

**An Investigation of Nationalism through the Writing of**

**W. B Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore**



**Inspiring Excellence**

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**An Investigation of Nationalism through the Writing of  
W.B Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore**

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### Abstract

Nationalism is a complex term, torsade with the forces of colonial and postcolonial witness. It is a quite difficult idea to be explained, as today every nation bears the sense of nationalism but not everyone is getting the same right and space. Time to time the idea emerge with many new additions and develop the base of the concept. This paper aims to study nationalism through the history of culture and literature.

Rabindranath is the emblem of Bengali nation but still regarded as an anti-nationalist. Who always stands for his own people but there is no abrogation for people belong to any other country, religion and nation. Again, Yeats is representing both Ireland and England. In the late nineties there was a radical change all over the world. The powerful countries became one another's rival. Colonial rulers were threatened by the rise of the revolutionary nationalist. The whole world came to a tumultuous situation. Both Rabindranath and Yeats concentrated on that part of the human history. Their nationalist perception turned into a new direction. It is because of the aggressive nationalistic view of that time.

So, when the nationalism became an activity, and took a homicidal and gusting frame both Rabindranath and Yeats move aside. But their conception of nationalism is not nailed upon on nationalism and antinationalism rather it goes furthermore. Which is the main concern of this paper. In the process of making the world "my own" "our" we are making our life critical. This constant argumentative statement will also have examined by the ideas given by Rabindranath and Yeats.

*Keywords: Indian, Western, Nationalism, Antinationalism.*

### Introduction

“In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners  
of my room; I find her not. (87, *Gitanjali*)

In today's world one of the most forceful elements is nationalism. This modern world is guided by many “ism's” and of them perhaps nationalism is the most fertile one. This is an ideology, which values in many different and particular ways. This idea is generated by the Western world but now it is propagated throughout the world. Every nation has its own way of nationalist thoughts. Which invents a constant unrest in the world, our present time is bearing the fact indeed. It is primarily a political ideology which developed in Europe in the later part of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. After the World War I it spread to the Asia, Africa, Latin America and Middle East. Early twentieth century was a period of turn over of the human history. A change came both in the Western and Eastern world. In the Western world the first world war came with a dystopian notice of the end of the world. On the other hand, the Eastern and colonized places come up with the dream of freedom. Thus “Nationalism” became an important question. Now, in the twenty first century the continuous advancement of the nationalist ideology shaping the global politics, which is creating new challenges all over the world. We all know that the emergence of this "subtle" idea or concept of the West the world has faced a lot of incidents. Some are good, some are bad, some stored a glorious chapter, and some are as horrible as damnation. Now we see many of the countries of the Eastern part is free from the colonial rule and established their strong position. Again, on the other hand the never-ending wars deluging the land of no-fly zones in Kashmir, Palestine, Syria. The incidents of that places may be did not carried away our humanism so another new name- Rohingya, added there. All these incidents the need of inculcating the value of humanity and ethical sympathy for others.

Hence the concept of nationalism is still a point at issue, which demands more investigations. We are living in the twenty first century in the world of ambition and zeal but still people of many places are struggling with the threat that anytime the powerful forces can diminish them, their existence can be dissolved. This situation indicates that the need of discussion about this topic is not yet over. This writing is an attempt to give an explanation to this controversial topic through the lens of literary attention. Still in the whole world, every nation is struggling with the fact that whether we need nationalism or not. If we need it then in which form it should be beneficial. In this paper the interpretation of nationalism will be examined through the most important ideas of the scholars from the late nineteenth to twentieth century. The rise of nationalism and the upheaval by this ideology which later divided the world into many fractions will be focused here. This paper will also talk about the formation of national identity and how it displayed in the literary work of that time. To discuss it we will mainly look at the literary pieces of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and W. B Yeats (1865-1939). Their works of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century represent the time of change and challenge. In our discussion Benedict Anderson and Partha Chatterjee will also come with their theoretical point of view to unfold the critical study of nationalism.

Nationalism is the most unique gift of modern time to the world, which is both valued productive and destructive. Fundamentally the term nationalism is described as a commonness and togetherness. Nations are usually defined as a community which possess a particular land and share their own culture and practice it. This community will share a common value, culture, custom, heritage and corporate will. The community is expected to be loyal towards the society. Every individual's loyalty to the community will sum up as the sense of nationality. The awareness of nationalism exposed in many different ways throughout the world. The understanding of

nationalism gave every nation a clue of particularity. So, the world became asunder into different nations and states. Where it will be always “we” against the “they”. And this “we” is- our language, our culture, our religion, our state, our symbol, our tradition and so on. Here “they” cannot come or “we” will not allow anyone to come. This “we” identifies a community’s territory.

Years after years people are talking about it, numerous writings are coming from every corner of the world. For the sake of own land and people everyone worked, thought and this is considered as a noble inherent instinct in human being. We call it patriotism. But for the betterment of my own country and my own culture can we harm other’s land, culture and heritage? To answer the question many people have responded with various ideas which can be analyzed by the study under various stream of knowledge as-Political Science, Social Science, History, Anthropology, Art and Literature. And certainly, these different fields give rise to different ideas. But from the late nineteenth century the study takes a new turn. The conflicted colonial rule, industrial revolution, print capitalism, social revolution-all these started a new chapter in the history of mankind. As we expected that modern age will be blessed with the aspects of life with hope and inspiration. This age will come with a resolution that human life is precious. But we saw that human beings have encountered with numerous crisis. What actually happened was not expected at all. Is that time was a asset to generate something new or is it a new way of being powerful and exploitation through consent? Cannot be answered so easily. These all arguments and discussions can be found in different documentations on nationalism.

Great philosophers of the nineteenth century are more connected with the echoes of that crisis time, which is hope under despair. W. B Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore are the most important figures of that time. They were under the British colonial rule and witness the impact of colonization being the subject of British empire. Both of them being the literary icon became a

protector of their nation and presented the world a vision of greater life. They were endowed with many qualities but above all they were poets. As the proverb says, the poets are the prophesier, it became true in the case of both Rabindranath and Yeats. That time when the very idea nationalism was emerging with its verity of thoughts many did not understood but they stated their own position about the coming crisis. Rabindranath was sure about the “process” that it will cause harm to the history of mankind. On the other hand, Yeats became concerned about the tradition of his land and culture. So, their writings of that time were representations of their thoughts of nationalism. Which will help us to relocate the study of nationalism through their literature. A structured historical event will be given by the study of history but in the study of literature and culture it is not giving merely a list of time rather give a reflection of life that particular time.

Rabindranath used to believe that whether it is the land or the mind, it must be free from the fear and narrowness and all this will be done by the courageous thinking and firmness of human. Because this world is for human and it is their duty to keep it a suitable place of living. Now, when we are standing in the point, where the wheel of this modern world running through the current tactics, comfortable lifestyle, scientific methods but will it be easy for us to answer the question how are we living? Are we living a harmonious life with all the new inventions we had in the last century or we are only imagining the good things of these new editions and making the place of living a nightmare. All these self-awakening questions come to the mind with every line of Rabindranath's and Yeats's writing focused on the thoughts of extreme nationalism.

Both Rabindranath and Yeats rejected the violent part of nationalistic activity. The most important thing was they addressed the idea nationalism as the coming threat and talked about it not in a political ground rather from a philosophical and cultural ground. To talk about this matter, we need to understand what the term nationalism actually means. Though Yeats did not try to give

any answer to it, but Rabindranath found it as an artifice and “deceitful” agency manufactured by the Western world.

In the attempt of giving a definition to the nationalism or nation *Imagined Communities* (1983) is a must read. In the study of nationalism Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) rooted his name so deeply that without his investigation no argument or monograph can proceed. His nonfiction *Imagined Communities* (1983) advocates his authority in this complex socio-political modern concept. Anderson's findings and judgments in *Imagined Communities* is one of the prominent documentations of nationalizing project. It is not only important for defining nationalism but also for finding out the origin and the process of spreading this idea. Hume Seton-Watson defines it as, “[nationalism is] a policy of creating national consciousness within a politically unconscious population.” (449). Again, Anderson sees this term differently, where he finds some process and facts working behind it so strongly that the individual of a community cannot deny it rather follow it. He considers the term nationalism maintains a process and works as an unavoidable issue in the society. Anderson was not intentional for giving any definition of nationalism as he stated, “Nation, nationality, nationalism-all have proved notoriously difficult to define,” (3). But the fact is nationalists are trying to give their explanations, which remains a matter of long-standing dispute. Again, a great influence of nationalism is noticeably “exerted” on the world in last centuries. So, time to time many chapters and verses come up with different investigations and analysis. Though it is not possible to find a “scientific definition” of the nation and their belonged nationalism but this “phenomenon has existed and exists” (3). So diverse arguments are obvious. But when Anderson is trying to express the purpose of tracing the idea of nationalism and relocating the origin of this with the reflections of different stages of time, his approach was not at all hypothetical rather he remained very experimental and systematic towards his goal. Rather he

presented his idea of the “anomaly of nationalism” with a proper proposal and with a detail stretch of works in *Imagined communities*.

At the very first point, Anderson make it clear that, nationality, or any other preferable term “world’s multiple significations,” nation-ness, as well as nationalism are the “cultural artefacts of a particular kind” (4). So, to understand them distinctly some major things must have the proper consideration. To knock on that exact point Anderson started working from a very initiative level and raised three questions, “how they [cultural artefacts] have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy” (4).

In the process of finding these issues and keeping it for further argument Anderson prefers to pinpoint the time. As he thinks towards the end of the eighteen centuries, the “artefacts” was regarded as a spontaneous “distillation” of a “complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces” (4). Through these many ‘crossing’ process some sense and knowledge created at one point. Once something is created it became a “modular”. As it takes a structure or a “modular” it can be “transplanted” easily. The ability of transplantation also indicating the aspects of stability. The “modular” later is seen with variable degree of self-consciousness including “great variety of social terrains” get itself merge and be merged with a “correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations” (4). Till this point Anderson’s one bold statement is notable that nationalism is not an abrupt notion but a chronic ideology with deep-rooted alignment in a particular state or society. There the human being is present, with his own culture and historical interest or a composed shared ideology of society. By saying so Anderson makes one thing very clear that, nationalism is a process of crafting for a common belief. Anderson accepted the difficulties of defining nation or nationalism and before giving his own interpretation. He tried to

cover the other thoughts by checking out the possible certainty and criticized the narrow chance as well. May be to Anderson it is much more close to the human being so he is acclaiming himself as an anthropologist before giving the definition. In words of Anderson, “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6).

May be it sounds a bit satiric that the most controversial and critical theme of last few centuries, which is and became so powerful now that many small communities, many delicate states and many glorious cultures is buried under the big aspirations of imperialism; is originated from the imagined capacity of mankind. However, Anderson also concerned about that, so he did not deny explaining the definition that, how it can be imagined and if it is so then how this tangibility can “aroused such deep attachments” (4) to the fellow members of the society. Here I want to quote the most influential lines of Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6).

In the field or the study of nationalism this explanation of Anderson highly acknowledged. Because Anderson’s comment is very much in convincing note that this nationalism project formulated through the powerful impression of the inhabitants, whom may be they never met and will meet. And obviously it is true indeed. We all are performing the same in our own communities. We are having a certain notion and understanding with the believe that, this is the ideal of my community or state and everyone is following it with great honor and thus this is my duty to do so as a citizen, to uphold the glory of my country, my culture, my history. We can see it clearly that, the whole process is depending on thoughts and whole heartedly accepted thoughts, so any individual is not judging anything rather just get into the process and build up the sense of

nationality through “imagine[ed]”. Even any community is not ready value an individual rather it is the totality, what really matters. So, it is well said that, “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity, genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 6).

At this point Anderson strikes with a very important question that, if it is imagining of fraternity so how it inspired so much that millions of people willingly die for and even intentionally kill for it. “Cultural roots” is working behind it as he explains- in eighteenth century in Europe the religious modes started declining and the concept of secularism prevailing. In that time the concept of nation gave a new sense with that imagination that the community had a very glorious past and have a very limitless future. This “cultural roots” prevailed through the consciousness of national origin. Here Anderson mentioned two relevant cultural system- religious community and dynastic realm (Anderson 11). He further argues,

Nor am I suggesting that somehow nationalism historically ‘supersedes’ religion. What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which- as well as against which- it came into being. (12)

Here the religious community is directly linked with the language. In the language the “superior” text is written is the secret language. In the time when the conversion started encompassing human being the vernacularization came up and gave a new assess to practice language. Then the dynastic realm came to the point of discussion. Anderson examined how that divine hierarchy’s automatic legitimacy withered away and the nationalist features became popular among the common people. By these changes of a system the new era comes. As Anderson suggested, after that the “national consciousness” came and gave the idea of nation a new turning to be proceed on. And he elaborated the idea by saying that it mainly propagated by the “print -capitalism”.

Now we will look to the strong criticism of Anderson's imagined modular by another scholar Partha Chatterjee. In his book *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1992) he started the first chapter with the question "Whose Imagined Community?". Chatterjee mentioned that his "central objection to Anderson's argument" (5) lies over this formation of "modular". He stated,

"If nationalism in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subject of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized" (Chatterjee 5).

Chatterjee took this point of opposition because he cannot "reconcile it [modular] with the evidence on anticolonial nationalism" (5). Chatterjee mainly focused on the study of colonialism and postcolonialism. As for investigating the case of Asia and Africa we cannot deny the fact of imperialism. In the point of nationalist imagination of Asia and Africa this is much more important, as Chatterjee is suggesting,

The most powerful as well as the most creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa are posited not on an identity but rather on a difference with the "modular" forms of the national society propagated by the modern West. How can we ignore this without reducing the experience of anticolonial nationalism to a caricature of itself? (5)

So, Chatterjee's ideas about the formation of nationalism indicates a different fact which was ignored by Anderson. He does not want to see it as too politically rather the social reformation is

much more important here. As he suggested, “anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power” (6). Chatterjee further argued that it does happen like this because the “world of social institutions and practices” (6) is divided into “two domains- the material and the spiritual” (6). According to his idea the material domain is the “outside” world which incorporates the economy and of state craft, science and technology. This “outside” domain is already proven as superior by the West. So the East had to surrender to them in this material world and for “accomplishment” they studied carefully this domain and “replicated” it. The spiritual domain is the “inner” factors of the domain which is mainly the cultural identity. In the words of Chatterjee,

“The spiritual, on the other hand, is an “inner” domain bearing the “essential” marks of cultural identity. The greater one’s success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual culture” (6).

Chatterjee is giving this “formula” for anticolonial nationalism. And he considers it as the “fundamental feature” of Asia and Africa. As every nation and every culture do not have the same history and the same problems and advantages so any common feature will not be appropriate to know them. As the colonize people and the colonizer people do not have any similarity so their indicators cannot be the equivalent.

The most crucial part of their argument is based on the language issue. Chatterjee completely supported Anderson’s “print-capitalism” theory, as it provides the new institutional space which develop the modern “national” language. Anderson considers that, printing language is the most powerful factor in the nationalism thoughts. As he said,

“If the development of print-as-commodity is the key to the generation of wholly new ideas of simultaneity, still, we are simply at the point where communities of the type ‘horizontal-secular, transverse-time’ became possible. Why, within that type, did the nation become so popular? The factors involved are obviously complex and various. But a strong case can be made for the primacy of capitalism” (Anderson 37).

Chatterjee argues that the “simple transposition” factor of development do not allow the “specificities” of the colonial situation. In this matter Chatterjee became very specific and enclosed his explanation to the discussion of Bengal, as he claims this history is more intimate to him. In the question of “print-capitalism” he explains that, the East India Company and the European missionaries took the first initiative to print Bengali books at the end of the eighteenth century. Even the first narrative prose compositions commissioned by them at the beginning of the nineteenth. Again, at the first half of the nineteenth century English completely displaces the native practice. We see that the Persian language of bureaucracy uprooted from Bengal and on that place English emerges as the “most powerful vehicle of intellectual influence on a new Bengali elite” (7). In the midcentury the crucial time of the development of the modern Bengali language comes, then the bilingual elite makes a cultural project that is, to provide mother tongue a necessary linguistic equipment to enable it to become an adequate language for “modern” culture (7). That time a complete institutional network of printing presses, publishing houses, newspapers, magazines and literary societies was created. All this happened outside the cognizance of the state and under the European missionaries. So through this process the new language, modern and standardized, is given shape in the Bengal. Chatterjee explains that the “inner” domain is also colonized, as he says,

“The bilingual intelligentsia came to think of its own language as belonging, to that inner domain of cultural identity, from which the colonial intruder had to be kept out; language therefore became a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for the modern world” (7).

Chatterjee is making his ideas very explicit by taking examples of the Bengal which was a colony of British empire. When the imagination is also under the superior the exact fact cannot be formed through the original national hold rather that initial thoughts become alloyed or a new means emerged and accepted by all.

Chatterjee suggested that the nationalism of West and the Asia and Africa will be different, but Anderson argued in his another writing, “Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism: Is there a difference that matters?” that the nationalism did not changed in the east -west line, rather it amalgamated from one to another. In his words,

“I myself do not believe that the most important distinctions among nationalism-in the past, today, or in the near future-run along East-West lines. The oldest nationalism in Asia-here I am thinking of India, the Philippines and Japan-are older than many of those in Europe and Europe Overseas- Corsica, Scotland, New Zealand, Estonia, Australia, Euskadi and so forth” (Anderson 31).

So the idea of nationalism cannot be defined so easily as it is inter related with many social, political and economic factors. Now we will move towards the main part of this paper, where the literary investigation will be find out through the component of nationalism.

In the later chapters of the paper the whole idea will be unfolded by the thoughts of Rabindranath and Yeats. Chapter one, is mainly focused on W.B Yeats. Here how Yeats is related

to the national origin of Ireland that will be discussed. Again time to time Yeats along with writing contributed in the national movement of Ireland that will be focused also. In spite of being so nationalistic why Yeats became so furious with the nationalist activity and supported the home rule. All these questions will be answered in the chapter.

Rabindranath Tagore is the messenger of humanism. His ideas and believes are working for the mankind and to the mankind. In the study of nationalism, he has propagated some values. The second chapter is mainly focused on that, where the traditional concept of nationalism is challenged by the features of Rabindranath's indications of nation's identity.

The Image and the Lack of Nation in Rabindranath and Yeats, entitled the third chapter of this paper. Here the outlining of the concept of nationalism by both Rabindranath and Yeats is presented through their liberal thoughts. Then the paper ends with the Conclusion chapter with opinion comes from the understanding of Rabindranath and Yeats.

## Chapter 1: Nationalism and its Ambivalences in the Poems of Yeats

“Before me floats an image, man or shade,  
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;”  
(*Byzantium*).

W. B Yeats (1865-1939) is the most influential literary figure in the twentieth century Europe. His literary excellence always keeps him in the centre of all talks of literature. As a poet, he expanded the border of English literature as well as dignified the Irish culture and literature. May be he used to believe that the art and culture is the expressive medium of society, so he did not hesitate to express his political view of Ireland in his writings. By doing so the reflection of that time specially the social upheaval and political situation was bring into being and we got the prospect. Yeats was the most influential poet among his contemporaries. In his young age when he just started writing, his creative potentials helped him stand up as a challenging personality specially to his Irish contemporaries. At the age of twenty-three, his first collection of poetry *The Wandering of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889) was published. This publication was a hint to the literary world about the arrival of a powerful poet, writer and thinker on the galaxy of literature. Here the words of Oscar Wilde will be certainly relevant. About the first book of Yeats, Wilde remarked:

“Books of poetry by young writers are usually promissory notes that are never met. Now and Then, however, one comes across a volume that is so far above the average that one can hardly resist the fascinating temptation of recklessly prophesying a fine future for its author. Such a book Mr. Yeats’s *Wanderings of Oisín* certainly is” (Wild 321).

Yeats is one of the main pillars of modern poetry. He is the heir of the romantics, so many times he has been called a late romantic poet. Though many things may appear very similar to others earlier, later Yeats managed successfully to create his own style and language. Here arises the question, what helps him to do so. A hypothetical answer is- may be his Irish background and fair judgment about his nation worked forcefully behind it. As in his writing though in many places he became confused or skeptical about Irish rebellions but at the same time he never ignored the necessity of strengthening the Irish art and culture.

The main themes Yeats treated in his poetry are love, mysticism, vision, symbol, Celtic mythology, Irish traditions, Irish nationalism. May be this list can vary from individual to individual, but no one will deny the fact that Irish note is always there in his poems. Ireland and the treasure of Irish nation get highest priority to Yeats. Whether it is Irish folklore or mythological character or the Celtic traditions- all are there in the writings of Yeats. Ireland exposed in different ways through Yeats. Some points are distinct and crystal-clear, and some are not so. May be nobody will deny it today that Ireland is the land of Yeats. But the total scenario is not the same in every sector. Yeats's love for Ireland seems unconditional but it was questioned somehow. For this may be Yeats is responsible to some extent.

W.B Yeats was an acknowledged poet in his time. His Nobel prize achievement in 1923 even made it more distinct. But his treatment of the theme of "Nationalism" is not clear at all rather it is vogue and full of contradictions. His Anglo-Irish origin and contradictory ideas about nationalism has probably worked behind it. Indeed, it can be regarded as the main factor. Some people honor him as the greatest poet of Ireland because he adds glory to them and retelling Irish legacy. Again, some people label him as a supporter of England as he highly valued English art and culture. Yeats was always very much advocating for both and ultimately his sufferings were

great. Yeats never liked the violence of Irish nationalists. This chapter will examine how Irish nationalism is working behind the writing of Yeats and his ideas about the nationalism through a close study of his works.

Yeats was born in Ireland but at a very young age he moved to London with his family. But his childhood was filled with the memory of the country Sligo in Western Ireland. He came there to his grandparents. Even later Yeats's family went back to their home in Ireland. So, Yeats's memory of life is shared into two places, England and Ireland. The beautiful nature of Ireland covered Yeats's whole childhood memory which is documented in the autobiographical writings of him. Here comes an important excerpt:

“My father read out to me, for the first time, when I was eight or nine years old. Between Sligo and Rosses Point, there is a tongue of land covered with coarse grass that runs out into the sea or the mud according to the state of the tide. It is the place where dead horses are buried. Sitting there, my father read me “The Lays of Ancient Rome”. It was the first poetry that had moved me after the stable-boy's “Orange Rhymes”. Later on he read me “Ivanhoe” and “The Lay of the Last Minstrel,” and they are still vivid in the memory” (Yeats 213).

Nature is described here so distinctly that one can see the vivid photograph described in terms of words. Yeats comes into a close contact with the literature of English at a very young age. In the autobiography he mentioned the events of his discussions with his father about poem and literature. There were Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, the Victorian writers and so on. His learning and conversation with his artist father has an influence on him, as he confesses “My father's influence upon my thoughts was at its height” (Yeats 216). In his autobiography of his childhood all the

memory is not as sweet as this. There is some hard part too. The following lines will express it. This is from the part when he was leaving in London with his parents between July 1867 to July 1873.

“I am looking out of another window in London. It is at Fitzroy Road. Some boys are playing in the road and among them a boy in uniform, a telegraph boy perhaps. When I ask who the boy is, a servant tells me that he is going to blow the town up, and I go to sleep in terror” (Yeats 210).

In December 1867 from the Fenian Brotherhood which is also known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood a Fenian bomb killed fifteen people at Clerkenwell in London. Perhaps Yeats’s memory recalls the tension of that time. The memories of his childhood in Sligo, migration to London, again his coming back to his previous life and atmosphere his experience with two different nations and two different countries will help us to understand Yeats as a poet, as a nationalist and definitely as a sceptic about Irish nationalism. Another thing deserves well mentioning that Yeats’s meeting with John O’Leary in 1885, (an Irish nationalist and a good friend of Yeats) is an important event. As John O’Leary inspired Yeats to write about Irish elements mainly.

“Yeats’s own lines tell Yeats’s story better than any can write it- and his story is the part of Ireland’s story” (Gonne 331). This is the most important quote of Maud Gonne about Yeats and Yeats’s Ireland. So, to understand Yeats’s nationalist views we must go through the writings of him. He wanted the Irish culture to be known again and along with other nation’s story Ireland and the Irish nation ’s head held high with its own uniqueness. He wanted to introduce the Irish literature again with a new ambience. To do so, Yeats moved onward with some specific process

or methods. In most of the cases it is seen that, Yeats did not reveal himself or convey directly to his readers rather he chooses to speak through his multiple characters. And these characters most of the time is coming from the Irish myth. Oisín, Aengus, Fergus, Druid these are the characters from Irish myth who became the spokesman of Yeats. Oisín is longing for his country. When he travelled to his country Ireland, he found that it was under another person, so he wanted to go back again but the girth of the saddle broke and so Oisín fell down and the horse given by the fairies disappeared. So Oisín was compelled to stay in catholic Ireland. Great Irish heroes tells the story of Ireland, through this wonderful method of retelling the old myth Yeats propagated about his Ireland. And through Oisín tells his dream about Ireland. There is an Irish folklore, that fairies steal the human children to be their companions. This regional story comes in a very fascinating way in the poem “The Stolen Child” included in the volume of poems *From Crossways*. In the poem the fairies are from “leafy island”. They wanted to take the child with them because the world is a place of miseries.

“Come away, O human child!

To the water and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world’s more full of weeping than you

Can understand” (9-12).

Here Yeats representing a fairyland which is situated in “dips the rocky highland of Sleewth Wood in the lake” (1-2) what may be the dream land for the poet. In many places Yeats is longing for an ideal place for living. And that desired place is no more than his own country Ireland. Again, in

another poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” from the book *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899). We see Yeats’s searching of Ireland through symbolism. Yeats personifies Ireland through the body of a beautiful woman. The poem depicts a hero who is lost searching for years his heart’s passion. Aengus meets a beautiful young woman and fell in love with her. Aengus catches a fish which turns into a beautiful woman and then is lost. Aengus keeps on searching this mystical woman for long but in the poem, he never reunites with her. As he says:

“Though I am old with wandering  
 Though hollow lands and hilly lands,  
 I will find out where she has gone,  
 And kiss her lips and take her hands;  
 And walk among long dappled grass,  
 And pluck till time and times are done,  
 The silver apples of the moon,  
 The golden apples of the sun” (17-24).

This is a poem about longing for not the love he got but the love he bears in the deep core of his heart. Many will say this longing may be is for Maude Gonne, but it does not seem so as he never lost her literally, rather he was with her as her friend always. Yeats’s life long longing is for Ireland never ended. In the poem it is further said that if he gets her that the days will be so bright. It is more clear that it indicates the bright future of the Ireland.

Another poem “Leda and the Swan” from the volume *The Tower* (1928) is the symbolical representation of the colonial others. In this poem Yeats refers to the myth of the rape of Leda by Zeus in the form of a charming swan. Poet narrated that, “a sudden blow” with the wings the swan Leda “caught in his bill” and she could not save herself. The representations of dominance of

power is very much clear here. As a colonizer does to the colonized. The poem ended with sad consequence of Agamemnon. So, England's dominance over Ireland and the harsh treatment of the powered one can make the end destructive.

Yeats is a true devotee of his motherland Ireland no doubt but as we mentioned earlier that his nationalistic view is a bit critical. There is no question regarding the patriotism of Yeats, but his nationhood requires more attention to understand him. It is known that Yeats was born during the colonial period of Ireland. He has the memory of several unrest in his country which is the result of colonial rule. Yeats always supported the Irish spirit. Even in his own literary life he took it as a symbol of pride. This pride helps him to stand in front so surely. And undoubtedly that is the strength of his nationalistic views but with the passage of time it changed. Roy Foster, answer that though Yeats was a poet of Revolution but from 1912 to 1922, this decade stands as a turning point of his revolutionary thoughts. During that time Yeats presented himself as a different person, who is supporting home rule. Yeats compared Irish society to a "stagnant pond filled with junk". And his further opinion was only home rule could "undam this pond." Despite of the Fenian past of Yeats he is supporting the British rule over Ireland. (*Yeats emerged as a poet of Irish Revolution, despite past political beliefs*, Stanford Report, April 18, 2001) It may be quite surprising, but a critical analysis is also needed to understand the whole controversy.

"What need you, being come to sense,

But fumble in a greasy till

And add the halfpence to the pence

And prayer to shivering prayer, until

You have dried the marrow from the bone;

For men were born to pray and save:

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,

It's with O'Leary in the grave" (1-9)

This famous and most important lines from the poem "September 1913" indicates the depressed mind of Yeats. As to him it is a new Ireland and his longing for "romantic" Ireland is gone. He has mentioned the name of O'Leary, who was an Irish revolutionary and a good friend. Being the member of Irish Republican Brotherhood, he believed in the independence of Ireland from Britain. He was the man who inspired Yeats writing about Ireland and for Ireland. He stood for protest but against the violence. He was always against the act of brutality and violence for achieving the freedom. In the name of independence people do not get the authority to do anything. In the poem "September 1913" Yeats became very much confused. This poem is important to understand his duality. As Yeats has a different concept to establish Ireland the act of brutality was rejected by him totally. Yeats became very much confused over the violent activity of the Irish revolutionaries. This activity gives Yeats the thought that the idea of national freedom is standing between the humanity. Here Yeats is more like Rabindranath. Yeats started the poem by criticizing the middle class Irish people. They are far behind the spirit of the ideal Ireland. According to Yeats, they are the people of "born to pray and save". The intentions of these middle class people is disgracing for the glorifying history of Ireland. So Yeats became very disappointed with the present situation and intended to call the sacrifice of the patriot "that [a] delirium of the brave?" (22) This poem is a clear indication of the changing thoughts of Yeats. The greedy, selfish nature of the Irish people made him feel ashamed and shaken his romantic ideas about the ideal Ireland.

Yeats became parted in two paths and no doubt that he loses his faith on the nationalistic view

of the people of Ireland. Once this Irishness made him a poet of his own country and people. He became the spokesman of his land and took the responsibility of a new Ireland though he did not want a complete separation from England. He became confused, but Irishness was still there and he became hybrid with two contradictory beliefs. As Bhabha says,

“Two contradictory and independent attitudes inhabit the *same place*, one takes account of reality, the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality. This results in the production of multiple and contradictory belief” (Bhabha 132).

Bhabha’s “ambivalence at the point of disavowal” is relevant in understanding some poems of Yeats. Another ambivalent poem of Yeats is “Easter, 1916”. In the aftermath of rising in 1916 Yeats wrote the poem. He was shaken by the incident by Irish Republic in Dublin. That time the poet himself was not in Ireland, he was staying in England. Yeats wrote the poem ‘Easter 1916’ in the months after the rebellion, but he waited for four years to publish it. The publication of this poem represents Yeats’ highly critical views about the revolutionary activity. To him the Ireland is “all changed, changed utterly” (16). So the poet is concerned that the sacrifice of the rebels may go in vain. “Was it needless death after all?” (67). This changed Ireland may fail to fulfil the dreams of the sacrificed souls. Along with the glorious history, Ireland will have a bloody part, which makes the poet feel abandoned with the nationalist revolution. He does not have faith on his people because they are blind with their idea of freedom. Again he is disturbed that the revolutionary peoples became impatient and did not keep faith on the British empire. As he says, “For England may keep faith/For all that is done and said” (68-69).

Throughout the poem Yeats being very critical about the supreme sacrifice of the Irish leaders. His skeptical attitudes towards the rising is also seen but at the same time he is expressing the

feeling that as long as the Ireland will be there the story of these patriots will be uttered with sincerity. So he also wants to write the name of the revolutionaries in his poem.

“I write it out in a verse-  
 MacDonaght\* and Macbride\*  
 And Connolly\* and Pearse  
 Now and in time to be,  
 Wherever green is worn,” (74-78).

Here along with the description of the Easter Rising the mentioning the names of the revolutionaries indicates the theory of Anderson's that how “cultural roots” and its “significant” expressed through the “tomb”, “monument” and the “unknown soldier's name”. The mortal nation bears that glory without knowing that “who lies inside”. (9) In the poem of Yeats, he mentioned the name of the persons who was important for the history of Ireland. He kept the document for the future generation. In the mentioning of the name by Yeats also shows a stand of nationalist attitude. He wrote the names so simply with the believe that may be these names will be known to all. The Irish revolutionary is ready to do anything for the independence of Ireland. This extremist feeling made Yeats ponder over the future of humanity as well as the glorifying history of Ireland. As Yeats always had a romantic concept about the Irishness of his land, he did not like the violent part of his country. The impatient activity and the heinous job of killing made Yeats reject his nationalistic view.

\*Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916) poet, critic, political activist. One of the seven leaders of Easter Rising.

\*John MacBride (1865-1916) Irish republican, military leader, Maud Gonne's husband.

\*James Connolly (1870-1916) socialist leader, Irish republican, commander general of Easter Rising

Along with the ambivalence features Yeats is the poet of Revolution and in 1922 he was appointed as a senator of the Irish Free State. The very next year the long Irish Civil War ended, and Yeats got the Nobel prize. Yeats has always upheld the art and culture and tradition of the Irish. So, nothing can break the relationship of Ireland and Yeats.

## Chapter 2: Nationalism and its Limit in Rabindranath's Writing

“Obstinate are the trammels, but my heart aches  
when I try to break them. Freedom is all I want, but  
to hope for it I feel ashamed.” (*Gitanjali*, 28)

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was not a political activist. But his intense words entitled the book *Nationalism* (1919) endorsed his believes on this very imported idea or concept. Being a romantic poet his continuation for Bengali literature became unparalleled but his coherent sight even makes him more pivotal for the Bengali nation. Rabindranath was always very much predisposed about the theme of "freedom". His genuine aspiration for the sovereign land and an authoritative nation filled with willpower and amity was always installed by his writing. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the idea of nationalism in Tagore. To do so, we need to discuss some other things or the early part of Tagore's life because his theory for anti-nationalism did not come abruptly. Earlier Tagore was one of the pioneers of Indian Nationalist Movement but why he became one of the prominent critics of nationalist thoughts or nationalism later is a matter of study and research.

Rabindranath's political view formation was based on criticizing the oppression of the British Empire. He firmly believed that unless or until the Indian subcontinent became free from the British empire the people of this land would not be able to do any ontogenesis trial for themselves. In the question of independence of land, Rabindranath was positive and for his one he was certain. That is the reason why Rabindranath started the Nationalist Movement. When Rabindranath come clase to the common people's life "the dire poverty of Indian masses rent" his heart. He began to realize that perhaps there is no modern other state will be found, which lacks the "elementary needs

of existence”. Again, the bitter truth is that the property of this land flourishing the British people for long. This was understood by Rabindranath very distinctly, as he stated, “It was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the British people” (Tagore 15). So, the bare domination of British empire and their exploitation project through the colonial rule downhearted Rabindranath and many of his contemporaries.

Rabindranath is the person who came in front of the glorious part along with the alarming part of nationalism debate. If talking for own culture, tradition, people and working for it is the indication of being nationalist, then Rabindranath was certainly is. Bangla modern literature is chiefly standing on the wonderful creation of Rabindranath. His writing enhanced the Bengali renaissance and amended the mind of progressive Indians. It won't be an exaggeration to say that, the Bengali nation chiefly depends on ideas and the vast stretch of work of Rabindranath. He is the one who has made the present form of Bangla language. He has added a great variety of uncounted words in the dictionary of Bangla. As Anderson suggested in his *Imagined Community*, the spread of vernacularizing of print-language awake “the origin of national consciousness”. In words of Anderson,

“In the process, [print language] they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-reader to whom they were connected through print formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community” (44).

Rabindranath believed that only the free land is not enough but the people who won this, they have to be strong and able enough to generate it properly. To do so they will need education,

knowledge about production or productive rule. According to his believe, he widened the sector of his work and strengthen the origin of Bengalese. He worked for the poor farmers of Bengal, established Kaligram Krishi Bank for providing the financial support to them. He worked for the education sector, established Bishwa Varati, Shantiniketan, Srinikatan. The Tagore Family itself contributed largely to the shaping of Bengali culture. Here it is worth mentioning that, wearing Sharee of Bengali women is now a highly traditional custom which came from the family of Tagore. Rabindranath, throughout his life, worked for his people and helped to design a nation. Being the most nationalist person, he contributed to his own people and land and being a liberal humanist, he advocated for the concept of one word, comradeship, alliance. So, Rabindranath's idea on nationalism is not so simple, to understand it a vast reading is necessary because his ideas and actions were not static, time to time it developed depending on the surroundings.

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Kolkata in 1841. It is the time when British Government was ruling over the Indian Subcontinent. Because of his family surroundings, from a very early age he comes to a close contact with English literature and knowledge. Tagore intensely loved the works of Donne, Shelly, Keats and many more splendid works of English Literature. At the age of seventeen, he went to England for study. Though he could not finish his formal education, he got the opportunity to know the English people from near. That experience is written in the book Europe-Expatriate Letter (Urupe Probashir Patra). There he found great differences between the English people who he met in England and who is ruling India. Throughout his life he acknowledged the greatness of English people and somehow thought that the heir of humanity will be preserved by them. But this expectation never came to be rather became an only threat of Indian Subcontinent. In *Crisis in Civilization*, the last speech of Tagore it is stated." I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I

am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether" (22). Rabindranath's admiration for the greatness of English people has always been misunderstood. Their liberal outlook, cultural achievement, scientific and technological innovations attracted him. As he was a man of humanity, the spirit of love was taken as a gift but when they fail to do so, Tagore was the only person to raise his voice against it. Here we will remember the dreadful event of Jallianwala Bagh massacre on 13 April in 1919. When everyone along with the enlightened western people was tongue-tied, Rabindranath Tagore was the only person to protest against it strongly. When he got the news, he rushed to Kolkata. The whole incident filled his heart with grief and pain. As he uttered,

“The accounts of the insults and sufferings by our brothers in Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers- possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons” (751).

That time the whole city came to a standstill. No one dared to say anything. Rabindranath tried to arrange a protest meeting, but no one supported him then he decided to relinquish his Knighthood as “a symbolic act of protest”. By addressing the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford on 30 May 1919 Tagore wrote a historic letter where he declared his decision firmly by stating that:

“Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the nobler vision of statesmanship in our Government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my

countrymen, who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings” (751).

In the letter Tagore mentioned that this humiliation of humanity “compelled” him to ask to “relieve” of the title of Knighthood.

There is no doubt that, Rabindranath is one of the pioneers of Indian nation who always guided his people in time of crisis. He appreciated the art and culture of the English people and the power of knowledge but never accepted the regime of British government or the rule of Company and strongly got involved in the protest against it. Both Gandhi and Nehru supported him. They expressed their appreciation of the important part Tagore took in the national struggle. Rabindranath's criticism of the British administration consistently grew more intense and stronger. Swadeshi Movement or Nationalist Movement- these names are very much related with him. Rakhi Bandhan for the protest of dividing Bengal is one of the most important events of that time. This Rakhi Bandhan was introduced by Rabindranath himself, that event was done for the unity of Bengal.

It is a known fact that, Rabindranath opposed British imperialism and supported Indian nationalist's movement in the early years. During that time, Tagore wrote many poems and composed many songs which are basically patriotic and still regarded as the best tool in the struggle of the Bengali nation. Here we can mention few, "Chitto Jetha Bhayshunyo" ("Where the Mind is Without Fear") and "Ekla Chalo Re" ("If They Answer Not to Thy Call, Walk Alone"). Tagore's nationalist view has also been described in his novel *Gora*, *Ghare Baire (The Home and the World)*, *Char Odhay (Four Chapters)*.

In his writings, he supported Indian nationalists just because he wanted the freedom of his mother-land and his countryman. In spite of supporting nationalism, Tagore did not support

Gandhi's Non-Co-Operation Movement or the violent part of Swadeshi Movement. In this movement, the Indian basically boycotted the British product and try to establish and improve Indian production. Because of this a major part of Indian nation was in trouble. Basically, the Muslim traders of India had to face great losses for this. So, Rabindranath did not support it. The man who led the procession against British government later withdrew himself from the movement. When the nationalist movement took a violent turn, he stayed away from it, though he was the person who voiced for the freedom of his countrymen. It is because Tagore is a man for whole mankind. In the name of freedom, killing innocent people was a crime to him. So, he tried to stop it. But when he failed, he moved aside with grief. In his writings, this part is also shown very clearly. Here the best example is *Ghare Baire (The Home and the World)*. Where we see the nationalist Sandip with his charm and powerful words, convincing everyone and justifying his deeds merely for his comfort in the name of patriotism. On the other hand, Nikhilesh wishes peace and comfort for everyone by working silently. His view was not only the land, to maintain the land and to establish claim over it people should work. Nikhilesh became Tagore's mouth-piece in the novel.

In 1917 Rabindranath Tagore emerged as the critic of the modern idea of nationalism. Though Tagore was not a politician or not involved in politics directly, his ideas or principles about politics still regarded as an important testimony. The history of early Indian Nationalist Movement says Rabindranath is a nationalist person or a nationalist leader. But the book *Nationalism* (1919) will portray him as an anti-nationalist person. To whom nationalism is "an applied science", "hydraulic press" or an instrument of killing humanism. This book is a clear illustration of Tagorean idea of nationalism. This book is compiled with three different essays and with a poem. "Nationalism in the West", "Nationalism in India", "Nationalism in Japan". *The Sunset of the Century* is the poem

which was written in the last day of the century. Those words of Rabindranath's announce the most critical time of the world. Because already the World War I has come with its all deadly epidemic and Rabindranath actively by writing and giving public speech expressed his grievance to any atrocity and protested for every evil or offence. From his childhood, he admires the greatness and liberalism of the West but in the name of doing well the violence of colonial rule was always challenged by him. Tagore clearly estimated that the concept of nation is transmitted by the West and he believes, "The political civilisation which has sprung up from the soil of Europe and is overrunning the whole world, like some prolific weed, is based upon exclusiveness" (Tagore 8). To Rabindranath 'Nationalism' is a 'greatest menace to Man'. In the early time, when people just started learning to live together and form a group of their own. They were nomad and for their livestock sometimes they take possession of another group's belonging and the other group have to escape from the place and look for a new one. May be by making another group to move or create a new place for living. This "sudden outbursts of nomadic barbarism" was not as worse as the deportation process of nationalism. Because this political civilisation is "scientific not human". This powerful idea gives the nation a sense that they are more proactive and in the name of science, technology, civilization, modernism we are trying to justify the inhuman actions. This straight line of judgement may be coming from the blockage of inner mind and thus cannot perform liberally. Moreover, men became captive under this hollow concept, which is referring in this line, "Nationalism is the training of a whole people for a narrow ideal; and when it gets hold of their minds it is sure to lead them to moral degeneracy and intellectual blindness." (Tagore, The Nation) Rabindranath was certain about the fact and tried to warn the mankind that, in the name of development we cannot risk our everything. And if we skip the fact then we will invite a great distress which will divide us into many pieces. And for Rabindranath "unity" is very important.

Throughout his literary writings, he tries to explain the term “unity” in many ways. As Indian history is the history of different races so Rabindranath consider the race problem is the main problem for India and she is facing it “from the beginning of the history”. So, India cannot practice the “exclusiveness” as her people belongs to many different ideas, believes, traditions and definitely their requirements are different from one another. In this issue Rabindranath is accusing India very harshly, by saying:

“She has made grave errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races, in perpetuating in her classifications the results of inferiority; often she has crippled her children’s minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social form, but for centuries new experiments have been made and adjustments carried out” (34).

He further adding, “Her mission has been like that of a hostess who has to provide proper accommodation for numerous guests, whose habits and requirements are different from one another” (35). Rabindranath did not ignore the fact that, this inclusiveness will give rise to “infinite complexities”. But to him the solution is not any technical method or the acceptance of Western believes of nation rather he wants to depend on the “realisation” of men. Which is presented in the line, “This gives rise to infinite complexities whose solution depends not merely upon tactfulness but upon sympathy and true realisation of the unity of man” (Tagore, 35). “Unity of man” must be the mission of India but if the Western world can also take the mission ultimately it will be a blessing for the mankind. But Rabindranath’s agony was instead of teaching the West the East is learning from and becoming the enemy of their own people and property. Western concept of making power and ruling over the world making them a giant. So, Rabindranath specify it that not only the British government, but the rule of a nation can affect the whole mankind. Moreover, this line is expressing the same, “It is not a question of the British government, but of government by

the Nation-the Nation which is the organised self-interest of a whole people, where it is least human and least spiritua” (Tagore 41).

To understand Rabindranath’s idea about nationalism we must understand the theme of humanism and spiritualism of him. For him the Indian sub-continent is a “melting pot”. Where different races with their different types of customs, religions, social values will live together and tie up the Eastern concept of nationalism. By saying so he never rejects the Western world though he totally rejects the dividing concept of Western nationalism. To him east and west are “complementary”. Rabindranath has his own understanding of nation or nationalism. He became argumentative to the point of the method of exclusion. He protested against any violence of any people. To do so he explained the ruinous and destructive device nationalism as a powerful formula taken by the West and implanting it to other part of the world. On that crucial moment when the great war already afflicted the whole world Rabindranath comes with his proposal of a peaceful world. But may be the world already assigned to the contract of imperialism which ultimately invited the conflict and curse for mankind. So, we have to face the World War II along with a continues turmoil of powerful nations for authority, command and wealth.

Rabindranath’s view on nationalism is based on human’s betterment of life. And to him it is with the amalgamation of human being with one another. When the east will be able to meet the west then the sun of good day will rise in the world. Rabindranath knew that the people of his land is suffering for long and now they are misguided. Their anger took them to that portion that they are ignoring the promise of humanity and welcoming the act of destruction. Rabindranath was a man of hope and his expectation from his people is clear. He wanted his people to stand for their own right but not with brutality. But with love and affection.

### **Chapter 3: The Image and the Lack of Nation in Rabindranath and Yeats**

“Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I  
feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand  
bonds of delight.” (73, Gitanjali)

Yeats and Rabindranath are the canonic figure of two parts of the world of literature. They are representing two different cultures, nations and heritages. Both of them are the creators of the history of their people and land. Though they are enlightening different poles but their roads coming together also. They are different in many ways but both of them are the ardent lover of their motherland. Hence today Rabindranath is the flag of the culture of Bengal and Ireland is regarded as the land of Yeats. In the debate of nationalism their common ground of standing is rejecting all violence, killing, destroying. Though this is a major issue that they are raising concentrations, but their perceptions are not same like before.

In 1910 the first publication of “Gitanjali” place these two names together. Yeats writes the preface of the book and shows his gratitude towards a poet of India. Through the words of his poem the English people got a light of hope. The destruction of the World War was darkened their life. They lost the hope and the spiritual shelter of Rabindranath became the strength. Yeats and other friends of him liked the book so much that they all become a follower of Rabindranath. Yeats and Rabindranath had a good bonding that time. Though it does not go so till the end.

As Rabindranath was scared that the greed of power will destroy the natural instinct of human. That happened as well. Soon the western world forgot the soothing power spiritualism. They started such a journey that ultimately ends the history of mankind. There is no doubt Rabindranath is supporting his people but not for any war but for regaining the culture of his own.

Rabindranath expresses mainly in the poem no.35 in Gitanjali. Here he is asking for the awakens of the people of his country. And to do so they need to be “fear” free and the light of knowledge only can be there weapon.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action-

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake” (1-8).

Rabindranath’s idea regarding the political factors arisen by the thoughts of cognizance of free land. From the late nineteenth century regarding the land few elements became very prominent. Number one, Stop dependency from the British government. Number two, adequate autogenous potentiality based society and number three is taking the way of making a self -dependent society by refusing the caste differences, dormant ideology and narrowness. The intension was to ingrain the intimate assimilation of individual and social agglutination. The communal detachment and strife was ignored or neglected by the political leaders, but Rabindranath was not in a daze rather he was well vigilant to the upcoming turmoil. He was in opposition to the politics of compromise,

so he again and again alerts the people and political leaders that by beseeching no great achievement can be attained. So, independence will not be achieved so easily that we will apply for it and will get it. From that intense national emotion Rabindranath started his Swadeshi Movement in the Banga vhang period. That time he tried to make people understand that for the deficit and underdevelopment of the country is the result of British rule. Again, he wanted to give the people (not the urban only but the common rural people) educated life, healthy life and open minded progressive thinking that they can be capable enough to take the responsibility of their own culture and society and reform it for the betterment of their social and communal life. His dream was to build a nation who will start up by his own power and insight. Then they will be able to achieve their independence by protecting it with amplification. So Rabindranath goes for the alteration of the freedom and being stringent for the matter of independence of Indian subcontinent. But his attempt turns out badly and the fear became true that the indignation of the people blows up and the whole situation goes against the will of Rabindranath.

Rabindranath believes that “East the mother of spiritual Humanity” (49). So, in the affliction of the West the East will elixir them. This concept became utopian as the Western world always exploited us they cannot be so privileged that the East will give the hand for friendship. But Rabindranath wanted to see the India in a very different attire. Where the people will find the amalgamation of many different races, customs and rituals. But there will be one thing in common that is unity of mankind. The Western ways of thinking which divides was totally rejected by Rabindranath. So, after the Bhang Vanga movement Rabindranath start losing his determination from the Nationalist movement and the only reason of this was the violent activity of the nationalist. He even disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi and did not liked the Non-Co-Operative (Ashohojog) Movement. To him it was an act of disgrace to humanity. In the poem Gitanjali, 108

he expressed his feelings very intensely and calling his country “ill-fated”. In the poem we will see that Rabindranath is being harsh towards the people, who dishonored the humanity.

“My ill-fated country those you have affronted

With them you must be equalised by sharing the same affront.

Those you have denied

human rights,

allowed to stand before you but never invited in-

with all of them you must be equalised by sharing the same affront” (1-8, 153).

Now anyone can ask the question that if Rabindranath thought like that then how he expected the independence of his country and his people. Yes, there is no doubt that Rabindranath wanted the cessation of the governance of British authority from India and the liberty people. But his idea was to achieve this the people will rely on Indian culture and knowledge not in weapon to shed blood. So, Rabindranath rejects the hostile ideology of the political leaders but did not leave behind the ideology of a freedom of land. He was against the means that they accepted as a way of drive away the British people.

Rabindranath’s idea of forming the nation is supporting the decolonizing notion. As his main concern was the revival of the originality of the Indians. And with that the native people will get the boldness to stand with their own power by rejecting colonial structure. As the term decolonization means and act out as, “Decolonization seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking, a freedom to revive and rejuvenate native forms of knowledge” (Nayar 6). The decolonizing idea was the main factor in the concept of Rabindranath’s nationalism. As he believed

that the Western system is not applicable for the East. This East has its own different identity. Moreover, Indian subcontinent is filled with numerous customs of different ethnic groups. If the native people, follow their own culture and convention then the others will know them with their own individuality and here lies the identity of a nation. A nation can fight with everything but if they had to fight with the identity crisis then their success is uncertain because without individual existence nothing can survive. In case of any nation it's even more obvious. So, Rabindranath tries to make the people aware of it and worked for the formation of national singularity. And about his own one (civilization) he was proud indeed, as in a very pleased tone he declaimed the amiability of India, in his Noble Prize acceptance speech.

“I can remind you a day when India had her great university in the glorious days of her civilization. When a light is lighted it can not be held within a short range. It is for the whole world. And India had her civilization with all its splendours and wisdom and wealth. It could not use it for its own children only. It had to open its gates in hospitality to all races of men. Chinese and Japanese and Persians and all different races of men came, and they had their opportunity of gaining what was best in India, her best offering of all times and to all Humanity” (50).

From this excerpt we can move towards another most important portion of Rabindranath's concept of nationalism. About one thing we must be very careful that to Rabindranath India was not only territorial but ideological. So again, and again he is talking about the responsibility of his men towards the mankind. He considered India as place of “melting pot” where from every corner of the world people will come and take the gift as a token of love and amity. The India will always be cordial to her multifarious guests and will offer them her best. So in the poem *Bharat Tirtha*, Gitanjali, 106 he uttered this way by calling the India with great enormity.

“O my soul, awaken slowly  
in the holy pilgrims’-place  
where India’s greatness reigns, before  
the ocean’s space.” (1-4)

His “melting pot” idea is depicted directly in this poem. As he further gets going to establish the India as a container of multiculturalism.

“No-one knows from where it flows  
or set it in motion,  
this wild flood-force of humanity’s course  
to mingle in mid-ocean.  
Here are Aryans and non-Aryans  
Moguls, tribes-of-East,  
and Huns and Scythians, Pathans, Dravidians,  
all in a body pieced.” (15-22)

Many times, it has been said that Rabindranath is the patron of English people for his considering tone may be it seem so but again we need to understand that, if he is a patron then it is not for English people only but for all nations in the world. Rather I want to say he is the patron of mankind. Rabindranath tremendously criticizes the imperialism of British government, but he never condemns the art and literature of them what is the light of the Western pole. To

Rabindranath the great literature of Westerns is like a “gift”, As he said, “Now the West has opened its door-/and bringing gifts all through it they pour,” (23-24)

Rabindranath’s final approach to nationalism towards the world is the amalgamation of all men, where they will come with their own uniqueness and offer it to others and will mingled to be more rich, “to give, to take, their mixed mixing make.../Their way they will not retrace” (25-26).

If we turn towards Yeats’s idea of formation of nationalism, then it will be found mainly based on the representation of the “cultural products”. He was looking for a change of Ireland and this change is more with culture. As cultural nationalism is suggested in a unique way. “Ideally, cultural nationalism should foster both unity and diversity, because it opposes a of another while simultaneously removing local and national characteristics as a source of meaningful differentiation” (North, 387). So, we always find Yeats’s reaction in his poem. In 1914 Yeats’s another volume of poems name *Responsibilities* published. This book mainly shows, who his idea was changing that time. His frustration was also reflected in his poems. Among them “A Coat” is the most prominent one. Here Yeats is talking metaphorically on the changes of Ireland so about his.

“I made my song a coat

Covered with embroideries

Out of old mythologies

From heel to throat;

But the fools caught it,

Wore it in the world’s eyes

As though they'd wrought it.

Song, let them take it

For there's more enterprise

In walking naked" (1-10).

Rabindranath and Yeats both were aware of the "cultural roots" and had an ardent believe that the consciousness of the cultural and national origin is important. To Yeats "cultural roots" was the identity of an individual. So he never left it behind rather took it with him and proceed. Perhaps that is the reason why Celtic culture, tradition always comes into the writing of Yeats. He actually retold the Ireland and Irishness in his writings. According to the suggestion of Anderson the national consciousness forms from the print language. And Yeats also consider it as an important fact that to give a raise the Irishness. Yeats took the work of writing as a means, which will help to build the nation with their origin and individuality. In 1892, December 17 Yeats wrote a letter to the editor of United Ireland. There he tried to explain the necessity of "de-Anglicising of Ireland". To do so the writings of olders can be represented in a new version, where there will Ireland and the new concept. Undoubtly Yeats took that way and retell the old Ireland in his new voice. He wants to keep the origin of the Ireland as a symbol of pride but this much is not enough for the nationhood, this is known to Yeats also. As he says,

"Let us make these books and the books of our older writers known among the people and we will do more to de-Anglicise Ireland than by longing to recall the Gaelic tongue and the snows of yester year. Let us by all means prevent the decay of that tongue where we can, and preserve it always among us as a learned language to be a fountain of nationality in our midst, but do not let us base upon it our hopes of nationhood." (262)

Rabindranath is a bit more active in this part of nation consciousness. He is not depending on any means rather expressing that the citizen or the nation of the land will be the resource and will make their own land with the aspects of life and humanity. But the whole process will be proceeding through “unity”. Rabindranath believes in inclusiveness thus in the process of making own nation and country he never excludes others. Moreover, he trusts that if the East and West stands together and exchange their asset, again helps in the inadequacy and stands for each other in their crisis. Then in proper term we will be able to tell our self a true citizen of world and a good nation with responsibility and sympathy. Yeats also thought about that “unity” but his activities always revolved around the cultural factors. As he used to believe that culture can make people connected to each other. So in 1999 with the help of Lady Gregory he established “Irish Literary Theatre” which later named “Abbey Theatre”. There Yeats was the main producer-manager.

As per the suggestion of Anderson, the printed version of language gives language a new fixity, helps create standards and build an image of antiquity. This indirectly shape and reshape the outline of a nation, with a distinct history. In this matter no one will be able to disagree that Rabindranath’s writing holding the major part in Bengali Literature and helped to form the nation. Fakrul Alam in his book *Rabindranath Tagore and National Identity Formation in Bangladesh Essays and Reviews* discuss how Rabindranath is involved in the process of forming Bengali nation and most importantly “the national identity formation in Bangladesh” how proceed before and after 1971. Alam in his book tried to answer the question that “has he been crucial to national identity formation in Bangladesh?” He added; “He [Rabindranath] has been able to galvanize the movement that had been sparked off by the language movement of the nineteen-fifties and has been inspirational for the cultural resistance that was at the core of the national liberation struggle of Bangladesh” (36). Alam was very much decisive in his tone and explained

very elaborately that how Rabindranath became the center of the “national origin consciousness” and played the key role of forming the Bengali nation's identity. Though the writings of Rabindranath are playing the vital role here but his other activities which representing and upholding the nation's and giving identity cannot be ignored. So Swadeshi Movement, Banga Vanga Movement, establishment of Visva-Bharati all these are in the center of the image of Bengali nation. Alam further included that Rabindranath's role in the national imaginary, “in the image of repossessing Shonar Bangla that his song focalized for the generation that fought the liberation war and are still striving to make the vision generated by it come true.” (36)

Anderson suggested that the sense of nationalism inspire love, and most of the time “profoundly self-sacrificing love”. According to him this love became a process of producing “cultural products”. In his words, “The cultural products of nationalism-poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts- show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles.” (141) If it is so then Rabindranath and Yeats both are the cultural producer of nationalism and perhaps influence their nation the most through their writing. Yeats throughout his literary life represented Ireland in different ways. And this representation is not less than any glory of a revolutionary. Which expressed in the poem *To Ireland in the Coming Times*. Here poet directly mean that his writings enacted as a nationalist act, so his contribution is also important.

“Know, that I would accounted be

True brother of a company

That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong,

Ballad and story, rann and song;

Nor be I any less of them,” (1-5).

Yeats was very much correct on his point that the written version of the nation will be appear as importantly as the martyrs. They way Farkul Alam described that the formation of national identity of Bengal is hugely depended on Rabindranath. Just like that Yeats's contribution helped to be nation with Irishness. Apart from the ambivalent part of his writings Yeats always depicted the Ireland. The Ireland he wanted to see and wanted to be.

### Conclusion

“From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and  
I know that of a sudden the happy moment will  
arrive when I shall see.” (*Gitanjali*, 44)

Nationalism being a controversial matter for last century changed the entire history of civilization. If it is negative for some cases, then it plays a positive role too. For the sake of nationalism ideas, we see some fieriest protest. Most importantly almost every nation-state come up with their culture and origin in writing. If we look at the post-colonial literature every piece of writing has their own tone of originality. Their intention of define native identity or retelling the own culture makes a kind of a kind of nationalistic reevaluation.

The twentieth century is vigilating the unfolding of various forms of nationalism, antinationalism and transnationalism. Due to this we see the thread of coming to an end of a nation-state, while a spike in ethnic conflict and secession can led rise of a new nationalism. Again the present form of nationalism is creating new windows, where the migration and diaspora, through that new created cultural, economic and social networks is the most important facts. All this focus towards the anticipation of “universalization” or “globalization”. Though these new elements are creating bridges over the world but again making some parts let alone. It is difficult to assess this idea. The present time is showing the extreme nationalist view by every nation which actually help them to protect their identity and origin. In our country Bangladesh, the nationalist identity is becoming acute day by day. Which is good sign for the newly born country but at the same time we are punitive towards the tribal people. Whereas this type of ethnic traditions should be protected.

The conflicting facts about the rise of nationalism is not decided yet though we can see from the beginning of the history of nationalism, it is questioned. Giving this ideology, an exact position is impossible as time to time it is changing and will be changed. Along with the historical study of this ideology the cultural and literary study shows more about it.

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