

**W.B.YEATS AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY FROM THE
POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE**

SYNOPSIS

**SUBMITTED BY
NIKHILESH DHAR**

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY(ARTS)
IN
ENGLISH**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY
WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

2013

INTRODUCTION

Among the doyens in the world of poetry between the two wars W.B Yeats (1865- 1939)and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) are two contemporary figures of particular relevance for a current reappraisal of their literary and social contributions in the light of postcolonial theory of criticism. Both of them were products of the then prevalent social and political milieu of their respective countries. But each of them by dint of his unique artistic genius transcended his own time to become an icon of excellence for all time to come. These two poets were aware of the similarities and differences of their countries in relation to the colonial British authority before they met in 1912 in London. Their meeting brought them in close contact and each poet discovered in the other an artist of his own mould. Each of them was a poet of the Romantic tradition, but at the same time infused with the features of modernism. They are, therefore, usually interpreted from aesthetic viewpoint and applauded for their sensuous and spiritual imagery and symbolism.

However, with the creation of a native body of criticism that has introduced Ireland as a precursor to the postcolonial societies in the second half of the twentieth century, W B Yeats has started to be interpreted as a postcolonial writer, the term being used not to mean 'after-colonial' but 'anti-colonial' in a comprehensive sense. Although colonialism, as a subject for Irish criticism and theory, has been tentatively broached, for example, in Seamus Deane's *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980*,(1985) it is Edward Said's lecture “Yeats and Decolonization”, published as a pamphlet by Field Day in 1988 which has played the vital role as an important catalyst for a postcolonial reading of Yeats. The premise of this seminal study is that Yeats was a poet of decolonization, a central figure in debating and

asserting an overt drive towards the construction of a national identity as a vital act of decolonization. Later studies establishing Yeats as a postcolonial writer by David Cairns and Shaun Richards in *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, (1988) Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995) and Jahan Ramazani in the article, "Is Yeats a Postcolonial poet?" (2001) followed. Because of all such stalwarts participating in the debate, the field is at present a hotbed of arguments and counter-arguments. The end result of all such theoretical conflicts, is, of course, justifiably in favour of Edward Said's conclusion and by the turn of the century it is evident that W B Yeats is being re-read as a postcolonial artist.

On the other hand, although universally acknowledged as one of the chief architects of modern Indian culture and Bengali Literature in particular, Rabindranath Tagore is given only a cursory glance by expounders of postcolonial theory. However, in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) Edward Said refers to Rabindranath in the context of the development of the nationalist spirit and cultural resistance to the imperial power in India while in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1998) the editors assign importance to Rabindranath in developing a critical discourse in the post-colonial world. In India, Partha Chatterjee in his book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World :A Derivative Discourse* gives only a scant reference to Tagore while Ashis Nandy in his book *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism – Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of self* (1994) refers to Tagore as holding an anti-imperialist stand as an almost sacred responsibility for him. More recently, of course, Amartya Mukhopadhyay in *Politics, Society and Colonialism : An Alternative Understanding of Tagore's Responses* (2010) has considered Tagore as one of the best recorders of the impact of colonialism through modern eyes whereas the book titled *Rabindranath*

Tagore and the Nation:Essays in Politics, Society and Culture(2011) edited by Swati Ganguly and Abhijit Sen attempts to examine Rabindranath's response to one of the most important issues of nation and nationalism.

Despite all these studies regarding Yeats and Rabindranath, there is still a big space wide open for analysing and evaluating both the writers from the postcolonial perspective — a line of argument which would critically focus on their role as cultural nationalists musing upon the construction of a cultural identity of their respective countries. My objective in this study, therefore, would be to evaluate both W B Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore and also to compare and contrast their creative roles on a shared, intersubjective awareness from the postcolonial perspective.

The thesis is divided into five chapters excluding the Introduction and the Conclusion. The first chapter of the study deals with the basic theoretical premise of Postcolonialism with special emphasis on the Fanonian idea of decolonization. The second and third chapters examine Yeats's genius in poetry and plays from the postcolonial perspective while the fourth and the fifth chapters concentrate on Tagore's creative role as a postcolonial artist by analyzing his contextual poetry, plays, songs, novels and short stories.

Besides the entire body of such creative literature there are the non-fictional prose writings of both these authors extended over the whole period of their lives and creations. These writings are very much crucial from the main point of view of my thesis. But my discussion of them is spread over the above mentioned four chapters in the chronological order of their publication. Rabindranath's book *Nationalism* is also examined in this context for understanding his outlook as it is reflected in all of his creative works.

CHAPTER – I

POSTCOLONIALISM : A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The chapter gives a brief account of the theoretical perspective of postcolonialism with special emphasis on the Fanonian contribution to the study of Postcolonial theory as a whole.

The term ‘Postcolonialism’ is often interpreted as a parallel theoretical paradigm to Postmodernism and Poststructuralism etc., the prefix ‘post’ meaning after in time or order. But although it is used originally to denote a historical period following independence in a colony and thus is related to the study of African and commonwealth literature, now the term has shaken off this limited time-period dimension and connotes the social, political, economic and cultural practices which arise in response and resistance to colonialism. Simultaneously, it is important to note that of the two spellings of the word with and without hyphen between the prefix ‘post’ and the term ‘colonialism’, I prefer the unhyphenated version following Bill Aschroft and use it to take into account the impact of colonialism on contemporary political and sociological realities in the former colonies.

Although postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct category only in the 1990s, its ancestry can be traced back to Aime Ce’saire’s article “Discourse on Colonialism”. The article had a great impact on Fanon for whom the struggle against colonialism involves the ‘claiming back’ of the colonized country’s own history from the negative or nonexistent version of it voiced by the colonizers. This emphasis on the creation or rediscovery of new forms of history and eroding colonialist ideologies thereby is found in Fanon’s most famous work *The Wretched of the Earth* . Fanon’s basic premise in the chapter “On National Culture” is that because of colonialism and

the cultural hegemony that goes with colonialism, native intellectuals respond by rejecting Western culture and embracing pre-colonial history and a non materialistic way of life through three different phases. The first phase is when the native intellectual assimilates the culture of the occupying power and all his or her sources of inspiration are European. In the second phase or 'just-before-the-battle' phase , as Fanon has termed it , he or she turns backwards and champions all things indigenious. The third phase Fanon calls a 'fighting phase' in which the native intellectual becomes directly involved in the people's struggle against colonialism. Thus Fanon sees cultural nationalism as a prerequisite to national liberation and the liberation of the nation as necessary for the renewal of culture.

In the field of Postcolonial criticism Edward Said's contention in the book, *Orientalism* is that the West has not only conquered the East politically, but that western scholars have appropriated the exploration and interpretation of the Orient's languages, history and culture for themselves. They have taken Europe as the norm from which the 'exotic', 'inscrutable' orient deviates. In the book *Culture and Imperialism* Said lays stress on the response of the colonized people to the western dominance. He says that with passage of time the natives of the colonies become conscious of their burden and start the movement of decolonization.

Another book of significance *The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post Colonial Literatures* as it is edited by Bill Ashcroft et all argues that resistance starts among those who learn the way of the master, as Caliban learns Prospero's language in order to curse him. In *Post-colonial Transformation* Bill Ashcroft describes the ways in which colonized societies have transformed the very nature of the cultural power for the purpose of their self empowerment.

At the same time Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous essay "Can the subaltern speak?" argues that the gendered "subaltern" is always represented rather than represents herself. Spivak is particularly interested in the figure of the subaltern woman who is the victim of a double colonization – European colonialism and indigenous patriarchal domination. Another important critic Homi Bhabha thinks that the Postcolonial perspective revises the nationalist pedagogies that set up the relation between the third world and the first world in a binary structure of opposition. In his opinion, nations are narrative constructions that arise from the hybrid interaction of contending cultural constituencies. Then in his book *Location of Culture* he brings in the concepts like 'mimicry', 'interstice', 'hybridity' etc in order to analyse in further details the nature of relationship between the colonizer and the people of the colonized nations.

From the foregoing analysis it is obvious that Postcolonialism is a blanket term that incorporates within its scope divergent areas of study. But as Fanon is the pioneer in the field who explored the psychological effects of colonisation on the psyche of a nation and its broader implications for building a movement for decolonization, his discourse is the most important for understanding the postcolonial theory. He thinks that if the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one's own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued. In my opinion, these two aspects are at the roots of the whole body of postcolonial criticism and in both Yeats and Tagore I find this kind of unique efforts to reclaim their country's past and to erode the colonialist ideologies. Therefore, in the subsequent chapters I shall be concerned with analysing the works of W.B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore to establish how their works basically conform to these two ideas of postcolonialism.

CHAPTER – II

YEATS'S POETRY: A POSTCOLONIAL READING

The chapter examines the colonial status of Ireland and gives a brief account of the 'imperial relationship' that prevailed between England and Ireland. It concentrates on W.B Yeats's poetic emergence against the colonial background of Ireland and his coming to artistic maturity by exploring the growth of the spirit of nationalism in him as well as his role as a postcolonial poet. The chapter deals with how by reclaiming the past and by using folklore, myth and legends of Ireland Yeats tries to make an anti-colonial resistance to the British cultural hegemony and transforms the degraded colonial present by recuperating the pre-colonial past and at the same time interrogates the dominant colonialist ideologies by which that past has been devalued.

W.B. Yeats was born at a time when Ireland was politically charged, i.e; Fenian Movement was at its peak and revolutionary figures like Isacc Butt, John O'Leary and Charles Parnell dominated the scene. From an early age Yeats felt a deep connection to Ireland and his national identity and soon realized that the British rule had a negative impact on Irish politics and social life. As a cultural nationalist, therefore, he wanted to create a rich Irish literature having its own identity free from the influence of the British literary tradition. Hence, by incorporating into his work the stories and characters of Celtic origin like Cuchulain, Oisin and Fergus Yeats endeavored to encapsulate something of the national character of his beloved Ireland.

Yeats's early poetry, the poetry he wrote before he came into contact with O'Leary and the nationalist poets, is in the tradition of the English Romantic poets. But it was his active participation in politics and study of glorious Irish history and

literature that made a great impact on Yeats and his coming to terms with reality is discernible in poems from *Crossways* like “The Madness of King Goll”, “Down by the Salley Gardens”, and chiefly “The stolen Child” which stemming from Irish folk legend provides an excellent example of the artist’s geographical and cultural repossession of his homeland. The poem “Wanderings of Oisín” from the volume *The Wanderings Of Oisín and Other Poems* demonstrates Yeats’s commitment to celebrate and poeticise national mythology, culture and geography. Interpreted from the postcolonial perspective the fight between Oisín and the Demon here can be viewed as an imagined fight between the Fenians of the nineteenth century and the British empire. The poem “The Lake Isles Of Inisfree” from the volume *The Rose* is concerned with the recovery and repossession of colonized land through the act of imagination whereas “To Ireland in the Coming Times” from the same collection is partly an explanation of Yeats’s attitude to the role of literature in the struggle for Irish Independence. It also reflects his contribution to the establishment of a mythical, spatial and political component of an Irish identity. In the poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” from *The Wind Among the Reeds* by choosing a Celtic God over the most traditional use of Greek or Roman Gods Yeats attempted to elevate Irish mythology in the world of literature. Thus, Yeats's continual efforts for the revival and use of Irish legends, characters of celtic origin associated with the pre-colonial oral culture of Ireland represented, in my view, some aspects of Fanon's theory on the use of the past to construct an image of a national culture endowed with 'dignified glory and solemnity' and opposing the savage aspect imposed on it.

Yeats’s role as that of a postcolonial poet eroding the colonialist ideologies is also revealed in many of the poems he wrote and published in the 1920s, especially those in the volume *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* and *The Tower* which are

characterized by an impending catastrophic violence resulting finally in the Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin, on Easter Monday. Yeats responded to the violence of both sides with a poem, "Easter 1916", which was as personal as public in its ambivalent reaction to the 'terrible beauty' born in that action. "Sixteen Dead Men", another poem written on the death of the revolutionaries is charged with patriotic feelings and shows Yeats's involvement in Irish politics. Finally, in Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" from *Tower* Yeats imagines and renders the results of the colonial relationship between Ireland and Britain. The poem is discussed in the postcolonial light by considering the swan as the invading occupier and the girl as ravished Ireland.

CHAPTER – III

YEATS'S PLAYS: A POSTCOLONIAL READING

The chapter attempts to examine the story behind the construction of Irish National Theatre as a major component of Irish Literary Revival in assigning to the Irish literature a new indigenous identity free of any kind of colonial essence under the backdrop of prevalent colonial culture in the eighteenth century Ireland. Here I analyse W.B. Yeats's creative role as a cultural nationalist and his concern for imaginatively constructing (or reviving) a national identity that exists in a metaphorical dimension along with the actual steps he has taken for attaining statehood by interrogating the dominant colonialist ideologies and reviving the glorious mythic past of the Celtic Ireland through his plays. Also foregrounded in this section is the issue of language as used by Yeats in his literary career.

Indeed, throughout the eighteenth century the theatrical culture in Ireland reflected the London taste and was a vehicle for colonial domination and exhibitionism. It was against this socio-cultural scenario and through the endeavour of the figures like Lady Gregory, Edward Martin and W B Yeats and others that the creation of the Abbey Theatre of Dublin, also known as the Irish National Theatre, as a part of a systematic effort to remove the influence of the imperial power was made possible. The aim of this venture was also to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland and the freedom to experiment which was not found in the theatres of England. In all these Yeats's role is worth mentioning for by the end of the century he (along with Maud Gonne) became not only involved in direct action to resist colonial rule but from now on as an active man of Irish Dramatic Movement his

literary career began to flourish with the publication of a series of dramatic works most of which took their subject matter from the Irish folklore and mythic past.

Yeats's first play *The Countess Cathleen* is unmistakably Irish in setting, in subject, in characterization, in sentiment, style and literary allusion and thus from the outset the play was conceived, advertised and read as a national work. To my understanding, the play can rightly be interpreted from the postcolonial perspective for the view of Ireland starving as in this play is often taken at a nationalistic level as the result of English colonial exploitation. Necessarily, Countess Cathleen, the noble lady can be considered as a protesting figure against the colonial exploitation and thus sacrificing herself to spare the people from the forced starvation. This is in fact a re-reading of the play from the postcolonial approach of study. Again, no other work by Yeats more clearly expresses the cry to break free of the English shackles than his little play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. It is a nationalistic play recalling the 1798 French landing at Killala and in it a vision of the nation personified as a poor old woman inspires a male hero to dedicate himself to her cause, to defend her boundaries. The play *The Pot of the Broth* can also be examined in postcolonial terms in the sense that here Yeats is actually making a scathing attack on the British economic policy leading to The Great Famine in Ireland and thus interrogating the socio - economic culture of Britain under the guise of some of the characters in the play. Similarly, many of Yeats's plays like *At the Hawk's Well* , *On Baile's Strand* relied heavily upon Irish myths and legends specially that of Cuchulain. Of these *On Baile's Strand* can be examined as a postcolonial play for in it Yeats accomplishes the purpose by showing his audience the contrast between the two figures : Cuchulain's disposition represents the Irish nationalism which is always in conflict with the English culture represented by his father, High king Conchubar. Thus, it is

through Yeats's continual efforts for the cultural revival and use of Irish legends, characters of Celtic origin associated with the pre-colonial oral culture of Ireland that some aspects of Fanon's theory can be better understood.

In respect to the use of language, however, Yeats thought it necessary to use English in place of his native tongue, i.e.; Gaelic which was limited to a few people. He argued that the content and not language is important. So, Yeats chose a syncretic language, a form of English that he and other members of the Irish literary movement made Irish through the use of inherently Irish idioms and expressions. Yeats, then, did not reject Gaelic outright but rather adopted its rhythms and idioms in this new Irishized English. In this way Yeats could reach an international audience and still remain true to the people he had made it his mission to represent through drama.

CHAPTER – IV

RE-READING TAGORE'S POETRY AND PLAYS

The chapter gives a brief account of the long colonial history of India and the role of Bengal Renaissance under the socio-economic setting of colonial subjugation. In it I argue how like Yeats Rabindranath interrogates the western hegemonic myth of supremacy and retraces his steps back to the 'classical' past of India and raises an anticolonial resistance to the imperial power and thus facilitates the formation of a national cultural identity of his country rather than a mere geographical entity of it. A brief attempt is made in this section to foreground the poet's effort in the establishment of a school at Santiniketan which is crucial to his engagement with a certain discourse of cultural nationalism that sought to recover the self respect of the colonized through revaluation of its cultural inheritance.

From his very childhood Rabindranath was brought up in a family atmosphere which was very much distinguished for its patriotic activities and nationalist fervor. Like Yeats from the early days of his literary career he perceived that for decolonization of a country the writers, artists, intellectuals there have a unique role to play in reconstructing its history by eulogising the glorious past of the same, conceived as a unified whole that could bring about the idea of an integrated nation during the pre-historic and ancient historical period. In fact, it was a mission of his life and through all his creations Rabindranath never ceased to reclaim and rediscover an ideal Indian subcontinental past endowed with a particularly oriental cultural civilization which is to a great extent different from that of the West. Naturally, he delved deep into the pages of Indian history and began writing two dozens of poems entitled *Katha* all of which deal with the same theme of the Indian heritage of

spiritualism and renunciation and moral values that illustrated a binary opposite to the acquired western values of materialism and sensual enjoyment. At the same time he composed another seven poems under the title *Kahini*. They are the storehouse of legends and historical anecdotes culled from India's ancient past, from the Buddhist lore and the more recent deeds of heroism and sacrifice in the annals of the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Sikhs. Moreover, Tagore's respect to the ancient epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and his reverence for figures like Buddha and Kalidasa finds right expression in his immortal poetic creations like "Ahalyar Prati", "Pujarini" and dramatic creations like *Valmiki Pratibha*, *Kal Mrigaya*, *Natir Puja*, *Chandalika* and *Chitrangada*. Again, Rabindranath never ceased to direct his attacking outburst of affliction and rage at the barbarous activities of the colonial power in the continents of Africa and Asia and in this way demolishing the colonialist ideology by composing poems like "Ebar Phirao More", "Jharer Kheya" and also the poems in the volume *Naibedya*. Some other poems like "Prashna", "Africa", "Raktamakha dantapangti" and "Naginira charidike pheliteche bisakta niswas" are also alluded to as glaring examples of Tagore's scathing protest against the brutish power of imperialism in this context.

In the plays namely *Muktadhara* Tagore has condemned the machine which he equates with the force of capitalism in the stage of imperialism and narrow nationalism. Tagore here seeks to emphasize that real freedom and advancement would be achieved only when the human spirit triumphs over parochial national interests. Rabindranath's earnest yearning to erode the colonial ideology finds more subtle expression in his play *Raktakarabi* translated in English by himself as *Red Oleander*. In this play Rabindranath conceives the Marxian class struggle from a new perspective. Here the world is divided in two halves ---- the imperialistic Europe and

the 'non-western races' of the third world. But side by side this play expresses the different contradictions of our life---- between the individual self and social self, and between love and wealth involving power etc.

In terms of the nature of the songs and their time Rabindranath's patriotic songs can be divided into three phases each of which in a way brings out the inner ripples of his patriotic self and thus resists the colonial culture and contributes to the freedom struggle in India.

CHAPTER – V

RE-READING TAGORE'S FICTIONS

The chapter attempts to examine three of Tagore's avowedly 'political' novels like *Gora*, *The Home and the World* and *Four Chapters* from the postcolonial perspective. It is possible to trace through these novels the trajectory of Tagore's critique of nationalism especially that of swadeshi movement and its agenda of social reform, its deployment of the rhetoric of emotions as well as its aggressive militant ideology. Here I also undertakes to reveal Tagore's response to colonialism by analyzing some of his short stories from the postcolonial perspective.

Rabindranath's *Gora* is a postcolonial text because here in the character of Gora Tagore wants to synthesize his idea of nationalism with his notion of internationalism. In it the then socio political and cultural set up of values and movements is described through the different characters like Binoy, Poreshbabu, Mahim and Nanda and the glory of Indian civilization is emphasized through the character of Anandamoyee. Tagore's next novel *The Home and the World* gives us a faithful picture of the time of Bengal partition and the events centering round this incident. The hero of the novel, Nikhilesh stands against the opportunist nationalist, Sandip and the wife of Nikhilesh, Bimala represents India by falling a prey to aggressive nationalism but afterwards realizing her own intrinsic value. Rabindranath's secular mindset is also revealed in this novel as well as his disdain for sycophancy of the politicians who stand presumably at par with the colonial power.

Tagore as a great critic of Nation and the concept like Nationalism delivered some lectures which are collected in a volume entitled *Nationalism*. The book contains three essays: (1) "Nationalism in the Japan" (2) "Nationalism in West" and

finally (3) “Nationalism in India”. Rabindranath considered Nationalism to be the most evil passion of human being and said that under the influence of its fumes the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion. But Tagore’s animosity to nationalism does not imply that he was not patriotic or that he was anti-West. In fact, he believed in a symbiosis of the East and the West, a deep association’ — or a living relationship between the two cultures.

Coming to discuss Tagore’s next novel *Four Chapters* it may be said that it is a postcolonial novel because here it is shown explicitly how the growth and legitimation of sanitized violence invariably associated with colonialism distort the lives and love of the colonized people who are encouraged to mimic the style of this violence and use it against their aggressors. But as in his other novels, in this novel also Rabindranath does not support the cult of violence inherent in nationalism, equated with patriotism and terrorism in India and Nazism in Germany.

Rabindranath as a postcolonial writer took up the question of the centrality of the village in his conceptualization of the indigenous society or ‘swadeshi samaj’. He also endeavored to erode the colonialist ideologies through some of the short stories like “Megh O Roudra”, “Rajtika”, “Ghora” and “The Parrot’s Training” etc compiled mainly in *Galpaguchcha* and *Lipika*. As an educationist Rabindranath’s untiring effort was to nationalize Indian education and make it free from the clutches of the British cultural hegemony. Accordingly, in a short story titled “Totakahini” he satirized the British government’s policy of educational reforms. He lampooned it in the short story under discussion, where a bird- which ultimately dies – is caged by tutors and force fed pages torn from books.

Rabindranath had an ambivalent attitude towards the British rule in India and this ambivalence which is one of the salient features of postcolonialism has been revealed first in his essay “Hindudiger Jatiya Charitra O Swadhinata”, and later in the controversial speech “Mantri Abhishek” .In these essays it is seen that in Tagore, on the one hand, there was a conscious denigration of Western values and an effort to glorify Hindu traditions and culture, and on the other, a desire for approval and acceptance of the European colonial rule .Bearing these in mind I cannot but consider Rabindranath as a writer of ambivalence.

CONCLUSIONS

A comparative study of the lives and literary creations of W.B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore demonstrates how they untiringly endeavoured to reclaim the glorious past of their respective countries which was obliterated by the colonial British authority and by doing that both of them are viewed as makers of a new cultural identity of Ireland and India, the two colonies with different historical background. This is in this particular way that W.B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore are evaluated as path breakers in Postcolonial writing in the light of Frantz Fanon's theoretical framework .

Both Yeats and Tagore were primarily very optimistic about politics and its role in ushering a new era of freedom for their respective countries. But gradually they grew uneasy with these political nationalist movements and criticized them openly. What is interesting to note here is that they went so far as to give compliments to the English cultural tradition. In fact, throughout their lives both Yeats and Tagore were saliently marked for this kind of ambivalence on their part.

Tagore's comments on nation and nationalism assert that he was a great critic of the western idea of nationalism while Yeats, too, was scathing about how nationalist orthodoxies polarised a people and imprisoned its intellect, making of national existence a ceaseless argument choked with hatred. Therefore, it may be said that both the authors were very much sceptic about the concept of nationalism for they felt that such notions ignored the real complexity and diversity of their nations and that a unitary sense of national identity would lead to cultural homogenization. Therefore, both Yeats and Tagore argued that their countries would gain real independence as soon as they could successfully adopt a national identity that would

transcend the limits of space and time by combining features of the modern and the traditional world, and of the metropolis and the periphery.

Despite these similarities in the basic attitude towards the decolonizing process in the colonies, it is important to note that W.B. Yeats and Rabindranath Tagore failed to maintain the warmth of their friendship after their first meeting in London in 1912 throughout their long poetic career because whereas W.B. Yeats remained engrossed only with the decolonizing process of Ireland, Rabindranath was able to fight against the evil of the colonial exploitation both in his motherland and also in any part of the world. With this end in view he travelled incessantly in different countries of the world and delivered speeches wherein he attacked the cult of militant nationalism as it was then cultivated by Japan and other western nations. His book *Nationalism* (1917) consisting of these lectures led to a fall of his reputation in the eye of the imperial authority. W.B. Yeats was also found to be not so much vocal in this context.

In the next place, there was an important difference between the two poets on the issue of language. While Rabindranath had a deep rooted love for his mother tongue, Bengali, the status of which he lifted through his almost solitary efforts to the standard of the dominant languages of the world around, W.B. Yeats chose to write in English. Of course, he desired to convert the colonial English and make it Irish as it is now being done by a great number of Postcolonial writers.

Again, it is seen that though as a Postcolonial author W.B. Yeats wrote not only poems and plays that were mainly concerned with the Irish themes and the Irish folktales, myths and legends but also set up separate institutions for entirely new type of theatrical performance, Rabindranath's poems, plays and fictions etc are charged with Indianness. But Rabindranath, as if, in conformity with Fanon's idea of political

education established an institution for imparting indigenous type of education to students wherein the message of the East-West confluence was also given precedence.

Finally, in his essay “Poet Yeats” Rabindranath’s distinction between two sets of poets ---‘ the poets of the universe’ and ‘ the poets of the literary world’ has, in my view, a relevance in the context of comparing Yeats and Tagore as Postcolonial writers. From my analysis of the poems and plays etc. of W B Yeats it comes out that he has always been a poet and playwright of Ireland---- an occidentalist in his attitude towards the outside world. In contrast, Rabindranath’s poetry and other creative writings have encompassed the culture and the people not only of his motherland but also of the whole world. Yet Rabindranath, being an orientalist in heart had deep regards for all religion, customs and beliefs of other countries. This is transparent from his poem “Bharattirtha” which speaks of his belief in the synthesis of the east and the west.