CONCLUSION

A critical scrutiny of Tagore's major novels in the preceding chapters brings out Tagore's broad concept of nationalism. Nationalism, implicated as it is in the modern imagination, is a deeply contested idea. So is nation – also referred to as an "imagined community" – which evolved as a socio-political institution, fairly recently and which is characterised by either a unifying cultural signifier or an overreaching ideology. Empirical studies reveal that the idea of nationalism often originates with the elite or with an aspiring middle-class, the rest of the society and appropriate into it. Tagore dismissed such nationalism as the organised self-interest of the people which is least human and least spiritual. He saw it as a constant threat to humanity. Indian nationalism can be traced back to the nationalist period of Indian history. Cultural thinkers like Swami Vivekanand and Sri Aurobindo, political thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar and V.D. Savarkar and philosophic writer like Rabindranath Tagore owing to the exigencies of the time have offered their views on the issue of nationalism.
and national identity. They seek to assert either a political or cultural unity of the nation in its struggle for independence and this was achieved, in the level of praxis, through the various social and political movements.

Tagore recognized the need for a national ideology. He recognised that for the same reason, India would either have to make a break with the past medieval western concept. For Tagore, as a result, nationalism itself become gradually illegitimate. The Indian freedom movement ceased to be an expression of only nationalist consolidation, it come to acquire a new stature as a symbol of the universal struggle for political justice and cultural dignity. It was as if he recognized unselfish critical Indian nationalism to be primarily a response to western imperialism and like all such responses, shaped by what it was responding to. Such a version of nationalism could not but be limited by its time and its origin.

Nationalism is a source of war and destruction, rather than international solidarity that induces a larger and more expansive vision of the world. This anti-
nationalitarian stand remains at the heart of most of Tagore's imaginative writings – letters, essays, lectures, poems, plays and novels. He always condemns radical nationalism that acts on of the people and makes them irrational fanatical and blind to truth and justice. Under the sway of nationalism people are ready both to kill and die for it perpetuating a logic of lunacy at war instead of a cycle of freedom and peace. He denounces it as "a cruel epidemic of evil ... sweeping ever the human world of the present age and eating it its moral fibre". (Nationalism), a terrible absurdity that is seeking to engulf humanity in a suicidal fire.

Tagore believes in an interactive, diologic world, given to a deep sense of sympathy, generosity and mutuality. Here in this world nations would not be parochial and xenophobic, guided by selfish men and greed Tagore imagines a commonwealth of nations in which no nation (or race) would deprive another "of its rightful place in the world festival" and every nation seek alight its lamp of mind as its part of the world."
Tagore, as a matter of fact, is an internationalist who emphasises the formation of one world and one nation of mankind. He has clear and steady vision of man's destiny and an unerring instinct for those first principles which if men and nations betray, they perish at the root. To him the need to understand values other than those which have come to be identified with one's own way of living is the greatest moral challenge with which the world is faced today.

The most important fact of the present age is that all the different races of men have come close together and again as we are confronted with two alternatives. The problem is whether the different groups of people shall go on fighting with one another or find out some true basis of reconciliation and mutual help, whether it may be interminable competition or co-operation.

Tagore believes that Indian has never had a real sense of nationalism and it would do India 'no good to compete with a western civilization in its own field. India's ideals have evolved through her own history'. Tagore is a
humanist. He believes in universal brotherhood, which is relevant for the world today, when different races of people are coming together. His concept of nationalism is a process of expansion in terms of internationalism which has appeared in his novels. *Gora, Home and the World*, and *Four Chapters* are some major novels of Tagore in English which embody his concept of nationalism.

In *Gora*, Tagore criticises the religious nationalism of the protagonist. Gora in his earlier years acts like a typical Hindu Brahmin and believes in caste system. But when at the end of the novel he comes to know his reality, that he is an adopted son and not a Brahmin, realises that he is on the wrong path. Thus Gora's nation and nationalism is not a water-tight compartment, where everyone thinks only of his nation and hates the other, but that his nation means a part of the world-nation without hatred and rivalry, but emerged in love and peace.

*Gora* deals with the theme of nationalism needed in a multi-racial, multi-religious community like India. It exemplifies Tagore's vision of new, syncretic India, rising
above the considerations of community, caste and race. At the outset, the protagonist is bigoted Hindu nationalist. He undergoes a process of realization of his ideals and achieves a liberal humanistic ethics at the end. The novel gives a clear articulation to the sentiments of extreme nationalism and liberal Brahmoism. It is quite perceptible that *Gora* symbolises all that India stands for with her strength and weakness. This is enlarged after the dramatic revelation of his Irish parentage. With his Hindu breeding and intellectual affiliation to the composite culture of India he turns out to be a real Indian nationalist. Sucharita is the image of Indian womanhood, Anandamoyi is mother India herself as *Gora* realises and solutes at the end:

Ma, you are my only mother. The mother for whom I have looked everywhere – all this time she was sitting in my house. You have no caste, you do not discriminate against people, you do not hate – you are he image of benediction. You are my Bharatvarsha².
Anandamoyi is the truest symbol of mother India, with no artificial distinctions and inhibitions. Her bringing up Gora, the orphan-foundling, like her own son is indeed a tribute to the Indian motherhood. In final analysis Gora obviously leanings out Tagoe's idea of universal humanism.

*Home and the World* offers a criticism of Bankim's brand of militant nationalism. Tagore is a spokesman for compassionate humanism. He is apposite to the narrowly defined concept of nationalism which, he is afraid, can destroy the values and decencies of life. Sandip and Nikhil are ideologically poles apart. The former is an aggressive and unscrupulous nationalist while the later is a non-violent humanist. Nikhil disagrees with Sandip on the ideal of nation worship. A juggler of words Sandip is able to win the sympathies of Bimala who comes to symbolize Shakti i.e. Mother India. Swayed by the maddening cry of 'Bande Mataram' Bimala robs of her own house like a thief for the sake of the so-called national cause. But soon she is disillusioned to learn the filthy means of Sandip whose great
and lust parallel as nationalism one extremely repulsive to her.

The protagonist Nikhil's humanism comes in conflict with false nationalism of Sandip. Bimala signifies Shakti, a primordial energy but Sandip's exploitation of the same is fraught with disastrous consequences as the communal riot at the end of the novel suggests. The novel is the unquestionable testament of Tagore's faith in the composite and humanistic character of Indian culture.

Tagore's *Four Chapters* is a forthright condemnation of the concept of nationalism which is a potentially dangerous political doctrine borrowed from the West. The view of militant nationalism is powerfully projected here. Political violence or violence arising from nationalism is blind, impersonal and dehumanizing. It is least interested in man as an individual who appears as a more instrument to be used for furthering the cause of an abstraction. The revolutionary leaders struggling for the freedom of the country renounce their ideals and turn to
robbery and violence. Without any inhibition they rob and murder a helpless widow in the novel.

The other novels by Tagore are mainly social and psychological in nature. In these novels Tagore has tried to study the problems of the people around him. 'The Wreck' has the institution of marriage for its theme; 'Chokher Bali' takes up the issue of widow remarriage; Chaturanga takes up the issue of religion and atheism; the two roles of a woman - that of a wife and of beloved in a man's life, is the subject of Two Sisters. The Garden deals with the psychological male – adjustment and neurotic that of Sarala due to excess loveliness and a life, devoid of love?

Tagore is dealing with the social condition of India of his times and the changes witnessed by it as it endeavours to move towards political freedom. These novels are humanistic in tone and feature hence are social psychological studies of human mind and life. As Tagore does not present his ideas of nationalism explicitly in these novels, they have not been taken up for detail analysis in my thesis.
Tagore has a global vision for mankind and a sense of creative bond of wholeness. He is critical of nationalism which likes religious formalism, breeds sectarian arrogance, mutual misunderstanding and a spirit of persecution. He wants all human beings to be treated equally regardless of the country or the nation to which they belong. He also does not want barriers between people even with the same national – the barriers of caste, race and religion. Tagore's vision may appear idealistic but it is not unattainable. It calls for a humanitarian intervention into present self-seeking nationalism through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension in the institution. It also requires us to step out of history to reinvent the new future for ourselves that respects human dignity and sees every individual and nation as equal, in a true democratic spirit. Nationalism should only be a transitory moment paving the way for emergence of enlightened global community.
Notes
