CONCLUSION

Chaudhuri's philosophy evolves from his personality, which was moulded by his deep understanding of the universal values and his simultaneous alienation from his cultural milieu. He teased his critics and detractors by calling himself a Hindu and an Englishman and his readers found it difficult to analyse his complex identity. Swapan Dasgupta offers the best explanation to this complexity that arises due to lack of knowledge regarding the Bengali culture, in the following words:

...the traditional Bengali, since Raja Ram Mohan Roy, has straddled the worlds of Bengaliness and Englishness with remarkable ease and without any apparent sense of conflict. He may be fastidious about his Western apparel, particularly the cut of his suits, the knot of his tie and the make of his shoes-as Nirad Babu quite certainly is. He may even know about the streets of London and the shrines of England without ever having been there-as Nirad Babu did. But he would rather stay at home than attend a Bengali marriage or the Durga Puja celebrations in anything other than a dhoti-preferably pleated—and a punjabi-preferably crimped (1)

Thus Chaudhuri became a high priest of the Bengali culture that was a perfect amalgam of the Western and Eastern traditionalism.
Scholastically speaking he self educated himself to be a choice product of the European Enlightenment. But at the same time, he had not totally extricated and alienated himself from his aboriginal Indianness. India was his first love and Indianess remained a rare passion in him. He always cherished the idea of seeing the illiterate and ignorant masses of India rising up to be the choice and enlightened citizens of the world— a brave new world which alone can conform the entire universe into a humanistic whole. For that purpose, he believed, that the Western enlightenment should invariably be coupled with the Eastern wisdom. Dr. Albert Schweitzer says:

Western and Indian philosophies must not contend in the spirit that aims at the one proving itself right in opposition to the other. Both must be moving towards a way of thinking which shall... eventually be shared in common by all mankind.” (2)

As his ideas and ideologies grew beyond the boundaries of nations he was able to see the peculiarities of each culture as clearly “like a map, with everything in its location.” (THM24)

Chaudhuri chose for himself the untrodden and uncommon path when he began to see the world and the events around him in a different way. Under the influence of his parents he developed an independent and original attitude towards religion, culture and social customs, defying general beliefs. In his Autobiography, he admits that his personal
development was in no way typical of the modern Indian of the 20th century. The independence of the environment in which he grew up gave him preternatural sensitiveness to it. Intellectual alienation from his society and an irritable impatience with the changes taking place in it hardened his resolve to rebel, as Albert Camus points out:

Rebellion arises from the spectacle of the irrational coupled with an unjust and incomprehensible condition. But its blind impetus clamours for order in the midst of chaos, and for unity in the very heart of the ephemeral. It protests, it demands, it insists that the outrage come to an end that there be built upon rock what until now was written unceasingly upon the waters. His aim is to transform.(3)

Chaudhuri too wanted to transform the world by getting rid of the degradation he witnessed in the existing nations. He rebelled against the degradation in his own way by hitting out at the inconsistencies existing in the society through his writings.

When he saw that there could be no salvation to this vast land unless and until it left its duplicity and double standards and assumed upon itself the right values of humanism as confectioned by the European traditions, he took it as his sacred mission to make people aware of the need to reassess their pre-existing values. He tried to teach the people the most important lessons of restraint and renunciation coupled with duty as propagated by the Indian philosophers and metaphysicians. It is with
this choice aim in mind that he wrote *Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse*. The three horsemen that guided and misguided the modern world are (i) Individualism, (ii) Nationalism and (iii) Democracy. It is very important to note that Chaudhuri wrote this book in the hundredth year of his life, most assuredly a rare gesture of intellectual maturity and balance at such a ripe old age.

For Nirad Chaudhuri, intellectual life is a constant struggle edged with do or die crisis. Since he found unthinking life unworthy of pursuit, he targeted his intellectual achievements to the highest maturation point. All the three important issues he has taken up in *The Three Horsemen* i.e. Individualism, Nationalism and Democracy are the burning problems that needed some urgent clarifications. It is important to note here that these three life giving institutions to humanity and humanism are the products of European Renaissance and Reformation. All the three important destiny makers of modern man’s life were variously interpreted and analysed by various scholars variously, even antithetically in the past. As a result there emerged innumerable confusions and contradictions in the application of these three guiding forces in the context of the last four hundred years. It is only after 1890 that these three cultural properties acquired for themselves and added importance and significance.

It is in this context that Chaudhuri tried to offer his clarifications of these properties. He aimed at a better understanding and application of
the values in order to achieve the highest good for the entire humanity. It is in everybody's knowledge that the Renaissance of the 16th Century re-enlivened the ancient Greek and Roman values of humanism. The humanistic impulses thus brought gave birth to individualism and nationalism in the European context. The reformation that immediately followed the Renaissance, in spite of the fact that it was religious in temper contributed to democracy in the modern world. But the Renaissance humanism in its misguided formula contributed for the egocentric and self-willed individualism and as a consequence, nationalism and democracy gained for themselves certain authoritarian stance. The individual humanism did not leave scope or margin for global and universal humanism. The Eastern sociological strategies of Confucius of China and the spiritualists of India always stressed on global and universal humanism. Restrained from the unwanted and untenable action Chaudhuri gave the call of 'going alone' (Tagore wrote a song in this context – Akle chaio re) and propagated the cult of judicious living and existence with freedom and choice. These Eastern values were ponderously attended to in the nineteenth century Europe. The result was a great introspective self search and thrust for judicious living. Chaudhuri for the first time made a comprehensive analysis by carefully analysing the Western and Eastern stands on all these three important institutional properties.
Our experience concerning the stability and coherence of the world we inhabit is formulated and maintained through our discreet observations. The validity of our observations is ultimately dependant on the 'co-reliability' or 'agreeability' with certain standards acquired on observation of the phenomenal reality. This kind of observation of reality gets polarised into two different attitudes; realism and skepticism. While the experiences of the world are taken into serious considerations they conform Chaudhuri into a realist and a skeptic at once. His was an academic of scholastic skepticism formulated in Plato's academy. It probably began with the statement of Socrates 'all I know is that I know nothing.' Thus, it was Chaudhuri's doubting that made him arrive at tentative determinations which were at times at best merely scholastic probabilities. He conducted his search into the realities and validities through Individualism, Nationalism and Democracy. Sensitive and informed as he was, Chaudhuri proposed his astounding analysis and arguments in the scholastic manner of 19th Century critics like Matthew Arnold and Lord Macaulay. But Chaudhuri's main concern was with humanism or humanity in times to come. His opinions on these three institutional forms acquired an urgency for he formulated a warning to all the thinking men about the need to revalidate and refresh our ideas concerning these values. They are only supporting agents of the world.

But Chaudhuri had a Cassandra curse on him. Both in the East and West his readers were apt to misunderstand his intentions or
deliberately distance from him and his ideas as he expressed them with violence and irreverence. This irreverence in him was born out of his skepticism and violence came out of disgust, emerging out of the unconscious prejudices and decadence as witnessed by him in world around him.
Notes and References

