Chapter VIII
Conclusion

An overall analysis of the comparative study of W. B. Yeats and Jibanananda Das brings out identical aspects of their poetic credos at various levels, though differences between them as poets are quite obvious. Both Yeats and Das are great poets. Both prove themselves to be trendsetters. Both are modernist poets in their own rights. Yeats’ poetic career started off during Irish freedom struggle. On the grand structure of Irish nationalism, his poetic credo was erected. Irish myths and folktales steer his creative faculty into action. The pioneers of Irish nationalism inspire him to form themes for his poetry out of both Irish legends and the rich history of Ireland. The relevance of Irish legends to the contemporary Irish political scenario and Irish freedom movement is beautifully articulated by Yeats through poetic lines. The panorama of Irish natural world and setting finds its vivid reflection in Yeats’ poetry. On the other hand, Jibanananda Das too evolves as a modern poet during Indian freedom struggle. Unlike Yeats, Das does not bear any direct nexus with Indian freedom movement and politics. But Das too creates the panorama of the bountiful Nature of India in general and that of the rural Bengal in particular through poetic lines. His poetry speaks volume of the rich heritage of Indian culture and of Indian history as well. Indian folktales and myths too find their vibrant expressions in Das’ poetry.

Jibanananda Das is a college lecturer of English. He is well updated with the contemporary English literature in particular and Western literature in general. His treatise on poetry entitled Kobitar Kotha proves to be a pointer to his deep knowledge of the Modernist English poetry. He is well conscious of the contemporary trend of English poetry. In the process, his poetry bears some kind of creative influences of the West upon itself. A modernist poet like Yeats, among others, is a noteworthy figure who exerts creative impact upon Das’ poetic self. The way Das upholds his poetry tends to relate itself to Yeats’ poetic micro-cosm. Yeats’ is the poetry of moral wholeness of history and humanity. Das’ poetry too is the embodiment of human emotions in their all aspects. Yeats’ poetic mechanism forms the rich variants of the making of a great poetry. Myths, symbols, similes, archetypes, metaphors, literary allusions, concrete images etc. embody Yeats’ poetry into a piece of art of purer quality. Das’ poetry too does
not lag behind. His poetry essentially is a literary artefact made out of the bones of archetypes, symbols, metaphors, similes and the like. In some poetic attributes Das’ poems strike a likeness with Yeats’, but it is the overall originality as a poet that Das holds his own. His poetic self certainly bears individualistic traits that separate him from other contemporary Bengali language poets.

It is found out that the background of Irish nationalism holds the core of Yeats’ poetry. However, with the passage of time, his poetry shows a noticeable transition from Irish nationalist aspects to much wider universal outlook and concerns in thematic perspectives. The changing social scenario under the impact of the First World War strikes a change in the aspects of tone and content of his poetry. This shift in the treatment of themes and contents makes his poetry more varied in character thereby leading it to an artistic piece of composition worth catching the all-inclusive psyche of readers of the modern generations. But even in this period of transition Yeats’ poetic self at times looks back to his nationalist and Irish facets that initiate his growth as a poet. Even the iconography used in his later poems still finds its source in the rich stock of Irish myths and legends.

A thorough study of Irish nationalism in relation to Yeats’ poetry makes this observation that the twin characters of the nationalism in Ireland shapes Yeats the person and the evolving poet. Irish nationalism generates two dimensions: political and cultural. Political nationalism in Ireland is a centralized mass organization whose sole aim is the political independence of Ireland from the yoke of the British clutches. It demands the status of a rational political community of equal citizens. On the other hand, cultural nationalism in Ireland proves to be a unique ideological movement that had its seed in the 18th century after the establishment of the Royal Irish Academy way back in 1785. Its basic goal was the intellectual and the moral regeneration of Irish community. The humanist intellectuals and the secular intelligentsia lead the cultural movement in Ireland. The cultural nationalism promotes both linguistic and literary movements. The linguistic movement aims to restore the native Gaelic civilization, while the literary movement seeks to create a typical Anglo-Irish nation. However, one common goal of both movements is the recovery of an Irish national pride at the end. W. B. Yeats hails from the Protestant background. He visualizes an Irish nation based on Anglo-Irish literary culture that promotes Irish legends and folklores in the me-
medium of English language. His contact with both John O’Leary and Maud Gonne, two Irish revolutionaries, instills in him a nationalist spirit. He even joins the Irish Republic Brotherhood in 1896. Besides, his knowledge of the works of Sir Samuel Ferguson and Celtic scholars such as Petrie, Renan, de jubainville, Rhys et al. make him drawn to Irish myths and legends which intensify his nationalist urge. Yeats imbibes in his poetry Celtic myths and folklores as metaphors, symbols and images. The Saga of Ireland and Celtic legends form major themes for his poetry. His notable poems, namely, ‘Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea’, ‘An Irish Airman Foresees His death’, ‘Easter 1916’, ‘The Song of Wandering Aengus’, ‘The Wanderings of Oisin’, to name a few, serve as the testimony to the effective and artistic impact upon the growth of his poetry.

It is observed that a creative reconstruction emerges out of the literary influence in regards to Yeats and Jibanananda Das. Influence study traces the influence of one writer upon another. It seeks to locate the degree and the kind of influence whether it is deliberate, conscious, unconscious, direct or indirect. The study also investigates the manner of influence in the domain of idea, theme, technique and attitude in literary context. J. T. Shaw points out that influence in one work is possible if the influenced writer has the knowledge of the works of the previous writer. Harold Bloom talks of the importance of the adoption of six revisionary ratios on the part of a weak poet to evolve into a strong poet. He reiterates that some poets are hindered in their creative process by the ambiguous relationship they necessarily maintain with precursor poets; that is why, a weak poet feels anxious about the possibility of being overwhelmed by the influence of the precursor. Now a meticulous comparative study finds out that Das’ poetic self experiences poetic influences of Yeats’ poetry at some level. Both poets echo one another when certain poems of Yeats are placed parallel to that of Das. But an added vigour and taste in the treatment of images and technique give Das’ poetry a distinguished entity. The degree of influence of Yeats is never overwhelming upon Das as a poet. The French symbolists and Yeats along with other modernist poets certainly embark upon the psyche of the poetic self of Das. But it is interesting to note the manner Das eschews the path towards the kind of poetry of great Tagore. In the similar fashion he succeeds to eschew European writers including Yeats at the end of the day while treading on their
path to follow the modernist trend of poetry. Das succeeds to make a separate world of his own, thanks to his inherent creative zeal. He certainly follows the European surrealist outlook and the French symbolists’ thought. He derives the inspiration from Yeats when it comes to the treatment of poetic mechanism and themes. But then he lends to them a creative touch of his own. The literary debt from Yeats never spoils the originality of the poetic mind of Das. He never fails to subordinate his borrowings to the creative world he constructs by the artistic implementation of his consciousness of both history and time. He never needs to tread on the heels of six revisionary ratios as suggested by Bloom in order to evolve into a strong poet. He is a strong poet in his own right; his individuality as a poet stands apart.

However, a careful study exhibits the extent of the kind of impact of some selected poems of Yeats upon Das’ poetic self. The manner Yeats treats Irish myth and legend justifies his greatness as a poet. Besides, the beautiful natural setting of Ireland never falls short of being highlighted conspicuously in Yeats’ poetry. Das is a strong poet. He comprehends Yeats’ poetic sensibility. At times, the alter ego of Yeats’ poetic persona is visible in Das’ creative faculty. Das’ own sensibility too is remarkable. He identifies himself with the spirit hovering in the backdrop of the rural Bengal. His sensuousness is Keatsian. Bengal’s rural surrounding mesmerized by the folklores finds its full view in the unorthodox images only the poet of Das’ caliber can sketch through poetic phrases. Both Yeats and Das at times seem to possess the identical spirit and ego cutting past the barrier of time and space. India and Ireland seem to have the same territory under the same blue sky. Autumn was the favourite season for both poets. Unlike other poets who prefer the season of spring, both Yeats and Das trace the beauty hidden in autumn. Yeats’ ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’ and ‘The Falling of the Leaves’ unveil the ‘autumnal beauty’. Das’ Aghran Pranore, Pnecha, Obosorer Gaan, Hnaas, Dujon etc., to name a few, present autumn as the season for both joy and pathos. Love is frequented in their poems as the major theme. The delicate treatment of love is a conspicuous feature in their poetry. Both are romantic by temperament. They feel ease in the dreamy world where love triumphs over affliction and agony existed in the mortal world. For the sake of love their poetic personae take the shape of a bird or a swan. Yeats’ poems
like ‘The White Birds’, ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’ and Das’ Ami Jodi Hotam are exemplary. The memory of the past love is always appealing to the separated lovers. Das’ Aghran Prantore and Yeats’ ‘Ephemerata’ uphold this basic nature of love. Both poets deal with themes conforming to human destiny. It is noticeable to find that both think alike sometimes. The transience of glory in human world never escapes their discerning mind. Yeats’ ‘Easter 1916’ and Das’ Jotodin Prithibite ascertain this passing glory a human being undergoes. The disorder and the uncertainty prevailing in the modern world come to the notice of Yeats and Das, the two modernist poets. Yeats’ ‘Reconciliation’ and Das’ Janantike delicately treats the idea of disorder looming large in the modern atmosphere. Yeats’ ‘Byzantium’ poems and Das’ Banalata Sen truly celebrate the omnipresence of history. Love and beauty are other names of art which is permanent, and so history is its witness. Both poems are exponents of this aspect. In the process, the identical aspects in the poetry of Das and Yeats bring out the glimpse of the impact of Yeats’ poetry upon Das’ poetic self.

The observation comes out regarding Das’ profound idea of poetry and its features. His treatise on poetry entitled Kobitar Kotha, written in Bengali language, illustrates the matrix of poetry in general. The poetic cosmos is, in the best possible way, exemplified in this treatise. In the course of articulation of poetry in Kobitar Kotha, Das makes references to the European writers to emphasize his points. Das reiterates that all are not poets; only those are poets, who are endowed with the gift of imagination that integrates experience with the profound thought; such imagination, aided by the poetic vision is always creative. Das also differentiates poetry from verse. Poetry appeals to heart and verse, to intellect. Poetry is conditioned by the lofty ideas stimulated by the imagination which is creative. Unlike religion and philosophy, goals of which are circulation of mass education, poetry seeks to integrate and reconstruct by the way of gratification of beauty. A poet’s imagination is capable of constructing a newer world which is the giver of a fresh lease of life in the atmosphere of newer sound, colour and smell. Das thinks that Yeats is a true poet. His poetry is stimulated by lofty ideas, guided by creative imagination. His poetry can integrate the world and the world beyond. On the other hand, Das disapproves Auden’s dictum of ‘memorable speech’. According to Das, prose and poetry are different as a piece of
literary composition; but mere memorable speech cannot differentiate between prose and poetry. Such a definition by Auden does not give importance to the consciousness of history and time. Das then argues that 'cleverness' cannot be an authentic device; by the application of 'cleverness', a poem may contain varied moods supported by images and symbols. But the spirit of beauty is nowhere found due to the lack of organized ideas in such poems which are only stimulated by the manipulation of 'cleverness'. According to Das, unlike Shakespeare, Dryden and Johnson find it difficult to transcend their contemporary time. Das believes that Coleridge realized the importance of time which is universal. Unlike other critics and scholars, Das also maintains that Shelley’s poetry bears the potential of surviving even a century. Das asserts that unlike the former poets, Tagore, Valery and Yeats have succeeded to display the contemporary time precisely, which some modern poets too are capable of. Thus Kobitar Kotha testifies to Das’ intellectual strength and mastery of thought. His attitude towards European poets as reflected in the treatise speaks volume of his profound understanding of poetry.

It is observed that Jibanananda Das’ poetic mechanism tends to draw his poetry closer to Yeats’ poetry. Das’ treatment of metaphors and literary archetypes is significant in the context of their proximity with Yeats’ poetic microcosm. The iconography used in the poetry of both poets has its source in Irish myth and folktales for Yeats and Indian history, myth and folklores for Das. It is quite interesting to note that the treatment of metaphors and archetypes is made in some of their poems almost in a similar manner as if they knew each other. Both make extensive use of archetypes not for mere ornamental sake, but for the passage to the soul of man’s psyche. Their archetypes act as the manifestation of their imaginative faculty. In Das’ case, the firmamental objects such as stars, moon and the sky transcend their traditional meanings at times. In his poem, Nirjan Sakshar, the firmamental archetypes refer to the tranquility of life and the guiding force. The repeated archetypal phrase, akashe akashe shows the broadness of his creative imagination. Again three archetypal images, nakshatra (star), akash (sky) and andhokar (darkness) are found to come together in his another poem, Onek Akash. Thus Das’ creative genius takes the art of the usage of archetype to another height. Das’ another remarkable achievement is that the
name of a region. ‘Bangla’ turns to an archetype as an iconic symbol for a landscape endowed with an aura of beauty. On the other hand, Yeats’ power of imaginative insight too turns a historical place, ‘Byzantium’ to an archetypal symbol for a place of art and immortality. History and myth are integrated by the application of creative imagination in the effective implementation of metaphors in the poetry of both Yeats and Das. Metaphor is an important asset to the poetic microcosm. The treatment of metaphor too brings both poets to the same league. Life is a journey as both undertake ups and downs. That both poets masterly treat the metaphor of journey through the passage of history is well perceived in Das’ Banalata Sen and Yeats’ ‘Sailing to Byzantium’. Yeats’ ‘The Cat and The Moon’ and Das’ Bidaal are comparable as in both poems a cat is likened to a fundamental image. In Yeats’ poem, it is the moon and in Das’ poem, the sun. Again it is noticeable, the poetic personae of Yeats in ‘The White Birds’ and Das in Aami Jodi Hotam aspire themselves and their lovers to be the species of bird. It is thereby found out that the twin poetic tools, namely archetype and metaphor, play their part in bringing two poets, Das and Yeats in the proximity of one another.

It is precisely noticed that Das’ poetry exhibits the aesthetic import of Yeats’ creative influence. But it is Das’ credentials as a creative genius that the creative influence never undermines his inherent artistic skills. Such influence, of course, determines his growth as a poet. The aesthetic import of a poem is realized only through language. Yeats’ poetic language is charged with the aura of occultism, mysticism and symbolism. Besides, myth, folklores and history condition his poetry into a sublime artistic composition. The objective realization of Yeats’ language is made by the application of poetic mechanism in the form of symbols, metaphors, archetypes and so. Das is well aware of Yeats’ poetic microcosm. He may realize that Yeats’ poetry gushes out an aesthetic beauty channelized by Irish folklores, legends and myths. Yeats’ poems, ‘The Song of Wandering Aengus’, ‘Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea’, to name a few, present the spirit of a folklore. Das too makes ample use of folk tradition of the rural Bengal in poems like Jotodin Beche Aachi, Kothao Dekhini, Prithibi Royeche Besto etc. The masterly use of these folktales uphold the primordial beauty in a conspicuous way. An aesthetic gusto is relished in the rhythmic tone of poetic sen-
tences, suggestive of the folkloristic aura. Das in his treatise, Kobitar Kotha espouses the aesthetic importance of poetry. He maintains that poetry is the articulation of beauty by the play of imagination which can integrate and reconstruct. Das finds this aspect of poetry in Yeats. Das’ legendary poem, Banalata Sen upholds the aesthetic aura of highest order. Das’ consciousness of history and time is objectified in the manner of language and rhythm played in the poem. Yeats’ ‘The Lake Isle of Innisfree’ and ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ too exposes his sense of history and time. The poetic aestheticism transcends the barrier of sensibility and reason by the unifying force of imagination. Both Yeats and Das artistically handle this force which enable them to drive their respective soul into the world of dream where beauty anchors in. They believe in the existence of love and beauty in the setting of Nature. Yeats’ ‘He Reproves the Curlew’, ‘He Tells Of A Valley’ and Das’ Prithibeete Theke, Aghran Prantore, Shankhomala and many others uphold the spirit of beauty which knows no barrier of time and space. Das’ artistic treatment of various threads of the poetic web constitute an aesthetic appeal to readers. Mere literary influence cannot evoke this appeal among readers. The originality and genuineness of Das’ poetic credo, built on his creative power, is the genesis of the aesthetic soul in his poetry. Yeats’ creative influence serves the role of intensifying it. It is, in all fairness, to sum up after the survey of all observations that Irish nationalism in particular and Irish Consciousness in general nurture the poet in Yeats. The poetry of Yeats stimulated by Irish nationalism acts as one of many guiding forces for the growth of the poetic self of Das. But in the final estimation, Yeats’ poetry stands for all-inclusive Consciousness transcending Irish Sensibility and, Jibanananda Das, as a great poet, moves ahead successfully transcending the Yeatsean sensibility.