Chapter 1

NATION/NATIONALISM AND THE POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES

“Imagine there’s no countries,/ it isn’t hard to do,/ Nothing to kill or die for,/ and no religion too,/ imagine all the people/ living life in peace.”

(John Lennon)

Late twentieth century English Pop icon John Lennon’s utopian pipedream of a borderless ambrosial world openly links the absence of nations to freedom and peace. An innocent dream of a popular Western poet and musician evokes disturbing images of the violence and destruction in recent human history generated by one or the other notion of nation and nationalism. Almost immediately, the memories of unimaginable human suffering, pain and devastation implicit in the song disturb the listeners out of the smugness linked with the naturalness of living in nations. It also makes one conscious of the impossibility of escaping from the discourses of nations and nationalisms and of imagining life outside them. This is particularly so in the case of individuals and writers belonging to minority communities caught up in societies divided along racial, religious, cultural, linguistic or other sectarian lines.

One of the central thematic concerns of most of the ‘postcolonial’ literature is the history, memory and viability of the nation-state and the critical issues of nation and nationalism which get foregrounded and articulated in postcolonial spaces. The genocide, violence, persecution and humiliation of innocent individuals, families and communities on grounds of religion, race, caste or any other such criterion are often the issues that the fiction of authors like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor tries to address. The birth of
independent nations as a result of fervent forms of nationalism and mass movements gave rise to dreams of democracy, hope, equality and possibility of development for all. But, the euphoria of independence from the colonial rule yielded place to new hegemonies as well as conceptions of nations and nationalisms in which many sections and communities found themselves marginalized and exploited by the new dominant ideologies and groups. Political independence was often accompanied by genocides, social conflicts, violence and unprecedented human suffering symptomatic of a deficient political will and failure of administration and the constitutional machinery in the newly independent nation-states like India and Pakistan. The postcolonial writer is acutely aware of the belied expectations and adheres to the imperative of critiquing various manifestations of nationalism in the post-independence nation-states. The failure of the nation-state to protect the rights and lives of individuals belonging to marginalised, minority or disadvantaged communities is the major discourse that is visible in much of the postcolonial writing in English.

The meaning and significance of nation/nationalism in this scenario becomes highly problematized. One has to accept the paradox of either celebrating them or denying the importance of boundaries and discourses built around them. Human life today is stuck in the dual imagination of either asserting national identities or the wish to transcend them for global and transnational alliances of economy and culture. The dream of seeing all human life, despite its immense variety, as one, and the planet earth as one open space, for nothing else but limitless personal liberty can only belong to the third imagination - that of a poet. Liberalism’s dream that nationalisms would
gradually get diluted - which incidentally finds expression in one of Gellner’s statements taken out of context that as “trade flows across frontiers: the life of the intellect ignores frontiers; and with the progress of learning, wealth and industry, the prejudices and superstitions and fears which engender frontiers would decline” (Gellner Thought 147) - too has remained unfulfilled.

One strong voice of an artist and activist that probes and problematises the question of nation in the realm of prose is that of Arundhati Roy. The overused language of prose cannot perhaps provide the issue an openness and radicalism that any discussion on the subject now craves. This is probably what Arundhati Roy means when she writes that the utopian dream of democratic living has never been realized and that the prosaic questions and prosaic answers about the perceived failure of the working models and variants of Western liberal democracies constitute an incomplete discourse. The inadequacies of the official registers or of what she describes as the prevailing contest between repressions “through proper channels” and “resistance through proper channels” has, in her opinion, turned the writer inside her into a clerk. She goes on to say about her own writings that as “resistance goes this isn’t enough. I know. But for now, it’s all I have. Perhaps someday it will become the underpinning for poetry and for the feral howl” (Roy ix-xii). This is evidence that in the midst of a climate of suspicion and distrust, theorists, thinkers and writers have been endeavouring to stretch the limits of the discourses on nation and nationalism.

The project of defining nation and nationalism has always been a very ambitious one as it is almost impossible to arrive at any single and universal way of defining them. The conceptual parameters of nations and nationalisms have always been
elusive and hard to capture. It would be appropriate to begin with one of the standard definitions: “The nation is a territorial relation of collective self-consciousness of actual and imagined duration” (Grosby 11-12).

However, there are innumerable other ways in which discourses and practices related to the notions of nation and nationalism can be experienced, perceived and defined. Preference for one particular definition over others will largely depend on factors like one’s location, or one’s religious, racial, cultural and linguistic identity and background. In addition to this local short term and long term memories, histories and divisions, political contexts, social and economic issues and ideological predilections at conscious as well as unconscious levels determine how an individual is likely to respond to, conceive or imagine him/herself as a member of a particular nation-state.

As this chapter sets out to critically examine this very important political, social and cultural category, Grosby’s definition, given above, offers itself merely as a suitable starting point. The theoretical objective of writing this chapter is to present nation as an unresolved problematic – as an idea that has not only been eternally critiqued but which craves eternal critiquing – particularly so in postcolonial spaces where the uncertainties surrounding it become even more pronounced. The opinions and theories on nation and nationalism are so varied and mutually incompatible that the chapter is bound to become a little abstract in studying them. However, since the present thesis has nation and nationalism as the theoretical framework against which Rohinton Mistry’s fiction is to be studied; it becomes important to consider, even if briefly, the various theoretical and academic positions on the subject so that appropriate selections can be made in the successive chapters when they are to be applied to the works of fiction under study.
Nations have never been homogeneous and it is impossible to write a universal grammar of nation and nationalism. Yet, as the only extant, viable and universally accepted system of political governance and social and economic organization in the world today, the nation is perhaps the most important determiner of life on earth. The lack of alternatives today finds a rather anguished expression in the epigraph of Arundhati Roy’s *Listening to Grasshoppers* in which she quotes Mahmoud Darwish’s *The Earth is Closing on Us*. It reads:

Where should we go after the last frontiers?

Where should the birds fly after the last sky?

Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air?

In her role as a social and political critic, Roy enters into a harsh and unremitting critique of the violence and exploitation that she believes is integral to the character of the Indian state and to that of the global/neo-imperial superpowers. The basic fact that the condition of living in a nation-state - which is conceived to ensure individual liberty along with social, political and economic justice - should arouse consciousness of injustice necessitates a shift from idealism to historicism. Arundhati Roy’s approach, taking the Indian example further, involves an analysis of the progress of national politics as the preservation of the economic interests of national bourgeoisie as well as Western economic powers. Roy’s scepticism leads to a revelation which also challenges the representativeness of the nation-state. In the introduction to *Listening to Grasshoppers* titled “Democracy’s Failing Light” she reveals that the 2009 UPA government’s national government’s claim to power rested on merely ten percent votes of the country’s population (xxiii). Roy’s prolonged
engagement through her works of non-fiction with issues like that of separatist movement in Kashmir, terrorism, communal riots in the state of Gujarat and rehabilitation of displaced tribal populations is seriously disruptive of the collocations connected with nation and nationalism. She goes beyond concerns like independence, autonomy, identity etc. and, like many other critics, enters into a historicist investigation of the meaning of the nation-state for the minorities and the marginalised. More importantly, her critique relocates the question of nation and nationalism within the more important question of the centrality of economic interests in social and political reality.

However, while attempting to provide a generic conception of nation in the definition quoted above, Steven Grosby, does evoke some important formative themes essential for the conception of what Benedict Anderson describes as, “the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our times” (Anderson 3). Grosby focuses on a (real or imaginary) belief in temporal depth and continuity in both spatial/territorial and historical terms as also in nativity, which become justifications of these structures of social organization used both to “assert distinctions” and “unify humanity” (4). While Grosby has mainly emphasized the regressive factors that promote the idea of nation, others have compared nations to the two-faced Roman god Janus that not only excavate and appropriate a real or imagined past but also look forward, through ideas of progression, to the dream of a collective destiny. Given the deep and riddling complexity of the ideas and practices that go into the making of national imagination, there are no absolute terms in which the concepts of nation and nationalism can be defined. A reading of any one of the novels by Rushdie, Naipaul or Mistry would bear witness to this.
The introduction to *Oxford Reader on Nationalism* lists the “kaleidoscopic” forms that nationalisms can assume. These include, “religious, conservative, liberal, fascist, communist, cultural, political, protectionist, integrationist, separatist, irredentist, diaspora, pan, etc.” (Hutchinson and Smith 3). ‘Nation’ and ‘nationalism’ therefore can be seen as the most appropriative terms. They are capable of appropriating, utilizing and forming connections with several social, cultural and political institutions and belief systems. At the same time it becomes possible to say that they can be approached from several theoretical positions such as political-scientific with its focus on their material and territorial make up within legal, politico-juridical, constitutional and strategic frameworks; from social, historical and anthropological positions concerned with tracing the linearity of descent in societies demarcated on territorial, religious, racial, linguistic or ethnic lines and from cultural positions having their reference in the primordial lifestyles and practices of a people.

It is possible, for instance, to approach postcolonial India from all these perspectives.

In popular perception, an ideal nation-state, as Hutchinson points out, is one which grows out of a synthesis of the cultural and political dimensions of nationalism (4). Several other important critics like Gellner and Guibernau discussed below have also alluded to the high degree of cohesiveness which becomes possible where the territorial and cultural dimensions coincide. Yet these syntheses are more theoretical than real and any engagement with nations and nationalisms can be more compatible with questions than with resolutions. A contradiction that riddles the heart of the third world nations and nationalisms is, on the one hand, their open allegiance to one particular dominant race, region, religion and culture, which, on the other hand, also
turns out to be, a form of collective identity that threatens to subsume and obliterate other politically and numerically less powerful identities and ‘nationalities’ within that geographical and political space. Hutchinson’s and Smith’s, nuanced observation could, however, explain this contradiction to some extent when he says that, “we cannot say…that nationalism is always an inter-class and populist movement, though it usually seeks to present itself that way” (5).

This suspicion when projected against Fanon’s idea of the nation being the outcome of collective awakening of the people to their condition and destiny gives birth to a new set of questions as also to the need to study anti-colonial/postcolonial nationalist movements as yet another alternative to the existing discourses (Fanon 165). Or, when Grosby’s definition is placed against Benedict Anderson’s influential conception of nation as an imagined community, one could see nationalism as primarily a populist notion (and not movement) “akin to religion and myth” that “appealed to the imagination” of the natives of a particular geographical space (Nayar 70). Apparently, it does not appear appropriate to attempt conceptualising any simple thesis about the nature, relevance and importance of nations and nationalisms in all situations and circumstances. One of the aims of this chapter is to survey and study various theoretical positions from which the idea of nation has been approached, particularly, in the postcolonial context with the theoretical objective of utilizing these ideas for an analysis and understanding of Mistry’s critique of postcolonial India.

The idea of nation, in the postcolonial world, consequent upon the complex, long and varied colonial experience having different import for different sections of societies, remains a troubled dialectic. It has variously been imagined as the locus for
cultural and political redemption; recovery and expression of the authentic collective self; continuation and/or reformulation of colonial imbalances; and also as discourse, text and discursive practice – an approach, which divests it of its materiality and makes it resemble a constructed network of codes of signification brought into existence, just like other social and cultural institutions, in accordance with the operations of power. The diverse theoretical positions which have been articulated on this vexed, unsettled and polyphonic conundrum of a subject and which show its evolution from a compulsion of the anti-colonial politics to a much critiqued idea in the postcolonial period, originate from and attempt to become justifications of the political and ideological position one prefers to take in his/her contemporary socio-political context. Mistry’s narratives, deeply entrenched in socio-cultural and political historical spaces, also enter into a critical engagement with postcolonial India. So a study of the various theoretical positions on the subject can lead to the proper analysis of the political, ideological and cultural content and intent of Mistry’s fictional discourses about postcolonial India.

The postcolonial nation-state, as represented in the narratives of various writers like Naipaul, Rushdie, Ghosh, Mistry etc., remains stuck in murky and irreconcilable complexities. In spite of all probing by the creative writers and well as theorecticians and critics, the issue remains elusive and alive for further probe, debate and discussion.

In their idealistic conceptions and liberal humanist justifications, nationalisms have been projected and defended as harbingers and guarantors of freedom and sovereignty of the ‘sacred homeland’. The ideological assertion of authentic cultural
self directed at the rediscovery of the pristine origins and golden ages has often been the justification of the need for nationalistic identities. Three celebrated ideals of autonomy, unity and identity pursued by idealists like Rousseau and Herder have found a wide acceptance in most nationalistic projects and policies. However, in more practical explanations the rise of nation-state and nationalism is often attributed to diverse social, economic and political factors like the expansion of capitalism, economic competition between absolutist states, breaking down of the unity of Christendom by ethnically defined states, urbanization, the advent of the printing press and newspaper. The passage of these concepts into places like India has apparently been facilitated through western capitalist expansionism as “nationalism spilled over easily into imperialism and colonialism; French, British, Dutch, and Portuguese annexations during the nineteenth century were as much the products of nationalist interstate competition being transposed across the seas as of any desire to exploit markets and export capital” (Hutchinson and Smith 8). The history of colonialism gave rise to nationalisms in the Middle East, South East and North Africa by superimposing imperialist territorial divisions and by exporting the notion of state-based civic nationalism. These non-western nationalisms were in turn naturalized and indigenized through ethnic and cultural movements of indigenous character as well as through adoption of ideas of the liberal-humanist western civilizing project introducing to the colonized world the western idea of nation as a universal and indispensable one. It is in this sense that non-western nationalisms remain creoles in their basic character.
Historically speaking, however, it is with Marx and later Gellner that attempts at breaching the naturalness of nations and nationalism begin to be made. Gellner clearly recognizes the selective use of pre-existing past and goes on to see in the necessity of nationalisms aspects of modernization and of industrial society. Gellner understands nationalism as a direct consequence of the requirements of industrialism. The rise of nationalisms coincided with the specific needs of a specialized and universal educational system that could supply individuals according to the needs of a complex division of labor in industrialized societies. Gellner almost denies any individual identity to the subjects of a nation by saying that, “for most of these men, however, the limits of their culture are the limits, not perhaps of the world, but of their own employability and hence dignity” (*Nations* 110). Gellner thus gives a functional role to education and to the individual in the service of an industrial system by believing that “[t]he state is above all, the protector, not of a faith, but of a culture, and the maintainer of the inescapable homogeneous and standardizing education system” (*Nations* 110).

Among the early theorists, Karl Marx opens up new ways of thinking about nation and nationalism and there are many theories in contemporary times that still take their cue from his ideas. Marx reads the history of human society in terms of class struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat. He attempts to subsume the emergence and progress of nations and nationalisms under class struggle conceived on a global scale. For Marx, unless there is incidence of nationalism as a facilitator of revolutionary struggle, it remains an expression of bourgeois interests. Many recent theorists among them Tom Nairn, Gellner, Aijaz Ahmad and to some extent even
Anderson modify or adopt Marx’s ideas in order to formulate theirs. But there is no
dearth of those who openly refute Marx’s ideas as reductive. Guibernau expresses
open disagreement with Marx and quotes Bloom’s aptly worded argument against the
limitedness of Marx’s approach to nationalism. Bloom writes that “the bourgeois
‘fatherland’ did not refer to the country’s potentialities for progress or to the nation
regarded democratically, but to the aggregate of institutions, customs, laws, and ideas
which sanctified the right to property on a considerable scale” (qtd. in Guibernau
Nationalisms 13).

For Marx however the possibilities of state or nation based communism may
not be desirable because the bourgeois of one nation do not only have a common
interest but it is this common interest that gets manifested as nationalism which in
turn competes with the interests of the bourgeois of other states. Thus the assertion of
bourgeois nationalism is one of the ways of further alienation of the proletariat. Only
those nationalisms can be called legitimate that coincide with the interests of the
proletariat. In The Communist Manifesto Marx writes that the proletariat of each
country must settle matters with its own bourgeois. Guibernau attempts to conclude
the debate on Marxist ideas by saying that, “In my view, Marx’s goal was not the
removal of all national distinctions, but the abolition of the sharp economic and
social inequalities derived from capitalism, and the establishment of a world in which
the emancipation of all individuals as human beings would be possible” (Nationalisms
18). Guibernau and many other critics like her desist from expressing complete
agreement with Marxist views on nationalism as they feel that they fail to explore all
the possibilities connected with it. Whereas many theorists have tried to offer
interpretations of postcolonial nations on Marxist lines, but there are also in these important revisions of what can be called the cardinal principles of Marxist philosophy.

Today, in the twenty-first century, the world is undergoing massive changes and the category of nation is being rethought under the impact of new intellectual currents being prompted by the cultural project of globalization as well as by the reorganization of capital at a global scale. This has given rise to renewed interrogation of the legitimacy and relevance of nations and nationalisms. There is a perceived crisis at the heart of nations and nationalisms both as a result of a climate of intense probing of their intrinsic credentials and of the inexorable growth of transnationalism, internationalism and globalization. Mistry’s work is one example of the need to probe these socio-cultural and political principles of collective organisation for both the reasons mentioned above. For Mistry, whose own location is in the West, the nation-state in its postcolonial form is completely unaccommodative of human freedom.

Yet, although, there is an impression that neoliberalism and globalization will usher in an era of postnationalism, old and new nationalisms are becoming amazingly more assertive and sometimes assuming militant dimensions. Homi Bhabha recognizes this when he says, “Nor have such political ideas been definitely superseded by those new realities of internationalism, multinationalism, or even ‘late capitalism’, once we acknowledge that the rhetoric of these global terms is most often underwritten in that grim prose of power that each nation can wield within its own sphere of influence” (Nation and Narrration 1). Writing with some sense of disbelief, Hutchinson and Smith also list the spate of ethnic revivals all over the world even
when ideally they should have subsided after “the horrors of Nazism and the world wars” (10) as also those of colonial racism. Yet, the ethnically defined successors of the Soviet empire, the chronic nature of conflicts in the Middle East, ethno-religious dissensions in the Indian subcontinent among several others have proved that, “issues of ethnic secession and irredentism, of sovereignty, identity, and self-determination” still remain the most intractable problems. These issues continue to persist in the face of “globalizing forces of an international division of labour, transnational companies, great power blocs, an ideology of mass consumerism, and the growth of vast networks of communications” (Hutchinson and Smith 11). Massive restructuring of the issues of identity on the one hand and an almost simultaneous regression into orthodoxies of national, cultural and ethnic identities on the other are the two opposing directions in which postcolonial writings on nation and nationalism have to look. Mistry and other writers of his ilk cannot claim to give expression to or cover all these complexities through their writings. In fact, it will be more accurate to say that these writings are themselves a product of the emerging dynamics of globalisation and conventional forms of allegiance. Their writings may represent specific perspectives having their roots in the experience of minority communities or they may voice the objections of secular and democratic outlook to the failures of nations and nation-states to ensure human dignity and justice. Thus, Rohinton Mistry’s narratives are informed by an intense mood of interrogation of the lapses, conceptual problems, failures and at the same time of the relevance of national spaces. In order to locate and interpret writers like Mistry it becomes important to turn to theoretical opinion on the subject of nation and nationalism again and again so that the dialect of creative/literary and theoretical writings can be co-related.
Just when terms like globalization, transnationalism and postnationalism seem to be gaining currency and acceptance; nationalisms are re-emerging all over the globe with sheer tenacity. As will be borne out by the views of Guibernau, it is a contradiction that nations and nationalisms are both particularizing and homogenizing. Well-known contemporary political theorist of nationalism, national and ethnic diversity, Montserrat Guibernau argues “National identity is currently one of the most powerful forms of collective identity. National identity is based upon the sentiment of belonging to a specific nation, endowed with its own symbols, traditions, sacred places, ceremonies, heroes, history, culture and territory” (Catalan Nationalism 152). She asserts that a common national identity favours the creation of solidarity bonds among the members of a given community and allows them to imagine the community they belong to as separate and distinct from others. These others can be people belonging to other nation-states or minority ethnic, religious or linguistic communities within the same nation-state. At the same time, the individuals who enter a culture emotionally charge certain symbols, values, beliefs and customs by internalizing them and conceiving them as part of themselves while rejecting others as alien and enemy attributes. In this sense the identities “act as mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, creating imaginary limits between those who belong and those who do not belong to specific communities” (Catalan Nationalism 3).

These important observations have a very strong relevance to postcolonial nations and nationalisms which came into existence after either reconciling with or overcoming cultural and religious differences within the national space. In her early study on the rise of nations and nationalism, Montserrat Guibernau goes on to
emphasize the fact that “the political character of nationalism as an ideology defend[s] the notion that state and nation should be congruent” (Nationalisms 3). This aspect of nationalist ideologies is also of particular relevance in the context of the discontents with the nation-state and nationalism visible in many postcolonial Indian writers like Mistry. Guibernau goes on to list the various important aspects of nationalism by elaborating “its capacity to be a provider of identity for individuals conscious of forming a group based upon a common culture, past, project for the future and attachment to a concrete territory” (Nationalisms 3). After having listed the various constitutive factors like culture, history and territory, Gaubernau, makes a very important observation about the distinction between “state nationalism” and “nations without a state” and how these determine the different levels of access to power and resources. Guibernau also recognizes what she understands is the “dark side” of nationalism which is often the result of the misappropriation of the ideas connected with it and which result in phenomena such as xenophobia, racism, fascism and violence.

Guibernau makes a very pertinent intervention when she says that the political expression of nationalism has never been characterized by homogeneity. Although, the nation-state is the most common and most forceful expression of the sentiment of nationalism, Guibernau proposes a very important theoretical classification between the different ways in which nationalism may find consummation:

In order to examine the political character of nationalism, a basic conceptual distinction between nation, state, nation-state and nationalism has to be made. By ‘state’... I refer to ‘a human community that (successfully)
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claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given

territory’. By ‘nation’ I refer to a human group conscious of forming a

community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated
territory, having a common past and a common project of the future and

claiming the right to rule itself. Thus, the ‘nation’ includes five dimensions:

psychological (consciousness of forming a group), cultural, territorial, political

and historical. By offering this definition, I distinguish the term ‘nation’ from

both the state and the nation-state... By, ‘nationalism’ I mean the sentiment of

belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols,

beliefs and ways of life, and have the will to decide upon their common

political destiny. (Nationalisms 47, italics in original)

Going further and directing her attention towards the extremely crucial
category of the nation-state, she writes:

> The nation-state is a modern phenomenon, characterized by the

formation of a kind of state which has the monopoly of what it claims to be the

legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the

people subjected to its rule by means of homogenization, creating a common

culture, symbols, values, reviving traditions and myths of origin, and

sometimes inventing them. (Nationalisms 47)

Thus, it appears that quite like several other critics discussed below Guibernau
too feels the need to be mindful of the distinctions between terms like nation, nation-

state, state and nationalism. Although there are numerous overlaps between these
terms the ambiguities of their free substitution for one another can be seriously
misleading. And as stated above the notion that state and nation should be congruent helps to gloss over major theoretical differences between the two. Such an analysis which sees a homogenization project at the heart of nation-states and which attaches to the idea of nation-state a responsibility to harness, either through use of force or through ideological means, a sense of nation in its members comes very close to the reality of postcolonial nation-states. This follows from the fact that, “[while] the nation has a common culture, values and symbols, the nation-state has as an objective the creation of a common culture” (Nationalisms 48). Mistry, amply highlights how a dominant culture in regional/national context through militant or coercive methods attempts to demonize and obliterate other ways of life. Guibernau also notes how nation-state and the idea of state power are fundamentally connected. This power according to her is accorded by “its capacity to maintain monopoly of violence” both internally and for external defence (Nationalisms 58). Heinrich von Treitschke, for example, assigns absolute and omnipotent power to the state. It is reposed with absolute authority over individuals and, secondly and more importantly, they are integrally bound to the ideology of war. Its relation to its citizens governance by a nation itself entails constraining. The constraining role of the nation-state, as will be seen later, is amply brought out in the texts of Mistry. Yet, it can be said with some justification that Mistry’s views on nation may not coincide with those of Guibernau. This can be said on the grounds that as distinct from a purely objective theoretical study, Mistry’s position is conditioned by the specificities of his cultural and religious location which gives rise to some prejudices as well as peculiarities of attitude and thought.
As stated above a mood of interrogation has informed most of the writings on the subject in contemporary times. Theorists, political and cultural critics and literary writers, have in their own ways, assaulted the discursive constructions which valorise the categories of nation and nationalism and have tried to breach the received sense of sanctity attached to them. While some of these thinkers draw on theoretical currents like post-structuralism and attempt to question dominant institutions that claim to rationally organize human life in order to reveal their basis in the political and strategic use of language, there are others, who proceed to critique the repressive practices and institutions within nationalist politics leading to inequalities in social and economic reality. Thus, on the one hand there is a line of thought owing its provenance to Foucauldian premises trying to discover the logic of nationalist constructions in strategic uses of language and on the other, one, that understands the nation-state as an inherently repressive apparatus which is used as an instrument of social and economic exploitation at several levels of social and political existence. Such critiques move in a diametrically opposite direction to the rhetoric of national progress through democratic principles. There are also those who lament the cultural contaminations written in the genetic code of postcolonial nations and yet others who feel a strong sense of marginalization on the basis of caste and religion within national spaces. Such writers have also endeavoured to decipher biases in nationalist historiographies.

It is very difficult to fix the denotation of the term nation although as seen above it connotes myriad things. Not hinting at any linearity in the term’s development theorists have, in fact, hinted at the opposite. Some have reflected upon the
ambivalence surrounding the term. Guibernau’s understanding of the inconsistencies between the terms ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘nation-state’ have been a subject of concern of many critics before her. Raymond William, among others, has expressed scepticism about the ‘jump’ from nation, as referring to natural relationships we are born into, to the modern nation-state. He writes:

‘Nation’ as a term is radically connected with ‘native’. We are born into relationships which are typically settled in a place. This form of primary and ‘placeable’ bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance. Yet the jump from that to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely artificial. (qtd. in Brennan 211, italics in original)

British-Czech philosopher and social anthropologist, Ernest Gellner, one of the best known theoreticians of nationalism in the late twentieth century, attempts to define ‘Nationalism’ in one of his last works published posthumously which according to him is “his last word on the subject of nationalism” (Nationalism x). Observing that “culture and organisation are universally present in all social life” (Nationalism 3), Gellner asserts that these ‘two basic notions’ are particularly useful in helping to define the term nationalism:

Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond. Whatever principles of authority may exist between people depend for their legitimacy on the fact that the members of the group concerned are of the same culture (or, in nationalist idiom, of the same ‘nation’). In its extreme version, similarity of culture becomes both the necessary and the sufficient condition of legitimate membership: only
members of the appropriate culture may join the unit in question, and all of
them must do so. The aspirations of extreme nationalists are thwarted if their
nation-state fails to assemble all the members of the nation, and if it tolerates a
significant number of non-members within its borders, particularly so if they
occupy places of importance. (Nationalism 3-4)

This, according to Gellner, is the “core idea of nationalism”. Defining ‘nation’
in terms of shared culture, he argues that “culture and social organisation are universal
and perennial. States and nationalisms are not” (Nationalism 5). In his opinion this is
an “absolutely central and supremely important fact” and no theory which fails to
recognise this can hope to do justice to the problem. “Nations and nationalist
sentiments are not found universally, whereas cultures and organisation are”
(Nationalism 5).

Walker Connor too has dwelt on the terminological confusion that exists in the
inter-utilization of the terms state and nation. Connor maintains that while the essence
of the nation is intangible and can be best explained as a feeling or intuition of
homogeneity based on a subconscious belief in the group’s separate origin and
evolution, this feeling of consanguinity is often linked to a territory. As, according to
Connor, nation is a self-designated group the consciousness of singular origin is often
a historical invention. His etymological analysis of the term nation reveals that its root
lies in Latin nasci - meaning to be born. Connor goes on to chart the course of the
terms’ swiftly and erratically changing associations ranging from reference to citizens
and residents of a particular area to its more rampant substitution for politico-
territorial and juridical unit of a state. In an interesting attempt at drawing theoretical
demarcations between the two freely interutilized terms, he asserts that the
hyphenated nation-state may not have the cohesion of a nation. He seems to suggest
that a free substitution of nation and nation-state helps link the latter to the idea of
nativity of a people and give it more legitimacy. An ideal nation-state would be “a
territorial-political unit” or a state whose borders coincided or nearly coincided with
the territorial distribution of a national group (36). According to him the most
authentic nation-states are strong enough to breed fascist tendencies while the new
nation-states of Africa and Asia cannot emulate them because of the presence within
them of more nations than one. There is an inherent problem of finding the cohesions
of nations in nation-states but there is a related compulsion for nation-states to look
like nations. Historical invention, appropriation of the past and cohesions of race,
ethnicity and religion are sometimes impossible to be conceived in nation-states. As
will be seen below, this becomes one of the biggest challenges of postcolonial and
anti-colonial nationalists. In another very important distinction between nation and
ethnicity Connor remarks that ethnicity comes closest in meaning to nation because it
too designates “a group characterized by common descent” (43). Just as nations and
states have become synonymous, ethnicity through semantic mutations has come to
stand for a minority of any denomination thereby making it a cloak term for ethnic,
religious, racial or other minorities. Connor cites Max Weber to redefine ethnicities
as communities with belief in common ancestry which are different from nations in
lacking political consciousness necessary for nations. Thus, ethnic groups are more
conscious of what they are not as compared to what they are. Connor concludes by
saying that, “while an ethnic group may, therefore, be other-defined, the nation must
be self-defined’ (45-46). Connor’s thesis contributes in a big way in establishing that nation and nationalism have come a long way from their original conceptualizations. As concepts they have suffered endless appropriations and re-appropriations particularly in postcolonial contexts.

Connor, Guibernau and Williams in their own distinct ways try to account for the theoretical demarcations between different terms that evoke the idea of national identity. For all of them the term nation signifies greater cohesion on primordial, anthropological, cultural, historical or ‘natural’ grounds while the other terms like state or nation-state may be characterised by the absence of a naturally available cohesion.

If it is conditionally accepted that this distinction between nations and nation-states is correct, it follows that in a vast and diverse nation-state like India, the homogenising tendencies on the one hand and the aggressive articulation and assertion of identities based on caste or religion on the other lead to insecurities and socio- economic repression/marginalisation of ethnic, religious and cultural minorities leaving them more vulnerable to exploitation at multiple levels. Many of the contemporary Indian literary writers have dealt with this theme in their work. The rise of fascist tendencies evidenced in religio-cultural movements like ‘Hindu nationalism’ has also sparked protests against homogenising tendencies of ‘nationalist’ politics. The demarcations of Hindu nationalism in postcolonial times are strikingly different from the conceptions of Hindu cultural nationalism in the anti-colonial discourses for the simple reason that the former is indisputably a greater threat. As a discussion of anti-colonial discourses of thinker-activists like Gandhi and
Aurobindo below will try to show, the element of fascism is almost absent in them as they are more an assertion of cultural identity as a mode of resistance against foreign domination. On the other hand political outfits like the Shiv Sena which become articulate in postcolonial times are intolerant and employ aggressive methods of cultural policing. Moreover, they are positioned against religious and cultural groups in the regional and national contexts.

The work of Rohinton Mistry, particularly, can be placed in the category of the literature of protest/resistance which is a consequence of the inherent contradictions present in postcolonial nation-states. The ‘nationalists’ in the postcolonial contexts who claim legitimate political right over the term, through strategic appropriations suitable to their context tend to project that the state is a universal institution of human society – a natural formation which evolves organically and is linked to cohesions of cultural, religious and linguistic nature. This, obviously, introduces an ersatz character in such nationalisms. The strategically inserted aspects of the state are conveniently elided creating, in the subtext of the nation, the possibility of the doctrine: “no society without order, no order without enforcement, no enforcement without appropriate agencies (the state)” (Gellner Nationalism 6). This gives rise to a suspicion that the component of ‘state’ is more conspicuously present in these lately founded political units in comparison with the component of ‘nation’ understood in the sense of theorists like Gellner. The present study accords the writings of Mistry the status of interventions that aim to expose the fault lines in the landscape of postcolonial nationalisms. At the same time, it has to be re-iterated that as a minority discourse and alternative history, this discourse is conditioned by the writer’s own cultural location.
Historical probing would also reveal that the emergence of states is a very recent phenomenon in the history of mankind and nation-states may not justifiably be treated as universal. There are many societies that successfully maintain order without possessing specialised order-enforcing institutions or agencies. In this sense, the modern nation-state is not simply an institution for maintaining order; it also becomes the alibi for exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups of people living within a certain geographical space. Moreover, an easy consanguinity between the limits of territory and that of common culture may not be possible in such societies. In as far as "nationalism is quite specially [sic] concerned with excluding foreigners from key positions in the state, the whole problem of nationalism scarcely arises when there is no state, and there are no key positions in it. What needs to be noted, then, is that the problem of nationalism in the main arises only in a world in which states are taken for granted and required, and this does not apply to all humanity (Gellner Nationalism 6, italics in original)."

Postcolonial writers like Naipaul, Rushdie or Mistry, challenge the authority and legality of the homogenising and dictatorial nationalist ideologies used to regulate and control the lives of people on the basis of colour, religion, caste or language. They appear to assert that states are not universal, nor is nationalism itself as universal and natural as it poses to be. They also attempt to expose the heavy burden of the state on the nation. Gellner also questions the naturalness of the nation in the following words: "It simply is not the case that, at all times and in all places, men wanted the boundaries of social units and of cultures to converge, or to put it in a manner closer to their own style, that they wanted to be among their own kind, excluding ‘others’. On the contrary: men very, very often lived in units which violated this principle, and
most of the time, this violation was accepted without protest or opposition, indeed without any awareness that a vital, alleged universal principle was being violated” (Nationalism 6-7).

It must be noted that the groups and individuals ‘inspired by’ nationalist sentiments believe in the genuineness, universality, perennial and inherent validity of their ideology. It is simply self-evident and ‘natural’ for these people to wish to live with their own kind. They claim to have a right to be unwilling to live with people of a different culture. They seem to resent most the situation that ‘others’ should have any special privilege or dominant role in governing them. Gellner asserts:

This is perhaps the commonest of ‘theories’ of nationalism: in one sense it is barely a theory, because it treats the principle as something inherent in human nature, or the very principles of social organisation, so obvious as not really to require any explanation.... This theory is dangerous not merely because it is false, but, more significantly, because the self-evident status which it ascribes to itself, and which indeed attaches to it, makes those who hold it fail to see that they are holding a theory at all. They do not see that this is something contentious and to be examined, rather than a self-evident category which justifiably pervades all thought about man and society. (Nationalism 7)

Even if the primordiality of the category of nation is accepted, the fact of the matter is that nationalism emerged as the dominant ideological perspective in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the whole of the world. The debate whether nationalism is necessary or contingent is very much alive and often the position or side chosen for the argument depends on the location and racial/religious/cultural
background of the individual or the group concerned. It is also true that most of the
‘nationalist’ advocates as well as ‘internationalist’ opponents of nation-states and
nationalist sentiments assume the phenomena to be universal rather than contingent.
Gellner asserts the need to avoid both these extremes and polar opposites and frames
the question in a better perspective by not treating any of the terms as absolute or
ahistorical: “Nationalism is neither universal and necessary nor contingent and
accidental, the fruit of idle pens and gullible readers. It is the necessary consequence
or correlate of certain social conditions, and these do happen to be our conditions, and
they are also very widespread, deep and pervasive. So nationalism is not at all
accidental: its roots are deep and important, it was indeed our destiny, and not some
kind of contingent malady, imposed on us by the scribblers of the late Enlightenment”
(Nationalism 10-11).

As the roots of nationalism are not universally present, it is not the ‘destiny of
all men’. Given this logic, the mankind can be divided between, what Gellner calls
‘nationalism-prone’ and ‘nationalism-resistant’ groups and individuals. It is an
apparent historical fact that during the last two-hundred years or so, more and more
people have tended to belong to the ‘nationalism-prone’ section of humanity. A
consequence of this is that as dominant, majority populations become more and more
vocal and assertive of their identities and exclusionist programmes, the minorities feel
more and more threatened and alienated. Mistry, as a Parsi in Maratha dominated
Bombay/Mumbai, Naipaul as a quintessential diasporic individual or Arundhati Roy
as the passionate voice of the discriminated and the dispossessed victims of national
progress use their fiction and non-fiction to highlight the plight of the marginalised
victims in times of aggressive dominating ideologies and policies in postcolonial
nation-states. The need for a subversive culture of writing proves the fact that while in
the case of anti-colonial struggles in early and mid-twentieth century, nationalism was necessary and emancipatory; in later years it tended to assume fascistic shades in certain situations in postcolonial states. So, one could agree with Gellner when he says that “nationalism is indeed necessary in certain conditions ... but these conditions themselves are not universal... nationalism is rooted in modernity” (*Nationalism* 12-13). Apparently, the spread of nationalism can be attributed to the social, political, economic and philosophical changes referred to broadly as modernity which led to colonisation of most of the globe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It also meant a replacement of enormous cultural diversity all over the world by a limited number of high cultures with political pretensions and programmes. It can safely be said with particular reference to postcolonial nation-states that they are more a manifestation of these high cultures owing their provenance to the territorial demarcations on colonial lines, their adoption of colonial post-capitalist economic and social models and their explanation of multicultural and heterogeneous social structures in politically generated secularist discourses than that of a revival of a pristine culture or form of life.

The interventions, like those of the writers mentioned above, have thus to be placed within the polemics on one of the important dimensions of modernity. India is no exception, as is revealed by much of the postcolonial writing, to the discontents and exclusions caused by modernity and nationalism. As aspirations of economic and social well being of the large sections were belied by most postcolonial regimes, the discontent and anger against the social and political dispensations came to the fore in various social and political movements in India from early sixties onwards. The critique of nationalism and the nation-state became a major thematic concern for many Indian writers in English as well as in vernacular literatures.
In India after Independence a political scenario emerged in which both the dominant groups and the marginalised sections felt that a good way of recovering social cohesion for having access to political power was through ethnic movements and assertion of distinct cultural, ethnic and religious identities. In Bombay, from the late sixties, the parochially ultra-nationalist Shiv Sena also saw an opportunity for carving out a political space through aggressive and violent methods selectively targeting non-Marathi minorities and migrant communities. The chauvinism of this form of cultural self assertion led to an exclusion of all non-Marathi speaking communities. Thus, an acutely engineered blend of regional, religious and linguistic identities conceived in a very limited way gave rise to a political culture of intolerance not only towards the traditionally ostracised Muslims but in an equal measure towards north Indian Hindus and Parsis. It is this form of chauvinism and intolerance of identities that fall outside the narrow limits of locally/nationally valorised categories which comes in for the severest criticism in Mistry’s works. Realising that issues concerning language, lineage or the ‘rights of the native’ could be activated and mobilised more quickly and effectively than movements based on more complex considerations, political entities like the Shiv Sena have been successfully intimidating and brutalising their perceived others for the last fifty years without having to face any serious legal consequences at all. It is not ironical that Mistry’s novel *Such a Long Journey* was recently removed from the syllabus of Mumbai University through the same arm twisting methods of the Shiv Sena.

Making the marks and symbols of ethnic membership very conspicuous, the members of the majority community openly fuel ethnic conflicts to draw attention to
themselves for political visibility and power. The main slogan is frequently about right to territory through an appeal to common language and culture. “The symbolism of land continues to be potent in the emotional poetry of nationalism” (Gellner Nationalism 48). Mistry highlights the general sanction of systemic and aggressive cultural policing by Shiv Sena in the context of the nation-state. Such failure of the state is put into relief and even compensated by the minority writers like Rushdie and Mistry who are scathing in their critique of the fanaticism integral to identity politics in postcolonial nation-states.

As far as theoretical opinion on the subject of nation and nationalism is concerned Benedict Anderson’s voice is one of the most significant. Benedict Anderson, perhaps the best known theoretician of ‘nation’ during the last decades of the twentieth century, inaugurated new ways of looking at nations in his path breaking work Imagined Communities. Just like the critics and theorists discussed above, Anderson also offers new ways of breaching the meaning of nation and nationalism generated through political appropriations and of deconstructing and decoding the myths surrounding them. He also traces the connections of these political structures less to a historical past drawing sustenance from the consciousness of a racial, religious, ethnic or cultural memory but to the rise of print capitalism thus offering an alternative way of placing them in the general condition of modernity. Anderson also departs from conventional theories by locating the genesis of nationalism in material and economic factors. His thesis is of a particular value to postcolonial studies as he offers an alternative to postcolonial nationalists’ fixation with culture and identity. For Anderson, print capitalism with its greatest expression in the newspaper is the underlying economic logic that restructures societies. He writes that, “the very
conception of the newspaper implies the refraction of even ‘world events’ into a specific imagined world of vernacular readers; and also how important to that imagined community is an idea of steady, solid simultaneity through time” (65). This leads to the implication that nations and nationalisms rather than being natural and given grew out of economic imperatives mediated by print capitalism.

Guibernau explains Anderson’s thesis by referring to the three ways in which print-capitalism led to the rise of nationalism in the European context:

Anderson argues that print-languages laid the basis for national consciousness in three ways: they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars; they gave a new fixity to language, helping to build an image of antiquity, central to the subjective idea of the nation; and they created languages of power which differed from the older administrative vernaculars. (*Nationalisms* 66-67)

Benedict Anderson’s thesis is of particular value in identifying a specific form of capitalism that paved the way for the creation of nations. Benedict Anderson opens up new possibilities of thinking the nation by introducing a problematic in its assumed continuity and cohesion and by describing nations as ‘imagined communities’. In his anthropological and sociological analysis of these communities, he reveals how the fundamental factors responsible for cohesion in human societies like geographic, economic and political contiguities needed to be interwoven with religious, administrative and linguistic homogeneities to form credible and expansive social communities. Tracing the continuity of postcolonial nations with their colonial past, Anderson emphasises how, particularly in the colonial regimes economic, geographic and administrative antecedents not only preceded national consciousness but were the
basis on which it was built. Before giving his exegesis on the creation of national sentiments and showing their provenance in print capitalism, Anderson writes that although pre-existing market-zones and administrative areas having geographical shape are vital for the plausibility of a nation, yet they are not factors strong enough to generate mass allegiance of the kind that behove a nation. He maintains that, “in themselves, market-zones, ‘natural’ geographic or politico-administrative, do not create attachments” (Anderson 55).

Thus, according to Anderson, although drawing its life from material factors, a nation is often premised on more imaginary justifications. According to Anderson this applies to all imagined communities. Prior to the nations, religious communities acted as the organizing principle of social life and were imagined through the generation of such meaning at the social level which foregrounded religion as the organizing principle of social life. Anderson believes that in pre-print age journey between “times, statuses and places” was a meaning creating exercise and the existence of religious constituencies depended on communication of this meaning through societies. Thus, the fact of belonging to a particular religion superseded other forms of allegiances. In the pre-print age, the reality of the imagined religious community depended profoundly on countless, ceaseless travels. Anderson writes, “Nothing more impresses one about Western Christendom in its heyday than the uncoerced flow of faithful seekers from all over Europe, through the celebrated ‘regional centres’ of monastic learning, to Rome” (56). Anderson goes on to assert that physical journey of functionaries and pilgrims were replaced by print-capitalism which canalized communication and the idea of the nation in South America, North America and Asia. The market-system and administrative structure of the colonial
administration was authenticated as socially, politically and nationally viable through the juxtaposition on the pages of the newspaper of the secular and the economic. In Anderson’s opinion print-capitalism played a pivotal role in promoting Creole nationalisms in North and South America and anti-colonial nationalisms that followed the end of European colonialism. Anderson’s thesis affirms the need of dissecting the discursive fabric of widely circulated ideas and of departing from purely scientific tendency of imposing definite closures on such subjects lending credibility to writers like Mistry whose literary enterprise, although not exactly on Anderson’s lines, is involved with reading the semantics of nation and nationalism. As will be discussed later, a peculiarity of Parsi consciousness involves maintaining a discreet silence about the colonial period and looking at the postcolonial period as not only a failure to deliver the promise of freedom and democracy but also as a sudden slide into social and political attrition on the basis of intolerance for cultural and religious differences.

Parts of Gellner’s and Guibernau’s thesis, dealing with the imperfections encoded in postcolonial nation-states or with the paradoxical relationship between the ideas of nation and state can be usefully utilized in reading a writer like Mistry who represents the viewpoint of the minority religious and ethnic community. However, the distance between theoretical accounts of nation and nationalism and their subjective representations in literature can be established through Mistry’s clear avoidance of any reference to the racial discrimination of the colonial period or the economic and administrative antecedents of postcolonial India in the colonial experience. This also brings in some degree of abstractness in his critique of India. It can also be said that Mistry’s foregrounding of the category of nation also involves a tactical balance of elisions and articulations. The relationship of such critiques with
the ideas of nation and nationalism is marked by complexity. In veering away from an analysis on Marxist or historicist lines such critiques, as themselves an integral part of constantly transmuting print capitalism, are largely instrumental in lending centrality of nation and nationalism.

Timothy Brennan in his essay “The National Longing for Form” has essayed to document this complex relationship between the idea of nation and fiction. His ideas create important possibilities of forming a very important theoretical conjunction between nation and language or to read nation as a discourse. Although nations have regularly sought justifications among other things, in national languages, new modes of thought have been successful in achieving a reversal by directing focus on the narration of nation in language. Such an orientation has the benefit of overcoming essentialist illusions about these two very important social and political categories. This theoretical practice has enjoyed great preference in postcolonial studies discourse. In an important intervention, Timothy Brennan suggests the world may have seen passed the apotheosis of nationalism. One, globalization of capital has led to attenuation of the feelings of nation-ness and two, the contrary and opposite valorization of smaller and more local loyalties and affiliations is also working to weaken the rhetoric of nationalisms. Mistry’s sustained assertion of Parsi Identity and his critique of nation contain both an element of subversion as well as a desire to overcome the strong homogenising tendencies characterising most nations and nationalisms. While Brenan’s assertions strike one as significant, it is equally true that in the emerging valorization of the global and local - being feted as the new ‘glocal’ reality - it becomes all the more important to study the adjustments to which nations will lend themselves. Moreover, a reflection of these adjustments is bound to appear
in the domain of fiction. Mistry, as a writer of the diaspora is particularly susceptible to these adjustments. However, the fictionality of nation is stressed by Brennan by highlighting what he describes as ‘institutional’ and ideological uses of fiction in sustaining the idea of nation. He links fiction and nation in three ways: i. the idea that fiction is not only co-terminus with nations but that it also assumes metaphorical responsibility of projecting them as viable; ii. nation is the founding trope of fiction; and iii. nation is itself a discursive formation or fiction. Timothy Brennan links fiction and nation by further suggesting that nation is a “gestative political structure” which the Third World artist is consciously building or suffering the lack of (213). This for him becomes the ground and justification for studying nation at the site of literature. In his view fiction is composite and bordered and territorialized like nations. Brennan’s thesis in many ways grows out of that of Anderson’s. The centrality of the newspaper and print capitalism especially to the newly conceived nations in South America, North America and Asia is found to be reiterated in his ideas. On the basis of such views it becomes important to recognize that nation and fiction are mutually entangled categories. Mistry’s critique rather than being given absolute value has also to be contextualized within the ideological and business imperatives of fiction as a part of print capitalism. Such critiques of course cannot be held to be representative of all the sections of the society. In terms of their site of production and consumption they are representative of the preferences of the selected sections of the society.

Brennan’s views in a way create the logical need for a departure from the analysis of theoretical opinion on the subject of nation and nationalism to its mapping in the overlapping contexts of postcolonial literature and postcolonial theory and in
the very important field of anti-colonial discourse. In recent postcolonial criticism and fiction too there is to be found a highly radical form of suspicion of the category of nation. With the entry of critics like Said and Bhabha with highly evolved postmodernist and post-structuralist modes of thought, a distrust of all metanarratives especially that of the nation has become palpably present. In such approaches nations, in general, have been understood to be mythical in more senses than one. They are understood to approximate myths in not possessing scientific verifiability and again as coalescences of the invented, the imagined and the real. Nations also have come to be projected as sterilized receptacles of social and political meaning dismissive of anarchist forms of insanity that try to dissect their semantics or in any other way to make them less obtrusive. Recent criticism has increasing looked upon nation as a discourse or as a sanctioned network of utterances. This approach to nation is more radical in nature as it draws its strength from a belief in the inescapability from a commensal relationship between language and power. The chief architect of this approach and the pioneer of Discourse theory, Michel Foucault, in one of his famous averments says that “We must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher. The world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour” (67). Sara Mills in her book *Discourse* reformulates Foucault’s assertion thus: “There is no intrinsic order to the world itself other than the ordering that we impose on it through our linguistic description of it” (47). As a form of collective belief the category of nation has often been linked to systems of signification demarcating lines between what is sayable and what is not. Intellectual probing of
nations as modes of social and political organisation and as consciousness forming abstractions of meaning having their basis in language has preoccupied both critics and creative writers in recent times. Such critical positions imply that the question rather than being arrested by certitudes has to be kept open. This necessity for theoretical open endedness is also felt to arise as, like other forms of identity, national identities are always in danger of becoming ossified political, social and cultural identities in denial of their discursiveness and oblivious of the arbitrariness and illegitimacies of their birth - as creoles assuming the discipline of languages. With the troubling realization of the absence of an isomorphic equivalence between language and ‘reality’ there has been intense critical interrogation of the salience of these ever shifting demarcations between the self and the other. There are many critics and novelists who have attempted to connect nation with language and understood it as a discourse. Although Mistry’s critique of nation and nationalism cannot be read purely along these lines yet his writings need to be read in the context of such trends. Bhabha’s is one of the most important interventions that seeks to interpret nation as a system of signification:

To encounter the nation as it is written displays a temporality of culture and social consciousness more in tune with the partial, over determined process by which textual meaning is produced through the articulation of difference in language; more in keeping with the problem of closure which plays enigmatically in the discourse of the sign. Such an approach contests the traditional authority of those national objects of knowledge – Tradition, People, the Reason of State, High Culture, for instance – whose pedagogical
value often relies on their representation as holistic concepts located within an evolutionary narrative of historical continuity. (*Nation and Narration* 2-3)

This often quoted definition of nation is also strongly indicative of the theoretical mood in the present times. It attempts to divest the nation of its materiality along with that of its foundational concepts like Tradition, People and National Culture in an attempt to salvage it from the narrative of historical continuity. It is symptomatic of one of the ways of radically destabilizing the idea of nation. In theorizing the nation, Bhabha foregrounds its discursiveness and temporality by calling it a, “system of cultural signification” and attempts to transcend its orthodoxies (19). He attempts to transcend the strictly empirical and verifiable so as to crossover into tropes of the symbolic and whorls of the linguistic in the process of probing these questions. He also chooses to stand outside nationalist discourses and histories “at a slight angle to reality” as Rushdie says in *Shame* (29). As a novel that narrates the history of Pakistan in a magic realist narration and by thus maintaining a distance with the approved ways of historicizing nations Rushdie’s text is an important statement on the theme of nation.

The ideas of nation and nationalism form an important theoretical conjunction with postcolonial literature and it is at this conjunction that the received ideas of nation and nationalism can be and have been most intensely revised and interrogated. Postcolonial fiction and writings in one of their important aspects have been doing just this. In its engagement with the ideas of nation and nationalism, we often find postcolonial fiction negotiating the dialectic of the colonial past and the postcolonial present, the East and the West and even that of home and homelessness. Both old and
new orthodoxies of thought make up the context of contemporary fiction. The Booker Prize winner and writer of *The Remains of the Day*, Kazuo Ishiguro’s observation that Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* was like a milestone for English-language migrant authors living in Britain because it satisfied the “Western commercial appetite for the exotic” seems to point towards the suspicion that writings understood as postcolonial have a western orientation (qtd. in Teverson 6). This obviously lends a new dimension to the theorising of nation in the pages of what is generally described as postcolonial fiction. In his conception of the nation the role of the migrant postcolonial writer is not transparent and unproblematic and this applies with equal relevance to most of the celebrated writers of postcolonial fiction. Ishiguro goes on to say that after the success of *Midnight’s Children*, in Britain it was an actual plus to have a funny foreign name and to be writing about funny foreign places and that “everyone was suddenly looking for other Rushdies” (qtd. in Teverson 4). Add to this the observation that Salman Rushdie specializes in, “approaching political and religious issues with levity, irreverence and humour” visible in the way in which he approaches serious subjects like Islam and one finds oneself face to face with the paradigmatic shifts in contemporary postcolonial writing with regard not only to the category of nation but even other related notions of identity (Teverson 5).

It is important to note that Rushdie’s articulations on nation are dressed up more as negations rather than as affirmations. Rushdie describes his fictional Pakistan in *Shame* in the following words,

This country in this story is not Pakistan, is not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same
space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself, at a slight angle to reality. I have found this off-centring to be necessary; but its value is, of course open to debate. My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan… I have not given the country a name. (29)

Rushdie’s irreverence and levity is optimally utilized in dismantling the grand narratives of the postcolonial nation just as it has been utilized to dismantle the idea of Islam at other places. Yet, critics speak in different voices when they try to fix the reasons for this levity and try to link it to expectations from him as a writer of English, his location in the West and his relationship with his audience. The same factors although in slightly different terms come into effect in the consideration of Mistry’s works. As a comparison between Mistry and Rushdie obtains almost naturally, chapter two of the present study carries out an extensive comparison of the two writers in order to form an understanding of their respective approaches to nation and nationalism and the adjustments to which the positions on these issues are susceptible.

Opposition to an approach such as Rushdie’s is as widespread as the popularity of his works. Aparna Mahanta responds to Rushdie’s descriptions by saying, “The pseudo-sons, the Saleem Sinais’ who have taken over from the heroes of Rudyard Kipling and of E.M. Forster” prove that postcolonial fiction caters to the needs of the western readership by weaving exotic fantasies through the exercise of wit, humour and satire and that “the Raj isn’t dead after all” (244). For Mahanta postcolonial discourse is not enabling for the non-west and is written in a sophisticated modernist and postmodernist idiom and tries to conform to the kinds of
discourses authorized by the Anglo-American academy. Aijaz Ahmad analyzes this problem in the following words, “There is a quality of linguistic quicksand forever …taking back with one hand what he has given with the other” (135).

However, Rushdie redeems himself by emphasizing the positionality of his own fiction through his intense self referentiality. Rushdie foregrounds the perspectives from which he is writing by valorizing his own cultural location. As one of the most representative writers of what has come to be called the counter-canon of postcolonial fiction, Salman Rushdie’s description of the locus of his story in *Shame* is, in one sense, both an assertion and a negation. It is marked by a postmodern tentativeness springing out of a reluctance to correlate the fictional and the real. Rushdie’s postcoloniality, as in the case of early writers like R.K Narayan or Raja Rao, does not lie in breaking away from the West with the purpose of narrating indigenous social, political and cultural reality. Rather, Rushdie’s alternative historiography conforms to Bhabha’s notions of the chronic and inescapable hybridity and impurity of the formerly colonized cultures. Bhabha’s idea that the original sign embodying the colonial culture and power gets fractured and transformed in the act of recognition and repetition in the indigenous world is relevant here. This idea of flawed mimesis finds articulation in Rushdie’s treatment of postcolonial nation-states. Richard J. Lane in his book *The Postcolonial Novel* also questions the validity of the postcolonial national spaces while discussing Wilson Harris’s *Palace of the Peacock* where the political map of the savannahs are described as dreams, “The map of the savannahs was a dream. The names Brazil and Guyana were colonial conventions I had known from childhood” (4).
The novel of diaspora being written from places of migration continues to cast a gaze back on the homelands and weave stories of intensely political nature. Salman Rushdie writing in his collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands*, foregrounds the location of the diasporic writers yet also proves that politics of nation is very much a part of his fiction. He leaves a clue about the peculiarities of postcolonial ways of understanding these issues,

We are Hindus who have crossed the black water, and we are Muslims who eat pork. And as a result - as my notion of the Christian notion of the fall indicates - we are now partly of the West. Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy. (15)

Such assertions seriously trouble the cohesion of ideas concerning nations and national identity by admitting discontinuities in them.

Thus, Rushdie’s fiction typifies a robust interest in the social and political reality of postcolonial nations like India and Pakistan. What Aijaz Ahmad calls linguistic quick-sand, Rushdie would call re-inscription. Rushdie claims his right to re-inscribe the socio-political reality of India and Pakistan in his serio-comic satires in *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*. While a critic like Ahmad would be suspicious of political value of such narratives, for Rushdie alternative and innovative methods of representation are in themselves politically enabling. Rushdie in his own way affirms the irruption of the political into the personal by saying that works of art cannot be separated from politics and history as they do not come into being in a social and political vacuum. In this sense, Rushdie’s fiction is an intervention in history not by
aiming to engage, participate or get intimately and actively involved in political issues but, “by describing the world in a way that contests or resists the interpretations of it offered by the more official organs of power”(Teverson 15). In the context of India and Pakistan, his fiction re-describes what he calls the “State truth” about the important historical episodes like Pakistan’s war in Bangladesh and Emergency in India on the pages of fiction (Imaginary 14). This is done through disrupting the narratives of the nation, by critiquing their politics and by representing the ‘reality’ in magic realist terms. He maintains that, “literature can, and perhaps must, give the lie to official facts” (Rushdie Imaginary 226). And one of the official facts, in the postcolonial nation-states, is the nation itself.

Critics like Said have also offered new ways of approaching political reality by keeping their focus on textual practice and exteriority of socio-political discourses. Said’s methodology of unravelling the constructions of the Orient in language has been liberally employed to study and narrate the nation. Said, while describing his methodology in Orientalism makes it clear that his concern with, “authority does not entail analysis of what lies hidden … but analysis rather of the text’s surface…” ; a study of “representations as representations, not as ‘natural’ depictions of the Orient” (20-21, italics in original). This is done with the objective of searching for “inaugural delimitations” or what Said referring to Louis Althusser describes as “a specific determinate unity of a text” (16). Significantly, these methodological strategies are re-appropriated within postcolonial studies to dissect nationalist historiographies and discourses. With the arrival of Said’s Orientalism postcolonial theory takes a new and more contemporary turn. Writing about the importance of the book to postcolonial studies discourse, Leela Gandhi writes:
Rather than engaging with the ambivalent condition of the colonial aftermath - or indeed, with the history and motivations of anti-colonial resistance - it directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings and, concomitantly, to the consolidation of colonial hegemony. (64-65)

Said’s entry opens up a whole new sphere of polemics in postcolonial studies discourse by placing the practice of power and resistance in inscription and re-inscription. Going way beyond the earlier tradition of anti-colonial thought of Gandhi and Fanon, which have their motivations in an intimate encounter with colonial violence and oppression, the emphasis falls on cultural reality through which the idea of the nation is also viewed with suspicion as lacking interiority; as a text constructed out of systems of cultural significations. Such approaches tend to be oriented towards assertions of cultural hybridity, postnationalism and internationalism. This also involves a reversal from justifications of nation as in Gandhi, Aurobindo and Fanon; culture here is used to establish the nation’s ambivalences. Bhaba’s position also marks a significant departure from the traditional ideas associated with nation and nationalism. Bhaba lists some of these in the following words:

…the *Heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other; the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class; the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation; the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality; the blindness of bureaucracy, the strait insight of institutions; the quality of justice, the common sense of injustice; the *langue* of the law and the *parole* of the people (Nation and Narration 2)
Bhabha promptly returns to his task of reading ambivalence in the exteriority of the narrative of the nation. Edward Said also, before voicing his suspicion of anti-colonial nations and nationalisms as the legitimate goal of anti-colonial struggles, voices his apprehensions about their regression into primitive and dogmatic forms of nativism - a critical dimension which with some modifications informs the works of Mistry. The binary opposition of imperial and native civilizations and cultures is too immature for critics like Said who base their critical formulations on more open ended theories of power and imperialism. Seen in this light, Senghor’s negritude and Hindu nationalism are outcomes of a negative dialectic (Said Culture 275). For Said the answer to colonial hegemony does not lie in the retrieval of civilizational, religious and cultural identities in their supposedly essential forms. Said’s critique of the cultural imperialism of the West is premised on the poststructuralist disbelief in essences. According to him, “To leave the historical world for the metaphysics of essences like negritude, Irishness, Islam or Catholicism is to abandon history for essentialisations that have the power to turn human beings against each other” (Culture 276). Mistry’s scathing criticism of the chauvinistic politics of Shiv Sena however cannot be read on these lines as his rejection of the chauvinism of Shiv Sena is concomitant with his holding of his Parsi identity as an essential part of his subjectivity.

The problematic of nation and language or nation and literature has occupied centre-stage in postcolonial criticism as well. Overtly in disagreement with the approaches discussed above, one of the major postcolonial Marxist critics, Aijaz Ahmad, has extensively sought to interpret postcolonial Indian Writings in English as lacking any substantial basis other than as a category that emerges out of the
restructuring of the print capitalism on nationalist and global lines again strongly
claiming that the demarcations of literary writings coincide with the demarcations
brought into existence by the distribution and redistribution of capital. It is an
important question which the present thesis engages itself with. It is important to
decide, in the process of reading meaning in the texts of writers like Mistry whether
they can be accused of compliance with dominant local and global economic
processes. Aijaz Ahmad is distrustful of the very category of postcolonial writings
that have the discourse of nation as their subject. Like this, owing allegiance to
Marxist ideas, Ahmad exhibits his distrust of bourgeois nations through his criticism
of postcolonial texts that according to him merely help to camouflage the real
disparities between the bourgeois and the proletariat at the national and international
levels. The protest of these writers, according to Ahmad, is more an illusion of
protest. Like Brennan and Anderson, Ahmad too looks around for the ideological
apparatus that supplies justifications for the nation-state or in the neo imperial context
attempt to reduce its significance and finds it in works of literature. Marx during a
discussion on ideology in his Manifesto of the Communist Party calls the nation-state,
“a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (45).

Going beyond Marx critics like Ahmad continue to study the ideological
adjustments of discursive constructions like the nation-state probing not so much its
building by the Third World artist as his suffering its lack. The fiction of Rushdie and
Mistry and their treatment of nation have also been studied on these lines. In Rushdie
the consciousness of the loss of nation is much more tangible than in Mistry. The
treatment of nation in novels like Midnight’s Children is seen to be in connivance
with the new global economic realities and in line with the needs to generate a
discourse of migrancy and globalization. For Ahmad such literature cannot be
accepted as truly representative of the reality of the postcolonial nations it claims to represent. While Brennan and Anderson emphasize the role of print capitalism in actuating the nationalist imaginary, Ahmad’s thesis comes close to them in claiming that the foregrounding of English literature in English as well as the conceptualization of regional literatures rather than being integral to the reality of the nation are superimpositions made to bear in accordance with postcolonial and neo imperial economic pressures favouring modern metropolitan bourgeoisie and transnational economic forces. Ahmad writes:

What is new in the contemporary metropolitan philosophies and the literary ideologies which have arisen since the 1960s, in tandem with vastly novel restructuring of global capitalist investments, communication systems and information networks – not to speak of actual travelling facilities – is that the idea of belonging is itself being abandoned as antiquated false consciousness. (129)

Ahmad’s extended critique of Rushdie’s richly allegorical text *Shame* in his essay titled “Salman Rushdie’s *Shame*” highlights how “postmodernist etiquettes” of reading and writing align with the condition of migrancy. Ahmad writes:

Thus, Rushdie’s idea of ‘migrancy’, for example, which is quite central to his self-representation both in fiction and in life, has come to us in two versions. In the first version ‘migrancy’ is given to us as an ontological condition of all human beings…In the second version, articulated more fully in the more recent writings, this myth of ontological unbelonging is replaced by another, larger myth of excess of belongings: not that he belongs nowhere, but that he belongs to too many places. (127)
This is akin, for Ahmad, to the experience of being in a supermarket and Ahmad has major objections to this kind of consciousness. For Ahmad, both the postcolonial nation in its popular form and the idea of fluid and indefinite identities are problematic.

Based on the conflicting positions discussed above it can be said that in the context of the postcolonial nation, it becomes a problem of fundamental nature to resolve whether the nation is to be imagined in the time prior to the colonial experience, in it, or, after it. As a consequence of colonial experience, the postcolonial nation finds itself encumbered with multiple responsibilities like reversal of the colonial condition; reinvention, recovery/search of the national Holy Grail; crystal gazing for a pre-ordained destiny; reconciling with received cartographies and coping with cultural contaminations as also those of resolving the issues of the global and the local economic realities that affect national spaces. Theorists have revealed how these ideas often demand imaginative treatment. All these questions are capable of fictional realization and most often these pressures stimulate the production of fresh historiographies around cultural, regional, racial and linguistic epicentres which try to creatively reconcile these complexities about the existence of such nations. The present chapter took the definition of nation given by Grosby as the starting point for the discussion on the subject. After having seen a glimpse of the diversity of irreconcilable positions, Ernest Gellner’s definition can be quoted as an alternative to the political scientific definition of Grosby, “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist” (*Thought* 168). By way of further expatiation, Gellner provides the grounds on which his doubts about the substantiality of nations and nationalisms are built:
Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all it is not what it seems to itself. The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition. Nonetheless the nationalist principle as such, as distinct from each of its specific forms, and from the individually distinctive nonsense which it may preach, has very deep roots in our shared current condition, is not at all contingent, and will not easily be denied. (*Nations* 56)

Such assertions further prove that all efforts to understand nations and nationalisms are bound to yield indecisive conclusions like that of Hugh Seton-Watson that “there is no ‘scientific’ means of establishing what all nations have in common” (quoted in Brennan 213). But one has to agree with Gellner, particularly in a work dealing with Mistry’s position that the conflicting interpretations and explanations of the terms are often, taking Gellner’s expression, ‘deeply rooted’ in the multiple aspects of socio-economic conditions.

The discourses of nation and nationalism definitely lack a straight teleological course. It is rewarding to read the early thinker activists who formulated their ideas of nation and nationalism in the socio-political environment of colonialism as when Fanon writes, “The living expression of the nation is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women. The collective building up of a destiny is the assumption of responsibility on the historical scale” (165).

It is of great importance to remember that postcolonial nations, even if not deriving their genealogy from such narratives, at least have a major reference point in them. No attempts at understanding of postcolonial nations and nationalisms can be
complete without revisiting the colonial experience and the early conceptions of
postcolonial nations in the writings of indigenous writers and activists. Leela Gandhi
fully realizes the importance of revisiting anti-colonial discourses of nation and
nationalism when she says, “without discounting the transgressive availability of
such polysemic anti-colonial subjectivities, in deference to a sense of realpolitik we
still need to listen carefully to, for example, Fanon’s categorical delineation of a
situated, monolithic and combative national identity” (112-113, italics in original).
Thus, it is enriching to correlate the old, classical and activist nationalisms with new
theoretical and deconstructive theories in the context of postcolonial nations and
nationalisms. Benita Parry notes that contemporary critical apparatus may not lead to
a proper appreciation of anti-colonial discourses as these were necessitated by a
different set of political requirements by saying that, “it is surely necessary to refrain
from a sanctimonious reproof of modes of writing resistance which do not conform to
contemporary theoretical rules about discursive radicalism” (179). Benita Parry has in
fact stressed the need of revisiting these anti-colonial counter narratives as they, “did
challenge, subvert and undermine the ruling ideologies, and nowhere more so than in
overthrowing the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, the speech and stance of the
colonized refusing a position of subjugation and dispensing with the terms of the
coloniser’s definitions” (176).

“We must take seriously Vico’s great observation that men make their own
history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography:
as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such
as locales, regions, geographical sectors as “Orient” and “Occident” are man-made”
(Orientalism 4-5). This assertion of Said is theoretically antithetical in its theoretical
attitude to Fanon’s definition of nation quoted above. Written in a characteristic
Fanonian idiom, the definition cited above conjures the logic and justification of the nation in the enlightened consciousness of the colonized masses to enter and alter history by resisting political and economic hegemony through violence. Fanon’s definition can be understood as one of the several examples of anti-colonial/postcolonial consciousness responding to the socio-political and economic imperatives of the colonial condition by invoking the idea of nation and by conceiving it as a collective end which would mark the end of economic and political hegemony. Fanon’s nationalism is essentially oppositional and theorizes history as a violent contest between the colonizer and the colonized. The nation he imagines rises as a consequence of the concerted retaliation by the dispossessed victims of colonial racism. It is conceived as a radical reversal of the political and cultural racism that propels colonialism.

As an important milestone of anti-colonial theory of intellectual and political resistance, Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* has attracted much critical attention. Such works can be used as important reference points in theoretical engagement with the concepts of nation and nationalism in postcolonial theory and literature. The terms in which Fanon writes about the nation is one of the ways of posing resistance to colonial oppression as also of negotiating with power through assertion of racial and cultural identity. Yet, as Fanon’s revolutionary doctrine of nationalism evolves, his differences with cultural nationalism of M.K.Gandhi and the Marxist theory become apparent. Both Gandhi and Fanon offer theories which are distinct yet possess significant similarities. Gyan Prakash juxtaposes the two figures in his edited book *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* to show that whereas Gandhi develops the main body of his anti-colonial theory through a political
appropriation of Indian religio-cultural tradition generating a theology of absolute and universal principles like non-violence; Fanon reposes faith in combative agency to deal with political and economic oppression.

The value and meaning of the anti-colonial oppositional discourses lies in their ability to deconstruct colonialism and in engineering ways of challenging colonial hegemony. Gandhi and Fanon display similarities by incorporating in their narratives a desire for decentralized national polity involving the peasantry rather than being controlled by elitist bourgeoisie nationalists. Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj* conceives the structure of the nation as dispersed in rural life without a commanding centre. Secondly both propose radical forms of cultural and political resistance to the cultural and political offensive of colonialism. This necessitates critiquing and resisting Western values, epistemologies and culture. These discourses have immense emotional appeal and seem to be built on essentialist and absolute ideas or are based on what Young below describes as ‘abstracted universalism’. However, it would not be wrong to say that these counter-hegemonic discourses are formulated and developed in their specific sets of social, political and cultural conditions and select their own foci and points of salience. While proposing methods of resistance and in formulating professedly indigenous forms of nationalisms they often appear to be conforming to strategic adjustments like selective appropriation of cultural and historical past in order to construct a nationalist historiography, forging homogeneities on national scale and/or adaptations of western ideas to suit local needs. Thus, although these discourses have an appearance of essentialism several strategic adjustments can be deciphered in their texts. Leela Gandhi makes a very
important intervention when she draws attention to the fact that Orientalist
generalizations were not only complicit with western power over the orient but were
available for strategic appropriation by national movements. Gandhian cultural
resistance for instance confirms some aspects of the orientalist image while trying
to found Indian nationalism on essentialized Indian cultural identity.

Purely oppositional expressions of national consciousness like those of Fanon
and Aurobindo are characterized by a belief in creating national solidarities sustained
by homogeneities of race and class in the case of Fanon and race and culture in
Aurobindo and Gandhi and in the utopian possibility of an almost complete
obliteration of colonial experience. Although such aspirations are a compulsion of
anti-colonial imagination, yet, they may not be treated either as fully realizable in the
character of the nation nor as the essential condition of the societies in which they
assume shape. The nation that comes into existence in the aftermath of the colonial
rule merely proves their inadequacies and deficiencies. The critiques of writers like
Nandy, Leela Gandhi, Partha Chaterjee and Ashis Nandy and the works of Mistry and
Rushdie, discussed later, go a long way in establishing the gap between anti-colonial
nationalist imagination and postcolonial nations. Rather than being held as creditable
theories of nation they can be studied to establish their dependence on Western ideas,
selective appropriations from native cultures and illusory ideas about a final
disjunction with the colonial past. There is also a forcefully articulated desire for
culture and class based solidarities of a lasting nature.

In his introduction to Sartre’s *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, Robert J. C.
Young writes, ‘Fanon, as Homi Bhabha has observed, ‘rarely historicizes the colonial
experience’ (Bhabha 1986:xiii). This was a deliberate political strategy: it was the
abstracted universalism of Fanon’s analysis that enabled The Wretched of the Earth to
become, in Stuart Hall’s words, ‘the Bible of decolonization’” (Sartre xviii). The
‘abstracted universalism’ with which Fanon conceptualizes the colonial encounter
runs through Fanon’s account of the colonial situation. This aspect of Fanon’s anti-
colonialism can be extended to Gandhi as well and it is in this aspiration for complete
annihilation of colonial experience, an unmitigated erasure of its cultural and
economic reality and its replacement by a new economic and cultural system born out
of revolutionary consciousness that both these activist thinkers are different from later
theorists like Bhabha and Said who accept the inherent hybridity of their cultural
location and the instability of all cultural signs. For theorists like Bhabha, “resistance
is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple
negation or exclusion of the ‘content’ of another culture, as a difference once
perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition
of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference” (Location,
110). Whereas for Bhabha the self-conscious foregrounding of ambivalence may
become a strategy of subversion for Gandhi and Fanon subversion cannot be achieved
without activism and political restructuring. This difference can be attributed to the
fact that Fanon’s and Gandhi’s ideas attain maturity in an atmosphere of oppression
and violence and an urgent need to overcome it through the creation of a nation.
Sartre’s existential humanism and his belief in the possibility of freedom through
responsible and authentic choices and agency find forceful expression in Fanon’s anti-
colonial nationalism as he adapts Sartre’s analysis of the colonial situation in his
articulations. According to Young,
The split between colonizer and colonized, internalized by Fanon to provide the kind of Manichaean schizo-culture so forcefully analyzed at the beginning of the *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), is drawn directly from Sartre’s model in which colonizer and colonized are ‘similarly strangled by the colonial apparatus, that heavy machine.’ (xiii)

Sartre’s ideological debt on Fanon is apparent in his understanding of political action being determined and founded in subjective choice to act against the dialectical oppositions engendered by the colonial system. Like Sartre again Fanon adjusts Marxist assumptions to deal with the local colonial situation. Young recognizes Sartre as a major theoretical influence on early postcolonial activists and traces the relevance of his unique theoretical position to postcolonial assumptions, “The conflictual dialectic of subject and object in Sartre’s phenomenology formed the theoretical basis for his Marxism which started out not from the determining material conditions of the world but from the subject as agent, acting his choices out in the conditions of history” (xviii-xix).

Fanon’s thesis is based on a belief in radical and complete decolonization through mass mobilization and political action. Fanon constructs a history of complete and unmitigated dichotomous and oppositional “reciprocal exclusivity” between the colonized and the colonizer which can reach its resolution through reversal of the political and economic situation (Fanon 30). The nation he imagines is one that “unifies people by the radical decision to remove from it its heterogeneity, and by unifying it on a national, sometimes a racial basis” (Fanon 35). As has been pointed out above early accounts of nation and nationalism formulated in reaction to colonial exploitation try to define racial and/or cultural cohesion in an antithetical opposition
to the West. Although, Fanon perceives colonial history as an economic reality that requires revolutionary correction, he feels the need to make a departure from a purely Marxist interpretation of the colonial situation as a necessary expansion of capital:

When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem. (Fanon 30-31)

The assertion of race/identity and their intervention in history as they are invoked in national consciousness do not search for validity in universal absolutes in the case of Fanon mainly on account of his Marxist leanings. The contestations of race/identity leading to material possession and dispossession are, according to Fanon a dialectical phenomenon. “The natives’ challenge to the colonial world …is not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute. The colonial world is a Manichaean world” (Fanon 31). The new nation will follow a complete eradication of the superstructure of western values aimed at forging national solidarity leading to the overthrow of the colonial economic structures.

Unlike Gandhi, Fanon’s understanding of truth is clearly existential in the Sartrean sense. The idea of truth is formulated in the colonial situation, “…truth is the property of the national cause. No absolute verity, no discourse on the purity of the soul can shake this position…Truth is that which hurries on the break-up of the
colonialist regime; it is that which promotes the emergence of the nation…” (Fanon 39) The conservatism of the bourgeoisie, according to Fanon, increases the possibility of achieving incomplete decolonization and continuation of colonial economic structures. Fanon regards the bourgeoisie of the colonized nation as an obstacle in the way of complete decolonization as they ensure the continuation of colonial economic structure by merely replacing the bourgeoisie of the colonizing nation.

Reinvention of indigenous cultures is a common phenomenon in anti-colonial struggles. It is both a means of self-assertion against the universalist claims of western culture and a way of rediscovering the authentic indigenous past. Revisiting or reconstructing native culture also has strategic, psychological and rehabilitative importance in the cultural dialectics of the colonial situation. Fanon also concedes the fact that cultural hegemony is one of the methods of colonial expansion as colonialism establishes itself through cultural misrepresentation and distortion, “By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys …this work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today” (169).

The differences between Fanon on the one hand and Gandhi and Aurobindo on the other with regard to their views on culture are several. Fanon conceives the idea of national culture and not Negro or black culture. Without attempting to find the basis of his nationalism in pre-colonial cultural way of life, Fanon argues that national culture cannot be isolated and thought of as distinct from political life. The enterprise of native cultural resurrection for Fanon is like an exercise in primitivism which distracts from the political necessity of political action. Fanon writes: “The culture that the intellectual leans towards is often no more than a stock of particularisms…
man of culture… will let himself be hypnotized by these mummified fragments which because they are static are in fact symbols of negation and outworn contrivances” (180). According to his argument, this type of cultural excavation is a negation of colonial reality. Thus rather than a simple reclamation the question of culture in the colonial context involves a dynamic reinvention in the light of material and political realities. In this line of thought it becomes desirable for cultural and artistic products to have pedagogical value. Culture must reincarnate and reinvent itself in the political dynamics of the colonial situation and make the establishment of nation its abiding value.

Thus, it is apparent that the almost mandatory encounter of the colonial societies with the idea of nation and nationalism is deeply problematic. The paradox of colonial societies’ experience of ideas of nation and nationalism through colonial rule gives rise to several questions of cultural and political importance. Whereas Marxist theories such as those discussed above at overt or covert levels are suspicious of nations and nation-states on grounds of their being brought into existence through capitalist advancements – those that took place as a result of expansion of markets and introduction of capitalist modes of production and division of labour in colonial societies or as a consequence of the nationalist bourgeoisie’s nationalist aspirations – there are others like Ashis Nandy that read in the postcolonial nation confusions of the cultural encounter of the East and the West. Ashis Nandy’s thesis is symptomatic of a new mood of interrogation in the colonial aftermath and of an important position in relation to the idea of nation in the postcolonial times.
The problem of reaching at a resolution of the highly confusing relationship between nationalism and colonial cultures is dealt with in Ashis Nandy’s essay “The Illegitimacy of Nationalism”. Economist Joan Robinson’s remark, “that the only thing worse than being colonized was not being colonized” is an apt description of the ambiguities governing the troubled relationship between colonized societies and nationalism (qtd. in Nandy 3). Ashis Nandy, in the introduction to his essay, traces the genesis of nationalism in India to the colonial period. According to him, the idea of the modern nation-state, “entered Indian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, riding piggy-back on the western ideology of nationalism” (v). According to him the term Indian nationalism is itself fraught with contradictions because nationalist aspirations were modelled on western experience. Nandy gets involved in a process of diagnosing the troubled entry of the term nationalism in the Indian discourse. First and foremost, nation and nationalism are integral to the modernist colonial pedagogy and its binomial relationship with the backward, native, rural and primitive colonized world. Yet, as Nandy notes, even in the colonial period there were dissenting voices that identified the associations of nationalism with, “the record of colonial violence”; with what could be explained as the re-appearance of a pre-modern concept as a “pathological by-product of global capitalism” and to forces of homogenized universalism, “itself a product of uprootedness and deculturation” (vi). For Nandy, any imposition of the ideology of polity which does not have a reference in history and civilization would be vacuous. He carries out an analysis of Rabindranath Tagore’s works in order to find justification for his ideas. For Nandy, both Tagore and Gandhi, in their own distinct ways sought to find a cultural basis of Indian Nationalism as a way of resolving the contradictions of the necessity of
adopting an alien concept. Nandy places special emphasis on Tagore’s ideas to say that even in the colonial period there were thinkers who were opposed to the nationalism that was mainly modelled on the Western models. In this context Nandy writes:

As a result, for Tagore, nationalism itself became gradually illegitimate; for Gandhi, nationalism began to include a critique of nationalism. For both over time, the Indian freedom movement ceased to be an expression of only nationalist consolidation; it came to acquire a new stature as a symbol of the universal struggle for political justice and cultural dignity. (Illegitimacy” 2-3)

By way of further amplification of the ideas of the two most prominent ideologues of the Indian nation and society, Nandy writes, “They did not want their society to be caught in a situation where the idea of the Indian nation would supersede that of the Indian civilization, and where the actual ways of life of Indians would be assessed solely in terms of their needs of an imaginary nation-state called India’” (Illegitimacy” 3). It becomes obvious as one peruses through Nandy’s expatiation of the ideas of Gandhi and Tagore that in the views of these thinkers culture is being granted an autonomous status. Nandy’s reading of Tagore’s writings arrives at a stage where the uncritical adoption of the western notions of nation and nationalism are treated as a form of Eurocentrism and placed in opposition to the idea of patriotism. Nandy writes that, “in this ideology of patriotism rather than of nationalism, there is a built-in critique of nationalism and refusal to recognize the nation-state as the organizing principle of the Indian civilization and as the last word in the country’s political life” (“Illegitimacy” 3).
Nandy in his other works like *The Romance of the State* has also shown a sense of discomfort with the prioritization of politics in what he perceives as largely apolitical and old civilizations. Or, in other words, Nandy’s culture oriented position is not accommodative of what Partha Chatterjee describes as, “the centrality of the modern state in the life of the nation” (112). Yet, one has to concede that unlike Chatterjee Nandy condones the majoritarian character of the nation. Nandy explains Tagore’s views on nationalism, as expressed in his book, *Nationalism*, as counter-modernist. According to him, the nation-state in the sense of a well regulated system of governance and polity may not agree with small native traditions that were dominant in the Indian society. He hearkens back to the native traditions of a composite, pluralist and liberal society in pre-colonial India to assert that the political should have its basis in the cultural and social. For Tagore, the real tradition of India lay in the gradual crystallization at social and cultural levels of ways which consummate, “an adjustment of races, to acknowledge the real differences between them, and yet seek some basis of unity” (Tagore 59). The expression of this tradition is to be found in Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and others. While, the apprehensions expressed in Tagore’s thesis are legitimate and his forebodings have an appearance of truth; the remedies and alternatives that are made available in his critique of nationalism may not have much tenability for several reasons. Tagore is fearful of the mechanical nature and inexorable operations of political structures that are blindly replicated without a consideration of the sensitivities of a people. In such a manifestation it is akin to “*bhougalikapadevta*, a geographical demon” (Nandy “Illegitimacy” 7). A thesis like that of Nandy involves a strategic exclusion, annulment and erasure of the colonial experience and his idea of traditional Indian past appears to be idealized.
The ideas of Aurobindo can be placed next to those of Tagore or of Fanon as another example of nationalist aspirations formulated under the yoke of political slavery and under the immediate need of conceiving the contours of a nation. The essay, “Bhawani Mandir”, is one of the most revealing of Aurobindo’s essays on nationalism published between nineteen hundred five and six. Aurobindo defines nation in the following words:

For what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as BhawaniMahishaMardini sprang into being from the Shakti of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. (69)

Aurobindo envisages a nation less on civilizational and cultural lines and more on religious ones. Broadly speaking, this approach foregrounds religion in its nationalist pursuits and according to it; nation comes into existence when a people come into the realization of their spiritual strength. Elsewhere, Aurobindo has defined nationalism as, “an avatar (incarnation of divinity) and cannot be slain. Nationalism is a divinely appointed shakti of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the Universal Energy from which it came” (“Life” 239).

Commenting on Aurobindo’s essay “The Life of Nationalism”, Nandy says that Aurobindo, “located his nationalist passions in a theory of transcendence that made sense to many Indians” (Nandy “Illegitimacy” 7).

Aurobindo seeks cohesion essential to nation and nationalism in a transcendental belief in a Universal and Infinite Energy he calls ‘Shakti’ and which has a basis in the spiritual beliefs of a people. He finds manifestations of this power in
different forms according to the character of different ages. Energy can take the forms of love, knowledge, renunciation or pity. In the Indian context this, “Infinite Energy is Bhawani, She is Durga, She is Kali, She is Radha the Beloved, She is Lakshmi, She is our mother and the Creatress of all… In the present age, the Mother is manifested as the mother of Strength. She is pure Shakti” (“Bhawani” 65). It is important, he believes, for the Indian people to discover their Energy just as the people of England have discovered it in their industry and science or as the people of Japan found the sources of that inexhaustible strength which were drawn from religion. Aurobindo describes the latter as, “It was the vedantic teachings of Oyemei and the recovery of Shintoism with its worship of the national Shakti of Japan in the image and person of the Mikado” (“Bhawani” 72). The reason that India has been enslaved lie in its inability to tap its Energy. He writes, “The mighty force of knowledge which European Science bestows is a weapon for the hands of a giant, it is the mace of Bheemsen; what can a weakling do with it but crush himself in the attempt to wield it” (“Bhawani” 77). The path to political freedom in the form of a nation can only be achieved through the spiritual path, through the courting of “strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible source of all the others” (“Bhawani” 68). Aurobindo even conceives a historic role for India in the scheme of the future:

It is she (India) who must send forth from herself the future of religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. In the sphere of morality, likewise, it is her mission to purge barbarism (Mlechchhhahood) out of humanity and to Aryanise the world. (“Bhawani” 70)
In his notion of nationalism, religious belief becomes the fountainhead of action; something that can eradicate fear, doubt, hesitation, sluggishness collectively called Tamas. It is clear that Aurobindo’s nationalist theory is couched in a religious idiom. In this case, resistance to colonial oppression is to be posed through the discovery of cohesion on religious lines. Aurobindo’s thesis has very strong intimations of traditional belief in a homogeneous national community, a desire to overcome colonial oppression and desire for cultural and religious self-discovery. Such theses come in for explicit and implicit critiquing by various thinkers who attempt to theorise the problematic of their relevance to essentially multicultural, multi-religious and heterogeneous spaces like India and also to the danger of their being appropriated for chauvinistic and exclusionary programmes. It has to be conceded that although Gandhi and Aurobindo both are innocent of fanatical intentions, yet it is important to rationalise their ideas in the context of the challenges of a postcolonial nation that has to constantly contend with the opposing pressures of majority and minority communities or the majoritarian desire for negation of difference and the minority desire for assertion of cultural and religious difference. Mistry’s work is deeply reflective of these pressures in the postcolonial Indian society. There are a couple of pointed references to Gandhi in Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* where the narrative, in narrating the agony of the marginalized castes even after independence, tries to expose the gap between the idealistic notions of Gandhian nationalism and the chronic and persistent divisions of caste in the Indian social set up. In the other novels also, as will be seen below, Mistry’s work is deeply involved with the day to day contests on grounds of parochial notions of caste and religion as well as the political appropriations of these categories for wrestling economic power.
Two objections, though vastly removed from each other, to ways of imagining India on religious and transcendental lines, as in the case of Aurobindo, can be cited here to show that the ways of theorizing the nation are radically different in the colonial and postcolonial periods and that the requirements of these two phases are vastly different. Aijaz Ahmad and Partha Chatterjee from their respective positions expose the deficiencies of early nationalist historiographies. Critiquing the incorporation of the canonical Hindu religious texts in the category of Indian literature as metanarratives of cultural nationalism, Ahmad writes:

For the historical moment in which this particular idea of an ‘Indian Literature’ came into being was also that same moment in which a canonical kind of ‘Hinduism’ (‘syndicated Hinduism’, in Romilla Thapar’s telling phrase) was also assembled, more or less on the model of the Semitic religions, with the notions of uniform beliefs, canonical texts, prophetic traditions, clerical institutions, adjudicable bodies of prescriptions, and all the rest...(260)

Carrying his argument forward Ahmad writes:

Aurobindo’s emphatic notion – stated at considerable length in his *The Foundations of Indian Culture* – that the *Mahabharata*, Valmiki’s *Ramayana* and (much less so) the plays of Kalidasa sufficiently constitute the essence, the difference and the achievement of Indian Literature presumes this narrowing of canonicity and the substantial overlap of the literary and the religious; apart from some general comments on narrative realism, what Aurobindo emphasizes most strongly, in the manner of a great many elite traditions, is
precisely their metaphysical grandeur and spiritual timelessness. This then
privileges certain kinds of readings and disallows others…it cannot be read in
relation to the secular conditions of its own production, nor as an ideological
text whose main task is to offer an imaginary resolution for real conflicts in
the secular, familial and material domains. (260-261)

Partha Chatterjee’s writings also stand in contentious relation with such
positions. As a leading member of the Subaltern Studies Collective in postcolonial
India, Chatterjee gives a voice to the excluded sections of India’s nationalism in a
thesis which diverges in some very significant ways from the ideas of postcolonial
writers like Nandy and exposes not only the gap between both anti-colonial thought
and postcolonial criticism but also the differences within postcolonial criticism.
Writing on the exclusions of India’s nationalist historiography in his book The Nation
and its Fragments, Chatterjee conceptualizes ‘Hindu Nationalism’, which he believes
to be the founding principle of Indian nationalism, as constructed on modernist,
rationalist, historicist and secular lines with very little pre-modern content attached
with the religion denominator ‘Hindu’ in it. ‘Hindu’ here is used as a generic or
umbrella term appropriated for nationalist use which neither accounts for the
“sectarian differences among Hindus” not does it exclude “anti-vedic and anti-
Brahaminical religions as Buddhism and Jainism.” Chatterjee, thus does not treat
religion as absolute as in the case of Aurobindo but in a very important intervention
writes about political appropriation of religion through a historicist evaluation of
nationalist history. Chatterjee goes on to ask “What then is the criterion for inclusion
and exclusion?” and “What … is the place of those inhabitants of India who are
excluded from this nation?” (110). The answer provided by Chatterjee is that the idea
of Indian nationalism is basically a majoritarian idea and majoritarianism becomes the basis of nationalist historiography. Moreover, this majoritarian nationalism takes shape in conjunction with an imperfect conception of secularism in which,

the formal institutions of the state, based on undifferentiated concept of citizenship cannot allow for the separate representation of minorities.

Consequently, the question of who represents minorities necessarily remains problematic, and constantly threatens the tenuous identity of nation and state (112)

Chatterjee’s scrutiny of the discourse of nationalist historiography also betrays a sense of unease with idealistic notions of Indian cultural and civilizational past which are not sufficiently historicized. The early nationalists, Chatterjee writes, held a belief in a kind of idealized secularism. The early nationalists, “denied the centrality of the state in the life of the nation and instead pointed to the many institutions and practices in the everyday lives of the people through which they had evolved a way of living with their differences” Such a view claims an “essential and transhistorical truth for the everyday life of the people” (112.). Such celebrations of pristine civilizational secularism are integral to the philosophy of Tagore, Gandhi and even Aurobindo. Chatterjee, however, believes that such nationalist theories of a cultural past give a central place to Hindu history and are clearly elliptical. Chatterjee also notices how parts of history are subjected to processes of homogenization or strategic silences to finally say that Indian history in its true nature is less singular and more confederal. The sweeping and generalized identification of subjection and conquest with Muslim rule in India for him is done in line with the requirements of Hindu nationalism. He writes:
The idea of the singularity of national history has inevitably led to a single source of Indian tradition, namely, ancient Hindu civilization. Islam here is either the history of foreign conquest or a domesticated element of everyday popular life. The classical heritage of Islam remains external to Indian history. (113)

It is for these and similar reasons that there is an undifferentiated treatment of rule of the Moguls and that of the Pathans. The historical differences between the Pathans and the Muslims are glossed over in the same way as various sectarian differences within Hinduism are. In another interesting observation, Chatterjee, affirms that the narrative of Aryan evolution in India can also be easily disrupted. He discovers a disjuncture between the history of India and that of Bengal which is held as, “the putative centre of a generically sovereign state. Chatterjee sees very little hope of reclaiming alternative histories as they lie, “submerged in the last hundred years by the tidal wave of historical memory about Arya-Hindu-Bharatvarsa” (114). Chatterjee’s differences with thinker activists like Gandhi, Aurobindo and Tagore elucidate the differences between a historicist account of Indian nationalism and essentialized ones. It also brings to the fore what has been described above as the irreconcilable differences between modes of thinking in colonial and postcolonial times. It also takes us in close proximity to Mistry’s objections to popular discourses of nation and nationalism.

Having said that one has to concede that the centrality of nation and nationalism to anti-colonial struggle and postcolonial reality has been one of the major concerns of Postcolonial Studies Discourse. Commenting on the contiguity of...
the desire for nation-ness to anti-colonial struggle, one of the most prominent postcolonial theorists, Leela Gandhi writes:

The project of becoming postcolonial - of arriving into a decisive moment after colonialism - has usually been commemorated and legitimated through the foundation of independent nation-States. So also, nationalism has supplied the revolutionary vocabulary for various decolonization struggles, and has long been acknowledged as the political vector through which disparate anti-colonial movements acquire a cohesive revolutionary shape and form. (110-111, italics in original)

Thus, the imperativeness of nationalist aspirations in postcolonial thought also lies in the fact that such aspirations mediate the enterprise of becoming politically independent from colonial dominance and also the process of cultural self-assertion. They also become the justification for the will to freedom and the logic of transition from colonial to postcolonial.

But as discussed above there is distance between these nationalist theories and aspirations that are formulated in response to colonial oppression and the nation-states that come into existence in the postcolonial period. Couched in the peculiarities of Parsi location, Mistry’s work is an example in creative writing of the theoretical irreconcilabilities of the anti-colonial conceptions of nations and nationalisms and the postcolonial nation-states. The early nationalisms usually do not and cannot become the ontological basis of the postcolonial nations and indeterminacies continue to eternally plague them. Leela Gandhi raises a very pertinent issue by questioning the fundamentals of third world nationalisms. She asks, “…are these insurgent
nationalisms purely of simply reactions against the fact of colonial dominance? Is the idea of the ‘nation’ germane to the cultural topography of the third world, or is anti-colonial nationalism a foreign and ‘derivative’ discourse?” (102-103). While we have to learn very important lessons from M. K. Gandhi’s religio-political idiom, Fanon’s redemptive use of violence with its existentialist basis or Aurobindo’s civilizational nationalism they cannot be made the sole theoretical basis for these nations. They can most profitably be read as what Gyan Prakash describes as, “another history of agency and knowledge alive in the dead weight of the colonial past” (5). Leela Gandhi also highlights the dangers of idealizing either anti-colonial resistance or the postcolonial nation when she hints at the entanglement of the postcolonial nation with the question of power: "The culture of resistance…finds its theoretical and political limit in the chauvinist and authoritarian boundaries of postcolonial nation-state – itself a conformity producing prison-house which reverses, and merely replicates, the old colonial divisions of racial consciousness” (81). After the colonial phase comes to an end critical thought begins to re-interrogate the legitimacy of postcolonial nationalisms which emerge from the mixed legacy of colonial encounter and native self-assertion.

As postcolonial theory evolves and develops new concerns after the end of colonial rule it revises and renews it perspectives on the questions of nation and nationalism. Important expressions of these revisions are to be found in postcolonial fiction, non-fiction and contemporary theory. Contemporary postcolonial accounts and estimates dealing with the idea of nation have become more self-reflexive and endoscopic. The postcolonial Indian novel in English has been obsessively concerned
with the problems or what can be perceived as the failures and problems of 
postcolonial India. Novels like those of Mistry, Naipaul and Rushdie have in their 
own specific ways and from their respective critical stances critiqued postcolonial 
India. The representation of the postcolonial nation in the pages of fiction opens up 
new possibilities of exploring the question. Novel of the diaspora, as will be discussed 
below, with its remote, memory based depictions, or, the novel written from the 
socio-cultural and economic margins of postcolonial India have in their distinct ways 
reflected upon the political and social reality of postcolonial India.


WORKS CITED


