Chapter 1

Swaraj and Nation as Idea

More often than not, India as a nation is defined in terms of its metaphysics. The overtly metaphysical leanings of Hindu philosophy, and the constant theorization of India as a divine land in the ancient Vedic texts and scriptures goes into this kind of metaphysicalization of India as a nation. In this chapter, a study is undertaken of attempts, made from time to time by leading contemporary Indian thinkers, to locate India in some sort of a teleological, mytho-poetic, quasi-religious frame. Though most of the contemporary thinking, grounded as it is in the empirical ethos of Western scholarship, tends to depart from any easy essentialization of India into an abstract idea, yet there are a host of thinkers who look upon Indian nationalism as remarkably different from the official nationalism being practiced in some of European countries. In this chapter besides the contemporary perspectives, some of the so-called not-so-contemporary perspectives have been taken for
extensive analysis to underline an uncanny continuity of thought on the nature and character of Indian nationalism.

I

In this part of the chapter, the accent would be on the political ideas of Sri Aurobindo, Rabinderanath Tagore, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Radhakrishnan, Raja Rao and Jiddu Krishnamurthy. The last two writers/thinkers of this list have hitherto been not studied as political philosophers as such. In fact they do not address to political issues directly, but they do reflect over the Indianness of India, the philosophical foregrounding of India as a nation. Even the inclusion of Ananda Coomaraswamy as political philosopher theorizing the nation, can also be disputed because primarily he was an art-historian. But in the scope and general tenor of the argument of the nation as an idea, Ananda Coomaraswamy does offer important insights which have bearings on the level of political thought of India. Also the views of Vinayak Savarkar would be studied to underline the overtly Hindu idea of India as a nation. The thinkers mentioned above have used the term swarajya quite often in their discourses. In relative terms they
may not be very recent, yet they form the very beginning of modern Indian thought. In this respect, they may be taken as representative thinkers of the contemporary political thinking in its formative phase. These thinkers, their subtle differences apart, tend to define nation as an idea. Let us begin with Tagore's idea of nation.

Tagore supports the idea of nation, provided it does not lapse into a construct of 'narrow domestic walls'. In his opinion "blind worship of the nation and the Nation State contained the seeds of disaster for man". Citing West as an example, Tagore says, "In the West the national machinery of commerce and politics turns out neatly compressed bales of humanity which have their use and high market value; but they are bound in iron hoops, labelled and separated off with scientific care and precision". Tagore holds modern nations to be political and economic arrangements. Modern nation "is merely the side of power, not of human ideals". When this power on the wings of science "begins to grow and brings in harvests of wealth, then it crossed the boundaries with amazing rapidity for, then it goad all its neighbouring societies with greed of material prosperity, and consequent mutual jealousy, and by the fear of each other's growth into powerfulness." He
goes on to add that ultimately this political power "becomes its ruling force" and "can stop no longer" because "the competition grows keener, organization grows faster, and selfishness attains supremacy. Treading upon the greed and fear of man, it occupies more and more space in society". Tagore, a champion of open nationalism points out some of the inherent defects in the very conceptualization of modern nation-state: "When this organization of politics and commerce, whose other name is the nation, becomes all-powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is evil day for humanity". In Tagore's opinion "nation is the organized self-interest of a whole people where it is least human and least spiritual."

Criticizing the Western brand of nationalism, Tagore advises the Eastern world to live up to its own ideals of spirituality and unity of mankind. He blasts Indians and other Eastern nationalists for imitating Western brand of nationalism:

The educated Indian at present is trying to absorb some lessons from history contrary to the lessons of our ancestors. The East, in fact is attempting to
take unto itself a history, which is not the outcome of its own living. Japan, for example, thinks she is getting powerful through adopting Western methods but, after she has exhausted her inheritance, only the borrowed weapons of civilization will remain to her. She will not have developed herself from within.\(^9\)

Tagore, as an internationalist, holds "nationalism is a cruel epidemic of evil that is sweeping over the human world of the present age, and eating into its moral vitality"\(^{10}\). Modern nationhood is a perfect organization of power, but not of spiritual idealism.

According to Tagore, India never had nationalism, as the term nationalism is usually understood in the empirical West. The following statement from Tagore might lead some narrow nationalist to dismiss Tagore as a true Indian:

India never had a real sense of nationalism. Even though from childhood I have been taught that idolatry of the nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity, I believe I have
outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity.¹¹

India cannot be realized as nation, if it is approached through purely political nationalism. India as a nation subsumes within itself the universal and the global.

Tagore criticizes the short-sightedness of different political parties who were seeking national independence in a rather measured way:

There are different parties in India, with different ideals. Some are struggling for political independence. Others think that the time has not arrived for that, and yet believe that India should have the rights that the English colonies have. They wish to gain autonomy as far as possible.¹²

In Tagore’s romanticist vision, freedom is not a question of autonomy or of rights; nor is it a matter of political struggle.
alone. To retrieve nation from the imperial forces is an endless project that demands total commitment and sacrificing.

Tagore does not approve the structuralists who hold nation to be a mechanism of law and order alone. This pretext of defining nation in terms of law and order as the governing principle is the most negative way of visualizing it. The perfection of this principle is "the perfection of an egg-shell, whose true value lies in the security it affords to the chick and its nourishment, and not on the convenience it offers to the person at the breakfast table". Any nation based on the principle of law and order breeds homogenizing tendencies and tends to be tyrannical. Therefore Tagore dismisses the very idea of equating nation with any administrative set up: "Mere administration is unproductive, it is not creative, not being a living thing. It is a steam-roller, formidable in its weight and power, having its uses, but it does not help the soil to become fertile." The organizational set up that is usually associated with nation cannot address to the needs of social well being and moral upliftment. According to Tagore when nation becomes an arrangement for political or economic pursuits alone, it spells disaster for the humanity: "When this organization of politics and commerce, whose other name is the
Nation, becomes all-powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is an evil day for humanity.”

Tagore’s nation is not an exclusive space. Nation should not be taken as a unit of international rivalry. Nation as politically organized geographic terrain, diverts people from the basic tenets of human-co-existence: “For thereby man’s power of sacrifice is diverted from his ultimate object, which is moral, to the maintenance of this organization, which is mechanical.” Political freedom should not lead to segregation. Explaining his stance towards the colonial West, Tagore says: “I am not for thrusting off Western civilization and becoming segregated in our independence.”

After Tagore, Aurobindo carries forward the tradition of locating nation in the metaphysical with much greater gusto and conviction. Aurobindo who started as a revolutionary, in his latter life, realized the limitations of his brand of nationalism. He undergoes a transformation during his stay in jail in the Alipore Conspiracy Case. He realizes that nation is not a mere geographical unit to be liberated from the clutches of the colonialist; it is a divine spiritual space, and freeing this space from the yoke of foreign rule is a metaphysical project, a
religious mission. This is how he defines nationalism: "What is nationalism? Nationalism is not mere political programme; nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live." Clearly to Aurobindo, nation is not an intellectual construct, nor nationalism an intellectual project. He warns those who mistake nationalism for some kind of intellectual pride:

Let no man dare to call himself a Nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is more patriotic, thinking that he is something higher than those who do not call themselves by that name. If you are going to be a Nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalists, you must do it in the religious spirit.

Nationalism is not an intellectual vanity. From a pure intellectual angle, nationalism can be dismissed as rank madness, but intellectuals never bring about nationalistic revolutions. To meet the materially rich and strong imperial West, only spiritual convictions can generate energy and confidence. To fight for nation is to fight for dharma.
In his very famous Uttarpara Speech, Aurobindo goes a step forward; not only does he identify nationalism with dharma, he equates it with Sanatan Dharma thus:

When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatan Dharma that shall rise. When it said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatan Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatan Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over world. It is for the Dharma and by the Dharma that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country. 21

Nation, in Aurobindonian thought, then, is not a working arrangement for economic benefits, it is a construct of faith and belief. Further, in the same historic speech, he declares about the religious underpinnings of his nationalism in unequivocal terms:

... I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a
religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it another way. I say no longer nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatan Dharma which is for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatan Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatan Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatan Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatan Dharma it would perish. The Sanatan Dharma, that is nationalism. 22

By extending nationalism to faith, and then faith to Sanatan Dharma, Aurobindo postulates nationalism as an eternal mission, a continuous task. Neither nation is a pure political unit, nor nationalism a pure political movement.

Aurobindo distinguishes between European concept of nation from that of India/Asia in terms of the national vitality shown by the respective nations of the two continents. What really juxtaposes Indian as nation form any other European nation is its unbroken continuous past of more than five thousand years. In his brief note entitled "National Vitality", 53
Aurobindo explains the overt differences in the very concept of nation:

European nations seem to have a brief date, a lifetime vigorous but soon-exhausted; Asiatic races persist and survive. It was not so in old times. Not only Greece and Rome perished, Assyria, Chaldea, Phoenicia are written in the book of the Dead. But the difference now seems well-established. France is a visibly dying nation, Spain seems to have lost the power of revival, Italy and Greece have been lifted up by great effort and sacrifices but show a weak vitality, the Anglo-Saxon race is beginning everywhere to recede and dwindle. On the other hand in Asia life pulsates victoriously. . . . The effect on India of an accumulation of almost all the conditions which bring about national death, has been a new lease of life and a great dynamic impulse. . . . What is the source of this difference? Is it not in this that Asia has developed her spirituality and Europe has turned from it? 23
The foundation of nation in the spiritual and the timeless sustains Asiatic nation as against the foundation of European nations in material put them into a perishable mortal frame. It goes to Aurobindo credit that he locates Indian nationalism in an indigenous frame; his frame of nation is not the usual Western frame of nation.

In his “The Ideal of the Karmayogin”, an article published as editorial to the first issue of Karmayogin, Aurobindo refuses to accept the Western methods as the only methods of building India as a new nation. This is how he defines Western ways: “The European sets great store by machinery. He seeks to renovate humanity by schemes of society and systems of government; he hopes to bring about the millennium by Parliament.”

Aurobindo does not approve of the overtly Western strategies of nineteenth century Indian reformers and political activists: “The nineteenth century in India aspired to political emancipation, social renovation, religious vision and rebirth, but it failed because it adopted Western motives and methods.” In a hard critique of the anglicized nineteenth Indian elite, Aurobindo reminds them the limits of their project of social reforms thus:
Widow- remarriage, substitution of class for caste, adult marriage, intermarriages, interdining and other nostrums of the social reformer are mechanical changes which whatever their merits or demerits cannot by themselves save the soul of the nation alive or stay the course of degradation and decline.26

According to Aurobindo, the task of social engineering cannot be accomplished through legislation or intellectual reforms.

The unprecedented national vigour which India has displayed all through its chequered history fascinates Aurobindo. Despite repeated invasions by alien enemies, India as a civilization has survived. Nationhood according to Aurobindo is not just credo of securing a space for shelter, it is in the Indian context, very assertion of its indigenous culture and way of living. Nationalism becomes a cultural enterprise:

We claim the right of every nation to live its own life by its own energies according to its own nature and ideals. We reject the claim of aliens to force upon us a civilization inferior to our own or to
keep us out of our inheritance on the untenable
ground of a superior fitness. . . . We point out to
the unexampled national vigour which has
preserved the people of this country through
centuries of calamity and defeat . . . 27

Swaraj, in the Aurobindonian frame, does not lie in mere
political freedom, it lies in the assertion of one’s own culture,
one’s own way of living. Of course, this does not mean hatred
against anyone.

Despite asserting India’s indigenous identity, Aurobindo,
very much like Tagore, does not advocate narrow nationalism.
Neither religion, nor nation should breed feelings of zingoism
or tendencies which threaten the unity of mankind.
Aurobindo’s nation ultimately must forge universal
brotherhood; it should not stand in the way of oneness of
humanity: “Our ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of
love and brotherhood and it looks beyond the unity of the
nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind . . . 28 But
Aurobindo does not seek this unity at the cost of India’s
subjugation under the colonial regime. In fact, any unity which
does not ensure equality is false and morally unsustainable.
Therefore Aurobindo is well aware of the dangers in-built in a unity which does not ensure freedom of the people from all kinds of subjugation:

But it is a unity of brothers, equals and free men that we seek, not the unity of master and serf, of devourer and devoured. We demand the realization of our corporate existence as a distinct race and nation because it is the only way in which the ultimate brotherhood of humanity can be achieved, not by blotting out individual peoples and effacing outward distinctions, but by removing internal obstacles to unity, the causes of hatred, malice and misunderstanding.²⁹

National freedom therefore is seen as a first step towards universal brotherhood. Nations do not necessarily divide people; rather they are the building blocks of universal order. thirty-nine Aurobindo's nation does not contradict the possibility of World State, provided such a State does not impose a monotonous uniformity all over the globe. thirty-one Also there should not be any hierarchy between nations / cultures in any scheme of World as one state.
Ananda Coomaraswamy, known as art-critic and an indologist, is an ardent nationalist. Writing as an artist, he calls attention to the debased aesthetic ideas and tastes which the ugly and sordid commercialism of the West has introduced into the mind of a nation (i.e., India) once distinguished for its superior beauty and grandeur. He laments the persistence of a servile imitation of English ideas, English methods, English machinery and production even in the new nationalism. The main drift of his writing is to censure the low imitative un-Indian ideals of our national activity in the nineteenth century. His mission was to outdistance and to instruct Europe of the rich cultural traditions that India possesses.

In his *Essays in National Idealism*, Ananda Coomaraswamy spells out his concept of nation. Nation to him is a moral and metaphysical construct. More than just a political entity, India as nation is an idea. Indian freedom struggle is seen more in terms of its struggle for the emancipation of this idea, than just a political pursuit of breaking from the colonial grid of Raj. He asks:
Do we fight with attachment to the fruits of works, such as political rights and commercial prosperity; or do we fight for an idea, the duty of self-realisation for the sake of others? If it is for an idea that we fight, victory is assured, if only for a material end, it may be that there also we shall win – or it may be not – but if we do win, it is not obvious what the great gain to humanity will be.\textsuperscript{32}

India as an idea represents an entire cultural ethos, and by that logic the entire humanity as well. In India’s freedom, Coomaraswamy, like Tagore and Aurobindo, sees not just a victory of one race, one nation or one culture. Indian freedom becomes the very trope of absolute liberty that cuts across the narrow considerations of race, nation or even a geography-specific culture.

To Coomaraswamy the geographical and social unity of India is a foregone conclusion. He traces the oneness of India as nation right from Asoka to Akbar thus:

The fact of India’s geographical unity is apparent on the map, and is never, I think, disputed. The
recognition of social unity is at least evident to the students of Indian culture. The idea has been grasped more than once by individual rulers — Asoka, Vikramaditya and Akbar. It was recognized before the Mahabharata was written; when Yudhishtira performed the rajsuya sacrifice on the occasion of his inauguration as sovereign, a great assembly was held and to this assembly came Bhima, Dhritrashtra and his hundred sons, Subala (King of Gandhara), etc. ... and others from the extreme south and north (Dravida, Ceylon and Kashmir 13

He further asks in a rhetoric not very different from Gandhi thus:

Is it not for nothing that India’s sacred shrines are many and far apart; that one who would visit more than one or two of these must pass over hundreds of miles of Indian soil? ... How much is involved in such phrases as ‘The Seven Great Rivers (of India)! The Hindu in the north repeats the mantram:
Om gange cha yamune chaiva godavari, sarasvati
Narmade, sindhu kaveri jale smin sannidhim kuru

when performing ceremonial ablutions; . . . 34

These relatively longer quotes from Coomaraswamy's essays amply prove that in the Sanskritic tradition, India was always heralded as a manifestation of a divine idea which no empirical theory of nation can account for.

The remarkable feature of Coomaraswamy's notion of nation is that it does derive its strength from dharma, without ever being remotely sounding communal or narrow nationalist. The following excerpt from the Preface to *Essays in National Idealism* brings out clearly the larger underpinnings of his concept of nation:

The true Nationalist is an Idealist; and for him that deeper cause of the Unrest is the longing for Self-realisation. He realises that Nationalism is a duty even more than a right; and that the duty of upholding the national Dharma is incompatible
with intellectual slavery, and therefore he seeks to free himself... 35

By relating nation to self, and national freedom to self-realisation, Coomaraswamy lifts the very concept of nation to metaphysical quest. Such a quest has its in-built secular dynamics which prevent its degeneration into a narrow communal spacio-temporal gain. It may be mentioned here that swaraj too at bottom is a credo of self-realization. Nation becomes an allegory of the self, both in Gandhi and Coomaraswamy. Observations such as these — "No other ideal can ever ultimately shape or determine the Indian character. In the immediate future this passion for self-sacrifice and self-realisation will find expression in a nationalism which will be essentially religious in its sanction" 36 or "The inspiration of our Nationalism must be not hatred or self-seeking; but Love, first of India, and secondly of England and of the World" 37 — can be attributed to Gandhi as well without any fear of contradiction. Coomaraswamy therefore anticipates Gandhi as far as the essentialization of India’s nationhood is concerned.

Both Gandhi and Coomaraswamy approach secularism through religion. Such a seemingly paradoxical stance
generates a concept of nation which is at once religious and secular, rather secular because of its religious foregrounding. Although both use Hindu imagery and mythical frames to articulate their idea of India, yet both reveal an open-mindedness and metaphysical inclusiveness that their discourses do not lapse into pure rightist rhetoric. Once again a longer quote from his essay "The Deeper Meaning of the Struggle" brings out the inclusiveness implicit in Coomaraswamy's idea of India as nation thus:

I have spoken so far only of Hindus and Hindu culture; and if so it is because Hindus from the main part of the population of India, and Hindu culture the main part of Indian culture: but the quotation just made from Arabian literature leads on to the consideration of the great part which Muhammadans, and Persi-Arabian culture have played in the historic evolution of India as we know it today. It would hardly be possible to think of an India in which no Great Mughal had ruled, no Taj been built, or to which Persian art and literature were wholly foreign. Few great Indian rulers have displayed the genius for statesmanship
which Akbar had, a greater religious toleration than he. ... 38

Coomaraswamy metaphysical understanding of India does not stop at the easy and readily available binary frame of Hindu versus Muslim, he thinks of a heteroglossic India in which “The diverse people of India are like the parts of some magic puzzle, seemingly impossible to fit together, but falling easily into place when once the key is known; and the key is that realization of the fact that parts do fit together, which we call national self-consciousness.” 39

Swadeshi as a concept of indigenous nationalism is co-extensive with swaraj. In fact the former is a corollary of the latter. In his essay significantly entitled “Swadeshi”, Coomaraswamy explains the wider connotations of the term swadeshi, but more importantly, he explicates on the dangers implicit in using this principle of self-sufficiency beyond a point. Swadeshi is not merely a political strategy or a weapon of boycott as such, it must aim at the very re-organization of Indian life. The imitation of European ways of living is positively decried: “Probably ninety per cent of European articles purchased by Indians are either ugly or useless or
both." But the definition of swadeshi is extended further: "There is, then a Swadeshi, a higher Swadeshi, which should boycott certain goods, not because of their foreign origin, but because of their intrinsic worthlessness." Such an understanding of swadeshi pre-empts the possibility of its being mis-appropriated by the so-called nationalists who use it as a principle of exclusive nationalism. Coomaraswamy also criticizes the Indian capitalists for invoking the slogan of Swadeshi to shy away from competition. He regrets how Indian millowners have taken an undue advantage of swadeshi. He says: "It matters little whether it is the Lancashire manufacturer or the great millowner of Bombay who successfully contests the village weaver's market." According to him, "It is the weakness of the Swadeshi movement that the arguments put forward in favour of it so often appeal to a purely material ideal of prosperity." Swadeshi should not be exploited for temporary material gains:

It is absolutely necessary for Swadeshi in India to be a foresighted and constructive movement if it is to be of ultimate and real benefit to the Indian people. The gaining of a temporary trade advantage, though valuable as a political weapon
to-day, is a small matter compared with the ultimate development of Indian society. 44

Further, Coomaraswamy objects to the vulgar use of the swadeshi as an equivalent sacrifice. Swadeshi is not a mere rejection of the West; it is a principle of acceptance, of faith and trust in things Indian. "For those who have adopted pseudo-European fashions and manners to talk of Swadeshi as a sacrifice is cant of the worst description," 45 observes Coomaraswamy. It is better to be a blind nationalist than to be a pseudo-swadeshi:

The blindest prejudice in favour of all things Indian were preferable to such condescension as that of one who casts aside the husks and trappings of modern luxury, to accept the mother's exquisite gifts as a 'sacrifice'. 46

Swadeshi should not be negatively defined. Such an attempt reveals lack of confidence. The ideal of Swadeshi would remain a distant dream until "Indian people patronize Indian arts and industries from a real appreciation of them, and because they recognize them not merely as cheaper, but as
better than the foreign." Clearly Coomaraswamy’s conceptualization of swadeshi is much more comprehensive than it is hitherto understood. It anticipates Gandhian position of swadeshi where is not just a principle of boycott but as a positive assertion of Indianness.

Radhakrishnan, the philosopher-statesman of India, is also an idealist who believes nation to be an idea and a concept foregrounded in the spiritual and the metaphysical. Each nation has its own particular mindset, cultural leanings and valuesystem. It is these things/values that go into the making of a nation. Radhakrishnan bestows a distinctness to the idea of India thus:

Each nation has its own characteristic mentality, its particular intellectual bent. In all the fleeting centuries of history, in all the vicissitudes through which India has passed, a certain marked identity is visible. It has held fast to certain marked psychological traits which constitute its special heritage, and they will be the characteristic marks of the Indian people as long as they are privileged to have a separate existence.
The distinctness of India as nation has been located in its spiritual philosophy:

Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual. It is the intense spirituality of India, and not any great political structure or social organization that it has developed, that has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history. 49

India's nationhood is rooted in its intense spirituality. It's cultural uniqueness must be acknowledged for it is because of this uniqueness that India as a nation has come into being, or has always survived as a nation in the public mind.

Neither an elaborate bureaucratic set up, nor even an institutionalized democracy can enliven a nation. Administrative machinery does not create/ cohere nations. Nations are not units of economic gains as well. The higher metaphysical pursuits in-built in the discourse of nation are spelt out thus:
If we are to put first things first, then we must admit that economic stability and political security are only means, however available and necessary, to spiritual freedom. A bureaucratic despotism which forgets spiritual ends cannot, for all its integrity and enlightenment, invigorate the peoples beneath its sway and cannot therefore evoke any living response in them. . . . The cry for Swaraj is the outer expression of the anxiety to preserve the provinces of the soul. 50

Swaraj, for Radhakrishnan, is not political strategy to retaliate the colonialists, it is credo of self-belief. It is the discourse of the soul. Nation accordingly is a construct of the soul.

The modernists claim to the role of democracy in building a nation has been accepted by Radhakrishnan with a significant modification. And this modification is qualitative as it seeks to raise democracy from a system of political participation to credo of morality: “In our national concerns we adopt democracy not merely as political arrangement but as a moral temper.” 51
Radhakrishnan, like other Indian idealists, does not see a clash between the national and the international. Nation is invariably seen as unit that would contribute to the universal well-being: "Nationalism and internationalism do not involve us in an 'either/or'. Internationalism is an overarching ideal which reconciles the national concepts that we have developed."52 Elsewhere, Radhakrishnan underlines the need to "subordinate national pride to international feeling."53 Nations must ultimately gravitate towards the underlying universality of humanity. Radhakrishnan cautions:

We should not put national security above world safety. The absolute sovereign nation-State is outmoded. Behind all national interests there is an irreducible minimum of values and aspirations which are the common possessions of mankind.54

The unity of mankind happens to be goal of all idealists, and Radhakrishnan is no exception to it. In the post-independent India, Radhakrishnan strives to relate Indian polity to the higher ideals set by Aurobindo and Tagore.
Raja Rao, a well-known Indian writer in English, has also speculated on the meaning of India in metaphysical terms. In his recently published anthology of prose pieces, entitled The Meaning of India, he brings forth the inadequacy, rather the falsity, of placing India in any spacio-temporal framework. To him India is not a desa, it is a darshana. That is India is not a country, it is a perspective. Couched in creative idiom, Rao's The Meaning of India, tends to be allegorical and allusive for to him that is the only way to discover, to define and to explore India. Rao does not approach India/ nation with the rational or analytical hangovers of a modern social scientist or with the deconstructionist credo of a postmodern theorist.

First very significant allegorical trope appears in the “Introduction” itself when he equates creativity with “chess game with horses, elephants, chamberlains, and the Kings which might fight one another” 55. Not for an outright victory or a defeat but for the “abolition of contradiction, of duality” 56. To Rao, Indian is the very metaphor of creativity, a game that must be internalized and then played with an intention of destroying the duality. The meaning of India lies in rasa, the delight which one gets in playing such a game of no win, no defeat or all win, all defeat. In Rao's discourse this
game is not an excuse for any post-modern playfulness that subverts the serious and the sublime in favour of the mundane and the petulant. It is a battle towards resolution – a battle which once “is over, you go, step by step, up the Himalayas, to Mansrovar . . .” 57 Obviously to him India is a creative game in which the self of the player is ontologically involved, and not a trick or a gimmick – the postmodern equivalents of game.

In the title essay of the discourse, Rao driven by the compelling story-telling ethos of India, begins with a Jataka story of a hare and his tree companions a monkey, a jackal, and an otter. To Rao story is the only way to approach the complex reality that India is. In the Jataka tale, the wise hare jumps into the holy fire for unlike his other companions he has nothing else to offer to Sakka, the god Indra. “This withdrawing the mind and sense-organs from their conditioned activities to pure activities where action becomes an offering” 58 represents true Indianness. This sacrificing characterizes India.

From the wise hare of Jataka tales, attention shifts to the tortoise of Mahabharata. To Rao India is just like a tortoise that “withdraws its limbs, one [who] translates all outflowingness into inflowingness . . .” 59. This inflowingness
permeates in every true Indian. The records of successive foreign observers from Megasthenes to Max Mueller testify to the sincerity and truthfulness of Indian character all through the history. To Rao, “If India were the country of Asoka or Bhoja Raja, of Vikramaditya or of Akbar Padishah – Indian would still be”\textsuperscript{60}. India as an abstract virtue of pure activity is a historical necessity. Therefore without slipping into the quotidian matrices of space and time, he concludes with a metaphysical conviction that “it [India] is not a climate but a mood (rasa) in the play of the Absolute”\textsuperscript{61}. By envisioning as an idea, Rao goes beyond history and geography both. Such a vision cannot be appreciated through traditional historiography that privileged time over space, nor through postmodern historiography that privileges space over time.

Rao takes a teleological view of history. Nation consequently is a teleological construct. When he comes to know about Nehru’s visit to Europe, he undertakes a journey to Black forest in Germany where Nehru was living with ill wife Kamala. He, at once, correlates his journey with the pilgrimage of a Hsuan Tsang visiting Kapilvastu”. Rao discovers “a secret historicity in his [Nehru’s] presence”\textsuperscript{62}. To Rao India is a cultural continuum whose foundations have to be traced back to.
from its unrecorded past. When Rao meets Nehru, his bald head shocks him for he “had imagined him with long locks of hair, curling and covering his elongated lobes like the Gandhara image of Gautama, the Buddha from Hadda, at the Musee Guimet in Paris”\(^6^3\). Despite the this-worldly approach of Nehru, what attracts Rao most in the personality of Nehru was his “ancient courtesy.”\(^6^4\)

In Rao’s allegorical vision, both Mahabharata and Ramayana keep interchanging as sources of one living culture called India. Gandhi can be Visvamitra, Srikrishna and Sri Rama in one go; all these metaphors bear a vertical semantic relationship. Therefore, Rao telescopes the two seemingly disparate time frames of mythical past and living present in one whole without any violence. Here is one instance from The Meaning of India where present is located in the mythical past in teleological loop thus: “India was a goddess, like Sita, the prisoner of Ravana again and again, and Pandit Nehru was not like Sri Rama, but rather like Bharata, because Gandhi was Sri Rama of course, and so for us Bharatha, the great sage – hero’s loyal younger brother”.\(^6^5\)
The second part of The Meaning of India is much more significant, as in this part Rao defines the fundamental principles of tradition-specific poetics necessary to understand the ‘meaning’ of the ‘meaning’ in The Meaning of India. It is this poetics that lends a definite meaning (i.e., ‘the meaning’ instead of the post-structuralist’s ‘the meanings’) to the understanding and explication of India as nation. In his first of this part, Rao discusses two perspectives of human understanding – one vertical, another horizontal. As a true Vedantin, he prefers the vertical perspective because that lifts “the I to the non-I”\(^6\). The vertical movement, the author believes, “is the sheer upward thrust towards the unnameable, the unutterable, the very source of wholeness”\(^7\). So the very meaning of “meaning” in “the meaning of India” has to be gathered in vertical perspective. Meaning of India can never be approached epistemologically, it has to be perceived ontologically.

Rao’s prose discourse ends with his oft-quoted Foreward to his first major fictional work Kanthapura to bring home his incorrigible faith in the mythological foregrounding of space/place. In this Foreward, he explains the structure of India as nation. Each village, in some partial or tangential way, has
been a site of some mythological happening or event; either "Rama might have rested under this pipal-tree, [or] Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath on this yellow stone." 68

The culture of the place is invariably rooted in legendary history or what Rao terms sthalpurana. The co-ordinates of sthalpurana are no doubt limited, but they form the vital markers of a larger narrative called purana in the Indian tradition. If sthalpurana is the mini narrative of village, on an extended plane, puran becomes the allegory of the nation. Like a purana, India is an "interminable tale" in which "we have neither punctuation, nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us." 69

If Raja Rao situates India in the grand narratives of puranas, Jiddu Krishnamurty discovers India as a nation in the self-reflexive, hermeneutically rich tradition of India. Krishnamurty in his philosophical dialogues does touch upon the issue of nation, in the context of defining East versus West. In his world-view nation once again emerges as an idea, a sort of intelligence. He is aware of the double-edgedness of the discourse of nation. If at one level it empowers individual, at another level it hampers him. If at one level, it expands the self, at another level it creates fissures and rivalries:

77
Outwardly, it brings about divisions between people, classifications, wars and destruction, which his is obvious to anyone who is observant. Inwardly psychologically this identification with the greater, with the country, with an idea, is obviously a form of self-expansion.⁷⁰

He explains the process of self-expansion and conflict that one realizes through nation:

Living in a little village or a big town or whatever may be, I am nobody; but if I identify myself with the larger, with the country, if I call myself a Hindu, it flatters my vanity, it gives me gratification, prestige, a sense of well-being; and that identification with the larger, which is psychological necessity for those who feel that self-expansion is essential, also creates conflict, strife, between people.⁷¹

In a way, Krishnamurty is rephrasing Tagore's dislike for narrow nationalism. It needs to be re-iterated that Tagore,
Aurobindo, Coomaraswamy etc. advocate nationalism only to the extent that it does not create cleavages from within. The end of mankind is not nation or nationalism; it is the unity of mankind. Clearly nation has to be experienced as an idea which if at one level asserts the uniqueness of its being, at another level it becomes a stepping stone towards the realization of One World.

Krishnamurty, a contemporary philosopher, also recognizes the distinctness of Indian mind vis-à-vis the Western mind: just as the Western mind has a proclivity to move and function in the outer environment. The inner environment has been the concern of India. He further explains:

The West turned to outer discovery, in their dialogue with nature. India also had a dialogue with nature, but it was of a different order. In India the concern with religion has been deep. Indian tradition has maintained that the understanding of the Self, of the Universe, of the Highest Principle, is the most significant pursuit.
But unlike other Indologists, Krishnamurty does not valorize Indian tradition. He is not in favour of revivalism to assert Indianness of India. He says if West has failed because of its blind faith in materialism, India as a culture too has failed because it has ceased to be a site of fervent inquiry which it once boasted of. Tradition has to be constantly updated from within through constant self-questioning and self-reflexivity. Swaraj is not mere assertion of tradition, it lies in furthering the tradition. Contemporary Indian philosophers have only revived tradition in a rather mechanical ritualistic manner. This has undone India as a nation and culture. Swaraj, in Krishnamurty’s world-view therefore, is not narrow nationalism, but it is a kind of intelligence which cannot be substituted either by tradition or religion.

Thinkers like Savarkar and Iqbal give a communal tinge to the idea of India. Vinayak Savarkar, a firebrand nationalist, seeks to Hinduize politics because he believes that India is essentially a Hindu nation. Here it is important to mention that Tilak, Aurobindo, Tagore and other later national idealists also discover the idea of India in the canonical Hindu Texts. Their discourses of nationalism are imbued with Hindu metaphors but they carefully avoid being communal. Hindu dharma in their
philosophy becomes an open religion of universal amity and brotherhood.

Savarkar claims that right from the very beginning, i.e., from the very time of their origin of Hindus, they have lived on a land what is today known as India. Criticizing the Congress-men for their empirical outlook, Savarkar says:

the whole Congress ideology was vitiated ab initio by its unwitting assumption that the territorial unity, a common habitat, was the only factor that constituted and ought to constitute a nation.75

It is significant to observe that besides highlighting the metaphysical basis of Indian nationalism, thinkers like Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan do refer to the common history and common habitat which Indian people of different religions and faiths have inhabited and shared right from the ancient times as one of the major factors of India's claim to a nation. Savarkar does not give any space to these factors of common history and common habitat in his theory of India as a Hindu nation.
He blasts the very concept of nation as a territorial unit by reminding how “All nations carved out to order on the territorial design without any other common bond to mold each of them into a national being have gone to rack and ruin tumbled down like a house of cards” \(^7\). Savarkar’s emphasis is on the organic unity, and he locates this unity in racial affinity and linguistic homogeneity. He observes:

Only those nations have persisted in maintaining their national unity and identity during the last three to four centuries in Europe which had developed racial, linguistic, cultural and such other organic affinities in addition to their territorial unity or at times in spite of it, and consequently willed to be homogenous national units — such as England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, etc. \(^\text{77}\)

Savarkar does not even grant any tangible role to non-Hindu Indians in future and destiny of India. To him, “Swarajya to the Hindus must mean only that ‘Rajya’ in which their ‘Hindutva’ can assert itself without being overlorded by any non-Hindu people, whether they be Indian-territorials or extra-territorials” \(^\text{78}\). Explicating upon the possible consequences of
granting important role to Indian Muslims and Indian-born
English, he foresees internecine battles between Hindus versus
Indian Muslims, Hindus versus Indian Christians. He rates
Indian Muslims or Indian Christians to be the worst enemies of
India: "Although they were territorially Indians, they proved to
be the worst enemies of Hindudom and therefore, a Shivaji, a
Gobind Singh, a Pratap or the Peshwas had to fight against the
Muslim domination and establish a real Hindu swarajya."

Savarkar without mincing words wants Hindus to be their
own masters:

The Hindus do not want a change of their masters,
are not going to struggle and fight and die only to
replace an Edward by an Aurangzab simply because
the latter happens to be born within Indian borders;
but they want henceforth to be masters themselves
in their own house, in their own land.

The idea of shared common history has also been shunned in
favour of racial unity: According to Savarkar it would be
simply "preposterous" to endow Muslim minority with the right
of exercising a practical veto on the legitimate privileges of
Hindu majority. This would be against the very spirit of swarajya.

Muhammad Iqbal, also locates his metaphysics in Islam, his religion in the narrow sense of the term. Islam is not just an idea, it is a vision of some specific social order:

The nature of the Prophet's religious experience, as disclosed in the Qur'an, however is wholly different. . . . Its immediate outcome is the fundamentals of a polity with implicit legal concepts whose significance cannot be belittled merely because their origin is reverential. The religious ideal of Islam, therefore, is organically related to the social order which it has created. 81

Communalism becomes a logical principle of nationalism. Rather, it becomes indispensable to nationalism. Thus from a purely metaphysical notion of nation, both Savarkar and Iqbal move towards a sectarian and communal approach to nationalism.
If seen against the background of his contemporary political thinkers and activists, Gandhi’s concept of swaraj inheres the metaphysical drift of their ideas on nation and nationalism. The concept of swaraj, as defined by Gandhi, visualizes India as an indigenous idea which no external culture can replace or alter by any brute-force. In fact, Gandhi re-lives and extends the metaphysical musings of Tagore and Aurobindo in a way that at times it becomes difficult to separate one from another. In fact the statements attributed to Tagore can be attributed to Aurobindo, and statements of both Tagore and Aurobindo can be attributed to Gandhi.

Let us see in what particular way(s) Gandhi’s swaraj is, first, a metaphysical idea, and then how this idea becomes a frame for nation.

At a very rudimentary level, swaraj hinges around the idea of self and its control from within. It is normally translated as self-rule, i.e., the rule which the self exercises over itself. The whole concept of self has metaphysical ramifications. An
investigation into the very nature of self or self-awareness forms the core of theory of swaraj. Self can be defined in two broad ways – the epistemological and the ontological. Epistemologically self is a two-dimensional rational construct.

Gandhi however with his metaphysical leanings does not stop at mere the epistemological meaning of self, to him self is an ontological construct. It is not simply empirical, it is intuitive too. Gandhi, however, depends upon Gita to illustrate his perspective of self. According to Gita, there are two aspects to the self: the self in itself, the imperishable substratum of our being; and the embodied self, the spatio-temporal self joined to psychosomatic organism comprising body, senses, mind and soul. The main focus of the Gita is of course final self-realization – the process by which the embodied self realizes fundamentally it is an atman that is not distinct from brahman, the universal being. The final realization means the felt experience of the self as timeless monad and particle of God which is the result of the absorption of all the powers of human personality into the self.

Anthony Parel observes that “the anatomy of the self as found in Hind Swaraj follows substantially the Gita conception
of karma" 82. In Gita, karma is not just an easy and straight equivalent of action as is normally understood in the empirical West. The principle of karma has deep metaphysical ramifications which often exceed the imagination of the literal-minded readers of Indian philosophy. Karma, as a theory of action always insists on nishkam action, i.e. action without any selfish motive. Selfless action is the only religious form of action. Any action which is directed towards self-promotion is sheer indulgence. Action begins with the self but it must end beyond the self. In other words, self is the agency or rather medium of action, it cannot be the end of action. Also 'disinterested action' as the highest form of karma in Indian philosophy dispels doubt about Indians being temperamentally docile and less dynamic. Gandhi invokes Gita's ideal for it provides a perfect objective correlative to his concept of swaraj. Karma is the first and foremost condition of swaraj. Action is freedom. If this action is self-less, freedom is divine.

Action is not an equivalent of violence as is used in media often. In Gita as well as Gandhi, action is not vulgar dynamism or action shrouded in any nationalist battle cry. Nationalism as politics of one-up-man-ship is nothing but a fascist strategy
of intimidation and thinly concealed terror is detrimental to the very realization of swarajya.

Is swaraj a sectarian or communal approach to nation-building? The kind of sources or sanskritized terminology employed by Gandhi may generate an impression that swaraj has a communal idea or that it is Hindu idea of nation. The invocation of Ramrajaya as an ideal nation-state or as prototype specimen of his swaraj has frequently been appropriated by the Hindutava-vadis. Such an appropriation of Gandhi is partial and political. For those who wish to become Gandhian in thought and practice, all that would be required is an equivalent metaphysic. If such a metaphysic can be found in other traditions, Gandhi would have no objections. He confirms this in the following statement made in 1920 thus:

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in
order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has been found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker and itself.\textsuperscript{83}

Gandhi's \textit{swaraj} may have distinct Hindu philosophical underpinnings, but never does it (i.e. the concept of \textit{swaraj}) invokes Hinduism as a canonical or institutionalized religion. The adequacy of equivalent metaphysic is strongly implied in statement like this:

The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of Christians and the Isvara of the Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism, there are as many names of god in Islam. The names do not indicate individually but attributes, and little man has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving Him attributes, though he is above all attributes, Indescribable, Inconceivable, Immeasurable. Living faith in this God means acceptance of the brotherhood of mankind. It also means equal respect for all religions... \textsuperscript{84}
Obviously Gandhi assumes that all major scriptures, religious have a non-sectarian and metaphysical basis, a first insight which any human being can grasp and accept.

IV

Aurobindo as a swarajist seems to echo much of the Gandhian scheme/darshan of swaraj. In fact, in many ways Aurobindo is an immediate precursor to Gandhi. He forms an important link for us to reach to Gandhi. Without him, Gandhi might appear as an abrupt development, a discontinuous happening, a bolt from the blue, a surprise package. Aurobindo renders Gandhi convincing and plausible. He prepares the groundwork, the mindset, a ripe environment which Gandhi could descend on and step into. It is Aurobindo's metaphysical forays which legitimize Gandhian politics of truth and non-violence. Had there been no Aurobindo, it would have been very difficult for Gandhi to sustain his moral politics all alone. To say that Gandhi' all alone charted his path, or that he pioneered politics based on morals is overstatement, and hence lopsided. To situate Gandhi in the context of India as nation, Aurobindo is a logical necessity. The very thrust of
equating the enterprise of swaraj with dharma brings two on the same wave length. The streak to spiritualize nation into an essential idea is common in both Gandhi and Aurobindo. In fact any reading of Gandhi must be preceded by a reading of Aurobindo as the discourse of the latter merges into the former without giving any feeling of discontinuity or rupture. Gandhi can be termed as a more sophisticated and practical version of Aurobindo. In any case Gandhi is an extended version of Aurobindo. Before Gandhi could happen to India, it was necessary for Aurobindo to happen. Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, a nationalist Hindi poet, describes the ideational proximity of Aurobindo with Gandhi thus:

But there is no denying the fact that many of the programme that were launched during the days of the Swadeshi movement were revived by Gandhi in 1920 and afterwards, and carried forward. Sri Aurobindo had sown the seeds. Under Gandhiji's leadership the seedlings grew into trees, all of enormous size. The old programmes, which received new dimensions, were practiced on a truly national scale. But under Gandhiji's leadership, they also received new directions and new forms.85
Gandhi's concept of swaraj therefore stems from Aurobindonian programme of swadeshi. In fact swadeshi is the first strategy to attain swaraj. The two terms are co-terminus as far the ideological underpinnings are concerned.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Gandhian concept of swaraj subsumes all other notions of swaraj put forward by the nationalist Indian leaders before Gandhi. This is the reason that in this thesis swaraj has been contextualized in Gandhiana alone.

V

Let us see in what way or ways Gandhi modifies, reconsiders and in a way re-formulates a distinct idea of swaraj – an idea which goes beyond Aurobindo in its scope and strategy.

Gandhi differed from Aurobindo over the issue of non-violence as means to attain swaraj. Sri Aurobindo did not believe in the ideal of non-violence. But like Gandhi he did
realize the limitations of armed struggle against the organized military power of the imperial forces. The following statement of Aurobindo makes it amply clear.

My idea was for an open armed revolution in the whole of India. What they did at the time was very childish, things like beating magistrates and so on. Later it turned into terrorism and dacoities, which were not all my idea or intention... We wanted to give battle after awakening the spirit of the race through guerilla warfare, as in the Irish Sinn Fein. But at the present stage of military conditions, such things are impossible, bound to fail (quoted by Dinkar, pp. 52-3).

Aurobindo later on turned into an ascetic goes on to verify the fact that he like Gandhi realized that swaraj is a religious mission which cannot be attained through the irreligious ways of sporadic terrorist violence.

But instead of suggesting non-violence, Aurobindo suggests and advocates the method of passive resistance. For Gandhi, non-violence is an attribute of dharma; it is more
manner of conviction than strategy. In case of Aurobindo, passive resistance is more a strategic posture than moral weapon. Dinkar brings forth the subtle distinction in Aurobindo and Gandhi over their respective ways to attain swaraj thus:

...that Sri Aurobindo advocated the method of passive resistance, as an expediency and not as a creed. And in this, Sri Aurobindo seems to have anticipated Gandhi, although for Gandhi non-violence was a creed, and not an expediency.

Sri Aurobindo, therefore, was aware of the limitations in-built in the idealization of non-violence. He had absolutely no moral scruples on the issue of non-violence. Passive resistance for him was a strategy for the time being, until, Indian masses are not awakened enough to carry our an armed struggle.

Gandhi's concept of swaraj is not very different form that of Tagore. In fact both Gandhi and Tagore had a deep respect for each other. Tagore was the first person to address Gandhi as mahatama, and Gandhi was the first person to call Tagore as Gurudev. Let us discuss the differences of their
views on nation and swaraj. To Tagore, as Ashis Nandy makes a very pertinent observation, the oppositions could best be handled within the format of India's "high" culture, within her classical Sanskritic traditions, leavened on the one hand by elements of European classicism, including aspects of the European Renaissance, and on the other by India's own diverse fork or little traditions. In his world modernity had a place. To Gandhi, on the other hand, "resolution of the contradictions was possible primarily within the little traditions of India and West, with occasional input from Indian and western classicism, but almost entirely outside modernity." But the differences were minor and were not fundamental in their nature. Further Ashis Nandy in his perceptive study brings forth the minor nature of their differences thus: "Few Indians have used the folk within the classical more creatively than Tagore. And few Indians have used the classical within the format of the non-classical more effectively than Gandhi."

Also, though both Gandhi and Tagore were basically humanists, yet they had difference of opinion on the issue of swadeshi and the strategy of boycott. Tagore does not approve of Gandhi's method of boycotting foreign cloth and considers
it madness to burn tons of cloth when millions shivered for the want of it. As observed by a scholar of Indian thought, "Such activities went against Tagore's ideas of supernationalism, and idea of a common civilization for the world."91

Gandhi was seen with lot of skepticism by both Hindu and Muslim communalists. Hindu fanatics condemned Gandhi for underplaying their majority status; Muslim fundamentalists saw a hidden Hindu agenda in Gandhian religion-based politics. Swaraj is a wishful ideal if it does not entertain the majority Hindus as per their strength. It becomes equally false if it fails to generate confidence and sense of selfhood to minority Muslims.

Raja Rao who was once a secretary to Gandhi, only accentuates the metaphysical aspects of nationhood as visualized by Gandhi. The idea of sthalpuran as the narrative of a village is not very different from Gandhian concept of village as self-contained republic. Gandhi in his famous oceanic principle also stipulates a non-hierarchical horizontal relationship of village with community and of community with nation with individual at centre. Gandhi also believes in this
nation to a narrative, a puran in which villages are episodes, stories within the story of nation.

Though Gandhi was never an exclusive full-fledged phiosopher, yet his concept of swaraj subsumes the cultural underpinnings of J. Krishnamurty very well. Gandhi, very much like, Krishnamurty believes in the curiousity of Indian mind. Far from dismissing Indian tradition as dogmatic, both Gandhi and Krishnamurty hold, it too be highly dynamic and self-reflexive. Also Gandhi's swaraj is a principle that connects individual with his nation, the subject with the object without creating fissures or contradictions in the individual/subject. Individual is as much an allegory of nation as nation is an allegory of an individual. Krishnamurty is only re-stating Gandhi's position when he holds that nation is desirable as long it does not create dissentions in the self of the individual.

VI

As far as locating India in its spiritual discourse of more than five thousand years is concerned, it is clear that Gandhi's swaraj does live upto this ideal very well. Those who continue to cherish that India as a nation is more an idea, than a mere territory, Gandhian swaraj is the best bet. Swaraj, in Gandhi, is
moral, metaphysical and religious in one go. Swaraj is incomplete if moral does not have metaphysical basis, and if religion does not lapse into an abstract philosophy of universal brotherhood. Gandhian swaraj, reconsidered in the light of nationalist ideas of Aurobindo, Tagore, Coomaraswamy, Raja Rao, Savarkar, Krishnamurty etc., definitely looks more comprehensive and inclusive. This is not to say that the views of Gandhi's contemporaries are less relevant, what is more significant is that their views do not exceed Gandhian swaraj, and only form one of the major sub-texts of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. The differences between Gandhi and the rest of Indian idealists are at best nominal, and do not pose any threat to the theory of swaraj as idea.

Swaraj has got to be an ideal first, before being a theory of praxis. Gandhi's swaraj does not disappoint the typical Indian idealists who refuse to accept Indian nationhood as similar to any other nationhood. Not only does Gandhi, as a true receiver of Indian tradition, underline the role of idea as an input of nation, he also highlights the distinctness of this idea in case of India as nation.
But the real problem in reconsidering swaraj as a viable theory of nation against the tide of globalization and racialism comes to the fore when it is countered by the modernists as mere wishful theory that does not take into account the hard realities of power-politics. Swaraj is usually dismissed as mere moral utopia sans any practical value. The next chapter evaluates the modernity in built in swaraj against the modernity preached by the exponents of nation as state (as against mere an idea).

Notes/ References:

In the Western tradition till the modern period, idea of defining nation in terms of an abstract unified whole begins from Greeks onwards --- "The idea of the State as an organism was hit upon by the Greeks. By the Stoics it was applied to humanity as a whole. It was then taken over by Christianity, and throughout the Middle Ages reigned supreme. It was challenged at the time of scientific revolution of the 17th century, which led to the 'mechanistic' view of the State. The view was maintained throughout the Enlightenment of the 18th
century, to be rejected again by Rousseau and by the German Romantics, who stressed the 'organic' view as against the 'bloodless' and 'soulless' mechanistic doctrine" -- C.L.Wayper, p.x.

Partha Chatterjee in his *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial Thought*, discusses three distinct models of nationalism which later on were appropriated by the Third World nationalists. The three models of nationalism are explained thus:

'Creole nationalism' of the Americas was built upon the ambitions of classes whose economic interests were ranged against the metropolis. It also drew upon liberal and enlightened ideas from Europe which provided ideological criticisms of imperialism and ancient regimes. . . The second 'model' was that of the linguistic nationalisms of Europe, a model of the independent national state which henceforth became 'available for pirating': . . . The third 'model' was provided by 'official nationalism' -- typically, Russia. This involved the imposition of cultural homogeneity from the top, through state action. 'Russification' was a project which could be, and was, emulated elsewhere.


5. Ibid., p.6.

6. Ibid., pp 9-10.


10. Ibid., p.108.

11. Ibid. p.106.

12. Ibid., p.112.

13. Ibid., p. 23.

14. Ibid.


16. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan sums up Tagore’s nationalism and internationalism thus: “Rabindranath puts forwards a plea for mankind by advocating the ideal of a family of nations to
which every member will bring his unique gift. This ideal of international unity and national independence will break down barriers of nations and make for sweet harmony” – Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, London, Macmillan and Co., 1918, p. 285

17. Tagore, Nationalism; p. 111.

18. Ibid.


20. Ibid., pp. 18-19.


22. Ibid., p10.

23. Ibid., pp. 34-35

24. Peter Heehs, The Essential Writings of Sri Aurobindo, p. 43.

25. Ibid., p. 44

26. Ibid.


28. Ibid. p. 127

29. Ibid.

30. Gandhi’s view on the relationship of nationalism with internationalism is not very different from that of Aurobindo:
It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations, which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of the other. Indian nationalism has struck a different path. It wants to organize itself for the benefit and service of humanity at large. -- *Mahatama Gandhi and One World*, by S. Radhakrishnan, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaty, et al, New Delhi: Publications Division, 1994 rpt.

31. Noted scholar Arabinda Basu comments: "He [Sri Aurobindo] did not at all recommend a World State which would impose a uniform pattern of existence and life on all the peoples and nations of the world. No, each nation must be left free to develop in accordance with its innate genius" --"The Infinite Zero", *Sri Aurobindo: A Centenary Tribute*, Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1974, pp.321-22.


34. Ibid., pp 8-9.
35. Ibid., pp. ii-iii
36. Ibid., p. ii
37. Ibid., p. viii.
38. Ibid., p. 11.
39. Ibid., p. 10.
40. Ibid., p. 154.
41. Ibid., p. 155.
42. Ibid., p. 161.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 164.
46. Ibid., p. 165.
47. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p. 44.
51. Ibid., "Service is Prayer", p. 522.
52. Ibid., "A Year of Regeneration", p. 533.
53. Ibid., "World Fellowship", p. 549.
54. Ibid., "Service is Prayer", p. 522.


74. "The understanding of nationalism comes through intelligence,... The moment you substitute religion for nationalism, religion becomes another means of self-expansion, another source of psychological anxiety,... Nationalism, with its poison, with its misery and world strife, can disappear only when there is intelligence. Intelligence comes into being when we understand problems as they arise. So, when there is intelligence there is no substitution; and when there is intelligence, then nationalism, patriotism, which is a form of stupidity, disappears" – J.Krishnamurty, "On Nationalism", p.128.


76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., p.118.


82. HS, pp. 164-65.

83. M.K.Gandhi, Young India, 12 May, 1929, p.2.

84. Ibid., Harijan, 14 May, 1938, pp.110-11.

86. Sri Aurobindo quoted by Dinkar, Ibid.

87. Here are some of the quotes from Gandhi’s articles which clearly bring out the fact that non-violence was not as much a strategy as it was a matter of faith and conviction with him:

1. “India’s acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting’ (Young India, 11.8.20).

2. “Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders . . . With the loss of India to nonviolence the last hope of the world will be gone” (Harijan, 14.10.39)

3. “Moral means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of Ramrajya excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height . . . ” (New Delhi, 29.4.46)

4. “Militarization of India would mean her own destruction as well as of the whole world” (Harijan, 14.12.47).

89. Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and Politics of Self*, Delhi; OUP, 1994, p.2
