Introduction

This study seeks to examine the notions of nation and nationalism in war. However undesirable they may be, wars have been a part of human civilization. Aggression and conflict, along with love and sympathy, form an integral part of interaction between human communities. War in one form or another has been fought from the stone ages through the medieval and modern period to the present postmodern era.

The formation and consolidation of nation-states as one of the most advanced forms of human communities occurred in Europe and America from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Since then, conflict over territory, overthrow of colonial powers, ethnic rivalry, and so on have been important causes of war. A socio-cultural and political institution such as the nation-state is at times believed to be the basic cause of war in the twentieth century. The desire for territorial aggrandizement, the megalomania of political leaders, and the goal of cultural hegemony are seen as some of the sources of conflict in this era. The Indian sub-continent has its own long history of war. Some examples are: the wars between Chandragupta Maurya and Alexander, Babar and Ibrahim Lodi, Tipu Sultan and the British. This study entails an understanding of how the idea of India as a nation emerges in the war narratives of the postcolonial period.

Every nation has its moments of insecurity when it is attacked by an external force or questioned internally by historically marginalized groups that, for one reason or another, do not feel the sentiment of oneness, crucial for nation-formation. War calls for a total allegiance to the nation. Differences arising from caste, class, gender, etc., are overshadowed in war. Love for
one's birthplace or patriotism, as it is called, is a dormant sentiment that surfaces during a war. This study does not however propose that war is desirable to unify the people of a nation.

The artefacts selected for examination are war films from popular Hindi cinema and military literature. This study would attempt an understanding of nation, nationalism, cinema, war and gender with the help of insights provided by cultural and postcolonial studies. The study would then proceed to analyze the representation of war, the popularization of the military hero, the mobilization of sentiment, and the marginalization of the woman in war films and military literature. Through an exploration of the above issues, I submit that it is possible to arrive at an understanding of the “nation.” Some of the issues that will be addressed and problematized in the study would be as follows: - How do war films and military literature construct the category of nation? How is the family constructed in the texts under investigation? What narrative modes are deployed to create consensus for war? How do war narratives further the statist agenda? What is the link between the war waged by the national army and that by the insurgents?

II

At the cost of reductionism, we may ask ourselves “How is the nation represented in war discourse?” The search for an answer to the question posed in this manner would require first, a thoroughgoing problematizing of the concept of nation. For this reason, the study purports to begin with the enterprise of understanding the complexity of nation as a conceptual entity.

In recent political debates the category of nation (a product of modernity) has not only received unprecedented attention but is also being
interrogated. This brings into focus related concepts such as nationalism, nationality, patriotism and so on. Politically, nationalism is a movement that demands statehood in order to grant legitimacy to a collectivity that imagines itself as a nation. Scores of books have been written on the subject of nation and nationalism. Benedict Anderson expanded the scope of the subject by treating nation as an imagined community, not as an objective entity (4). Nation was imagined through cultural forms.

Since Anderson, studies on nation and nationalism have changed tracks from the political to the cultural arena. The idea of nationalism as a political/historical phenomenon has given way to its formulation as a discursive phenomenon. Scholars today understand the nation as coming into existence in and through a range of discourses. The nation is characterized as a narrated rather than a cartographic entity. Nationalism then is a mode of narrating the nation. Homi Bhabha focuses on the textuality of the nation in all his writings. His contribution to the nation-nationalism debate enables me to read films and military literature as texts that invoke the nation.

Anderson stresses the role of print-capitalism in imagining a nation. According to him, the two main forms of imagining in eighteenth century Europe were the novel and the newspaper (45-46). We may contextualize Anderson's thesis and ask, "How then may the large masses of illiterate Indians imagine the nation? Through what modes of mediation does the nation get imagined for them?"

These are some fundamental issues that Partha Chatterjee takes up against Anderson in his works. His extensive oeuvre on the topic of nation
and nationalism has greatly enhanced our understanding of the Indian nation as a cultural category. In his Preface to the Omnibus Edition comprising three of his best-known works (Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World, The Nation and its Fragments, A Possible India), outlines the aim of his first book: “to write the 'ideological history' of the Indian nation-state from its conception to its fruition" (1999: v). This book provides theoretical frames to locate the concepts of nation and nationalism. Chatterjee detects a deep contradiction in nationalist discourse: While India borrowed the tools provided by modernity to fight colonialism, it rigidly guarded its tradition and cultural specificity (1985: 30).

In The Nation and its Fragments, Chatterjee contests Anderson's formulation of first world nationalisms as "modular" forms and third world nationalisms as imitative. Such a formulation elides the existence of indigenous modes of resistance to colonial rule, especially in the domain of the private/spiritual (1992: 6). For our purposes, Anderson's view that print languages created "unified fields of exchange and communication" (44) that helped foster a nationally imagined community may be applied to a great extent, as we shall see later, to the role played by Hindi cinema. The fellow viewership allowed for the interplay between overt entertainment and a covert pan-Indian bonding.

In the West, political nationalism is characterized by the rise of the anti-feudal bourgeoisie. Even in most postcolonial societies, the primarily elite nature of the nationalist classes gave it a sectarian character. However, when the modern Indian nation was taking shape, it was also being interrogated simultaneously for its exclusionary nature. Foremost among
such anti-bourgeois thinkers was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who saw the nation as a social brotherhood and democracy, not merely as a form of government. Ambedkar’s vision combined the political aspects of a nation-state with the sociological aspects of the nation. The subsequent chapters will examine whether the nation constructed in the texts under scrutiny embodies an inclusive vision or remains entrenched in the elitist, bourgeois model.

Aurobindo Ghosh claimed the right to freedom for India on religio-spiritual grounds. He based his demand for independence on the inherent right of people to self-rule and the inherent evil of foreign domination. His works are considered primary texts of early twentieth century Bengali religious nationalism (Heehs 44). Religious nationalists based their ideology on the belief that Indians had an intrinsic spiritual nature and hence the Western secular model was not suitable for the nation. The historical perspective to religious nationalism provided by Heehs helps us to understand the interface between religious movements and secessionist movements in contemporary India. That is not to say that Ghosh’s militancy is the same as militancy in Punjab or Kashmir. The major difference lies in the motivation. Ghosh’s militancy was directed against the colonial powers with the aim of achieving freedom for India. The militancy in Punjab or Kashmir is motivated by the goal of secession. The two converge on the single point of secularism. Both reject the Western version of secularism and believe in the primacy of religion in politics.

Secessionist movements in India have run parallel to the nationalist movement for independence from British rule disrupting the notion of nation
as a single unit with a homogenous social and cultural life. These movements have also led to prolonged encounters with the national army in the country, resulting in low intensity conflict and a blurring of the identity of the "enemy." Therefore, the need is felt to expand the definition of war (more on this later) to include the dynamics of insurgency and consequently the shifting significance of the concept of nation.

For the purposes of this study the term nation will be understood as a cultural rather than a territorial space that both reflects as well as constructs an entity called "India." A nation is constituted in the people's imaginary through a series of cultural and representational strategies. The cultural practices of a nation actively engage in creating its particular image. Interestingly, there has been no major work on the link between nation and war in India. War is not a "normal" situation. Its peculiarities call for perceptual mechanisms different from those employed during peace. The present study hopes to make up for this deficiency.

III

War studies as a discipline is mainly restricted to military studies and political science. The former is engaged in rigorous analyses of previous wars from the point of view of strategy. The latter studies war as a political phenomenon caused by differences in political ideologies and praxis. Military historians study war from the soldier's perspective. Unlike the soldier who studies specific wars, the political scientists study war at a macro level. Political realists believe in the inevitability of war and the consequent need for nations to be prepared for it. Political idealists by contrast, believe that peace is the
natural state of the human being. Therefore the pursuit of peace and harmony among nations is a natural condition of nation states. The Marxists were of the opinion that the nation state was the cause of war. The bourgeois nation used war to subjugate not only its enemies but also the proletariat within its own territory. They believed that the end of war could be brought about by the triumph of socialism as it would facilitate the demise of the state.

The political scientists study various factors that lead to war. For the soldier-writer, the inevitability of war is the starting point of his study. He does not question the political cause of war; rather he studies war in order to learn how to win wars. This marked difference in perception is crucial to our analysis of military literature. The present study attempts to integrate the two disciplines, i.e., political science and military studies, by employing the category of culture. Beginning with the premise that war to most of us is a narrated event, the study proceeds to explore the “national question” in war discourse.

Military literature in India may be loosely divided into autobiographies/memoirs (J.N. Chaudhuri, B.M. Kaul, S.S.P. Thorat, S.K. Sinha, etc.), monographs of battles/wars (P. Bhullar, K.P. Candeth, J.P. Dalvi, Lachhman Singh and so on), and the evolution of the army as an institution (W.J. Wilson, S. Cohen, P. Mason, for instance). To the best of my knowledge no attempts have been made so far to study the representation of the soldier or the nation in Indian military literature. Also military literature has not received sustained critical scrutiny except for journalistic attempts in the form of book reviews. Lastly, military literature has not yet been used as a tool for understanding the ways in which India is constructed/represented as a nation. My study is an effort to fill in these gaps.
Lt Gen S.L. Menezes's book *Fidelity and Honour* is an authoritative history of the Indian Army from its origins in the seventeenth century till the present. The book details the formation of the Presidency armies (Bengal, Madras and Bombay) under the East India Company up to 1857. Indian troops were recruited into independent companies, commanded by a British officer. Differences of caste and religion remained strong amongst the Indian troops and the British officers were ordered by their superiors not to interfere in such matters (24). The book analyses the 1857 revolt, the Indian army's role in the two world wars, the Indian National Army, the partitioning of the Indian army that occurred with the creation of Pakistan, the Nehru and post-Nehru eras.

The studies conducted on war so far focus on strategy, history, analysis of causes and effects, etc. Studies of war literature (John Onions, for instance) treat it as "literary texts" and deploy the tools of literary criticism to interpret these texts. Jean Elshtain's book, *Women and War* is a major intervention in war studies in which war is treated as a cultural phenomenon. It offers a feminist perspective on war discourse. However, the "national question" is not satisfactorily addressed by Elshtain. In the third world context, women are drawn into war-like situations in anti-colonial struggles as well as ethnic conflicts. This makes it imperative for us to address women's militarism/militancy differently from first world contexts. Women's agency in the third world context needs to be treated within more sophisticated theoretical matrices. My analysis of nation and war as gendered categories seeks to develop an understanding of the problematic relationship between women, militarism and the state. I invoke the ideas provided by Nira Yuval-
Davis in her chapter, "Gendered Militaries, Gendered Wars" from her important book *Gender and Nation*.

Military literature belongs to the category of niche writing. Unlike popular films made to cater to a large audience, military literature has a limited readership. It is therefore unmediated by the imperatives of commerce. Does this automatically make it a freewheeling narrative unconcerned with the market forces? If so, would the writers be more "free" and "honest"? The search for straightforward answers to these questions is hampered by the nature of autobiographical writing. The temporal dislocation between the events described and the time of writing undermines the truth claims of this discourse. The representation of the self in autobiography/diary involves the processes of selection and erasure just as in fictional narratives. The "sanctity" of military literature is however diluted, in this postmodern era by the intrusion of the media (print and electronic) into the hitherto insulated organization.

War produces inexplicable situations. Even bitterly fighting enemies could suddenly develop empathy for each other as comrades-in-arms. Does the military experience narrated in literature produce the experience of individuals or nations? Classical European literature on war has an inexorable tragic sense as its dominant quality (Greek tragedies, for example). The literature of the American Civil War dramatizes the conflict that a soldier faces in the contradiction between private emotions and public duty. (For example, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*.) This aspect, which finds a prominent place in war films, will be illustrated in the third chapter. Valorization of army discipline and behaviour went hand in
hand with the professionalization of the army in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Both war films and military memoirs devote ample space to the description of training institutes. The professional soldier then was more and more isolated from the rest of society. War is only a small, even if the most momentous part of the military experience. The rest of the time is spent in making the organization work. For this reason, it may be noted that Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha's memoir analyzed in the second chapter has barely a few pages related to the author's war experience. Any soldier more often than it is imagined, is a corporate executive rather than a warrior.

Comradeship is a dominant theme in the literature of war. The works of some English poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves exemplify this theme. In their works, the death of a comrade is more tragic than the horrors of war. The endurance of the brutalities of war is made possible in the light of collective suffering. The universality of the soldier's situation increases endurance levels. The death of a comrade is like a rehearsal of one's own death. The despair and senselessness of war increase with each comrade's death.

As can be seen, war is mostly explained in western literature as a universal phenomenon, with philosophical implications for life, death, friendship, betrayal and so on. War does not occupy as much space in the collective imagination of the Indian people as it does in the western mind. This study, while not ignoring entirely the existential dilemmas of war, foregrounds the immediacy of war, its representation in the cultural arenas of the national space, and the gendered nature of wars.
The postmodernist age heralded the blurring of boundaries between binary oppositions, one of the most important being the distinction between "high" and "low" culture. An ideology that sees the surface as the real, appearance as reality has facilitated the examination of genres dismissed off for long as unworthy of serious study. The historical shift from modernism to postmodernism in the 1980s in the West may be seen as a shift from the classical to the popular. Such a shift is imbricated in the socio-political/economic forces of a particular time and place. The populist impulse in postmodernism has enabled the institutionalization of film studies as an academic discipline. Further, the idea of nation as imagined in and through a visual vocabulary is facilitated by the growth of cultural studies as an interdisciplinary academic discipline. What was earlier condemned as commercial, popular (appealing to the masses) has now attained status in academia. This makes the discipline of popular film studies in its own way subversive. The trajectory of the Indian nation-state can be charted by examining popular cinema. Cinema, especially in Third World countries, is implicated in the economic, political, social and cultural processes of nation building. In this study I focus on how a text (whether a film or a memoir) produces a particular subject, in this case, the nation and how the process of the production of the subject is inflected by ideology, commerce and the historical imperatives.

Cinema is a multi-dimensional art form. It combines the creative processes of literature, dance, drama, and music with the technological aspects involved in production, distribution, etc. How a story is told is more
important in a film than the story itself. The point of view, both of the narrative as well as the camera angles, is crucial to the experience of viewing a film. Any analysis of a film must necessarily take into account this fundamental premise, what John Berger calls "way of seeing." The ideological orientations of the film induce the audience to particular ways of seeing. The configuration of art, technology and commerce with ideology lies at the heart of image production.

In the past few years, several scholars have explored the themes in cinema using the topos of nation and nationalism as a framework. One of the most influential studies is Sumita S. Chakravarty's *National Identity in Indian popular Cinema*. It is an in-depth account of popular Hindi cinema over a period of forty years from independence. The study is deeply entrenched in the poststructuralist framework that positions cinema at the intersection of the axes of culture and nation.

Chakravarty employs the metaphor of impersonation to establish a relationship between Indian cinema and national identity. In a way, impersonation is reminiscent of the appearance versus reality theme, central to the readings of classical literature. Chakravarty analyses very briefly the 1961 Dev Anand starrer *Hum Dono*, a film with a World War II background. *Haqeeqat* is mentioned only in passing. The non-committal nature of the filmic text is too easily interpreted by Chakravarty as the "apolitical stance of the Bombay film" (219). *Hum Dono* receives more attention as the double role played by Dev Anand gives Chakravarty an opportunity to locate the reading of this film within her framework of the impersonation theory. Such a tendentious reading of a war film obfuscates the possibilities of several other
interpretations. Her listing of war films till the year 1987 has some significant omissions like *Hindustan ki Kasam* (1973), to name one.

Madhava Prasad in his full-length study on Hindi cinema affirms the national character of Hindi film for the following reason: its role in popularizing Hindi language and its cosmopolitan workforce. Its all-India market could also be another pertinent factor in giving it a national character. Prasad integrates Marxist and poststructuralist theories in his analysis of Hindi cinema as an institution that shapes and is shaped by national ideologies. He identifies "the socio-political formation of the modern Indian state" and "the global capitalist structure" as the determining frameworks for Indian cinema (6). He notes a symbiotic relationship between cinema and the form of the state. The cinema-state relationship does not extricate to the changed dynamics in the time of war. Also, war films have not been taken up for analysis. He refers to *Haqeeqat* only in passing as a patriotic film in comparison to *Sangam* (1964) which "did not take on the burden of a nationalist propaganda in a straightforward manner" (85). Nonetheless, his study of Hindi cinema as a site of ideological production informs my work to a great extent. But my work is more specific in that it analyzes the ideological underpinnings of the notion of nation in war narratives. It is precisely such a focus that separates my study from the growing repertoire of studies on Hindi cinema.

Shoma Chatterji's full-length study of the representation of women in Indian cinema essentializes woman as a universal category. The woman is theorized as a vehicle for the generation of "pleasure". She is not perceived as a national subject. Thus the complexity of representing the highly differentiated category of gender within the larger rubric of the nation eludes
her study. My study has a strong feminist bias in which I explore the modes through which war narratives construct masculinity and femininity. The narratives use the metaphor of the earth mother to glorify the fecundity of the woman. The idealization of the nation as a mother, on the one hand, and the valorization of women's subservience to national goals, on the other, account for the paradoxical construction of womanhood in war discourse.

V

A set of frameworks in concentric patterns informs my analysis of military literature and popular war film. For military literature, I propound a framework that divides it into what I call "insider" and "outsider" literature. The former term designates the output of writers who belong to the armed forces, and the latter, writers who write on military matters but are not from the armed forces. The two categories together are fairly similar to the notion of secondary discourse as formulated by Ranajit Guha in his essay, "The Prose of Counter Insurgency." Secondary discourse, according to Guha, consists of a body of retrospective writing like memoirs. It is written by the participant after a considerable lapse of time from the event. Unlike primary discourse (letters, dispatches, telegrams, and reports written by officials strictly for the information of the government), secondary discourse is meant for public consumption (51-2). This is not to assume that the compartmentalization of the two discourses is rigid. The two categories do overlap to the extent that both are written by a participant in the event, in the case of the present study, the event being a war.
I use Antonio Gramsci's and Louis Althusser's formulations of ideology to understand how a war film upholds and propagates the statist agenda. According to French theorist Althusser, the function of ideology is to provide social cohesion and to maintain class domination as well. In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus*, Althusser explains the basis of his critical production. The key question he poses is: what is ideology and how does it permeate society and conscience? Using Marx, he sets out to explain his idea of a state. He enhances our understanding of the state by distinguishing the ways in which state power operates. He identifies two significant modes and calls them "Repressive State Apparatus" viz., the army, police, etc., and "Ideological State Apparatus" viz., religion, family, school, media, etc. The hierarchies that operate in society are replicated in the values taught to individuals through ideological state apparatus. Thus, ideological state apparatus ensure the continuation of existing relations of power. Following this understanding of ideology, I wish to see Hindi cinema as a cohesive force in that its ideology, as I shall show, reflects as well as shapes national culture. Popular cinema is the arena of shared space (the cinema hall), shared aspirations/dreams/fantasies and shared national recreation. Such a sharing creates a community of national consumers that mediate in the formulation of discursive strategies of popular/public culture into which the hegemonic ideology seeps in at times in subtle ways, at others even overtly.

According to Antonio Gramsci, a particular ideology flourishes in situations created by economic conditions. In order to understand the ways in which ideology penetrated and circulated in any given society, Gramsci coined the term "hegemony". Hegemony involves the crystallization and
entrenchment of the ideas of the elite classes. Hence we may say if ideology is the medium to transmit values, according to Gramsci, then popular film can also be read as a terrain on which ideological battles are fought. This makes cinematic characters the bearers of dominant ideologies. Despite the onslaught of reception studies, Dwyer and Pinney's for instance, that foreground the consumption of cinema, it is my contention that the scope for the study of cinema as an ideological site is not yet exhausted. To continue with Guha's formulation, I suggest that the discourse of film, especially the terrorist film be equated with what Guha calls "tertiary discourse." This discourse belongs to the realm of the third person, non-official narratives (71). It is characterized by its radical content made clear through its sympathy for the insurgent (72). Some of the films in the third chapter will be analyzed in the light of this formulation.

VI

In this section, I provide the layout of the dissertation. The several strands in the title of this study (nation, war, military literature, Hindi cinema) need to be opened up and each strand necessitates detailed explication.

Chapter I will problematize the notions of nation and nationalism as these form the objects of study. Its main concern is to map out the history of the terms "nation" and "nationalism" as they have evolved in various contexts. The proliferation of studies of these terms from different disciplinary locations underlines their contestatory nature.

Nationalism is largely understood as an anti-colonial movement. However for the purposes of this study an understanding of nationalism as a discourse would be more productive. Nationalism as a discourse involves the
attempts to structure a coherent narrative of the nation. In this sense, India may be conceived as a discursive terrain. Different discourses of various ideological hues engage in a battle to gain hegemonic status in their attempt to define the Indian nation.

One of the chief sites that engages in defining the nation is the institutionalized discipline of history. Rajeev Bhargava distinguishes between four types of history-writing on nationalism, viz., manipulated, strongly relativist, critical and objectivist. Official history is manipulated by officials who have the power. Nationalist history-writing takes on the responsibility of correcting colonial history. It attempts to restore the self-respect of the colonized people by creating the idea of an idyllic past. The past, pictured as a golden era contests the civilizing claims of the colonizer. Relativist histories are those that are not objective. For instance, Indian historiography is divided between the communal and the secular, the former emphasizing communal difference and the latter, the modern state. The classical secular state restricts religion to private realms (195 - 196). The discourse of history is significant for the ways in which it shapes cultural discourses. Nationalism in its various manifestations then may be seen as a dynamic and constant ongoing process to gain power over the means to define, to give meaning to a well-bounded geographical space, which we call nation.

The study of nationalism in postcolonial societies must necessarily begin with the idea of nationalism as anti-colonial struggle. All nationalist movements claim the authority to speak for the whole nation which gives them a mass character. Such democratization is central to nationalism as anti-colonialism as it leads to the mobilization of the masses. In the Indian
context, Gandhi is given the credit for democratizing the freedom movement. Anti-imperialist mobilizations of people are based on a common political purpose. Yet, collectivization of people results in the formation of new social communities with the consequent focus on hitherto marginalized sections. This perspective of the nation shifts the focus from its conceptualization from above (i.e., the abstract state) as a unified whole. The new formations foreground the conceptualization of the nation from below (i.e., the people) as a collectivity of heterogeneous fragments upon whom unity is imposed. As we shall see later in this study, such a perspective is crucial to the study of insurgent movements.

As stated earlier, the nation is to be understood here as a cultural space in which culture is the locus of its self-definition. In the process of defining the nation, culture transforms itself into an ideology and becomes part of the larger framework of the politics of nationalism. Cultural nationalism is based on the claims of a unique cultural distinctiveness. The idea of a unitary, absolute culture is utopian, especially in a plural society like India. In multi-religious contexts culture invariably is intertwined with religion. Therefore, cultural nationalism and religious nationalism become overlapping modes of constituting a nation. Writing about India's attempts to forge a national identity, Richard Lannoy notes that the history of Indian nationalism has always been ineluctably intertwined with religion (xix). The cultural nationalists claim that religious differences can be ironed out by fostering the idea of a common cultural heritage. In a country like India, this is highly problematic as invariably culture is made synonymous with a Brahminical Hindu culture. Propagating this as Indian culture would be tantamount to
homogenization and majoritarianism. New forces like free market and globalization have created problems in the attempts to forge a national identity. It is tempting to believe that a homogenized nation-state is the perfect solution for a conflict-ridden plural society. Critiques of Nehruvian socialism and secularism paved the way for Hindu fundamentalism. The categories of caste and religion suppressed in Nehruvian discourse began to tumble out of the closet into the public arenas. In the articulations of intellectuals, caste and religion became "respectable" categories of analysis. These in turn emboldened the religious fundamentalist groups to mobilize the masses at the political level. The analysis of the growth of Hindu fundamentalism is necessary for this study as it is inextricably linked to militarism and the idea of the nation as a cultural space. In an essay on Ambedkar and the national movement, Gopal Guru emphasizes the role played by Hindu nationalists in valorizing culture. He says, "As we all know anti-colonial Hindu nationalism did try to privilege the Hindu cultural categories for establishing sovereignty in the spiritual-cultural sphere thus juxtaposing it with western culture" (157).

Of the many locations from which "the national" may be defined the diasporic community is a significant one. The locus of a postnational global order lies within this community. The diaspora with its feet firmly planted on foreign soil and heart in the homeland emblematizes the simultaneity of lived experiences. The threat to the relevance of the nation in the wake of globalization has led the diasporic communities to perpetuate its significance. The poststructuralist shift from essentialism to constructiveness has had its impact on first world discourses of the nation. These discourses castigate the
nation as a totalizing grand narrative. However, their very attempt to move away from the metanarrative by valorizing the fragment only helps to keep the former in the limelight. Diasporic writers (Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, etc.), scholars (Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, for instance), and filmmakers (Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair and others) have added an entirely new dimension to the study of nation and nationalism. Their focus on the transnational or the global contests the stability of national identities, which war narratives, as we shall see, endorse in very definitive ways.

Tagore was instrumental in prophesying the possible violent offshoots of nationalism in postcolonial nations. He notes, "Nationalism is a great menace. It is the particular thing which for years has been at the bottom of India's troubles" (111). Nationalism is generally conceptualized as anti-imperialism that resulted in freedom movements and finally independence. However, if nationalism was purely anti-imperialism, it should have extinguished itself with political independence. That it survives to this day in many forms (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, to name a few) reveals its many-sidedness. Nationalism in such forms has resulted in violent uprisings, leading to bloodshed and fragmentation of national and human communities. It is for this reason that this study considers nation not as a unified grand narrative but one that is contested by the fragments. This view propagated by the writers of the Subaltern Studies Series has gained canonical status in academia. Here I use it as a starting point in order to examine the extent to and rigour with which war narratives seek to dismantle such a view, and resurrect the notion of a unitary India. Interestingly, this idea, carefully constructed by the secular nationalists, is revisited by the present day cultural
nationalists. Only the former’s notion was inclusionary, the latter’s exclusionary.

Chapter II will deal with the construct of nation in military literature. The focus here is quite clearly on the phenomenon of war, and how it produces a particular idea of the nation. Clausewitz, the theorist on war, has defined war as an extension of politics and the military as an instrument of political policy (87). To the Nazi theorists of war, there was no such thing as peace time. The period of peace was only the period of war preparation. For the socialists only the war of the oppressed classes could be considered the legitimate war. To Marxists-Leninists, the nation-state was the root cause of war. Liberal thinkers conceptualize the state as a war-like entity. Liberal and Marxist theories are inadequate to explain war, both being based on the idea of history as progress. War in the twentieth century, far from being the epic battle of good over evil has been self-serving, fought out of greed, territorial aggrandizement and ethnic/national/religious rivalries. Liberal theorists believe that chances of war decline in an industrialized society. But experience has proved that ethnic/religious differences perpetrate war even in industrialized societies. Consequently, war is not always necessarily fought for resources or territory. Even advanced societies can be drawn into the ethnic conflicts of the third world countries, as is exemplified by the recent US interventions in Bosnia. The neo-Machiavellian view is that war and the armed forces are a part of the human condition. War makes possible the unleashing of aggressive impulses. To us, however, it is war as a narrated event that is central to an understanding of texts in this chapter. To the vast majority, war is *narrated* through stories, legends, history and films. The
fascination for a war story is endemic to the human race. War stories are fascinating as they deal with certain fundamental existential dilemmas of the human race. Classic stories of triumph and honour invest war with the powers of transformation. The experience of war is akin to a rite of passage that shapes its veterans in profound ways. The self-aggrandizement gets translated into the aggrandizement of the nation. The children in the villages, according to Fanon, dream of identifying with "some rebel or another, the story of whose bravery still moves them to tears" (91). There has been a spate of books on war and terror after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001. Justifying the spurt in sales a representative of a bookstore in New Delhi says, "Our job is to give the readers what they want. Tragedy and controversy sell like nothing else" (2 November 2001, *Times of India*).

The tradition of war narratives does not exist in India as it did in Greek and Roman civilizations which produced writers like Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius and Tacitus. Indian kings were great warriors but the practice of maintaining war accounts did not exist. Only one Indian chronicle called *Rajatranjini* written during 1149-50 AD by Kalhana, a Kashmiri historian exists in Sanskrit verse. War accounts began to be written in India only during the Mughul period. Even these were not exclusively war accounts; instead they formed major parts of autobiographical writing as in *Babamama, Akbarnama* and so on.

In the present era, the technologizing of war has changed the ways in which it is fought as well as narrated. Today it is easier to resolve problems by bombing as America did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Access to advanced
technology empowers a nation which may choose the root of armed conflicts more easily. Public opinion has a decisive role in changing the nature of war. Hobsbawm calls it the CNN effect (Hobsbawm 15). The media is also an instrument at the disposal of the state for mobilising public opinion. It presents the war in such a way that people perceive it as legitimate and just. However, as Hobsbawm notes, military intervention has also successfully halted crimes against humanity and expelled dictators. Two significant examples are Vietnam’s invasion of Cambodia to overthrow Pol Pot and the other example is Tanzania’s intervention in Uganda when it was ruled by Idi Amin (21). Such developments increase the scope of a war narrative and impinge upon the ways in which the nation is represented therein.

That brings us to the specific texts to be examined in this chapter. I use a mix of memoirs, war accounts, diaries and newspaper reportage. If I take all three services into consideration, my topic will become less manageable than it already is. My reading of military literature therefore has an army bias. The sheer output of autobiographical and other writing in the army is a fair enough reason for this choice. Most of the wars fought in India have been fought mainly by the land forces. Consequently, the war accounts that exist share my bias.

As military memoirs form a part of this chapter, it would be necessary to offer a brief explanation of the theories of autobiographical writing. Antonio Gramsci in his writings on culture gives one possible justification for the writing of autobiographies: “to help others develop in certain ways and toward certain openings” (qtd. in Forgacs and Nowell-Smith 132). He ascribed a didactic purpose to autobiographical writing. Recent theories of
autobiography have stressed the fictiveness of discourse that purports to
describe the history of a self. According to Ranajit Guha, a memoir is a genre
of retrospective writing. There is a temporal dislocation between the event
and its recall. Nevertheless, memoirs are significant documentations of past
events (48).

According to Linda Anderson, “autobiographies are not bare
chronicles of fact, but the artful manipulation of details and events that
acquire the status of facts during the construction of a particular persona as a
self” (79). The writing about the self before the practice crystallized as the
genre of autobiography consisted of confession (initially, a narrative of soul's
progress towards God), apology (philosophical explanation and justification of
one's beliefs) and memoir (recollections of a person involved in, or witness to,
significant events). The term autobiography first emerged in English at the
end of the eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, it was applied to
studies of the self. The term seems to have emerged to accommodate a
genre, which often fused elements of confession, apology, and memoir.

In this study, I prefer to use the term "memoir" as it implies the writings
of people who are self-conscious of their status in public, and would rather not
indulge in self-reflection. The domestic or private lives too occupy only a
limited space in the narrative. War discourse especially is based on an
implicit understanding of the segregation of the man's world and woman's
world. This has far reaching consequences for the ways in which the nation
is represented in military literature.

Chapter III is devoted to the analysis of war films. The genre of war
films will be expanded to accommodate terrorist films as well. Cinema is an
affective medium that exploits the sentiments of the spectator for its own purposes. The trope of cinema as a vehicle for generating public hysteria can be dated to 1901. Save Dada made a newsreel on the return of R P Paranjpye from England with a Cambridge degree. There was mass hysteria with Paranjpye being escorted by a long procession of enthusiastic people. Even spectators who watched the newsreel experienced a surge of nationalist feeling (Kaul 24). As we shall see in this chapter, the mobilization of nationalist sentiment is a vital part of a war film, usually directed towards the creation of consensus for statist agendas. Indian cinema emerged during the colonial era. Thus cinema in India has always seriously engaged itself with the construction of a national identity. Popular culture and cinema in particular, is implicated in the power structures, ways and means of official discourse. Indian cinema’s imbrication with the nation-building process may be attributed to the historical fact of cinema’s arrival in India in 1896, around the time of the consolidation of the freedom movement. Indian cinema thus reflects the evolution of the idea of India as a nation.

The tradition of political and historical films that engaged with the idea of nationhood goes back to the pre-independence era. D N Sampat made India’s first political film, *Bhakt Vidur* (1921). He made Hindi cinema a truly national venture by recruiting artists and technicians from all parts of India for his Kohinoor film company. Ramesh Saigal’s *Shaheed* (1948) and *Samadhi* (1950) recalled the moments of the national freedom struggle. Gautam Kaul locates the emergence of national cinema in the talkie. He says, “As films began to be made in several of India’s own languages it now became possible to arouse people speaking these languages across the length and
breadth of the country. The regional talkie harnessed the immense treasure of regional folklore and regional literature. It was like message relayed through a dozen languages of the subcontinent. Thus emerged an all-India body of national cinema, each projecting the unique share of its own regional ethos" (113).

Today "the all-India body of national cinema" that Kaul speaks about extends beyond the territorial borders of the nation. The immense popularity of Hindi films among the growing non-resident Indian population in countries like USA, UK and the UAE has ensured a steady market. The popularity of Hindi blockbusters abroad shows the success of the nostalgic mode. For the exiled, return to motherland is more a mythic phenomenon than real. Thus the return is made possible vicariously through films. However, the return to homeland need not have the kind of mythic value to a nineties immigrant to the USA for instance, as it had perhaps for the indentured labourer to Trinidad. The economic status of the immigrant is now higher than it used to be in the sixties and seventies, enabling him/her to visit home more frequently. For this reason, the nostalgia evoked in recent films is for rural India, rather than for the urban spaces to which most middle class exiles would return to. For example, Bollywood hits like Aditya Chopra’s *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1996) and Subhash Ghai’s *Pardes* (1997) locate the Indian scenes in the green fields of Punjab and the picturesque hills of Himachal Pradesh respectively. War films, for somewhat different reasons, deploy the nostalgic mode to transport the audiences to a heroic era in which the dilemmas were not merely of one nation against another, but of the transcendental, existential ones of life and death itself, the conflict between
eros and thanatos, or rather the question of the "ontic being", to use a phrase from Heidegger. War is attractive, as it has to do with that most enigmatic reality of life, i.e., its antonym death. Death is eroticised in the discourse of war as the dead are invariably young men who in the natural order of the universe should represent the life-affirming force of Eros as begetters of the future generation.

A brief synopsis of the kind of cinema produced in each decade since Independence would be in order here. The fifties and sixties combined Nehruvian idealism and the decline of faith in socialist ideals which provided a framework for critiques of the socialist state. Hindi cinema during this time consisted of social, neo-realistic films and espoused the cause of the oppressed. It negotiated a multitude of social concerns even within an apparently escapist narrative comprising of song and dance, melodrama, action, fantasy and rhetoric. Bimal Roy and Raj Kapoor are the prominent filmmakers in this period. Raj Kapoor's films like Shree 420 (1955), romanticized the poor, innocent hero lost in a corrupt world. Bimal Roy in a film like Sujata (1959) for instance engaged with a pertinent social theme like the caste-system. Roy's Do Bigha Zameen (1953) explored in a moving and sensitive manner the trauma of displacement from the rural to the urban. Pertinent socio-economic issues of the times were translated into cinematic text.

The seventies was the age of the "angry young man" dominated by the super star Amitabh Bachchan. This was a period of staunch anti-establishment sentiments following the failure of the state to eradicate poverty, unemployment and social injustice. Bachchan epitomized the
underdog of society in most of his films. From the marginal position that his character occupied (gangster, petty thief, coolie, etc.) he challenged the establishment values of the privileged classes. In *Deewar* (1979), unemployment makes him enter the world of crime till he rises to the position of a rich powerful gangster. However, the imperatives of commercial cinema make the film ultimately a pro-establishment one. The hero Vijay never attains happiness and dies at the hands of his own brother who as a police officer is a cog in the wheel of the establishment. Popular Hindi cinema seldom challenges the status quo and even if it does, it is only to restore and uphold it at the end of the film.

The films in the eighties and nineties reflect the growth of cultural nationalism in the political arena of the nation. In the nineties, there have been two dominant genres in Hindi cinema, viz., action film and the family drama with the ubiquitous love story as its major component. These, I would suggest, are only apparently antithetical. The ideological underpinnings of both remain the same. Both genres tackle an imagined enemy. Right wing ideology indulges in creating paranoia about threats to the nation, both territorial and cultural. The enemy in the action films is cross border terrorism with veiled references to Pakistan. The other genre deals with an insidious enemy that appears in the form of cultural invasion. This poses a threat to the idea of an essential India. While confronting the first enemy is the job of the patriotic Indian male, the second enemy is reserved for the Indian woman. Here, I find useful Partha Chatterjee's division of material domain and spiritual domain to stand in for the West and East. Further, it suggests that the division is a gendered one, as it engages in the reification of rigid gender
roles. The "material domain" with its engagement in the public world of economy, labour, political struggle and the like remains the male world. The "spiritual domain" is the private world of family, rituals, home and tradition inhabited by and the responsibility of women (1992: 117). Conflict that occurs in each domain is split between the two genres one, action films and two, family drama. The "back-to-roots" command of Hindutva simplifies conflict with its implicit belief that if only we are rooted in tradition, then there can be no conflict at all. A return-to-roots formula may be a counter strategy to the anarchic uncertainty, flux, ambivalence and in-betweenness of postmodernism. However, what is unsettling is that such a move leaves little option for women who are forced back into the straitjacketed roles of several decades ago. The "roots" in a so-called authentic past are themselves not unproblematic temporal and spatial zones to which one may return. Therefore, such a strategy can at its best be described as a form of romantic nativism. The eighties was a period of transition from socialism to capitalism, culminating in the nineties that was the era of globalization, privatization and the rise of Hindutva forces, emblematic of resistance to what has been described as cultural imperialism of the west. In its assimilation of nation and culture, the Hindutva debate foregrounds the two categories, both of which can be read as vigorously contested sites.

As we have seen above, each decade (broadly and generally) provides an ideological framework for cinema that reflects the socio-political scene of the time. Each of the eras outlined above saw its cinema reflecting conflicting ideologies, making Hindi film a "cinematic discourse [which is] a symbolic force in post-independence India" (Chakravarty 4). It is in this context that
cinema provides a terrain on which one can map out the intersection of the oppositional ideas of nationalism. Popular films, in the process of constructing a national identity, turn into sites of ideological battles. In countries where there is a large population of illiterate people, popular film may be "seen as an alternative route into national imaginaries and cohesion" (Radcliffe and Westwood 18).

Cinema has always responded to wars. The drama, pathos, passion and rhetoric of war have provided fodder for its cinematic reproduction. The recent American "war on terror" has inspired several productions. Hollywood is making a host of films based on the heroes of American operations in Afghanistan. Sylvester Stallone is expected to act in a film which is based on the US operations in Afghanistan. Many of these films speak on behalf of the common combatant against the military top brass and the politicians. The Indian nation's pre-occupation with history both in the form of direct governmental intervention in revising school history text-books as well as the filmmakers' interest in historical themes is closely related to the militarism of right wing politics alluded to earlier. Anil Sharma's Gadar (2000) and Ashutosh Gowarikar's Lagaan (2000) were period films laced with patriotism. In the pipeline are three films on Bhagat Singh (Unnithan, 84-5). The focus on the nation's past indicates cinema's obsessive desire to grapple with questions of the nation and national identity.

War films can be categorized on the basis of 1) war as providing a historical perspective 2) war film as a medium to glorify heroism 3) impact of war. The films Haqeeqat (1964), Hindustan ki Kasam (1973) and Border (1997) would fall under the first two categories. Certain stock features in war
films are: soldiers waiting for enemy attack, a noisy soundtrack, home coming of the hero, arrival of mail from home, brief loss of morale, love lives of soldiers, team work, character of a strong commander and tough training.

War films serve as explanatory texts for the audiences. They play upon the emotions of the people and make the emotive a constituent part of the mode of reception. War films set up a regime of loss as well as desire. In lamenting the loss of unity, security and nationalist sentiment, there is also the desire for these qualities as requisites for peace.

This chapter also studies terrorist films as putative subversions of war films. These films create space for the contestation of the State that the narrative of a war film assiduously glorifies. How do the films under consideration represent militant violence? The terrorist films in showing violence as spontaneous and natural undermine the conscious and rational political choices made by the people. Violence in militant movements is not merely material, it is psychological and symbolic as well. It aspires to draw attention to the militants' cause, to threaten opponents of the cause and to destroy the symbols of the state, which is their chief enemy. By expanding the definition of war to encompass insurgent movements, what I wish to do, is to show the changing nature of war in accordance with the changes that occur in the perception of the nation and the state. Wars are defined conventionally as aggression between two or more nation-states as in World War I and II and closer home the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971. Wars may also be fought outside one's own territory as for example in Vietnam, the Gulf and Kosovo. Then there are the insurgent wars as in Kashmir, Nagaland, etc., which are not called wars but are variously described as
secessionist/irredentist/ insurgent/separatist movements. One of the ways of denying legitimacy to these movements is to deny them the conventional terminology itself. For the purposes of this study, the last will also be termed as wars. More importantly, describing them as wars may enable us to understand the multiple connotations of the increasingly intractable term “nation.”

My engagement with war films and military literature also arises from a desire to expose these texts as foregrounding male history, through valorizing heroic, male deeds. It would be illuminating to examine the category of gender as it is represented in war narratives. Wars have been fought conventionally to protect the women and children back home. The warrior/woman opposition is a cross-cultural phenomenon. In Aztec society the worst insult to give a man is to treat him as a woman (Todorov in Elshtain 196). In war narratives, women occupy liminal spaces as part of the family that celebrates the exploits of their men, as victims in the form of widows or orphans. Women from the enemy ranks have usually been subjected to torture in the form of molestation/rape by the conquering soldiers. By contrast, the armies of the insurgent movements recruit large numbers of women in their ranks. The dynamics of gender construction in the narratives of terrorist films make for an interesting study of women and war and their place in the nation.

As war discourse foregrounds masculinism, the study of gender forms a significant part of this study. For instance, the narratives of the Vietnam War in which ten thousand women served, continue to confine women to sexual and domestic spaces. Such a politics of erasure helps the long-term
investment of conventional ideologies. The presence of few women in the army too mirrors the general prejudices that exist outside the military. By and large women are not taken as combat soldiers. They are largely recruited as doctors, nurses and of late in the services, i.e., non-combat formations like Army Ordnance Corps, Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Army Service Corps. They are not yet a part of combat formations like Infantry, Armoured Corps, and so on. Feminized images of women in the military are necessary complements to the discourses of machismo that permeate the military. War in classical studies is construed as a proving ground for masculinity. Although the advances in armament technology have rendered outdated, the fears of the risk factor in war, women are still “protected” from it. As Yuval-Davis notes, "Technological innovations in modern warfare have deemed biologistic rationalizations of women's exclusions mostly obsolete" (114). Chapters II and III will look at the representation of women in military literature and war films respectively, in order to understand the ways in which a nation is imagined as a male fraternity.

Several studies as elaborated above exist separately on nation, cinema and war. I propose to combine them in an attempt to fill in the gaps in the existing scholarship. The present work is a small step towards understanding the cultural representations in visual and verbal forms of the undesirable, yet inevitable phenomenon of war, through which emerges a particular notion of the nation.
Notes

1 The American President George Bush coined the phrase, “war on terror” to describe the action taken against Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. on 11 September 2001.
Works Cited


Chapter I

Nation and Nationalism:

An Overview

The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the light of thy dawn of peace, my motherland. It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to ashes the vast flesh – the self-love of the Nation – dead under its own excess.

Rabindranath Tagore

This chapter is devoted to a detailed study of some of the key concepts like nation, state, nationalism, patriotism and so on, which form the core objects of study in this thesis. I believe such an overview is important because each of the concepts enumerated above is invested with a rich minefield of intellectual thought. I propose to explain some of the ideas that have evolved over a period of time in this field.

The polysemic term “nation” has been defined by several scholars in different periods in history. Still, it remains a problematic concept. It is defined by combining subjective elements like will and imagination and objective elements like language, territory, race, and so on.

One thing however is certain and that is, the fact that nation is a modern term. The fall of dynastic empires in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave rise to the forging of collective identities based on language, culture, ethnicity, etc. These collectivities crystallized over a period of time to form nation-states. The French and the Russian Revolutions along
with the fall of European empires are the empirical causes of the formation of modern nation-states. The French Revolution ushered in democracy, which became the main political system of future nations. I offer here what is often called a survey of the field of nation and nationalism.

II

The intellectual tradition of studies on nation and nationalism has a long history. Ernest Renan’s essay “What is a nation?” is one of the earliest attempts at theorizing the idea of nation. Renan highlights the role of memory in the formation of a nation. Memory is a selective process that operates at the level of the individual as well as a collectivity. It is a complex mental process that includes remembering and forgetting. When Renan speaks of memory, he refers to remembering and forgetting, the two constituent components of memory. He says, “to be conscious of one’s own belonging to a nation, one must remember the past of one’s nation and must have the feeling of having shared its joys and sorrows together as ‘a people’” (qtd. in Bhabha 19). Renan does not seem to take into consideration the fact that individual memory, or, for that matter, the collective memory is shaped by forces extraneous to one’s own free will. A powerful state can use several agencies, like the media for instance, in order to influence a nation’s memory through manipulation of images and information. Renan considers the subjective element of “will” to be central to the nation-formation process. He remarks:

To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present, to have performed great deeds together, to wish
According to Renan, grief is more important than joy in national memories, as grief imposes duty. Besides a shared memory, a nation must also continuously assert a will to remain unified in future. In this sense, a nation is "a daily plebiscite" (qtd. in Bhabha 19). We will see in the third chapter how war films facilitate the assertion of the idea of a unified nation. The skilful use of images in war cinema helps to create the memory of a shared, heroic past.

While dwelling on the element of memory in nation-formation, it would be fruitful to cite Shahid Amin's essay on the Chauri Chaura episode. According to Amin, the nation invariably chooses to forget those events, images, metaphors that are associated with its subaltern classes, creating in the process an elite national memory. Therefore, recovering marginal histories should be an important part of the historiography of a nation. Amin uses the event of the peasant revolt of Chauri Chaura to put forth his thesis. To Amin, national history-writing is like the writing of biography, where memory lapses, selectivity and erasures (at times, deliberate) form part of the strategy for constructing a past (179). Thus, in the process of creating the past of a nation, sometimes it may be necessary to recover the narratives of the subaltern groups. The spate of terrorist films in the nineties — some of them with a fair degree of sympathy for the terrorist — may be seen as an attempt to rewrite the history of the nation from the subaltern's point of view. This issue will feature in detail in the third chapter.
One of the most important contributions of poststructuralism towards the task of defining the complex term "nation" is to explain it in terms of its discursivity. The nation is no longer a unified, well-bounded territory of communities sharing a series of common features. Rather, the nation is constituted in and through the realm of narrative. The postmodernist dislodging of grand narratives from their place of pride facilitates the forging of marginal narratives. Hitherto suppressed residents of the margins begin to articulate their conceptualizations of the nation that interrupt and dismantle canonical discourses of the concept. One of the most influential scholars propagating such a notion of the nation is Homi Bhabha. In his seminal essay, "DissemiNation, Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," following Eric Hobsbawm, Bhabha foregrounds the experience of exile as crucial to the narrative of the nation. Further, it is not the nationalist movements per se that interest him, rather it is "traditions of writing that have attempted to construct narratives of the imaginary of the nation-people..." (Bhabha 303). For the purposes of the present study, this formulation will prove to be productive as will be seen in the chapters that follow.

The older meanings of nation stressed its ethnicity. The newer meanings associate nation with political unity and independence and increasingly with cultural sovereignty. To Hobsbawm, nations are "naturally heterogeneous" (133) and national movements have been either for national unification, or for expansion. He argues that even if nationalism is prominent today, it is historically less important in the sense that it is no longer "a global political programme" as it was in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. He predicts that the history of late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries
can no longer be written in terms of narrow notions like nation and nation-state. The history of the world will be "supranational" or "infranational" with nations performing only cameo roles in the new world histories (171-173). He hopes for the day when nation and nationalism need not be the only categories through which a person can constitute his or her identity. It may be difficult for us to go with this idea all the way. The nation is an entity, which in most Third World countries has come into being after a violent struggle against the colonizers. For this reason, it is as much an affective as a political, cultural category. Perhaps the most influential work on colonial aggression is Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. The memory of the colonizer's violence is part of the collective consciousness of most African and other postcolonial nations. The native-settler encounter, according to Fanon, has always been violent. As a result, "the colonized finds his freedom in and through violence" (68). A nation that has come into existence after an encounter that involved such passion would necessarily be a strong, emotional category through which an individual derives his/her identity.

III

The state is the political expression of the nation characterized by sovereignty over a territorial unit. It is universal in the sense that every person on earth belongs to one state or the other. Liberal political philosophers believed that the state should be in control of society and denigrated non-state institutions like churches or guilds for appropriating the power that should legitimately belong to the state.

Much as it may seem the norm to talk of the state as a western concept, we cannot ignore the fact that a thorough conceptualization of the
state exists in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as far back as 150 A.D. The state for Kautilya is responsible for the people's well-being. Only a powerful, coercive state in charge of law and order can work for the welfare of its people. The state is conceptualized as a strong organ with the function of facilitating the expansionist aims of the king. Territory is thus central to the idea of a state. He envisions a paternalistic state that would be responsible for the people's well-being. The state is the sole dispenser of justice. The prosperity of the state depends upon alliance, settlement on virgin lands, and conquest. The king, the councillors, the territory, the fortified towns, the treasury, the armed forces, and the allies are the constituents of the state (119).

Now coming to the modern state we find that almost identical features have been ascribed to it. Territory, a political apparatus, legal system, and sole power in the use of force are some of the features that are common to Kautilya's conception of a state. However, the continuity thus established is circumscribed by the fact that Kautilya's state functioned within the framework of a feudal government. Therefore, we must turn to the more recent and larger narrative of colonialism to locate our conceptualization of the state in India. What the British rulers conceived as benefits given to the colony through their rule (railways, postal service, law courts, army, police, etc.) is now seen as part of a larger regime of power. The bureaucratization of the Indian state is an exercise in vesting power in an elite group. This elite group consisted of the educated classes of colonial times who are the precursors to the great Indian middle class. After Independence, therefore, there was no radical change in the administrative and functional aspects of the state. The
Indian nation-state carried on the legacy left behind by their erstwhile colonial masters in the fields of law, education, military, etc.

Statism is central to political nationalism. Thomas Hobbes considered as the founder of Statism said:

I Authorise and give up my Right of governing Myselfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner. (qtd. in Gilbert 77)

As we may see, Hobbes envisioned mutuality in the relationship between the state and the individual. State-formation is important for the survival and security of individuals. It is an artificial category but its contrary, i.e., a state of nature would bring humans into unnecessary conflicts with each other. Thus the function of the state is to play the role of an arbitrator and protector of the people. This could lead to a clash of interests with other states. Since it is the duty of each state to protect its people, one state can stand in relation to the other only in an attitude of conflict. Liberal philosophers believe that the state is a detached, enlightened, objective power through which a nation is kept together. For Hegel, the state is the domain of universal values that transcends the mundane concerns of civil society. The state’s power derives from its impartial and impersonal relationship with its members. The functioning of the state as it filters down through its various institutions is based upon uniformity, i.e., the creation of the citizen as an autonomous, free, unmarked individual. Discrepancies in the creation of a citizen have led to every national state having its share of “unredeemed minorities” (to use
Hobsbawm's phrase). Hobsbawm notes that although the nationalisms of Asian countries were modelled on western nationalism, the states that were created after Independence were antithetical to Western states. States in Asian countries were multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural unlike their relatively homogeneous Western counterparts (169).

Poststructuralists see the state as an agent of power. This understanding comes from Foucault who believed that in the twentieth century power is not centralized but distributed so thinly that it is not recognized as power. In the post-globalization era, it is important to examine the receding role of the state. The state in the global world withdraws itself from the social sector, giving place to the emergence of civil society.

It is important to distinguish the nation from the nation-state. Much of the chagrin displayed by the critics of nation should more appropriately be directed at the nation-state. In the following elucidation, I wish to dispel the confusion that arises when the two categories are treated as synonymous. The nation-state is a politically constructed category, which holds within it the judicial, legislative, and constitutional domains. It is the nation-state that has proved to be inadequate in granting those who owe their allegiance to it, all that it set out to grant in terms of rights, equality, choices and space. The nation-state is responsible for the hiatus that creates the privileged and underprivileged, the metropolitan and the subaltern, the centre and the margin. The nation is mistakenly linked to territory because of its equation with the state and consequently of the state with the people. Thus in the subsequent pages of this study, the nation will be understood as an emotional site and the nation-state as a political site.
With this we have a fair understanding of the difference between nation, state, and nation-state. To summarize, nation in this study will be understood as a culturally determined subjective, affective category, and state as its political expression. The nation-state would be an entity with which we interact as citizens. Nation-states are sovereign, independent units with properly demarcated territories. Recognition in the international arena is crucial for a nation to become a nation-state. For instance, Tamil Eelam may be a nation in the imagination of Tamilians in Sri Lanka. Still, it can be called a nation-state only after it gains recognition from the comity of nations in the world. Recognition is what helps a nation to come into existence as a nation-state.

IV

It was believed that the overarching category of nation could include in non-conflictual ways diverse divisions based on caste, class, religion, gender. The reality as we know is far from the ideal. In this section, I attempt an analysis of gender politics as it is enacted within the space of the nation. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis outline five different ways in which women are perceived by the nation-state. These are as:

a) biological reproducers
b) reproducers of national/ethnic/racial boundaries
c) transmitters of culture
d) signifiers of ethnic/national difference
e) participants in national/political/military struggles (qtd. in Hutchinson and Smith 313). To this, I would add another perception applicable particularly in postcolonial nation-states, and that is, women as beneficiaries of state largesse. We shall see later in this section how the nation-woman-state
relationship is cast in a complex mutuality. Women's primary relationship with the nation-state is through citizenship. Gender and its relationship with the nation-state is a complex subject that is worthy of independent treatment. Several studies in the recent past have examined the state vis-à-vis gender relationship (Jayawardena and de Alwis, Yuval-Davis, Sunder Rajan, to name a few). Our purpose here is to examine the ways in which women are represented in war narratives, and how their representation impinges on the way the nation is imagined. Therefore, it would be necessary to understand the ways in which the nation becomes a gendered category, the mechanisms by which constructs of women are produced within the cultural arena of the nation-space, and how women are at times resistant national subjects. A formulation of this kind will have a bearing on our understanding of women in war narratives.

The mythologizing of nation as earth mother is one of the most powerful strategies deployed in nationalist narratives. The nation as earth mother would have a deep resonance for a people whose main occupation is agriculture and whose sustenance comes from land. The image of the fecund earth provides a parallel to the image of woman as mother. This image is transferred on to the nation as a maternal figure iconized as Bharatmata, revealing the traditional nation and woman conflation. The etymology of the word nation (natio, Latin for “something born”) further consolidates the earth-mother configuration. This image of nation combines in a paradoxical way the dual implications of the mother as producer of brave sons, who in turn protect her from external enemies who desire her. There is an element of the Freudian oedipal complex at work here. As analyzed by Sumathi
Ramaswamy in her essay on the erotics of Tamil nationalism, the patriotic love for the motherland is coloured by the erotic desire for the woman. Both the *Tamilittaay* (Tamil mother) and *Bharatmata* were imagined as compassionate and nurturing, yet desirable and virginal. The erotic is harnessed in the service of the patriotic through the manipulation of images within the discourse of nationalism. According to Ramaswamy, the virginal, hallowed *Bharatmata*, the desiring male citizen and the nationalist female citizen who must continue the line of descent through the propagation of the national collectivity are the three corners of “the triangular pattern of the nationalist love story” (qtd. in Sunder Rajan 21).

The domain of religion is a significant site for constructing womanhood. Scriptural sanctions for specific types of female “behaviour” are brought into force in the construction of an ideal Indian woman. Epic characters like Sita and others from Hindu mythology like Savitri are prototypes of Indian womanhood. In the colonial period, the influence of English education gave the Indian male and female colonial subject a new model to fashion a modern Indian woman, who was a judicious combination of the east and the west. The tradition-modernity dialectic was played out in the realm of gender. In early nineteenth century, the women’s question was framed within the discourse of social reform. According to Partha Chatterjee, nationalism in India posited the women’s question as different from Western modernity (qtd. in Sangari and Vaid 243). It made the private domain the locus of the women’s question. Using the status of women as a marker, the colonizer condemned an entire culture as barbaric. The female colonizer also became an ally in this discourse. The infamous work of Katherine Mayo, which
Gandhi called "a gutter inspector's report" upholds the idea that India did not deserve self-rule as it was not civilized enough to govern itself. One of the main criteria for arriving at this conclusion was the low status of women, which according to colonial discourse had the sanction of the scriptures.

Women have always been exhorted to raise patriotic sons in folklore and nationalist myths. In Costa Rican nationalism, women were encouraged to raise patriotic sons like Santamaria. The *Intifada* did the same with Palestinian women and numerous folk songs amongst martial races in India, such as the Rajputs do likewise. In simultaneity with such images of home-bound, fecund women, India also has a tradition of militant warrior women in figures such as Razia Sultan, the thirteenth century queen of Delhi, Nur Jahan, wife of Emperor Jehangir and Laxmi Bai, the Queen of Jhansi who fought against the British in 1857. The last has been co-opted into the gallery of national heroes by official historiography. Despite this, women's work for the motherland, whether it is in the freedom struggle or in various professions in postcolonial India, is always discursively constructed in a way that emphasizes their continued focus on home and family. Women's work is seen as positive, worthy of appreciation only in tandem with their femininity, without the latter being jeopardized in any way by the former. As pointed out by Kumari Jayawardena:

> While Indian women were to participate in all stages of the movement for national independence, they did so in a way that was acceptable to, and was dictated by the male leaders and which conformed to the prevalent ideology on the position of women. (108)
While the nation/earth-mother conflation conjures up a figurative, primordial relationship between women and nation, it is also important to address the corporeal, everyday negotiations of woman with the nation-state. The nation-woman relationship is entangled in a variety of discourses besides the obvious one of gender. Perhaps no other event exemplifies this better than the Shahbano controversy of 1985. The legal case of a divorced woman petitioning for maintenance from her ex-husband took on a national significance in which the discourses of law, media, academics, electoral politics and religion intersected making it an “event” in the history of the nation. The Shahbano case problematized the relationship of secular law vis-à-vis personal law. What could have been an uncomplicated gender issue was hijacked by the more potent interest groups of politicians, religious fundamentalists and legal luminaries. The case also opened up the important debate on minority identity. The insecurity of the Muslim community surfaced and this gave them “an opportunity to mount an attack on what they perceived as the Hindu’s homogenizing influence, an influence that would eventually lead to the assimilation and destruction of Muslim identity” (Pathak and Sunder Rajan 561). Partha Chatterjee’s “inner domain” in which he locates femaleness with its attendant qualities of morality, virtue, spirituality need not be as autonomous as he makes it out to be. Either the domain is invaded by the outer, public space or the recalcitrant inhabitants of the inner space elbow themselves out into the public domain, as was exemplified so evocatively in the Shahbano event.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, gender has been crucial to the nation-formation process. The colonial rulers drew attention to gender issues
by pointing to the low status of women in India. Nationalists were quick to respond through interventions in social practices such as sati, widow remarriage, etc. Whether it was debates around sati or women's participation in the freedom movement, questions of gender have always been imbricated within the discourses of nationalism. As Sunder Rajan and You-me Park point out, "Postcolonial feminists have necessarily to negotiate the relationship of their feminism not only with Western feminism, but also ... with other contending ideologies such as nationalism ... an endeavour that is both politically fraught and theoretically complex" (qtd. in Schwarz and Ray 65).

V

History and its writing is a crucial aspect of nation-formation. If, as we have noted earlier, Renan believed that the past of a nation is what constitutes its "spiritual principle" then a construction of that past for the benefit of the living present is important. However, a national history or more appropriately, historiography has always remained a problematic area. As war forms part of a nation's history and war narratives a part of the project of history-writing, it is imperative that we examine the complex relationship of the nation with its history. A nation's history comes to us through multiple narratives enshrined in the discourses of literature, film, sociology, etc. History as an academic discipline changed irrevocably with the publication of the first volume of The Subaltern Studies Series. The writers of this series stage a rigorous contestation of hegemonic historiography. It is their contention that the history of the Indian nation is elitist as it excludes marginal groups. The
historiographer down the ages has kept the subaltern classes out of the narratives of the nation, denying them subjecthood of their history.

Dipesh Chakrabarty points out that a phenomenon which came to be called "history from below" appeared in the 1970s to fill the gaps in official historiography (qtd. in Mongia 223). "History from below" referred to minority histories, that is, the history of those socio-cultural groups who did not feature in the mainstream narratives of official histories. These groups were invariably the oppressed, marginal classes like women, tribals, peasants, etc. "History from below" democratized the discipline of history by giving space to hitherto silent voices, which had been erased by mainstream history.

Charging the Indian bourgeoisie for their failure to speak for the nation, the Subaltern Studies group's foremost agenda is to rewrite the history of the nation from the margins, peopled by the subaltern classes who had to negotiate power at various levels. Their study had significant implications for the definition of a state. Some of these insights will be used in our study of insurgent movements and how they challenge the idea of a nation.

VI

Nationalism has been variously described by a wide range of scholars. In the west, it received academic attention in the eighties. Nationalism may be studied as a) anti-colonial movement b) sentiment c) narrative and d) a response to the homogenizing tendencies of a global order. Firstly and most commonly, nationalism is studied as an organized movement against the existing state. Nationalism as anti-colonialism focuses upon its political and conflictual aspects. Nationalism is a movement that demands statehood in
order to grant legitimacy to a collectivity that imagines itself as a nation, which is a “group of any kind that has a right to statehood” (Gilbert 1). What began as a movement in various parts of Europe in the mid-nineteenth century to establish nation-states spread to the colonies that used this ideology very effectively in their anti-colonial struggle. Thus in the Asian sub-continent nationalism is almost synonymous with anti-colonialism. Nationalism calls for absolute allegiance and loyalty to the nation above all other groups that an individual is likely to identify with like family, caste, region, and linguistic community or religious groups. It is based on the firm belief that the nation is the supreme marker of identity for an individual, as is often manifested in statements such as “We are Indians first, then Punjabis, Tamilians and so on.”

All leaders of anti-colonial movements use strong sentiments in order to mobilize colonized peoples against the colonizers. These sentiments offer a frame of reference that helps construct nationalism as a matter of consciousness of a particular culture. Here sentiments are mobilized by drawing symbols from the domain of culture. Such an endeavour is of course fraught with tensions, contestations and opposition. Scholars who subscribe to this way of understanding nationalism study cultural manifestations such as art, cinema, religion, language, etc. All cultural productions are seen as fields of signification, which produce particular notions of nation and nationalism.

The primary idea of nation is the axis around which the discourse of nationalism revolves. In colonized countries, nationalism is largely associated with anti-colonial consciousness and revolt. The creation of ideas was needed for the mobilization of consciousness and the idea of the nation was one such. However, in the case of non-metropolitan nations, as Benedict
Anderson details in *Imagined Communities*, it is believed that far from being original the idea of nation was shaped by metropolitan models of nationalism. Before Anderson, most studies on nation and nationalism focused on the givenness of a nation. Pre-existent, unitary groups were seen as potential nations. It was Anderson’s ground-breaking work that led scholars to think of the nation as a cultural construct mediated by the faculty of imagination. Anderson’s work revealed a fundamental paradigm shift in the conceptualization of nation and nationalism with its alignment of nationalism with cultural systems, rather than political ideologies. Print capitalism aided people in their pursuit for meaning in life. The temporal coincidence (which Anderson calls “homogeneous empty time”) of an activity like the reading of a newspaper at a particular time of the day gave rise to a national consciousness (69). The progress made in the field of communication further facilitated the awareness of commonality amongst people living within a particular territory. The nation is an outcome of a developed system of internal communication, which aids the construction of national identity. Anderson is of the opinion that the journeys undertaken by the functionaries fostered a feeling of oneness, which was a prelude to nation-formation (55). This indicates the importance he accorded to progress in the field of communication. This makes nationalism a major component of modernity.

A number of factors, notes Anderson, made nation-ness “the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (3). Nations were imagined into existence by an increased level of national consciousness. Once nationalism developed in Europe and America, it became “modular” (4). By this, Anderson meant that Asian and African nationalist elites imported
these forms from the continents. Anderson's Calibanistic model of nationalism for colonial territories provoked Chatterjee to ask "Whose imagined community?" In a powerful critique of Anderson's "modular forms," Partha Chatterjee asks:

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? (1992: 5)

It is in the context of contesting Anderson's notion of modular forms that Chatterjee comes up with his (by now oft-cited) formulation of the material and spiritual domains. Nationalism had defined itself as anti-colonialism in the spiritual domain of language, literature, arts, tradition, the family and culture long before it entered the public space as a political struggle (1992: 6-9). For this reason it would be inadequate to conceptualize it as imitative of western forms of nationalism.

The politics of national identity is crucial to the process of forming a national consciousness. The creation of an identity is a politically loaded task that can very easily slide into the creation of a monolithic national identity. According to Amartya Sen, philosophical and historical issues converge in the making of an Indian identity.² The historical construction of identity in India has traditionally conflated Hindu and Indian identities. But the makers of the Indian Constitution made a conscious choice while deciding upon a secular framework for a largely Hindu populated nation.
It is necessary to dwell on the territoriality of the category in any discussion on the subject of national identity. Does a national identity, like Indian, for instance constitute only those dwelling in the territory called India? What does it mean to be an Indian outside India? What is the immigrant's experience of India? Where does "Indian" fit into his identity which is transformed by the experience of immigration? Will India always remain only the past for him/her, a site of longing and belonging, a mythic place of origin and the desired location of death? The diasporic communities problematize the issue of national identity in complex ways. The in-betweenness of their location results in fractured identities, which radicalize the notion of nation. Nevertheless, a detailed study of this subject is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Tom Nairn views nationalism from a Marxist perspective as a stepping stone to internationalism. All societies must necessarily pass through a nationalist phase that is a conjuncture of market economy and a national bourgeois class. Nairn likens nationalism to adolescence, which at times can be struck by "a deadly disease" (qtd. in Hutchinson and Smith 71). This deadly disease turns nationalism into chauvinism. Nationalism to Nairn is "a fact of general developmental history" and people of a nation are forced into this historical development (qtd. in Hutchinson and Smith 72). Uneven development within and across nations is the cause of nationalism. Although Nairn is prepared to concede the role of ideas in the formation of nations and nationalism, to him, nationalism is still the political resistance of less developed societies towards more developed societies.
The Marxist approach reads nationalism both as class struggle within a society and economic struggle across society. Class has now been proved to be an inadequate critical category for the analysis of as complex a concept as nationalism. Class is too universalistic and homogeneous and does not take into consideration divisions of caste, gender, religious affiliation, etc. Nationalism as anti-colonialism cannot be treated within Marxist discourse, as colonialism for Marx was a progressive event. The rationality of class interest and class alliances is too broad an understanding for analyzing the specificities of gender, caste etc., which rupture the collectivity called class. Mass politics is beyond pure rationality and masses are known to be mobilized on the basis of sentiment, identity and cultural associations. Marx's call for the workers of the world to unite is a call for internationalism, for solidarity of working class people across national boundaries. Thus, at a fundamental level, Marxism cannot accommodate nationalism. At the most Marxist anti-capitalism could provide some ammunition to fire at the bourgeois nature of anti-colonial nationalism. Since imperialism is also a form of economic exploitation, nationalism could be read as a resistance to it. Nevertheless, political freedom is no guarantee for economic independence.

John Brueilly is of the opinion that a complex phenomenon as nationalism is best understood as "a form of political behaviour in the context of the modern state and the modern state system" (1). Other ways of understanding nationalism such as through categories of economy, class, ideology, culture, do not facilitate a "general" understanding because nationalism is about politics above all else, and politics is all about having control over the state. I would like to offer my resistance to Brueilly's notion of
a "general" understanding of nationalism. As we have already noted nationalism is a highly differentiated category that cannot be thought of in terms of a general understanding. Brueilly believes that the compulsion for political freedom is at the heart of nationalism. If that is so, then why does nationalism in one avatar or the other persist even after a nation attains political freedom? As we shall see shortly, there are many forms of nationalism: cultural, religious, linguistic, etc. Even after a nation comes into being as a nation-state, nationalism in one form or the other may still persist. Nations being heterogeneous collectivities, there could be groups who could organize themselves on the basis of region, ethnicity or religion. These groups could then mobilize masses with the ultimate aim of secession or irredentism, giving rise to forms of sub-nationalisms. The sovereignty of a nation is thus not absolute. Rather, it is always questioned by one form of nationalism or the other. For this reason, nationalism is a dynamic, on-going process. Nationalism as a concept or as a praxis cannot be subjected to closure.

VII

The Indian nation-state has witnessed a focal shift from political nationalism to cultural nationalism in the nineties. Political nationalism is characterized by processes of democratization of society and the emergence of the masses into the public domains. Broadly speaking, a form of nationalism that seeks to build a nation on the presumption of a unified, homogeneous culture would be called cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism focuses on the community as it is considered the repository of "authentic" culture. Disillusionment with
Enlightenment values of liberal individualism and structures of modernity that emphasize homogenization and centralization has led to a revival of interest in the collective entity called community. In recent political debates, a group of theorists (Ashis Nandy, T.N. Madan, for instance) pose community as an alternative to the secular nation-state. They believe that a community that is based on a set of commonalities contains certain internal mechanisms to deal with dissent and create solidarities for the common good of the people.

Communitarian debates engaged in by social scientists contain certain underlying assumptions about community. Firstly, there is this romantic notion of community as a well-knit, unified group grounded in traditional moral values. Such an assumption undermines the possibilities of difference, dissent and division that may have existed even in pre-modern communities.

Secondly, there seems to be an assumption on their part that communities are repositories of authentic culture. This may be true to the extent that the community in question was closed to external influences. Nevertheless, such influences did operate in the form of invasions, wars, and intrusions by nomadic tribes, and travel for trade purposes, which transpired even in pre-modern communities, bringing about changes in the culture of that time. Thus, so-called authentic cultures of communities, eulogized by communitarian theorists need not have been really authentic or indigenous.

Lastly, community traditions invariably perpetuate patriarchal structures of repression and therefore, setting up the community as an alternative to the state, without contesting its internal repressive tendencies, could be dangerously elitist. Privileging the community could automatically mean
resurrecting a patriarchal and hierarchical edifice, which would be deleterious to the interests of women, as we have seen in one of the preceding sections.

Cultural nationalism is based on the belief of the distinctiveness of one's culture over that of another. A particular culture is designated as the culture of a national collectivity. Vedic Brahminism, Bharat Rashtra (unified territory) and anti-modernity (anti-West) were the defining elements of cultural nationalism which took birth in late eighteenth century Bengal and later spread to different parts of India. Most scholars very easily essentialize western and eastern nationalisms as political and cultural respectively (Hans Kohn, for instance). Alternately, they see nineteenth century nationalisms as political and twentieth century nationalism as cultural. Nineteenth century Indian nationalism had a fixed, immutable goal which was the attainment of political independence. Twentieth century nationalism by contrast, is a far more complex phenomenon. There is a double-pronged attack on the nation from within (secessionist movements and communalism) and without (globalization). This has led to the mobilization of certain essentialist notions of nation and national identity. Migration of people and the resultant cross-cultural interactions arising out of a postnational order become threats to notions of purity. As a result, the category of culture is redefined and mobilized to resurrect the nation's exclusivity, for which the iconography and rhetoric of the audio-visual media is utilized. Even in nineteenth century India the engagement with culture coincided with the struggle for political independence. But the terms of cultural nationalism have changed at the end of the twentieth century.
In the Indian context, cultural nationalism is closely linked to religious nationalism generally dismissed off as a form of fanaticism. As opposed to secularists, religious nationalists do not conceive of religion as a purely personal matter. Religious nationalism thus becomes an encounter with the western tradition of secularism that demarcated religion and politics into the private and public domains respectively. However, at the structural level, one can discover similarities between the two forms of nationalism, viz. secular and religious. Both demand supreme loyalty, one to the nation, the other to religion, both sanction violence and both glorify martyrdom. For this reason, contemporary scholars of nationalism like Anderson have shown through their works that even secular nationalism, despite its claims to the contrary, cannot transcend cultural elements (4). The Indian concept of secularism has however valorized tolerance of all faiths rather than separation of religion and politics as the crucial aspect of secularism. Loss of faith in civil society, particularly amongst the middle-classes all over the world, has led to the resurgence of religion as a defining factor in global politics. The post-colonial nations adopted secular nationalism but became disillusioned with it. Therefore, the search for alternative political paradigms led them to religion (Juergensmeyer 23).

Religion, an inescapable category in the project of nation-building in post-colonial societies, has always been a close binding factor in a community. Therefore the religious identity of the people cannot be ignored in the process of forging a national identity. However, in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic nation like India, the different religious communities come into conflict with each other. Movements based on religious nationalism gain political
power by their ability to sanction violence. This results in the notion of 
*dharma yudh* (just war) or *jihad* (holy war). Religious leaders justify violence 
and war by casting war as a fight between good and evil forces. By 
appropriating the state's power to kill, they confer a legitimate power on 
themselves. According to Rene Girard, a religious scholar who has 
formulated a sophisticated theory of violence, religion's aim is to transfer a 
community's immanent violence on to a victim. The victim becomes a 
scapegoat that prevents the members of a community from turning violent 
against each other (qtd. in Heehs 131). For this reason, religious nationalists 
create an inimical other on whom the immanent violence can be unleashed. 
He does not take into account the political and sociological changes that lead 
people to violence. Therefore, Girard's theory in dealing with the pathology of 
violece has only a limited utility.

Religious nationalism is usually seen as a reactionary and regressive 
phenomenon for women as most religions sanction and demand their 
subordination. Women are generally called upon to uphold religious values 
and traditions. Women in their turn easily succumb to such injunctions as 
they are socialized into being god-fearing and submissive. Chatterjee points 
out that in nineteenth century Bengal, women were called upon to maintain 
traditions and observe rituals as the men were preoccupied with the more 
pressing task of gaining independence for the country (1992: 147). Religion is 
part of the identity of a community. Therefore resisting religion would mean 
resisting the community. In societies like ours, women maintain close 
economic, emotional and social links with groups such as the extended family, 
the neighbourhood, the local community centres and the like. Therefore,
women have much to lose in breaking ties with the community. The choice between the individual self and the communal self belies claims of female agency. However, increasingly women are themselves becoming part of militant, religious-nationalist groups. Women sometimes join the militant ranks as a result of being victimized during communal riots, pogroms, etc., as it happened in Punjab and Kashmir. The militant group Dukhtran-e-Millat in Kashmir has several women members. The need arises then to conceptualize women and their agency differently.

It is necessary at this stage for us to address the rise of Hindu nationalism because it forms the fulcrum of cultural and religious nationalism in India. A largely middle class phenomenon, Hindu nationalism gained prominence as a result of the demands of modernity, on the one hand, and adherence to tradition on the other. In the nineteenth century, Hinduism was threatened by the missionaries who undertook large-scale conversions among the tribal and other lower-caste communities. This gave the Hindu movement, which is generally dated to the mid-nineteenth century, an added impetus (Jaffrelot 11-14).

Historically, Hindu nationalism has been associated with fascism. Belief in a centralized strong leadership, thriving on the creation of an enemy and spreading hatred, notions of social, racial, ethnic purity – these are some of the prominent features of fascism. In the 1930s, Hindu nationalism was influenced by European fascism and leaders like Hitler and Mussolini (Jaffrelot 51). What attracted the Hindu nationalists of Maharashtra to fascism was the militarization and transformation of society through inculcation of discipline.
Savarkar, Golwalkar and all subsequent Hindu nationalists argue that an Indian identity in one way or another must be derived from a Hindu identity. Hindu nationalist ideology defines a Hindu, not as a person who follows the religion of Hinduism, but one who is born and lives in the geographical territory called India. The conflation of religious affiliation and territory as the defining constituent in the formation of national identity leads to their assimilationist ideas that create a national homogeneity. Golwalkar's idea of nation and nationalism, inspired by the works of a German lawyer, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, contained the fascist hatred of the other. He believed:

They [Muslims] may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen's rights. (qtd. in Jaffrelot 56)

Hindu nationalism enjoys a hegemonic status in present day India. Growing disillusionment with the inadequacies of the Nehruvian interventionist and tutelary state, technological advances and economic imperatives, which forced India to open its doors to Western market forces, and the resurgence of religion are some of the factors that helped foster the growth of Hindu nationalism. Its impact on the cultural productions will be dealt with in detail in the third chapter. Nationalism will be understood in this study as a historically and politically inflected cultural discourse that is still in the making.
It is not completely true that India won independence through non-violence alone. Recent research has shown the considerable role of “terrorist” groups. The patterns of revolutionary terrorism were established in Bengal between 1906 and 1910 with organized terrorism having begun in 1906. The agenda of the “extremists” was political economy, *swadeshi* and the establishment of national institutions in educational and judicial fields. Aurobindo Ghosh was a great inspiration for “extremist” groups. His idea was to stage an armed insurrection and general revolt in the Indian army.

Early Bengali writers of the freedom movement consider Aurobindo Ghosh as an apostle of “militant nationalism” (Heehs 43). Nationalism to Ghosh was a religion that came from God. Ghosh believed that India was destined by God to be a spiritual leader of humanity. Thus, freedom was indispensable to accomplish this. In order to achieve freedom, Ghosh advocated a militant uprising as a mode of resistance to colonialism.

So far, we have seen “terrorism” being used as a strategy for Indian independence. When we examine terrorism in post-Independence India, we find that the term is used for what is officially known as subversive movements. The goal of militant movements such as the ones in Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir is secession from the existing state. The use of violence in insurgency is a contrast to peaceful forms of political protest like that of Gandhiji’s in India, Khomeini’s in Iran, Solidarity in Poland and the Civil Rights movements in the USA. Using several resources like cadre recruitment, propaganda, infiltration and so on, insurgent movements function like the
national armies. They have the sympathies of intellectuals, whose resources are used in the service of ideological manipulation of cadres as well as "the people." The people are crucial to the success of insurgent movements. The insurgent elite represent the grievances of the people against the official state. Insurgency is primarily a political phenomenon. Military considerations are secondary to political, social and economic policies.

We may say that the central object of study in the nationalist and the insurgent discourses is the nation-state. One upholds it, the other contests it, but neither can abandon it.

IX

This section deals with nationalism in the time of war. Most of the European nations came into existence after a war or a series of wars. The process of parturition involves blood spilling. Similarly, nations are born after bloody revolutions as for example, France and America. Michael Howard notes "In nation-building as in nationalism force was the midwife of the historical process" (qtd. in Hutchinson and Smith 225). The search for the origins of a nation invariably leads us to a history of conflict. Nationalism demands total allegiance to the large political structure called nation-state. Historical evidence reveals that a decline in feudal and religious hostilities is concomitant with the birth of nation-states. This has been the experience of sixteenth and seventeenth century European nations like England, France and Spain as well as several African and Asian nations. In this sense, nationalism reduces incidents of small-scale clashes. On the other hand,
nationalism has been the cause of large scale wars in terms of destruction and violence.

India's historiography of the anti-colonial resistance, of course, is dominated by the non-violent struggle spearheaded by Gandhi. This hegemonic representation of the Indian freedom struggle has been to a certain extent displaced in academia by a foregrounding of violent struggles of the tribals, peasants, etc., creating thus a rupture in the dominant discourse of the Indian independence movement. The pre-colonial history however is replete with accounts of wars between feuding kings of dynasties like Marathas, Moguls and so on. The idea of the bloodless birth of the nation is undercut in a powerful way by the bloodbath of Partition. Thus violence as a part of the birth of the Indian nation is etched upon the consciousness of the people of the sub-continent.

From time immemorial, the authorities have always used war against an external enemy as a cementing force in times of increased internal differences. The image of a martyr is emotionally charged and few can claim not to be overwhelmed by it. Nationalism in war degenerates into chauvinism in which an intense hatred of the other is created and disseminated through various agencies like, media, educational institutions, etc. Patriotism in war becomes a contagious and almost mandatory sentiment for a loyal citizen. The soldier, usually forgotten in peacetime, is deified in war. Patriotism borders on jingoism. Patriotism in the time of war is reactionary, regressive, and is forced by a desperate nation-state upon its people.
What is patriotism? Is it love of one's birthplace or a space associated with early dreams and aspirations? Is it pure mystique? Patriotism is usually associated with something concrete like land, territory and place of birth. It is, to Gilbert "love of one's country, whether one's country is thought of in nationalist terms or not' (5). The term, nationalism is used in relation to a more amorphous thing like the nation-state. According to Gilbert, it involves the "proper object of patriotism" (5) i.e., the nation. It is the most enigmatic of human sentiments and difficult to theorize. Nationalism and patriotism are often used interchangeably. Therefore, it would be useful to examine the subtle difference between the two. Patriotism is a sentiment that one may claim to possess even without having faith in nationalism as an ideology. It is possible today to be an Indian born American citizen, taking an oath of allegiance to the American nation and still claim to be a patriotic Indian. (In fact, the non-resident Indian goes out of his way to prove his love for the land of his birth!) However, a nationalist must be rooted in his/her territory and owe supreme loyalty and attachment to the nation. His/her belief in the concept of the nation-state must be absolute. A nationalist puts the nation above all other categories like caste, tribe, religion, class, etc. If patriotism is a primordial feeling of attachment to one's native land (watan, patrie) what happens in the case of displacement? Most of all, how does the nation make its people die for its sake? These are some of the questions that have vexed scholars who have tried to theorize nation and nationalism. According to Anderson the nation is constituted of "horizontal comradeship", i.e., the sense of community which arises in contiguity with the territory it occupies (7). This solidarity makes people die for the nation.
Propagators of the theory of postnationalism reject patriotism as an outdated and dangerous phenomenon. Since World War II and Hitler's excesses, patriotism with its subsequent total allegiance to the nation-state has become suspect. In recent Indian history, the Pokhran nuclear blasts in May 1998, followed by the Kargil conflict of May 1999, brought to the surface a fresh wave of patriotism or more appropriately jingoism. Arundhati Roy, Booker prizewinner and activist, declared in an article in a leading fortnightly that she would secede rather than be part of a nuclear India. The question is, "does this statement make her unpatriotic?" Is the desire for a peaceful, safe world in the common interest of humanity of a lower order than subscribing to a nuclear nation? The sentiment of patriotism throws up several tricky questions to which there are no straightforward answers.

Small groups like family, school, club, etc., demand the loyalty of an individual. Individuals are generally loyal to those groups from which they are likely to gain one thing or another. The nation is the largest single group that calls for the loyalty of its inhabitants. Generally, this loyalty remains intact, even if the inhabitants of one nation migrate to another. This is best exemplified in diasporic writing. The diasporic community continues to feel a sense of belonging to the nation of its birth even though it is located outside its geographical limits. The purely subjective category of nation belongs to the realm of individual feelings, thoughts and imagination. The nation, in such a formulation, crosses the barriers of geography and creates solidarities beyond categories such as region, language, and so on that would otherwise create fissures. Nation here transforms itself into an emotional, individualist entity evoking sentiments of longing and belonging, nostalgia and desire.
Clifford Geertz notes that a nation is formed through a combination of primordial and civic ties (qtd. in Smith and Hutchinson 31). At one level, patriotism, tied up as it is with belonging and identity, is a manifestation of primordiality. At another level, it is related to the visual politics of performance. Patriotism involves a set of practices that display loyalty to the nation. These practices could emerge from within individual groups or could be imposed from above, i.e., from the state. Pinning a flag on one's dress on 15 August or flag-waving during a cricket match are some instances of the performative aspect of patriotism. Then there is patriotism at the level of representation. Cinema, advertisements and other popular cultural productions within the nation-space effectively evoke sentiments of patriotism through manipulation of images. This need not detain us here, as it will feature in a major way in other parts of this study.

The history of patriotism dates back to Greece and Rome in the West. Only selected inhabitants were given citizenship. The citizen, being the chosen one, had to owe his allegiance to the state above everything else. Patriotism thus had a moral flavour. Children were considered as belonging to the larger family of the nation before they belonged to their parents. Then the advent of the church put to test one's loyalty to the nation. The church was a universal institution and Christians all over the world owed their loyalty first to it. In the Middle Ages small groups like the city demanded loyalty. Tudor and Elizabethan England are the prototypes of national loyalties. The American and French revolutions first brought to the fore what we now know as patriotism. With the invention of the hydrogen bomb, patriotism began to
be condemned as parochialism and detrimental to universal brotherhood and peace.

What is the place of patriotism in a post-globalization era? If *khadi* in pre-independence India was a symbol of patriotism, the flaunting of brand names like Tommy Hilfiger and Reebok is the order of the day in globalized India. What then is the object of patriotism today? Indian immigrants in different parts of the world continue to call themselves patriotic Indians. Patriotism is here directed at the land of origin and associated with soil, motherland, birthplace and so on, evoking sentiments of nostalgia. Arjun Appadurai reminds us that thinking about the future of patriotism would automatically lead us to check out the relevance of the nation-state today (160). According to Appadurai, nationalism is "itself diasporic", that is, it no longer invokes images of a bounded territory (160-1). In the theories of nation, there is a definite conceptual shift from the natural to the cultural. That is, the nation which was thought of as collectivities of a single race, language, and culture, is now increasingly seen as an entity that is invoked through the processes of imagination triggered by cultural products such as literature, cinema, TV, newspaper, etc. If such fundamental changes have taken place in the notion of nation, then it would follow that patriotism too should be conceptualized differently. Appadurai suggests that patriotism should shift from challenges to die for the nation to challenges to die for ideas (176). The objects of patriotism would change in the scenario of an emergent world order in which borders and boundaries are blurred, and territories are no longer peopled by homogenous groups. Thus, with pluralism being the inevitable feature of the postnational global arena, Appadurai suggests, "Patriotism itself
could become plural, serial, contextual and mobile" (176). The American response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre quite clearly belies such hopes.

Patriotism thrives on creating fictions of the other, such as a dangerously belligerent neighbour, culturally inferior other society, and so on. Such beliefs are so cleverly engineered that they give rise to feelings of superiority towards oneself and disdain for the other. The state deploys a series of symbols in the service of patriotism like flags, anthems, parades, fleet reviews, etc. Despite such attempts on the part of the state, sometimes the media creates a disjuncture in the discourse of patriotism. In a CNN report on the Desert Storm operation in Iraq, some soldiers were shown weeping when they admitted that they did not want to be in the war. Such media images rupture the myth of the patriotic soldier.

War discourse channelizes the inherent feeling of love for the place of one’s origin towards the state’s expansionist purposes. More importantly, it uses the sentiment of patriotism to breed hatred for the other. After all, the borderline between patriotism and xenophobia is a thin one. The following chapters of this study will illustrate how war narratives achieve this purpose.

X

The idea of nation as a distinct territorial and cultural space is threatened at a time when Third World countries have opened their markets for the free flow of capital from First World countries. Tagore’s romantic vision of a postnational world and his denigration of the category of nation in his long essay “Nationalism” is way ahead of his time coming as it did in 1917. The
ethnological diversity of India is to Tagore, "her problem from the beginning of history" (4). This diversity has been negotiated through "social regulation of difference, on the one hand and the spiritual recognition of unity on the other" (5). The nation is an imported category from the West into the East, which Tagore idealizes as "childlike in its manner" (7). Tagore further distinguishes between power and human ideals. A nation organizes people into a group for the mechanical purpose of self-preservation. However, as power grows with the help of technology, then nations play upon the human's inherent greed and begin to occupy more and more space until they become the ruling force. Tagore condemns nation as the least human and least spiritual collectivity.

Tagore has praise for the spirit of western civilization but denigrates the nation of the West. The former is manifested through philosophical thinking, literature, ideals of freedom and justice. The latter is the power-hungry imperialist government that seeks to invade, to colonize and to subjugate. He explains:

The truth is that the spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of western nationalism, its basis not social cooperation. (21)

He sees an inherent paradox between the western spirit and the western nation. Nation breeds evil and the birth of every new nation is the harbinger of danger. Nationalist symbols like flags, anthems (an irony indeed that a song composed by Tagore is India’s national anthem) are dismissed off as symbols of evil. Tagore homogenizes the West as an advanced, industrialist, materialist greed-driven society and therefore the concept of nation coming from the West could not be free of these drawbacks. Patriotism to Tagore is
chauvinism. It creates demons of neighbours and spreads hatred, instead of love. Patriotism is cultivated through an insidious system that indulges in fabrication. Minds of young pupils are filled with hate through means such as display of war trophies, propagating pride in killing the enemy, and boasting about conquests. In a prophetic vein, Tagore pre-empts the notion of postnationalism when he says, “The whole world is becoming one country through scientific facility” (99). These are probably the earliest thoughts of a poet that envision a postnational world order.

Tagore’s views on nationalism, however, do not equip us to deal with the concept as anti-colonial resistance. Nationalism at one point of time in all colonized nations was the political imperative of the day. As we have already noted, nationalism had epistemic value in pre-independent India.

To sum up, it may be said that this chapter sufficiently problematizes our objects of study in this thesis. In the subsequent pages then, the term “nation” will be understood as a gendered, cultural construct with an emotional content. The state is a political entity which gives legitimacy to a nation. Nationalism is a process aimed at defining the “nation”, a means, we may say, to narrate the nation. The next chapter will examine how the Indian nation is narrated in military literature.
Notes

1 Mayo's *Mother India* (1927) is a quintessential colonial text that justifies the colonizer's civilizing mission in India. I have used *Excerpts from Mother India* edited by Mrinalini Sinha (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1997).


3 I have in mind the Sindhi community who lost all of Sind to Pakistan during Partition in August 1947. Sindhi literature is dominated by nostalgia for their lost land. If patriotism is only love of birthplace or native land, then the Sindhi's love of Sind would turn out to be anti-nationalist with Sind in neighbouring Pakistan now.

4 The Indian Army conducted an operation in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir in May 1999 to flush out militants who had intruded into Indian territory. The conflict received unprecedented media coverage, resulting in what Nivedita Menon called “plastic patriotism” (6 July 1999, *Times of India*, Ahmedabad).

5 This is with reference to Roy's article titled "The End of Imagination" in *Frontline*, 1 August 1998.
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