CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
The study on Nation and Nationalism is one of the most rapidly expanding areas of scholarly study. Nationalism has become one of the most powerful and recognized forces of global politics and almost every ethnic, racial, and other type of "political" movements describe themselves and their efforts in nationalistic terms. Not surprisingly, there is a burgeoning literature attempting to understand and dissect this omnipresent phenomenon permeating every region of the globe and frequently causing brutal conflicts.

The nation is, in fact, a project, as postcolonial literatures seek to erase their colonial pasts. Resisting and rejecting the Western constructions of their nations as primitive, savage, and ancient, postcolonial writers seek to retrieve a pre-colonial past that would help them define the nation, and, more importantly, project a destiny, a future. That is, they seek to reconstruct the nation without the frames of reference used by the colonial masters. The contours of the nation—geographical, economic, political, and cultural—have been a continuing theme in postcolonial writing. The chief question to address a nation and its literatures is: how does a nation speak about representing itself to its own people and to the world, maintains Nayar (Nayar 68).

In Indian English literature, R.K. Narayan is a prominent writer who is preoccupied with the ideas of nation and nationalism in his writings. He began his career in the 1930s during the heyday of Indian political mobilization and the campaign of civil disobedience against British imperialism. Narayan’s life spanned the twentieth century, which meant that he belonged both to an old and new India. But what take the place of an overt nationalist agenda in Narayan’s fiction are scattered allusions directed at both the British in India and the contemporary struggle for
independence. His novels appropriately portrayed the issues raised and faced by the people in India during the Freedom Struggle. Mass movements of the Freedom Struggle along with an empathic writing in favour of Gandhian thoughts are presented here and there in his writings. Through his novels, Narayan tried to raise the then major national issues of his time.

Being a postcolonial writer, Narayan’s writings abound with postcolonial elements. Postcolonial writers, generally, attempt at reviving the ethnic cultures, traditions, beliefs, languages etc. The postcolonial literature inculcates pride in one’s own ancient culture and traditions. It abounds in patriotic feelings. Postcolonialism aims at developing the national identity in the wake of colonial rule. It deals with the colonized people’s response to the colonial legacy by writing back to the centre. The indigenous peoples start to write their own histories, legacies, often using the colonizer’s language. Looking at India from the Indian perspective is felt to be a postcolonial deconstruction of colonialism. Elleke Boehmer opines that “the comic pastorals of R. K. Narayan . . . [which] emphasise the continuity and harmony of small-town of India,” are actually an instance of “the Empire writing back.” Referring to the fact that there are hardly any British characters in Narayan’s early pre-independence novels, she observes that “through the simple device of ignoring the British presence,” these novels effectively dramatise a world “that existed quite independently of the colonial power” (quoted in Sen 107-108).

R.K. Narayan productively demonstrates how the literary project participated in the modern moment inaugurated by the discourses of nationalism and colonialism. Like other postcolonial writers like Raja Rao, Narayan is also found to project the
nation building attitude in his writings. If the literature on nation and nationalism has become a "terminological jungle" (Akzin 7) then by far it shall not seem uncalled for to begin with a measured elucidation regarding the general understanding of the two terms, so that one might go ahead with an approving approach towards the advancement of nation and nationalism as complicated, non-derivative discourses. At the very outset it is better to clarify the notions of nation and nationalism by dismissing it as what they are not, than what they might subsume. Critics all over the world have their own views on nation and nationalism. To the discourse of nation and nationalism, the views of some major theorists like Ernest Renan, Ernest Gellner, Homi K. Bhabha , Benedict Anderson, Rabindranath Tagore, Edward Said and Partha Chatterjee are discussed.

Ernest Renan attempts to define a nation in his essay "What is a nation." According to him:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. Man, gentlemen, does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are (quoted in Das 36).
Renan attempts to define a legitimate nation by reflecting on the uprisings led by nationalist leaders during the revolutions of 1848. He advocates people to come together, and look to common bonding experiences that do not smother progress and unity because of the differences in race, language, religion and geography. Ernest Renan’s central argument is that a nation is a corporation of people who share a common past and have derived a strong bond, with an agreement to stay together and be governed by mutual consent in the future.

Though not clearly mentioned, Renan’s first and central assumption is that all people are equal and free. His second and third suppositions rest on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity generated during the French Revolution. His arguments require that people who wish to become nations must be governed by “consent.” It is obvious here that he believes that all people are free, equal and capable to govern themselves. This supposition cannot be taken for granted as it is done today. More attention must be paid to it because when this rhetoric was first proclaimed, it was totally revolutionary to Europeans under dictatorial rules. Nationalist factions used this new rhetoric to cause great political turmoil that shook the foundations of European monarchies. This supposition is significant because it supported the liberal and nationalist factions who wanted independence from old monarchies as demonstrated in the revolutions of 1848. Therefore, Renan’s definition of nationhood is legitimate because it rests on the choice of the people.

The second argument that Renan has pointed out, says that the inhabitants of a nation must share a common past. He has the belief that a nation is defined as the “culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice and devotion” (quoted in Das 36)
and "a large scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past" (quoted in Das 36). According to him, a nation is an aggregate of people, unified by joy, grief, national sacrifices, triumphs and travails in the past. Renan's statement is true because large scale events that affected a particular people are an impetus for people to bond and advance together as an entity. An example can be seen with the Jewish people. The memory of the Holocaust is shared by all Jews, and it unites them for a common goal of national existence. The result is just as Renan's argument predicted—the founding of the state of Israel.

According to Renan's third argument people who are willing to live together in the present in harmony are a nation. For achieving that, people have to have common glories in the past and to have common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more—these are the essential conditions for being a people. He wants to mean that if people are willing to consolidate their past and perpetuate their unity and be governed together by consent, then they are a nation.

The arguments that are put forward by Ernest Renan actually form the basis of modern nations. His arguments are legitimate because they rest on the people's volition. His definition of a nation can be compared to matrimony. If two independent individuals are fine with each other's personalities, differences and similarities, likes and dislikes, and if they agree to live together in the bond of love for the rest of their lives, then they can enter the lifelong contract of marriage. Similarly, according to Ernest Renan, a nation is an expressive agreement of the inhabitants who have a preexisting bond to live together upon their consent. Just as neither spouse is a slave to the other nor is venturing for someone else permitted, similarly, no group of people...
are unfairly subject to the other and seizing of other territories are forbidden. Thus for Renan nation is a state of mind, a principle which exists till it is willed and perishes when it no longer exists in the thoughts and aspirations of the people.

Ernest Gellner is one of the most important scholars of nationalism. His book, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), remains one of the most important books in this field. He sees nations as bi-products of industrialization and as made up where they did not exist before. According to him:

Contrary to what Marxism has lead people to expect, it is pre-industrial society which is addicted to horizontal differentiation within societies, whereas industrial society strengthen the boundaries between nations rather than those between classes

(Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* 12).

The prime concern of Gellner’s theorization about nation has been societal specialization. He does not delve deep into the ethnic roots, rather he identifies three periods of human lives: hunter-gatherer (or, pre-agrarian), agro-literate and industrial and sees nationalism as an existing movement only in the third one. In this sense, he ties nationalism with imperialism for he claims that nationalism always seeks to spread the borders and for the higher class to control the lower class. Also, he sees impossible for pre-industrial societies to be able to foster nation and nationalism as such since, for him, nations do not exist where there is no state.

Gellner’s major target was *ideological diffusionism*, the vision that ideas have a power of their own, that they can indeed lead the world, and that nationalism is determined by the diffusion of ideas. One of Gellner’s arguments against the role
of ideas, is his claim that no major political philosopher has vindicated nationalism. For Gellner this was symptomatic of the intellectual inferiority of nationalist theories—and hence, a proof that ideas count for little. Gellner's interpretation of nationalism owes much to Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), and is influenced by both functionalism and modernization theories. Nationalism arises as a response to uprooting modernization which undermines traditional systems of ascriptive relations. Nationalism's historical mission is to dispense new forms of loyalty and identification with the nation-state. Hence, nationalism is a political response to a functional imperative: territorial and social mobility make necessary the construction of a collective identity which can operate for the uprooted individual as an anchor and steering compass. Gellner shared with modernization theorists the belief that there is a radical discontinuity between industrial and pre-industrial societies. This contrast is indeed at the centre of all his explanations of nationalism. Following Max Webber (1864-1920) Gellner also focused on the bureaucratization of culture:

The state has not merely the monopoly of legitimate violence, but also of the accreditation of educational qualification. So the marriage of state and culture takes place, and we find ourselves in the Age of Nationalism (Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty* 108).

Thus it is seen that Gellner works with Max Webber's definition of the state as that agency within society that possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence. He notes that states only exist where there is division of labour, and the state is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order whatever else they may also be concerned with. He observes that "stateless societies cannot,
conceptually, experience nationalism. The state is a prior to nationalism” (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* 6). The concept of nation is more complicated, as it is seen as natural. Gellner says: “Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* 36). He believes that the state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state. It is more debatable whether the normative idea of the nation, in its modern sense, did not presuppose the prior existence of the state. Thus for two men to be in the same nation requires two things: a common culture, understandings, meanings etc. and the acknowledgement that the other is a fellow national and the recognition of mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of shared membership in it.

Benedict Anderson’s influential work *Imagined Communities* (1991) addresses the issue of nation building more than that of nationalism. His *Imagined Communities* has become the Gita or the Bible of nationalism in which he examines the origin and spread of nationalism in colonial and post-colonial contexts. It is said that no convincing discussion on “nationalism” can be made without making a reference to the famous book. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Anderson’s study has helped fuel interest in the further studies of nationalism. Benedict Anderson aims to successfully interpret “the anomaly of nationalism” (Anderson 4) in his book and he admits that “nation, nationality, nationalism—all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse” (Anderson 3). In his book he offers a new way of looking at nations and nationalism— as “imagined political community, and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 6) and he convincingly illustrates
the role of the printing press and colonial states in “making” nations. He suggests that
the nation as a political institution is the product of European Enlightenment and
Industrial Revolution. He argues that the rise of nationalism in Western Europe was
made possible by the decline, if not death, of religious modes of thought, in the wake
of the rationalist secularism of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason.

In his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of
Nationalism*, Anderson distinctively describes nations as

imagined political communities, because the members of even the
smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet
them, or even hear them, yet in minds of each lives the image of
their communion (Anderson 6).

This idea alone implies that ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ have to be calculatingly
constructed or ‘invented’ by somebody—that is nationalism has to come before
nation, not the other way around. His definition is somehow different from the
definition proposed by Ernest Gellner who said that “nationalism is not the awakening
of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (Gellner,
*Thought and Change* 169). Benedict Anderson critiques Gellner’s definition due to its
inherent assumption that “true” communities exist which can be then juxtaposed to
nations and he maintains that all communities are in fact imagined which means that
communities are to “be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style
in which they are imagined” (Anderson 6). It is this imagining through language that
helps to “create” symbols, history and values that make a community of any size
appear real. Moreover, Anderson elaborates on the birth of nations by illustrating how
it became necessary due to the closure of authority of three ancient entities—religious communities, dynastic realms and conception of “temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable”. Religious communities and their sacred languages (such as Latin) began to lose their monopoly on their “truth,” especially after the explorations of the non-European world which “widened the cultural and geographic horizon and hence also men’s conception of possible forms of human life” (Anderson 16).

Benedict Anderson argues that language is the most important constituent in the mixture that attaches a “nation” together and creates group consciousness. It is language that tells history, suggests images and produces social solidity. The same language tool, however, can be used to draw distinct lines between those who “historically” belong to the nations and those who are outsiders and intruders. The language can be used not only to fuse people but also to change attitudes of the people, give them meaning and to re-define the “nation” by forging common bonds among the vernacular people. Therefore, the language serves not only as a medium of forging the sense of community, but is used to send a message to the speakers of a certain language. As a rhetorical tool the language enables the elites to pass their ideas to a large number of people. These leaders will attempt to use the symbols such as the words ‘history’, ‘motherland’, ‘alien’, ‘us’, ‘they’, which are created through language and communicative interaction, to signify the meaning of a particular event and provide standards for judging what is good and bad. The leaders who are charismatic can rather easily arrest the attention of the masses by using glib language and stimulating statements not many people would dare to utter.
Therefore, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* illustrates the origins of the rise of national consciousness to the modern-industrial age of the Enlightenment in Western Europe. Following the fall of traditional, hierarchical forms of social organization connected with Christendom, Anderson points out a major role to economic factors that helped spread supposedly universal, homogenous and ‘horizontal-secular’ notions of national space, territoriality, and citizenship. Particularly, economic change promoted the rise of social-scientific discoveries, increasingly rapid communication, and the logic of capitalism, epitomized in its ruthless and continuous search for new markets. Anderson observes an essential bond between the rise of capitalism and the development of print-as-commodity. Communication and popular literature, for instance, helped propagate national languages, consciousness, and ideologies across a broad landmass, previously unconnected by any conception of shared experience or identity. As a secular, non-religious phenomenon, the idea of the ‘nation’ achieved a level of mass consciousness. So, nationalism has the unique ability to traverse millions of people in and through the interplay of capitalist relations and modes of production, the spread of communications, or print technology which resulted in the ultimate ruin of human linguistic multiplicity prevalent in the pre-modern era. However, simultaneously, Anderson’s conception of the nation is one of a community that is socially-constructed, or ‘imagined’ into being. Anderson’s approach accentuates the role of creative imagery, ‘invented traditions’, representation, imagination, symbols, and traditions in nationalism, as a constructed narrative about the nation-state. As a phenomenon that is fundamentally historical in its constitution, the ‘truth’ of national
identity cannot be found in fixed racial categories, myths about origins, or certain primitive ‘facts’. While Anderson’s approach to the nation has done much to deflate myths about nationalism that assume the nation possesses some primordial essence.

Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990) is primarily an intervention into “essentialist” readings of nationality that attempt to define and naturalize Third World “nations” by means of the supposedly homogenous, innate, and historically continuous traditions that falsely define and ensure their subordinate status. Nations, in other words, are “narrative” constructions that arise from the “hybrid” interaction of contending cultural constituencies. He underlines the growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the origins of nation as a sign of the modernity of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality (Bhabha 1).

According to him, Nations, like narrative, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye. Such an image of the nation—or narration—might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. It is an idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force. What Bhabha wants to emphasize in that large and liminal image of the nation, is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it. It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the ‘origins’ of nation as a sign of
the 'modernity' of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality.

Bhabha argues that what meditates between theory and politics is writing, where 'writing' includes cultural exercises such as novels, cinema and music. Bhabha also argues that the mimicry and production of stereotypes and hybrids in colonial discourse reflected not the strengths but rather the weaknesses of colonialism—colonialism needed stereotypes to reinforce itself. Mimicry was resistance and subversion on the part of the native. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha extends his explanation of the 'liminal' or 'interstitial' category that occupies a space 'between' competing cultural traditions, historical periods, and critical methodologies. Again utilizing a complex criteria of semiotics and psychoanalysis, Bhabha examines the 'ambivalence of colonial rule' and suggests that it enables a capacity for resistance in the performative 'mimicry' of the 'English book'. Discussing artists such as Toni Morrison and Nadine Gordimer, Bhabha seeks to find the "location of culture" in the marginal, 'haunting', 'unhomely' spaces between dominant social formations.

Timothy Brennan examines the role of literature, especially the novel, in the formation of national consciousness during its early period, i.e, the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The novel, as Timothy Brennan demonstrates, has historically played a central role in this construction because the novel objectified the multiple and unified nature of national life (Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of Nation* 1-31). He maintains:

It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one yet man' of national life, and by mimicking the
structures of the nation...But it did more than that. Its manner of
presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that
the nation was (Brennan, *The National Longing for Form* 173).

Despite literature's such active complicity in the formation of the institution and
the global acceptance of nationalism as the only legitimate form of political
organisation, India’s myriad-minded poet, Rabindranath Tagore shared not an iota of
positive sentiment towards the ideology. His foremost objection came from its very
nature and purpose as an institution. The very fact that it is a social institution, a
mechanical organisation, modelled on certain utilitarian objectives in mind, made it
unpalatable to Tagore, who was a champion of creation over construction,
imagination over reason and the natural over the artificial and the man-made. Tagore
took the view that since nationalism emerged in the post-religious laboratory of
industrial-capitalism, it was only an “organisation of politics and commerce” (Tagore,
*Nationalism* 7), that brings “harvests of wealth” (Tagore, *Nationalism* 5) or
“carnivals of materialism” (Soares 113), by spreading tentacles of greed, selfishness,
power and prosperity, or churning up the baser instincts of mankind, and sacrificing in
the process “the moral man, the complete man... to make room for the political and
commercial man, the man of limited purpose” (Tagore *Nationalism* 9).

Tagore deemed nationalism a recurrent threat to humanity, because with its
propensity for the material and the rational, it trampled over the human spirit and
human emotion; it upset man’s moral balance, “obscuring his human side under the
shadow of soul-less organisation” (Tagore, *Nationalism* 9).
The book *Nationalism* (1976) is a compilation of three lectures delivered by Rabindranath Tagore. The three lectures published in this book are: “Nationalism in Japan”, “Nationalism in the West” and “Nationalism in India”. In this book Tagore dismisses the concept nationalism as “the organized self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least spiritual” (Tagore, *Nationalism* 8). Of course, Tagore’s critique of nationalism might seem a little lofty and farfetched – ‘too pious,’ as Pound might have said – but much of it is intellectually valid and some of it is borne out by contemporary post-colonial criticism. Critics, for example, hardly ascribe the nation with any moral authority but emphasise its practical necessity, its legitimacy on the ground that it has laboured on behalf of modernity, an outcome of the overlapping discourses of Reason, Modernity and History that serves as an underpinning to modern civilisation. In the view of Leela Gandhi, “nationalism is the only form of political organisation which is appropriate to the social and intellectual condition of the modern world” (Gandhi 104). She does not, however, suggest how beneficial it is from a human point of view, how much it contributes to the moral and spiritual fulfilment of human beings. Interestingly, that does not seem to be part of the contemporary discourse, something that Tagore was so preoccupied with; modern discourse is monocular in its acceptance of progress, civilisation and modernity as a material and intellectual process only, and not both material and moral, or intellectual as well as spiritual – precisely the criticism that Tagore, a multilateral thinker, directed at the current unilineal civilization.

Tagore was opposed to the idea of the nation; he was even more fiercely opposed to India joining the bandwagon of nationalism. This would compromise India’s
history and identity as a culture and bring it under the shadow of the West. Unlike Gandhi, Tagore believed that political freedom and attainment of a nationalist identity by driving the British out was not the right solution for India's problems and so he said in his characteristic hopefulness: “I am not for thrusting off Western civilization and becoming segregated in our independence. Let us have a deep association” (quoted in Soares 106). Tagore maintained that India's immediate problems were social and cultural and not political. India is the world in miniature, this is where the races and the religions have met; therefore she must constantly strive to resolve her “burden of heterogeneity,” by evolving out of “these warring contradictions a great synthesis” (Dutta 239). First and foremost, India must address the caste issue. The caste system has become too rigid and taken a hypnotic hold on the mind of the people; what was once meant to introduce social order by accommodating the various racial groups in India, has now become a gigantic system of cold-blooded repression. India ought to come out of this social stagnation by educating the people out of their trance; only when the immovable walls of society were removed, or made flexible, will India regain her vitality and dynamism as a society and find true freedom. What is the purpose of political freedom when the elites in society are exploiting the lower classes, especially the untouchables so ruthlessly? In his short story, Purification, he exposes the absurdity of Gandhi's satyagraha movement and the hypocrisy of the Indian nationalists by showing how selfish and superficial the nationalists were in their quest for freedom; they were fervently opposed to the British oppression, but oppressed the poor as well as the untouchables themselves; they wanted dignity and respect but wouldn't allow the same to their less fortunate brethren.
Tagore is astute in equating the imperial discourse with the discourse of nationalism and asserting the process of othering colonised nations by the Lacanian grande-autre, the great Other, or the colonising Other, to fulfil its imperial ego. A nation can construct itself only by constructing its others in such a way as to confirm its own reality. Thus every nation is given to an inherent discourse of self and other, each finding its identity by positing itself against the other, thereby making each potentially an enemy of the other. Tagore explains:

The Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation, that all its precautions are against it, and any new birth of its fellow in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril (Tagore, Nationalism 17-18).

Tagore's animosity to nationalism should not make us think that he was not patriotic or that he was anti-West. He believed in a symbiosis of the East and West, a 'deep association' or a living relationship between the two cultures; a creative unity that was possible only when the East had discovered its soul and its separate identity. Moreover, his profound love for Bengal and India is manifest in his many immortal songs and poems. His love and intensity for the land transcended the bounds of a narrow, selfish and self-aggrandising nationalism and carried such depth, generosity and broadness that his compositions were adopted as national anthems in India and Bangladesh. Despite the fervour, Tagore never allowed his love for his
country to stand in the way of his love for truth, justice and humanity – he was not
given to a national consciousness but a world-consciousness, a visva bodh in which
every country would keep alight its own lamp of mind as its part in the illumination of
the world. As Nikhil says in *The Home and the World* (1916),

I am willing to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for
Right which is far greater than my country. To worship my country
as a god is to bring a curse upon it (Tagore, *The Home and the
World* 29).

Tagore’s vision might seem idealistic but it is not unattainable. It calls for a
humanitarian intervention into present self-seeking and belligerent nationalism,
through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension in the institution. It also
requires us to step out of history to reinvent a new future for ourselves that respects
human dignity and sees every individual and nation as equals, in a true democratic
spirit.

For Edward Said, the Orient “... is not merely there” (Said 4), but a construction of
thought in which an entire region is homogenized as one particular culture, or
‘civilization’ in opposition to the Western Occident. At first glance, this approach
shares a constructivist affiliation to Anderson’s theoretical framework in *Imagined
Communities*. However, Anderson’s conception of nationalism as imagined, comes
dangerously close to idealizing discourse to the extent that the ‘nation’ can be read as
some sort of text, in order to uncover the legitimizing narratives that aid in its
construction. At the same time, the political economy or ‘materialist’ aspects of
Anderson’s theory point to underlying social-material relations whose base can be
found in the workings of the capitalist-economy, and its corresponding modes of social (re)production. Often socially and technologically reductionalist, however, such theories tend to conceive ideas as mere reflections, or representations of a socio-economic base which is understood to be the underlying reality beneath the ‘veil’ of ideology.

Moving beyond ‘social construction,’ Said, on the other hand, highlights the productivity and power of knowledge, which, “... for many generations, there has been considerable material investment” (Said 6). Anderson’s methodology is therefore, too anthropomorphic insofar as it attributes far too much to ‘social’ (ie. human) elements in the rise of nationalism. The ‘material’ is reduced solely to ‘social’ relations. Like Marx, for whom materialism is the critical means by which we become conscious of ourselves as naturally historical beings, modern history is seen to unfold in accordance with the logics of capitalism as an ensemble of social relations of production. Contemporary social construction theories, similarly, are socially and technologically deterministic, neglecting the role of non-human actors and literal ‘materials’ in the constitution of knowledge, space, and subjectivity. In a theoretical approach indebted to material semiotics, Kendall (2004) argues that our understanding of knowledge should include “all the texts, speeches, materials, institutions, ways of acting and ways of problematising that are associated together in a convenient package” (Kendall 65). A knowledge, then, “is never simply informational, nor is it simply technical, but it is a result of the juxtaposition of a number of elements” (Kendall 65).
Edward Said, in contrast to Anderson, allows for a more thorough and precise approach to nationalism by highlighting overall thematic continuities, but at the same time, disbursing close attention to historically-specific, cultural particularities, or discontinuities. Said's framework shows how, at first, the 'civilizing missions' (in the name of the Christian religion) of the imperialistic powers had a close, actual, physical relationship to colonial territories. Scientific surveys, maps and censuses, created by experts in the name of 'human progress' were carried out so that Europeans could authoritatively regenerate an Orient which they knew better than any Oriental. History shows that resistance to colonialism often takes the form of an 'anti-colonial' nationalist movement that finds itself in the framework of power defined by the very colonial power itself. In appropriating Orientalist texts for the purposes of legitimatization, these nation-builders assert a new form of unity, with all of its exclusionary components. They can be seen as sort of "inside-out orientalists, who revalorize what orientalists perceive as lacking." (Burke 494-495). Yet if nationalism is the excluded other in colonial discourse, then Islamic movements for instance, occupy the same position in nationalist discourse. The often authoritarian-secular, anti-Islamic movements for national consciousness in Turkey, for instance, are an excellent example of the dark side of nationalisms, especially in their explicit exclusion of such religious identities.

While Anderson sees an abrupt break from the imagined communities of the Christian religion, to the rise of nationalist movements following the Enlightenment, Said's approach to Orientalism demonstrates a continuous thematic from liberal imperialism (with its Euro-Christian epistemological base), to nationalism, to present-
day religious movements. The psychology of faith, in this sense, cannot be limited to purely religious contexts, but must be understood as a ‘faith’ in particular metaphysical analogues for God – be they the transcendental belief in the self-evidence of the Nation, teleological, scientific progress, or Man as both transcendental subject and object of world-history. Specifically, Edward Said interprets the term nation in Oriental perspective. In his book *Orientalism* he opines that orientalism is this production of ideas, knowledge, and opinions about the Orient—ideas which were preliminary to governance, military conquest and political control over the geographical territory of the Orient. Orientalist knowledge came first, political control later. Orientalism is thus a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’. Partha Chatterjee, Sumit Sarkar of the ‘Subaltern Studies Collective’ ignore Said’s concept. Partha Chatterjee points out, it was within:

When one turns...from European knowledge of the Orient to nationalist thinking in the east in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, what stares one in the face is the profound manner in which nationalist thought is itself shaped, indeed contained by the same dominating framework—the framework of Orientalism. Of course nationalism in colonial countries is premised on opposition to alien rule, in this case rule by a Western power. But it is vitally important to emphasize that this opposition occurs within a body of knowledge about the East (large parts of it purporting to be scientific) which has the same representational structure and shares
the same theoretical frame work as Orientalism (Chatterjee, *Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society* 155).

Perhaps the most relevant, and potent critique of Anderson’s approach in *Imagined Communities* comes from Partha Chatterjee (1993), in asking, “whose imagined community?” Chatterjee reminds us of how nationalisms were seen as “emancipatory” in their struggles against colonial powers as recent as the 1950s and 1960s in parts of Asia and Africa. Nationalisms, be they ‘good’ or ‘bad’ were seen as “one of Europe’s most magnificent gifts to the rest of the world,” an essential “product of the political history of Europe” (Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* 215). By the 1970s, as if all previous history had been forgotten, ethnic nationalisms were seen as causes- unto-themselves - the cause of third world wars, corruption, and violence. Chatterjee, however, takes issue with Anderson’s conception of nationalism as one that pre-exists in “modular” forms, such that its basic tenets can easily be exported and appropriated in the postcolonial world. His is a totalizing, “universal history of the modern world,” fails to consider the dynamics of anti-colonial nationalisms. He rejects Anderson’s thesis as yet another example of Eurocentricism. He writes:

> If nationalism in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain “modular” forms already available to them by Europe and the America, what do they left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our
behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized (Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* 216).

Chatterjee, through his solely Bengali cases in point exhibits how the nation has already arrived when the Bengali middle class had endeavoured to forge a “modern national culture that is nevertheless not Western” (Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* 6). He identifies three ‘moments’ for nationalist thought, as expressed in literature. The first, the moment of ‘departure’, is predicated on essential differences between the West and the Rest, noting that while those not living in Europe or North America are deficient in European modernities, that lack is compensated for with spiritual gift. The second, the moment of ‘maneuver’, described as the embrace of modernities antitheses as the national culture. In the third, the moment of ‘arrival’, nationalist thought is phrased in its own vocabulary of modernist order.

While appearing to oppose the colonial influence at one level, the problematic of anti-colonial nationalisms assert a form of inner sovereignty, an “inner domain of national culture,” and claim to an ‘essential’ cultural identity (Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* 220). Nonetheless, the very thematic of post-Enlightenment epistemologies and ethical systems provides a national-theoretical framework that while seemingly the reverse of Orientalism (colonialism), “…retains the essentialist character depicted in Orientalist discourse”
(Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 38). The search for an authenticity in identity, solely conceivable in terms of nationalism, demonstrates the immanence of certain strategies of resistance to regimes of power (Foucault/Deleuze). Chatterjee demonstrates, more specifically, the extent to which anti-colonial nationalist movements share the same epistemological-discursive field as their colonial oppressors. Anderson fails to consider these historically, and culturally specific dynamics in the postcolonial world.

The book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (1986) is in many ways the foundation for Partha Chatterjee's celebrated *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993). It is a collection of tightly linked essays. The first essay is on "Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Political Ideas." It is a critique, from a postcolonial standpoint, of the theories of Elie Kedourie, John Plamenatz, Ernest Gellner, and Benedict Anderson. Chatterjee has sympathy for Anderson's position, but, he asks,

What ... are the substantive differences between Anderson and Gellner on 20th century nationalism? None. Both point out a fundamental change in ways of perceiving the social world which occurs before nationalism can emerge...Both describe the characteristics of the new cultural homogeneity which is sought to be imposed on the emerging nation...In the end, both see in third-world nationalisms a profoundly 'modular' character. They are inavariably shaped according to contours outlined by given
historical models (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*? 21).

The second chapter entitled “The Thematic and the Problematic” investigates the curious bi-level nature of nationalist thought. On one level, it “appears to oppose the dominating implications of post-Enlightenment European thought,” but on another level, it “seems to accept that domination” (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 37). Chatterjee motivates his investigation through the critical use of Edward Said’s concept of “Orientalism.” Chatterjee observes that “the problematic in nationalist thought is exactly the reverse of that of orientalism. That is to say, the ‘object’ in nationalist thought is still the oriental, who retains the essentialist character depicted in Orientalist discourse” (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 38).

“The Moment of Departure: Culture and Power in the Thought of Bankimchandra” is the third essay of the book where Partha Chatterjee tries to examine the thought of Bankimchandra Chatterjee, a leading Bengali intellectual, mentor of Rabindranath Tagore, and one of India’s first nationalist thinkers. At the very outset of the essay, Chatterjee says,

Bankimchandra Chattopadhya (1838-94), a novelist, satirist, and easily the most acclaimed man of letters in the Calcutta of his day, was one of the first systematic expounders in India of the principles of nationalism. He was widely read in European literature, particularly in 19th century sociology and political economy, and was greatly influenced, according to his own admission, by
positivism as well as utilitarianism. He wrote a great deal on social
and political questions, using several literary forms (Chatterjee,
*Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative
Discourse* 54).

Chatterjee specifically looks “at the ways in which [Bankimchandra’s] thought relates
culture to power in the context of a colonial country” (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought
and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 54).

Chatterjee tries to explore Bankim’s thinking about the two great reasons for India
being a subject nation. The first is that Indians lack a national desire for liberty. Some
Indians probably nurse a vague feeling that independence is better than subjection,
“but never has this feeling become a compelling desire; never have the majority of
Indians fought for their liberty” (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial
World: A Derivative Discourse* 55). This leads directly to the second great reason
for the subjection of India, i.e., the lack of solidarity in Hindu society.

National solidarity, Bankim says, is crucially dependent on two
kinds of attitudes. One is the conviction that what is good for every
Hindu is good for me; that my opinions, my belief, my actions must
be combined and consistent with those of every other Hindu. The
other attitude is a single minded devotion to the interests of my
nation, if necessary even at the cost of the interests of other nations
(Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A
Derivative Discourse* 55).
However, Bankim argues that it is because of our contacts with the English that we have discovered for the first time the true basis of liberty and national solidarity. Chatterjee observes that Bankim’s explanation of the subjection of India is not in terms of material or physical strength. It is an explanation in terms of culture. It is also significant that when Bankim quarrels with the Orientalists about their assessment at the quality of the sources of Indian history and the way these should be used, he does so from a thorough rationalist position. From that position, he accuses his adversaries of ethnocentric bias and racial prejudices which, when they were not plain ignorant, deflected them from a strictly rational examination of the evidence, maintains Chatterjee (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 59).

Next comes the longest of the essays, entitled, “The Moment of Manoeuvre: Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society.” This essay is basically a reading of Gandhi’s famous tract Hind Swaraj (“A Free India”) as a “text in which Gandhi’s relation to nationalism can be shown to rest on a fundamental critique of the idea of civil society” (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 85). In response to alternative positions like that of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who believed the absence of cultural attributes had resulted in India’s subjugation by the British as mentioned in the previous essay, Gandhi spoke, rather, of the disjuncture between the prevailing politics and the morality of the community that had resulted in the same. Chatterjee presents the moment of Gandhi in nationalist politics as the moment of manoeuvre, proposing that Gandhi’s critique of civil society and representative democracy emerges through his reworking of the relationship
between the moral and the political. Without going in to the merits of Chatterjee’s formulation here, we could try to understand this separation that Gandhi makes, in order to better understand his accompanying take not only on the value of science, but on a necessary relationship between its use and the morality of the community. Again and again, in response to industrialisation, in response to the work of doctors of medicine, in response to “much that goes under the name of modern civilisation” (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 80), Gandhi reacts,

I overeat, I have indigestion, I go to the doctor, he gives me medicine, I am cured. I overeat again, I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me and I would not have overeaten again.

The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 84).

And so with history, and so with the law, all of which are the record of visible illness rather than of the truth. In Gandhi’s world, it would seem that “[t]rue knowledge [which] gives a moral standing and moral strength” (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 119), can be the only basis for any politics. To that extent, Non-cooperation or satyagraha, as “intense political activity” rather than passive resistance, but in the form of a negation of the existing political frameworks, was born. The ‘disobedience’ here was not only of the British administration, but of existing modalities of resistance. The positive content of the
programme was that of rural construction through khadi and the charkha programme, which for Gandhi would be the true method of non-violent swaraj. This too, however, needed the abdication of the state from responsibility. The collectivity that Tagore found so suspect in this regard was for Gandhi an experiment in the modalities of non-violent mass resistance. And to Tagore’s eloquent argument against the charkha on account of its staticity, what more eloquent answer than this –

It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 96).

The essay, “The Moment of Arrival: Nehru and the Passive Revolution” examines the two major works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi’s pupil and the first Prime Minister of independent India, in order to find “the key ideological elements and relations of nationalist thought at its moment of arrival” (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 132). Here Chatterjee argues that Nehru’s ideology is one in which

the central organizing principle is the autonomy of the state; the legitimizing principle is a conception of social justice. The argument then runs as follows: social justice for all cannot be provided within the old framework because it is antiquated, decadent and incapable of dynamism. What is necessary is to create a new framework of
institutions which can embody the spirit of progress, or, a synonym, modernity ... Hence the principal political task before the nation is to establish a sovereign national state (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 132-133).

The conclusion to the book, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World is a short (anti-)Hegelian postscript. The title of this essay is “The Cunning of Reason”. Where Hegel had found a promise of salvation upon what he grimly described as “the slaughter-bench of history” (thanks to “the cunning of Reason”), Chatterjee sees Reason as “sovereign, tyrannical universality,” which in its universalizing mission has been parasitic upon a much less lofty, much more mundane, palpably material and singularly invidious force, namely the universalist urge of capital (Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse 168).

According to Chatterjee, reason and capital have fused into the juggernaut of “development,” and nowhere has nationalism as such been able to halt this giant’s march through the world.

In the book, The Nation and its Fragment: Colonial and Post colonial History, Partha Chatterjee looks at the creative and powerful results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa that are posited not on identity but on difference with the nationalism propagated by the West. Arguing that scholars have been mistaken in equating political nationalism with nationalism as such, he shows how anti-colonialist
nationalists produced their own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before beginning their political battle with the imperial power. These nationalists divided their culture into material and spiritual domains, and staked an early claim to the spiritual sphere, represented by religion, caste, women and the family, and peasants. Chatterjee shows how middle-class elites first imagined the nation into being in this spiritual dimension and then readied it for political contest, all the while "normalizing" the aspirations of the various marginal groups that typify the spiritual sphere. While Chatterjee's specific examples are drawn from Indian sources, with a copious use of Bengali, the book is a contribution to the general theoretical discussion on nationalism and the modern state. Examining the paradoxes involved with creating first a uniquely non-Western nation in the spiritual sphere and then a universalist nation-state in the material sphere, the author finds that the search for a postcolonial modernity is necessarily linked with past struggles against modernity. The purpose of Chatterjee's book seems to be to thoroughly explore the idea of nationalism, apart from political nationalism, especially in terms of India's history. The concept of nationalism seems so deeply entrenched in European thought that Chatterjee's perspective brings the reader into a dialogue with one's own misconceptions and prejudices regarding what it is to be a country. Chatterjee leads the reader to confront the idea that all people within a country are the same. He discusses the nationalism of India in terms of the elite and the common person with a separation between the political nationalism and the spiritual nationalism. Class is not something that the western person comfortably deals with, as there is the supposition in the U.S. that all people are created equal, whether or not they actually are. Chatterjee clearly discusses
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the composition of each of the classes in India. Of interest is the middle class, which was placed in a position of subordination in one relation and a position of dominance in another. Chatterjee's book may be considered to be the point of departure for any person who wants to be informed and to reflect on the concept of nationalism and its application for any country, not just India and Bengal. Chatterjee's strong point is the idea that nationalism, as it is commonly understood by the western person, includes various deeply held beliefs about nation, modernism, history, and identity that are not necessarily true for other groups around the world. Such old style "paternalistic colonialism" is of an imperialistic nature, and it is important for the educated, informed person to realize this less comfortable, less romantic aspect of western history. The associated strong point is that nationalism can exist within a conflicting political ideology, enabling the oppressed to develop distinct beliefs in the civil and spiritual realms, enabling the oppressed to gather strength and solidarity while forming strategies to break off the yokes of oppression. The author makes it clear that India's history cannot be completely understood with a stereotyped western perspective. He asserts, “This history, when submitted to a sophisticated sociological analysis, cannot but converge with Anderson's formulations” (Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* 217).

Another significant Indian nationalist project of Partha Chatterjee is vested on his views on “Material/Spiritual and Outer/Inner”. Here Chatterjee argues the partition of private/public, home/world gender division endowed with a resolution between conflicting claims of nationalist ideology and modernization in post-colonial societies. Chatterjee (1989) elaborates an ideological framework for analysing the formation of
national identity through the dichotomy of gender in the Indian nationalist project of the nineteenth century. Chatterjee has the opinion that a division of the domain of culture into two spheres, the ‘material’ and the ‘spiritual’, made it possible for the colonized people to learn superior Western techniques of organizing material life and integrate them into their own cultures without threatening the self-identity of their national culture. Science, technology, rational forms of economic organization and modern methods of state-craft, which had given the European countries the strength to overpower non-European people and to impose their supremacy over the whole world, simply belonged to the material domain. Learning from the West, therefore, should not mean the imitation of the West in every facet of life. Chatterjee goes on to illustrate that the discourse of nationalist writers connects the material/spiritual distinction to the distinction between the ‘outer’ and the ‘inner’, which is ideologically a far more powerful dichotomy.

Chatterjee opines that if the inner/outer distinction has been applied to the matter of concrete day-to-day living then it will be possible to separate the social space into ‘ghar’ and ‘bahir’ (the home and the world beyond). The ‘world beyond’ represents the external, the domain of the material. On the other hand, the ‘home’ is one’s inner spiritual self, one’s true identity. The world is a deceitful territory of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. Typically, it is also the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the blasphemous activities of the material world – and woman as its representation. “And so one gets an identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of the social space into ghar and bahir” (Chatterjee, Colonialism,
Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India 624). In this way, the home became the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture, and women must take the main responsibility for protecting and nurturing this quality. Indian nationalist discourse affirmed that the world was where the European powers had challenged the non-European peoples and, by virtue of their superior material culture, had subjugated them. But they had failed to colonize the inner, essential identity of the East, which lay in its distinctive, and superior, spiritual culture. The home is where the East was undominated, sovereign, master of its own fate. Chatterjee emphasizes it is here that the home/world dichotomy and social roles of middle-class women become crucial in Indian nationalist ideology.

Writing about Indian nationalist historiography Romila Thapar, the prominent Indian historian says:

Despite the stereotypes of ‘unchanging India’ and her ‘unhistorical’ religions and peoples, the historical writing on ancient India goes back for more than two centuries and exhibits an instructive series of change in interpretation. The historical writings produced by European scholars, beginning in the eighteenth century, were formulated in terms of the ideological attitudes then dominant in Europe, and naturally these were significantly different from the indigenous tradition of ancient India. European ideologies entailed a set of attitudes toward India which were for the most part highly critical, though there were also some sympathetic historians. These ideologies continued to be influential even after Indian scholars
began to write, since they often wrote in reply to earlier interpretations and were therefore still moulded by them. It has been only in recent years that the influence of ideologies on the interpretation of Indian history has been recognised; perhaps now for the first time a history of the changing interpretations of ancient India can be written (Thapar 1).

According to Thapar, India was by no means a country unknown to Europe. The visits of merchants, ambassadors, and missionaries from various parts of Europe to the Indian sub-continent helped the Indian to enrich with knowledge and wisdom. The accounts written by some of these visitors—such as those of Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of James I to the Mughal court of the Emperor Jahangir, or Francois Bernier who visited India in 1668 and was associated with the court of Louis XIV—became the basic European source of information on India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some of these accounts were fairly reliable; others were a mixture of observation and a large amount of fantasy. The first serious study of India and its past began in the late eighteenth century with the work of scholars who have since been described as the Orientalists or Idologists.

Thapar observes that for the Orientalists, the most significant discovery was that of the relationship between Sanskrit and certain European languages, which led to subsequent work on the common Indo-European heritage. The ancient Indian past was seen almost as a lost wing of early European culture, and the Aryans of India were regarded as the nearest intellectual relatives of the Europeans. There was an emphasis on the study of Sanskrit, since it was believed to belong to a period earlier than that of
Greek and thus to be in a purer state of preservation; it therefore provided a better understanding of all Indo-European languages.

Ancient Indian society was visualised by these writers, according to Thapar, as a comparatively unchanging society over the period from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000 with a uniformly high quality of achievement; the basis of the stability was the ancient Aryan culture. It was felt that nineteenth-century historians had belittled the achievements of ancient India by, among other things, denying its antiquity and by suggesting that its achievements were borrowed mainly from Greece. There was an attempt, therefore to place literary sources as early in time as was reasonably feasible and to prove that the more worthwhile aspects of Indian culture was entirely indigenous. To counter the argument that the Indian tradition lacked a concern for the rational and the pragmatic, it was maintained that Indian culture had an essentially spiritual quality which was totally opposed to that of the essentially materialistic Western civilization. It followed that in essence Indian culture was superior.

Another characteristic of historical interpretation influenced by nationalism was the desire to stress the political unity of the country from earliest times. Thus the rise of the Mauryan empire in the third century B.C. and its extension over almost the entire sub-continent was seen as an expression of an all-India consciousness. In this connection Ramila Thapar writes:

Historians writing in the 1920's and 1930's felt the impact of the national movement, and this was reflected in their historical thinking...(They) continued to write political and dynastic history in the main, but their interpretations were based on a clearly
nationalistic point of view. There was an unashamed glorification of the ancient Indian past... The glorious past was also a compensation for the humiliating present. To some extent the glorification of the past represented a revival of interest in the writings of the more sympathetic Orientalists... (Thapar 11).

In fact, Indian nationalist historiography has gone so far as to claim that India, rather than being the shelter for Indo-European migration, was actually their original homeland and the migration was from India to other places in the world and not the other way round.

The history of colonization in India has a deep root. In the real sense of the term Colonial India is that portion of the Indian subcontinent which was under the dominance of European colonial powers who actually established the dominance by means of trade and conquest. The earliest European power to arrive in India was Alexander the Great, the king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece, in 327–326 BC. After he left the satraps (Satrap was the name given to the governors of the provinces of the ancient Median and Achaemenid (Persian) Empires and in several of their successors, such as the Sassanid Empire and the Hellenistic empires) he established in the north west of the subcontinent immediately collapsed. Afterward, trade was carried between Indian states and the Roman Empire by Roman sailors who reached India passing through the Red Sea and Arabian Sea, but the Romans never sought trading settlements or territory in India. The trade of spice between India and Europe was one of the main trading sessions of the world economy and was the chief catalyst for the period of European exploration.
To discover the wealth and prosperity of India led to the fortuitous "discovery" of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492. After a few years near the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama became the first European to re-establish direct trade links with India since Roman times by being the first to arrive by sailing round the Cape of Good Hope in Africa in 1497-1499. He arrived in Calicut, the major trading ports of the eastern world of that time and acquired permission to trade in the city from Saamoothiri Rajah (Samoothiri of Calicut is the hereditary royal title used by the Hindu rulers of the medieval Kingdom of Calicut on Malabar Coast.)

Other European powers came to India because of the emerging trading rivalries. In the early seventeenth century the Dutch, the English, the French and the Danes established trading posts in India. Because of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the early 18th century and then the weakening of the Maratha Empire after the third battle of Panipat, the virtually weak and unsteady Indian states which emerged were increasingly open to exploitation by the Europeans through dependent friendly Indian rulers.

In the later 18th century Britain and France struggled for dominance through substitute Indian rulers and also by direct military interference. In this connection, the name of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799) can be mentioned. He was the de-facto ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore. He is better known as the 'Tiger of Mysore'. His full name was Sultan Fateh Ali Tippu and he was born on 20th November, 1750 at Devanahalli, in present-day Kolar district, near Bangalore, India. He is the eldest son of Hyder Ali and Fakhr-un-nissa (Fatima Begum). Tipu ascended the throne of his father after his
death in 1782, following the Second Mysore War, to then rule the Kingdom of Mysore. Tipu Sultan was a benevolent and instrumental leader, whose constant valiant efforts against the British oppression in southern India resulted in his name being etched in the annals of Indian history. He was greatly respected by his people and earned the trust of various international allies such as the French, the Amir of Afghanistan and the Sultan of Turkey, to assist him in his fight against the British. Tipu Sultan was the founder-member of the 'Jacobin Club' that served allegiance to the French. A true patriot like his father, Tipu visualized the forthcoming danger of the expanding British's East India Company. His reputation as a great general and fearless warrior was sealed in the Second Mysore War when he defeated British forces under Sir Hector Munro at the Battle of Pollilur in 1780. With the aid of French officers, he broke through British lines and unleashed 13 offensives until the British officers finally surrendered. One of them,* Captain David Baird, was held prisoner for four years before returning to his regiment and eventually leading the force which defeated Tipu Sultan in his capital, Seringapatam in 1799. The defeat of the impressive Indian ruler Tipu Sultan, in 1799, marginalized French influence in India. It was followed by a rapid expansion of British power through the greater part of the subcontinent in the early 19th century. By the middle of the century, the British had already gained direct or indirect control over almost all of India.

Before the middle of the 19th century, directly or indirectly, the British had full control over all of present-day India. In 1857, a local rebellion by an army of sepoys escalated into the Rebellion of 1857, which took six months to suppress with heavy loss of life on both sides. As a result, the East India Company lost its powers of
government and British India formally came under direct British rule, with an appointed Governor-General of India. The East India Company was dissolved the following year in 1858. A few years later, Queen Victoria took the title of Empress of India.

In the late Nineteenth century India suffered a series of serious crop failures resulting in widespread famines in which at least 10 million people died. The East India Company had failed to implement any synchronized policy to deal with the famines during its period of rule and it affected reform movement. Ultimately, the slow but momentous reform movement paved the way for Indian Independence Movement. During the years of World War I, the hitherto bourgeois 'home-rule' movement was converted into a popular mass movement by Mahatma Gandhi. Despite Gandhi, other revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad and Subhash Chandra Bose, were not against use of violence to oppose the British rule. The independence movement achieved its goal with the independence of Pakistan and India on 14 August and 15 August 1947 respectively. Thus the colonial rule ended in India.

Any discussion on Indian nation and nationalism will not complete without an assessment of Swami Vivekananda's idea of these. "Vivekananda's thought found sustenance in the common roots of Hindu nationalism" (B. Gokhale 39). His early name was Narendranath Dutta. He became associated with the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, and in 1881 he met Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836-1886), the great mystic-saint of Bengal. This meeting changed Narendranath's life, for instead of aspiring to be an affluent barrister-at-law, he became an ascetic calling
himself Vivekananda. After Ramakrishna's death in 1886, Vivekananda completely devoted himself to a life of religious effort in the cause of the regeneration of Hinduism.

Throughout his life Vivekananda played a decisive role as philosopher of the Hindu nationalist movement and tried to discover the forgotten glories of the spiritual tradition of India. On September 11, 1893, he delivered his now famous address to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He firmly believed that India was the centre of the world's spirituality. He said,

Let others talk of politics, of the glory of acquisition of the immense wealth poured in by trade, of the power and spread of commercialism, of the glorious fountain of physical liberty, the Hindu mind does not understand it. Touch him on spirituality, on religion, on God, on the soul, on the infinite, on spiritual freedom, the lowest peasant, I am sure, is better informed in India than many a so-called philosopher in other lands (Vivekananda 3: 148).

His conviction was that “India is still the first and foremost of all the nations in the world” because of its being the motherland of philosophy and spirituality, ethics and sweetness, gentleness and human love (Vivekananda 3: 147). Vivekananda argued that Indian spirituality conquered the world once. That world is now overcome with weariness, and “it is Indian spirituality that will once again save the world from its destruction” (B. Gokhale 38).

But regarding the present condition of India, Vivekananda freely admitted that India had fallen on evil days. There was poverty in the country, and there was a lack
of education. There was political subjection and cultural humiliation. The rationalist in him made him speak out against ignorance, superstition, untouchability and caste system. But he was hopeful that spiritual education would be helpful for the removal of these evils from the Indian society. According to him, “the Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it stands and will stand so long as the spirit shall remain as the background, so long as the people do not give up their spirituality” (Vivekananda 4: 160). And the Hindu, the common, down-to-earth Hindu, cannot give up his spirituality for "he has been the blessed child of God always (Vivekananda 3: 105).

Mysticism is the basis of Vivekananda’s nationalism. In fact, mysticism plays a prominent role in the formation and development of Hindu nationalism from Dayananda Saraswati to Mahatma Gandhi. Gopal krishna Gokhale, the Moderate leader and philosopher of Indian Liberalism once expressed his mystical faith in the future of India when he said,

a new consciousness of power is stirring within us - a new meaning of existence is breaking upon our mind..., and altogether we seem to see the first faint streaks of a new dawn which, in God's Providence, must in course of time grow into the perfect day (G. Gokhale 948).

Similarly Gandhi also believed that Divine Providence had meant India to play a special role in human history and that was to deliver the message of Satyagraha to the world for “no other country will precede her in the fulfillment of the message” (Dhawan 344-345).

This mystical faith in the special role of the country in the history of humanity was a part and parcel of the Hindu revival which
forms the basis of much of Indian nationalism from 1875 onwards

(B. Gokhale 40).

The gradual expansion of the scope of politics from the Western educated, English-speaking upper middle classes to the urban lower middle classes and finally to the rural masses demanded a shift in the basis of the nationalistic appeal. It also brought the necessity of using Indian languages for political propaganda and communication with the masses in the place of English. These languages were suffused in the Sanskrit and Hindu tradition, just as the mind of rural and lower middle class urban India was largely Hindu in its ideas and concepts. For them a term like Ram Raj was much more evocative than a Welfare State, and the persistent use of the former term by Gandhi in his speeches is an indication of the importance of Hindu concepts in the development of a mass nationalism in India.

Hindu mysticism and Hindu concepts of spiritual greatness were thus essential and inevitable elements in the process of the development of Indian nationalism, and of this Vivekananda was one of the earliest exponents (B. Gokhale 40).

Vivekananda felt that India was a country full of diversities and conflicts. There were different religions, languages, sects and regional societies often at cross-purposes with each other. There was the need to discover a common basis which would help the people “transcend the barriers of language and regional societies and weld them into a nation inspired by a vigorous and creative nationalism” (B. Gokhale 40). In his opinion such a basis could be found only in religion and spirituality which meant the Hindu spiritual tradition. He said,
The only common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build...the unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India (Vivekananda 3: 286-288).

Vivekananda was convinced that “national union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune” (Vivekananda 3: 371).

This spiritual tune was compounded of the theological, metaphysical, and ethical elements developed by Hinduism through the ages. He opposed the movement of social reform if it tended to destroy faith in Hinduism, since if that faith was destroyed everything was destroyed (Vivekananda 3: 216-219). He was not against borrowing ideas and techniques from other countries and civilizations, though he decried the imitation of Western materialistic attitudes by the educated Indians of his day. He also acknowledged the importance of political work such as was done by the Indian National Congress, but considered it a mistake if the awakening of the nation was seen only in political and social reform movements, for the awakening was quite as real in religion and it was this awakening of religion that would provide nationalism with vitality and through it pervade the life of every Hindu.

Vivekananda was by no means a Hindu fanatic, but he was deeply convinced that nationalism in India could be effectively based and developed into a mass movement only if it acquired a religious content (B. Gokhale 41).
Along with Mahatma Gandhi and Balgangadhar Tilak Vivekananda, forms a part of one continuous process. Many of Gandhi’s ideas on Hinduism and spirituality have similarity with Vivekananda’s ideas on same. Like Vivekananda, Gandhiji also believed that spirituality must permeate everyday life; and Gandhi would not consider of politics as detached from religion, though for him this religion was not a particular dogma but a universal religion of belief in a well-organized moral government of the universe. For him Swraj was synonymous with Ram Raj which he interpreted as the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth (Bose 223-224). But whatever philosophical interpretation he might give of terms like Ram Raj, he could not dissociate them of the religious significance associated with them in the Hindu mind. Swami Vivekananda also profoundly influenced the mind of Subhas Chandra Bose, who was particularly struck by the Swami’s exhortation on the acquisition of moral and physical power (B. Gokhale 42). Regarding Vivekananda’s nationalism B. G. Gokhale comments:

Vivekananda’s Hinduism was tolerant and broad-minded, and he was as much an inter-nationalist as a nationalist. He did not turn his back completely on the West, but his emphasis on the reacquisition of a “Hindu-ness” by the Hindu meant, as in the case of others, a rejection, more or less complete, of the West and its materialistic values. Vivekananda attacked secularism and denounced the secularization of life initiated under the Western impact on Indian culture. He urged a return to what he called “spirituality,” which in effect meant Hinduism purged of all of its
superstitions and antiquated concepts of social and economic relations. In this he began as a symbol of his age but went on to become its prophet, the prophet of a renascent Hinduism which when fused with a sense of unity would grow into the force of Indian nationalism (B. Gokhale 42).

To arouse national consciousness at the time of Freedom Struggle Indian Nationalist literature played an important role. The literature in any genre at that period had, purposefully, social and national in theme and content. After Independence the content has been changed, but the theme dealing with changing ideas of nation is easily visible in the writings of some prominent poets, novelists and dramatists. The prominent nationalist writers of the period are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali, Bishnu Shastri Chipulkar in Marathi, Subramanya Bharati in Tamil, Baratendu Harish Chandra in Hindi, Jyoti Prasad Aggarwal in Assamese. In this context Rushdie’s comment on the birth of the Indian Nation is remarkable. The birth of the Indian Nation, writes Rushdie, is an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate...a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will except in a dream we all agreed to dream...India, the new myth—a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies—money and God (Rushdie 150).
Nationalism, which had helped the anti-colonial struggle, now becomes entirely different in post-colonial period. The literature of postcoloniality that configures 'nationhood' generally emphasizes the following themes:

1. The modes of constructing, imagining, and representing the nation.
2. The role of locality, community, and space in the making of a national identity.
3. Issues of cultural identity, especially for Aboriginal writing in post-colonial societies, and the policies of nativism.
4. The centrality of religion and spirituality in the construction of a national identity.
5. The continuation of colonialism through other forms, especially by postcolonial elites.
6. The marginalization of certain communities and identities within postcolonial societies—a process of subalternization—which leads to protest and movements for social change and form (Nayar 70).

Indian writers belonging to postcolonial era were conscious of their role in nation-building, "since the nation is also a cultural construct, built out of and upon the artistic, folkloric, theoretical, and philosophical discourses about the nation" (Nayar 68). And the novel, as mentioned earlier, has historically played a central role in this connection because the novel objectified the multiple and unified nature of national life (Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* 1-31). In postcolonial writing, therefore, the national elements like geographical, economic, political and cultural have been a continuing theme. The vital point about the representation of national elements in the literature, naturally, appears.
However, this is hardly a simple task since most postcolonial methodologies, rhetorical forms, epistemologies are always already contaminated and informed by Western ones. The past, present, and future are harnessed in postcolonial texts where trauma [colonial], pride [nationalism] and hope [postcolonial] merge (Nayar 68-69).

Interestingly, Nelson Mandela's first ‘State of the Nation’ address also captures the postcolonial idea of nation:

The time will come when our nation will honour the memory of all the sons, the daughters, the mothers, the fathers, the youths, and the children who, by their thoughts and deeds, gave us the right to assert with pride that we are South Africans, that we are Africans and that we are citizens of the world...we must, constrained by and yet, regardless of the accumulated effect of our historical burdens, seize the time to define for ourselves what we want to make our shared destiny (Barnard 151-76).

Therefore, accounts of postcolonial counter-textuality begin by affirming the contiguity between the anti-colonial novel and anti-colonial nationalism. In general, postcolonial theory subscribes whole-heartedly to Benedict Anderson’s insistence upon the textual underpinnings of nationness. Benedict Anderson’s influential thesis that nations are ‘imagined’, located literature specifically the novel—at the centre of the ‘imagining’. Anderson argues that the novel was a technical form for ‘representing’ a kind of imagined community that becomes the nation. The point is not whether Anderson’s theses is right or wrong but rather that literature, especially
Indian English Literature between two World Wars, constantly refers to the idea of
the nation. Literary texts do indeed construct the nation through imagining spaces and
territories. Nations of the mind assume as much significance as ‘real’ ones, and
Anderson is quite accurate in this formulation. A novel or poem that provides a
particular image of the nation is influential in shaping the public imagination of
belonging, territory, and nationhood. In keeping with Anderson’s assertions, critics
like Fredric Jameson argue that the emergent third-world novel is especially
committed to the rendition of nationalist realities. According to Jameson, “Third-
world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly
libidinal dynamic—necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national
allegory” (Jameson 69). In this context, Leela Gandhi says:

It is certainly the case that the newly discovered textures of realist
prose in colonies like India, quickly lent themselves to the socio-
political concerns of nationalism. In addition, socialist anti-colonial
thought sanctioned the view that cultural-literary ‘labor’ was
indispensable to the nationalist task of social transformation. In
other words, the anti-colonial novelist was often, although not
always, a nationalist (Gandhi 152).

Keeping all the nationalistic discourses in mind, the present study undertakes to
examine the novels of R. K. Narayan in the context of the idea of nation and
nationalism. R.K. Narayan’s idea of nation is the subject of this study but it is better
to explain it in the light of the whole of Indian writing before studying the novels of
Narayan in particular. So, in Chapter 2, a brief survey of the development of
thematic plenitude in Indian Writings, especially, Indian Fiction in the light of the idea of Nation and how this idea relates R. K. Narayan’s works have been discussed. In this connection Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s famous nationalistic fiction, *Ananda Math* that vibrates with patriotic fervour and which was arguably the precursor of latter writers of the genre Indian Writing in English, would be discussed. Moreover, to get a proper insight into the reflection of the concept of Nation and Nationalism in Indian (English) Fiction, other novels like Tagore’s *The Home and the World*, Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* have been separately discussed. Before proceeding to the chronological re-evaluations of his novels in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, a separate chapter, i.e., Chapter 3 has been introduced which is devoted to detailed discussion on R.K. Narayan’s works in the light of the concept of Nation.

Several dissertations on R.K. Narayan have been written dealing with different aspects of his writing. Here, in this dissertation, an attempt has been made to explore how and to what extent his idea of nation forms a part of his fictional world. Since this aspect has not been taken up for research as of now, it would be a challenge to undertake it with a view to examining his idea of nation that contributes so extensively to his writing.
Works Cited


