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**ImagiNation: Nation and Spatial Strategy in *Kanthapura*
and *All About H. Hatterr*.**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Supervisor:

Prof. Makarand Paranjape.

Submitted by:

BAIDIK BHATTACHARYA

Centre of Linguistics and English

School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University

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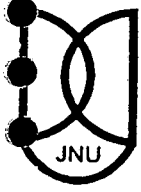
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CENTRE OF LINGUISTICS & ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE STUDIES
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067 INDIA

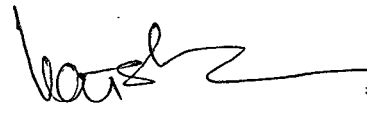
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled “**ImagiNation: Nation and Spatial Strategy in Kanthapura and All About H. Hatterr**”, submitted by Mr. Baidik Bhattacharya, Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any university. This may, therefore, be placed before the Examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**.


Prof. Makarand Paranjape,

Supervisor


Prof. Vaishna Narang,

Chairperson

Professor Vaishna Narang
Chairperson
Centre of Linguistics & English
School of Language, Literature
& Culture Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This dissertation entitled, “**ImagiNation: Nation and Spatial Strategy in *Kanthapura* and *All About H. Hatterr***”, submitted by me to the Centre of Linguistics and English, School of language. Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any university.



**Baidik Bhattacharya,
Centre of Linguistics and English,
School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University,
New Delhi – 110067.**

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CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION:

National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.

– Frantz Fanon.

This project is about nation-space and its social and imaginative usage. The point in stressing *social* and *imaginative* separately is not to claim mutual exclusivity for them, but to acknowledge two different usages, though the possibilities of overlap and slippage have not necessarily been precluded. In a more general sense, this project is an attempt to understand imagined spaces like nation and their social usage. At the outset I envisage the general understanding of space as a complex network of relations – internally contested and eternally contending – without any locus in a strictly structuralist sense. On the other hand, this understanding is not an independent one in the sense that it does not presuppose a neutral or even primordial naturalness of space, bereft of any socio-cultural coding and ideological hegemonisation. On the contrary, the understanding of space here imbricates specific sense of ‘construction’, not fabrication but more positive sense of production. In other words, this project follows much of the contemporary social philosophy (e.g. Bachelard 1969; Lefebvre 1971; Harvey 1989; Keith and Pile 1993, among many others) in maintaining that there is nothing ‘natural’ about space, it is *always* ‘socially produced’. In Michel Foucault’s vocabulary, we do not live in “homogeneous empty spaces”, rather, “[w]e are in an age when

space is presented to us in the form of relations of emplacement” (Foucault 1998: 177). Foucault further goes on to assert, “we live inside the ensemble of relations that define emplacements that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable” (Foucault 1998: 178).

But what is interesting in almost all the available social theory of space, including Foucault, is the recognition of an irreducible duality of emplacement between space and place – in a more general parlance, between abstract and concrete, or mental and material. This project in a more specific way wishes to interrogate nation-space through what might be called its textual production, a relationship that unfolds itself through the interface between its abstract and concrete forms. It needs little imagination to understand that territoriality is one of the mandatory prerequisites of a culturally meaningful and politically charged nation-space. That is to say, the idea of nation must necessarily be accompanied or preceded by a sense of shared space. In a more functionalist sense, territory or geography vis-à-vis nation becomes, as Edward Said explains, “socially constructed and maintained sense of place” showing “how geography can be manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site’s merely physical reality” (Said 2000: 180). What Raymond Williams said in *The Country and the City* (1973) about retrospective and contemporary images of space, argues Said, are true even about these imagined geographies, that they are “historical constructs, myths of social geography fashioned in different periods by different classes, different interests, different ideas about the national identity, the polity, the country as a whole, none of it without actual struggle and rhetorical dispute” (Said 2000: 182). Nationalism, as it has come to be known in political theory, has often been held capable of the ideological insemination that represents the social, political and historical enterprise of producing and sustaining the nation-space – quite in the sense of Williams’ ‘social geography’ – as a form of cultural struggle over territory. It functions, so to speak, as an embodiment of the socio-

cultural forces that Said enumerates in the preceding quote. My endeavour in understanding this sense of national emplacement through its textual inscription makes sense if we compare with it the centrality of space in Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*, where he shows interdependent structures of literary or cultural productions and the changing geography and landscape as a result of social contests. Analysing the complex relationship of the 'country' and the 'city' and the consequent complications they have spawned in theoretical understanding, Williams notes that the life of them "is moving and present: moving in time, through the history of a family and a people; moving in feeling and ideas, through a network of relationships and decisions" (Williams 1973: 8). But the decisive turn in Williams comes with his conviction that

Much of the creative thinking of our time is an attempt to re-examine each of these concepts and practices. ... In many areas of this thinking there is not only analytic but programmatic response: on new forms of decision-making, new kinds of education, new definitions and practices of work, new kinds of settlement and land-use. (Williams 1973: 305)

Williams in fact proposes a radical understanding of some of the major British authors in terms of the social division of space, where the aesthetic *raison d'être* depends on the changes in social perception and usage of the space, making the latter an integral element of the former.

This present project sets a similar, though much less ambitious, goal for itself. In a very general sense, here I wish to propose a similar relationship, in a more directly political sense, between Indian nation-space, in the sense of social geography, and what has generally been called national(ist) narratives in the early half of the twentieth century. To be more precise, I would like to concentrate on two texts, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) and G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* (1948), in order to understand their programmatic response to what

Foucault would have called the “ensemble of relations” representing the Indian nation-space. Given the limited scope of this project, the choice has been narrowed down to a particular literary tradition, Indian Writing in English (henceforth IWE), and to the processes in which these texts internalise a nuanced response, in their respective ways, to the transforming concept of nation-space in colonial India. The choice is not completely fortuitous, especially if we understand it in terms of the complex ways in which colonial domination shaped the indigenous cultural formation. IWE in fact, can be a symptomatic case for the way it becomes a macrocosm, so to speak, of the larger political battle and the resultant cultural response. In fact, IWE becomes an emblematic case for the ways it internalised a liberal western framework as far as the aesthetic rationale is concerned, in the sense of a derivative discourse, which recent studies have shown as quite a common thing to happen in the colonial period. And in this sense, IWE definitely shares a common attribute with other ‘modern’ Indian literatures. But what sets it apart has largely to do with the prioritisation of English as the creative medium. The colonial educational policy of maintaining a distance from the missionary enthusiasm of early settlement and the wide-ranging usage of English as the means to impart education induced English with a certain sense of ‘universality’ and ‘secularity’. It also helped English, though not consciously, to acquire a universal space, quite outside the feud of linguistic regionality. In a way, through a mischievous turn of history, English emerged as the representative of an intellectual space that spread across linguistic boundaries and hence can plausibly be linked with the trans-linguistic nation space. Such an understanding, in a larger context, needs to be situated within overlapping concerns of nation, novel and language where English as a language and IWE as a distinct literary tradition pose several challenges for our understanding of the Indian nation-space. As Meenakshi Mukherjee puts it:

Language-centred nationalism and the concept of a nation that transcends linguistic divisions reinforced each other in this period and the novel in India emerged at the cusp of these twin impulses. One without the other could not have sustained a genre that served a complex function in a colonial society, providing a vehicle for the emergence of political aspirations, imaginative adventure, historical reconstruction as well as a desire to document contemporary life. The novel as well as Indian nationalism stand at the conjunction of English – which not only opened out a new literary horizon but introduced new knowledge – and the Indian languages which became the conduit for processing this knowledge to suit regional needs. (Mukherjee, 2000: 22-23)

While I generally subscribe to this idea of ‘conjunction’ of English and regional – or more fashionably called *bhasha* – literatures representing the universal appeals of nation and regional senses of nationalism respectively, I would like to envisage them as ‘integrative’ and ‘instrumental’ aspects of nationalism, riveted together by the bilingual intelligentsia in the colonial period. Even at a very theoretical level it seems quite plausible to constitute a shared sense of representation that would entail a mutually constitutive sense of space. English as a language here precisely performs the role of a hinge, so to speak, connecting two different forms of spatial imagination. This is more so if we understand that the connection between nationalism and modern (literary) practices needs to be supplemented by an understanding of political imagination, a common repository available for both English and regional literatures¹. Indian English novels from the colonial period, I would argue,

¹ It would be interesting to note that Sudipta Kaviraj, in an essay on the crisis of the Indian nation-state, has argued that Ernest Gellner’s emphasis on the material aspect of nationalism’s connection with modern practices (*Nations and Nationalisms*, 1983) has to be supplemented by Anderson’s understanding of the political imagination. (Kaviraj: 115). My argument here is somewhat similar in the sense that the political expression of the nation-space cannot only be understood through an antithetical textual manifestation. Far from allowing the

provide a unique opportunity to understand what Mukherjee calls 'conjunctions' of English and regional languages and literary traditions in the form of emplacements. The tension is visible in the history and historiography of IWE, because of the astonishingly varied ways it has been conceptualised. With each move in the history, or with different practices in settling a persuasive historiography we have conspicuously been reminded of its spatial moorings and its desperation in foregrounding those very spatial categories.

II

A burgeoning body of 'Indian' literature, quite young by the standards of its other celebrated Indian counterparts (both classical and modern), was accredited 'Indo-Anglian' literature. Initial critical works like Edward Farley Oaten's *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature* (1908) and Bhupal Singh's *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (1934) subsumed all peculiarities of IWE under the umbrella term 'Anglo-Indian', without making any difference between, let's say, Kipling or Romesh Dutt. The designation demanded careful execution since a large-scale need was felt soon to distinguish it from an already established body of literature, Anglo-Indian. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, in his *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945), first argued in favour of a distinct tradition and a defining terminology² – Indo-Anglian – distinct from Anglo-Indian. And a

complexities involved to surface, such an understanding of antitheticity in fact forecloses them. We need to account for the imaginative aspirations as well.

² Iyengar justified his use of the term mainly on technical grounds. Of all possible combination of the two words English and India, he argued, Indo-Anglian lends itself most comfortably as an adjective or a substantive. Anglo-Indian, he thought, bore too strong ethnic connotations to be used as a literary terminology. Meenakshi Mukherjee, however, points out that, "Professor Iyengar accepts the responsibility for giving the term currency but denies having invented it, because it was first used as early as 1883 to describe a volume printed in Calcutta containing 'Specimen Composition from Native Students'. However, Chalapati Rao has claimed (in *Illustrated*

critical plea in this direction was convincingly reiterated by V. K. Gokak in his *English in India: Its Past and Future* (Bombay, 1964), where he postulated a strict disciplinary boundary between these two. Further, Gokak distinguished three internal categories of Anglo-Indian writing (which covered writers as diverse as E. M. Forster, L. H. Myers and Rudyard Kipling), and two of Indian writing in English – ‘Indo-Anglian’ and ‘Indo-English’, the latter one set to include works like Romesh Dutt’s paraphrases of the epics or P. Lal’s *Mahabharata*. It would, however, be quite wrong to assume an unproblematic universality for Iyengar or Gokak’s proposition, even within the early generation of critics³. Even though the body of literature under question gained vitality as well as scope after its hesitant inauguration, the adequacy of the defining term soon came under severe scrutiny – partly because of its strong attestation of the colonial past, and partly because of its visible failure to account for the *desiness* due to its foregrounding of the largely unwarranted sense of hybridity⁴. Among the problematic areas, however, English as a language with its necessary

Weekly of India, May 26, 1963) that it was James Cousins who gave this name to Indian writing in English.” (Mukherjee, 1971: 16)

³ One symptomatic case might be H. M. Williams who observed: “The terms ‘Anglo-Indian’ and ‘Indo-Anglian’ have alone gained wide currency. They can still be used with profit in spite of some confusion over areas of relevance such as whether the novels of R. Praver Jhabvala should be considered ‘Anglo-Indian’ or ‘Indo-Anglian’. There are inevitably writers who do not fit into historical-literary categories. The terms, however, are tentative and clumsy as well as ambiguous, and there are temptations to abandon them in favour of one overall term (Anglo-Indian) or to substitute phrases like ‘English Writing in India’ and ‘Indian Writing in English’ for the two broad areas. If, however, the distinction is still needed – and this would seem to be so – and periphrasis is to be avoided, then the neat hyphenated labels remain indispensable.” (Williams 1976: 2-3)

⁴ A brief overview of the titles (including the critical corpus) published in the first few decades after independence would suffice to highlight this conceptual muddle: P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao (eds.) *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (Calcutta, 1960), K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (Bombay, 1962), P. Lal (ed.) *Modern Indian Poetry in English: An Anthology and a Credo* (Calcutta: 1969), Gauri Deshpande, An

ideological baggage emerged as the most obdurate one. Even in a very common sensical way, it would have been quite naïve to theorise English as merely *another* language, given the historical and political backdrop of its advent in India. Meenakshi Mukherjee, in one of her early works, voiced this ‘common sense’ view:

In the complex fabric of contemporary Indian civilization, the two most easily discerned strands are the indigenous Indian tradition and the imported European conceptions. ... This cultural conflict – or synthesis, as the case may be – has for some reason always assumed a vital significance for the Indian novelist who writes in English. As early as 1909, Sarath Kumar Ghose wrote a novel called *The Prince of Destiny* dealing with this inter-cultural theme where the hero, the prince of a native Indian state, has to choose between the love of a English girl and marriage with an Indian princess. And as late as 1960, J. M. Ganguly’s *When East and West Meet* shows that the East-West motif has not yet exhausted itself. (Mukherjee, 1971: 65) ⁵

This centrality of language and its ideological connotations can be interpreted as another postcolonial appropriation of an otherwise poststructuralist position, but in a very practical

Anthology of Indo-English Poetry (Delhi, n.d.), V. K. Gokak (ed.) *The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry 1828-1965* (Delhi:1970), Pritish Nandy, *Indian Poetry in English 1947-1972* (New Delhi, 1972) .

⁵ Writing about modern Indian poetry in English as late as 1987, Bruce King reiterated similar position: “Unless some new radical change occurs, Indian social and economic progress is linked to the same processes of modernization which, for historical and political reasons, have become wedded to the spread of the English language and the evolution of an English-language culture alongside Hindi and the regional languages.” (King, 1987: 3)

sense the question of language becomes crucial for our understanding of the historiography of IWE as it adumbrates the reality of Indian English narration⁶.

A different approach to this critical impasse seemed to free English from its immediate territorial allegiance (here India) and the necessary historicity that such a spatial allegiance would enforce. In other words, the practicality of this move wanted to break free of a particular locality of language in order to link the literary creativity in it with a 'tradition' that spreads across national boundaries. In due course, the earlier designation yielded place to a newer one: Commonwealth Literature or Third-World Literature⁷. The interesting thing about this new move was the attempt to link this Indian body of literature in English with a vast geographical area – hugely amorphous, and therefore without any specific location – with the subsequent (though implicit) idea of bestowing a degree of legitimacy by linking it with other similar bodies of literature. In both cases the designations betray a certain sense of politics. In the case of Indo-Anglian, as I have already argued, what had generally been stressed was a typical *foreignness* of writing. On the other hand, later designations – Commonwealth or Third World – emphasised a typical *international* writing community, engaged in their respective ways to negotiate a shared sense of history and literary creativity. It can safely be said that such nomenclatures engaged themselves with the 'secondary' attributes and thus hinted at different areas of concern that cannot exclusively be

⁶ Tabish Khair cogently puts the logic in the Introduction of his study of what he calls '*Babufiction*': "In our case, we can say that the English language not only constitutes Indian English literature but also Indian English realities and narratives". (Khair: xi)

⁷ It, however, goes without saying that the names did not appear in a strictly serial order, or they did not cease to exist with the advent of a newer one. In fact, both these terms are still in circulation; in several universities, both in India and outside, courses are being offered under such defining names. I have adopted the serial nature here only for the sake of conceptual clarity.

accommodated within the disciplinary boundaries of literary criticism, at least in its conventional sense⁸.

What needs to be emphasised vis-à-vis Indo-Anglian literature is not a simple case of novelty that a cross between the Indian content and English language was able to produce successfully. Neither is it a case of only conquering the foreign language – a claim that has often been laced with a patriotic naiveté and has further been simplistically linked with anticolonial resistance. The question, rather, is a political one – it is perilously linked with the pre-emptive nature of the English language in the Indian context. It needs little imagination to understand that ‘language’ here does not enjoy an ahistorical innocence which it could have mastered in a more traditional environment of literary criticism. The necessary baggage of language, even in a very structuralist sense, makes it impossible to concede the designations ‘Indo-Anglian’ or ‘Commonwealth/Third World’ as merely neutral, or ‘productive’, nomenclature and further explicates the profound political claims that underlie such ‘descriptive’ terms. Within such a contested situation, we need to address several questions regarding the literary history and historiography of Indian writing in English: what is at stake in such debates over designation? What would be our critical response to such

⁸ Srinivasa Iyengar, for example, while lauding the achievements of the Indian poets writing in English, acknowledges this dichotomy obliquely: “The best Indo-Anglian poets have given us something which neither English poetry nor any of our regional literature can give; in other words, they have effected a true marriage of Indian processes of poetic experience with English formulae of verse expression.” (Quoted in Mukherjee 1977: 5) He evidently carves out a niche for Indo-Anglian poets both outside English and regional literatures. But at the same time the emphasis on “true marriage” also hints at larger questions, especially because of India’s past as a colony of Britain, which could, and in fact has, affected the conjugal bliss in several discrete socio-cultural terms. Consider, for example, the following statement of ‘Masti’ Iyenger, the father of modern Kannada short story, who once proclaimed: “Write in English, write in Spanish, in any language you like; I have no quarrel. But I shall fight tooth and nail if you do it at the cost of your mother tongue” (Quoted in Mukherjee 1977: 8).

designations that sought to establish a 'tradition' so to speak, and yet could hardly achieve a consensus regarding its defining terminology? What are the issues implicated in such debates that have largely been methodological? How are we to make sense of literary creativity in a language which is understood by only a tiny part (two to three percent) of the population, and yet which is decidedly the language of power and privilege? How are we to account for the charges of 'alienation' and the 'anxiety of Indianness', so often levelled against the Indian English writers?

We would have occasions to return to these issues on several junctures throughout this project, but what I would try to foreground here is a typical sense of space central to these concerns. That is to say, I would argue that such issues, along with a number of other concerns about IWE, represent a typical spatial orientation – that of the nation – and it would be extremely solipsistic to wrench these issues out of their spatial context. Therefore, it would be my endeavour in this section to situate some of the questions regarding literary creativity in English within an array of overlapping locations that shaped the concerns, both creative and critical, culminating in English as a language in India, that connects social context with cultural representations. Any meaningful discussion about the history and historiography of IWE, further, must perforce begin with a brief overview of the role of English in colonial India.

III

The introduction of English studies in the Indian colony has drawn serious critical attention in the last decade or so (Viswanathan: 1989; Joshi: 1991; Sunder Rajan: 1992), and even the systematic development of English literary studies as a branch of knowledge has been extensively commented upon (Palmer: 1965; Baldick: 1983; Eagleton: 1983). Following Gauri Viswanathan we might see Antonio Gramsci's brilliant observation, that cultural

domination through generating consent can precede conquest by force, as underlying the introduction of English studies in India. Power, Viswanathan argues following Gramsci, operates at least at two distinct levels, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership', and therefore it would definitely be short-sighted to assume only a material force in the form of an effective leadership (Viswanathan: 1-2). While most of the studies of the introduction of English in India start with the 1835 English Education Act of William Bentinck and Thomas Babington Macaulay's minutes of the same year, Viswanathan pushes it another twenty-two years, making the East India Company's Charter Act of 1813 a watershed in the educational policy of the colony. The advantage of this shift is to highlight a Gramscian sense of cultural domination through English studies, and at the same time to suggest that such domination was chiefly intended for social control. The point becomes clearer, Viswanathan argues, if we understand that the principles of this new education policy were not imparted from an uncontested position of British superiority, and that "it was the role of educational decisions to fortify [the British position], given the challenge posed by historical contingency and confrontation" (Viswanathan: 10). Two things need to be emphasised about this social control, the veiled – or as Viswanathan prefers to call it, masked – motive behind the British educational policy. The logic of delayed or uneven development – that the barbaric natives needed civilised British mediation for their own development – served as the humanist logic of colonialism, but at the same time made it necessary to employ a systematic mechanism to generate consensus among the natives for the colonial political structure. It was more so because the logic of uneven development presupposed the Orientalist idea of an uncivilised – irrational, inscrutable, volatile – native subject, with the consequent reasoning that that if unrestrained such an unpredictable native would be a potential danger for the colony. Even at a very imaginative level, this fear psychosis needed an ideological guard to curb this irrational and immoral native; and the British answer was an

elaborate educational system⁹. The practice, institution and ideology of English studies in India, therefore, were designed to “perform the functions of those social institutions (such as the church) that, in England, served as the chief disseminators of value, tradition and authority” (Viswanathan: 7).

This unilateral appreciation of the British educational policy, however, is partial in understanding the dynamic role English performed in India. As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan points out, the British educational policy as part of larger colonial design needs to be supplemented by the ideas of “the disciplinary formation of English as a branch of knowledge, and the early history of colonialist interventions in Indian education, language and literature” (Sunder Rajan: 11). The most interesting aspect of Sunder Rajan’s argument is the way she analyses the checkered history of the early phase of colonial intervention in educational decisions to show a gradual yet decisive turn in making the English text, and by extension the language as well, ‘universal’ and ‘secular’:

...English *literature* was not indicted on ideological or historical grounds by association with the English ruler. Rather it became the surrogate – and also the split – presence of the Englishman, or a repository of abstract and universal values freely available to the colonized as to the colonizer. (Sunder Rajan: 12, emphasis original)

In other words, such universalisation (in the sense of trans-historical) of the English language also meant its necessary dissociation from the national – i.e. British – origins¹⁰. The point needs to be delineated carefully because it has larger bearings on our project, since such a sense of dissociation facilitated the emergence of the bilingual intelligentsia and affected the

⁹ Viswanathan quotes an illuminating passage from Edward Thornton, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1852-53, “As soon as [the Indians] become first-rate European scholars, they must cease to be Hindoos”. (Viswanathan: 23).

¹⁰ An interesting case in point might be the way the defenders of English, in the post-independence language debates, argued in favour of the Indianness of English as well as its practical utility as a pan-Indian *link* language.

Indian nationalist movement in several discrete ways. I would discuss these issues at greater length in the next chapter; presently, however, we need to see how this sense of universal values – epitomised/ embodied in English – became an intrinsic component within the overarching rubric of colonial domination, so much so that it turned out to be quite impossible to compartmentalise it as an isolable body of knowledge that can be resisted, rejected or appropriated monolithically. The simple recognition that “modern Indian education grew out of a body of utterances that embodied the collective attitudes of a hegemonic class” (Viswanathan: 4), in spite of its illuminating understanding, falls short of explaining this intrinsic nature of English. That is to say, such arguments only beg further questions like how several affiliatory and overlapping interests and compulsions of different social groups were riveted together by the hegemonic rhetoric of English and how the economy of colonialism needed to sustain and proliferate the discourse of English in close conjunction with different social formations, discrete in nature and almost always exclusivist and hegemonic. In other words, this partial reasoning falls short of explaining the structural transformation of the indigenous cultural and political institutions in close collaboration with English. Such a view, rather, needs to be contextualised against the backdrop of what might be called the intentionality of colonialism, in a phenomenological sense, which Svati Joshi describes as the “political foresight” of colonialism in “investing the indigenous cultural and political institutions with western *liberal* knowledge, a form of dominance far more powerful and permanent than any direct form of government” (Joshi: 18, emphasis added). If this is the case, then, when we talk about English literature in India, it becomes imperative to recognise that, in the words of Badri Raina, “language use has enormously to do with who we are or wish to be, as well as how we wish to relate to any particular situation on hand” chiefly because “every particular language preference tends to be informed by the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which larger histories have shaped us [and] those larger histories in

turn are usually shaped by the ways in which controlling structures of power choose or do not choose to define and distribute values” (Raina : 266).

Against this general backdrop if we return to Meenakshi Mukherjee’s argument about the conjunction of English and regional languages, and to our primary concern with the historiography of IWE, the conjunction seems to lend itself to a much more complex and contested situation than what has generally been made out of it. In a sense the conjunction becomes a perfect case for the continuity of the liberal framework, in the sense of derivation, within an otherwise indigenous institution of regional literature. As Susie Tharu has argued, “[t]he emergence of ‘modern’ Indian literatures, in many ways [was] closely tied to the rise of English literary studies in India and in Britain” (Tharu: 162) and the idea of *influence*, including its ‘nature’ and ‘extent’, was not confined within the realm of literary productivity alone. “Rarely is it pointed out”, she further argues, “that the agendas set up in the nineteenth century actually *constituted* the concept of an Indian literature...; or indeed that these agendas informed the writing of literary history as much as they did literary production, pedagogy and criticism” (Tharu: 163). On a larger account, her argument seems to suggest a merging of two different moments of imperialism and nationalism, shot through the structural scope of “literature for democratic aspirations” (Tharu: 162); but the idea also informs our concern with the historiography of IWE. When we talk about Indo-Anglian literature as a separate body of Indian literature, and distinct from Anglo-Indian or Indo-English, I would suggest, the historiography exposes a structural continuation of the liberal framework of the nineteenth century that transformed much of the institutional bodies with indigenous origin. That is to say, the constitution of IWE with a distinct identity visibly internalised as much as other Indian literatures a direct derivation of literary pedagogy from the intimate body of English literature. The idea of a supposed contradiction between the regional and Indo-Anglian literatures in absolute terms, though not totally unfounded, certainly misses out this

historical junctures of conformity. But what needs to be emphasised out of this moment of collusion is the idea that IWE through its direct use of English as the medium also internalised, more than any other regional literature, the universal and secular claims of the English literary studies of the colonial period. It managed to rise, so to speak, above the regional needs and aspiration and therefore inscribed a sense of pan-linguistic nation space. In other words, the integrative nature of the English language, in the sense that it crosses linguistic regionality, can (and indeed has) induce a certain sense of geography that can be posed as universal and trans-historical. The modern literary practices of IWE, more directly modern than regional literatures, has been recognised – or, indeed, pointed out – in the ‘Anglian’ part, while the subtle sense of cartographic unity has also been evoked through ‘Indian’.

The general and inclusive nature of the newer term, Commonwealth literature, has its own use value though the methodological questions have not been generally addressed in the early literatures on the genre. Some of the early works – A. L. McLeod (ed.), *The Commonwealth Pen: An Introduction to the Literature of the British Commonwealth* (Ithaca, New York, 1961); John Press (ed.), *Commonwealth Literature* (London, 1970); K. L. Goodwin (ed.), *National Identity* (London, 1970); K. R. Srinivasa Iyenger, *Two Cheers for the Commonwealth* (London, 1970); William Walsh, *Commonwealth Literature* (London, 1973); Bruce King (ed.), *Literatures of the World in English* (London, 1974); Bruce King, *New English Literatures: Cultural Nationalism in a Changing World* (London, 1980) among others – pay scant attentions to the question of literary historiography but we can read some of the implicit judgements here and there. C. D. Narasimhaiah, in his *Essays in Commonwealth Literature: Heirloom of Multiple Heritage*, after summarising some of the major positions expressed in these volumes, approvingly quotes an unpublished paper by a Canadian scholar: “all Commonwealth literature originates from two historical experiences:

from leaving one's own home and from an invading culture" (Narasimhaiah, 1995: 15). These two aspects – physical and psychic dislocation – he argues, give rise to the creative tension in much of the Commonwealth. What is more, Narasimhaiah argues elsewhere, this creative tension has a distinct advantage "because of a common language which eliminates the treachery of translation and reduces the gap between experience and expression" (Narasimhaiah, 1978: vii). This needs special mention because in most of the Commonwealth countries English combines together the regional difference, and constructs larger scope for "sharper and more sympathetic appreciation of differences" (Narasimhaiah, 1978: vii).

Most of the available literatures on Commonwealth literature emphasise these two facets – historical experience and shared language – as the defining features, occasionally making minor amendments to suit specific cases. Jurgen Schafer, for example, situates the emergence of the Commonwealth literature within a shift from nation to language. Or, more specifically, from national experience to a "common literary tradition" in English (Schafer: 8). What needs to be emphasised, he argues, is the relationship between different region-specific literary traditions in English and the 'common tradition':

...the first is a conceptual analysis of English-language literary criticism and literary history in terms of national consciousness and national myth-making; the second is an examination of the *actual* literary tradition of writers and readers in the English-speaking community. (Schafer: 8, emphasis added)

The idea is to locate a shift, rather a conceptual one, where the commonality through language becomes more *actual* than national consciousness and myth-making. Though people like Patrick White or Chinua Achebe are creating distinctly Australian or Nigerian locales within their texts (consciousness and myth-making), nevertheless the language they use, and the literary tradition in which they are "immersed", are both shaped by "Shakespeare and The Authorized Version, by Milton, Pope, and Jane Austen" (Schafer: 8).

Schafer's ideas get further elaboration in Bruce King, where the older pair of categories has been rechristened as 'national' and 'international' cultures. King points out a remarkable international orientation of the post-colonial cultures; it is remarkable specifically because of the ways these different regional cultures have managed to emancipate the restrictive borders of anti-colonial nationalism. Modernisation – "modern technology, international communications, mass travel, large cosmopolitan cities and the expectations they create" (King, 1983: 10) – is instrumental behind this internationalisation of the erstwhile colonies and the most acute form of it can be captured in 'metropolitan centres'. King, however, deals with at least two senses of the term 'metropolitan'. First, in the sense of cosmopolitan cities, a space where the modernist saga of internationalism unfolds itself. The second is more metaphoric, where the metropolitan West has been postulated in terms of provinces, or the Commonwealth nations, setting a reciprocal relationship between the centre and periphery. It is the second sense of the term metropolitan that informs King's understanding of the simultaneity of the national and international cultures in Commonwealth literature; the most immediate example for our present purpose is Mulk Raj Anand's proletarian fictions *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936), which King describes as expressions of international political consciousness and national social concerns. King's earlier works hinted at several of these possibilities, but taken together they seem to suggest a comparative aesthetics for which Commonwealth provides a common platform. In his *The New English Literatures* (1980), King argues in favour of a comparative universality that can bind together discretely different national literary traditions, and the Commonwealth, in such a scenario, becomes a radical category since it can successfully be posed against both the metropolitan bias in literary historiography as well as the national(ist) restrictions¹¹.

¹¹ This comparative approach to Commonwealth literature has variously been dealt with. D. E. S. Maxwell's essay "Landscape and Theme" might be a symptomatic case in point. He proposes at least two different



This has more or less been the defining paradigm for Commonwealth literature. The very idea of such terms presupposes a definite phase of history, or a historical experience as imperial colony, that unites a vast geographical area, otherwise disconnected and spread across several continents. The idea of Commonwealth literature, even more than the Third-World, also presupposes a continuity of this historical narrative within these vastly differentiated geographical forms, where the unity of experience stems from an irrevocably shared past and where territorial boundaries have been submerged within a historical as well as literary 'tradition'. The idea of cultural differentiation still works as the 'new' literatures of the erstwhile colonies are set as distinctly *different* from the canonical literary tradition of the empire, but even this implicit hierarchisation is more interesting for the ways it evokes a generalised sense of space (the colonies as Commonwealth) as the condition of its existence. It needs little effort to understand that the body of literature produced in different parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America (continents in which most of the erstwhile colonies are situated) hardly lend themselves to a unified category, but such terms are more concerned in establishing a notion of 'tradition' in a very historical sense, where the non-synchronous cultural forms and their regional variations can be generalised as emanating from the same historical 'experience'. The category 'experience' in turn postulates the notion of vast and

categories in Commonwealth literature depending on the complex relationship between the language and the environment in which language operates: "In the first, the writer brings his own language – English – to an alien environment and a fresh set of experiences: Australia, Canada, New Zealand. In the other, the writer brings an alien language – English – to his own social and cultural inheritance: India, West Africa. Yet the categories have fundamental kinship. Viewing his society, the writer constantly faces the evidences of the impact between what is native to it and what is derived from associations with Britain, whatever its form. The Nigerian will respond differently to it from the Canadian. Both, however, are responding to circumstances which, for all their dissimilarities, share an attachment, whether voluntary at the start, to a remote society and culture which is manifesting itself in their immediate surroundings." (Maxwell: 82)

undifferentiated space – the Commonwealth – bereft of any socio-cultural specificity or location other than that of colonisation.

One of the most sophisticated as well as controversial interventions regarding such nomenclature came from the Marxist critic Aijaz Ahmad. His analysis of the terms like Commonwealth or Third-World literature presumes interlocked preparatory grounds of pedagogy and practicality, which he holds responsible for brewing such categorisation:

The category of ‘Commonwealth Literature’ came to play the same function of affirming beleaguered identities – and, in the fullness of time, opening up careers – for immigrant intelligentsias in Britain. It was on the prior basis of ‘African Literature’ and ‘Commonwealth Literature’ that the category of ‘Third World Literature’ first arose, often duplicating those very pedagogical procedure and ideological moorings. (Ahmad: 330)

To understand these preparatory grounds, Ahmad argues, we need to be conscious of several discrete “institutional and pedagogical forms”, which form and sustain particular intelligentsias and their “largely unrecognized global determinations” in the “era of colonialism and imperialism” (Ahmad: 43). These institutional and pedagogical scheme has been laid down on four major fronts: the situation of contemporary literary theory, availability of texts produced by non-Western authors, growing number of professionals from the non-Western countries into the West and, finally, the arrival of a new political theory – the Three World Theory. Since these elements, in several defining ways, form part of the pedagogical and institutional formations, Ahmad argues, they are very much subservient to the global determinations. But in spite of this potent danger of embourgeoisement for any radicalism within the reactionary political environment in the West, these factors have managed to extract considerable ‘gains’ regarding debates surrounding issues like race, gender or the empire within an otherwise stifling atmosphere of

the metropolitan academic circles. This newer epoch of radicalisation of the academia, albeit partial, was understandably linked with its pedagogical output, though the mode of operation was still confined within the institutional limits. Likewise, on a large scale, this part of the academia responded prominently to the vast changes taking place on a global level throughout the second half of the twentieth century, but at the same time their institutional moorings made it impossible to shed off the largely accommodative, even compromising, traits. Therefore it did not come as a surprise when the pedagogical creativity shifted its focus from the radical Left politics of the 60s to the consolidation of the bourgeois nation-states during the greater part of the 80s. The idea becomes concretised as well as topical in Ahmad as he approaches the Western academic milieu through an analysis of almost every possible dimension of politics, culture and society on a global scale to pronounce:

Radical thought in the universities paid its homage to this new consolidation of the post-colonial national bourgeoisies by shifting its focus, decisively, from socialist revolution to Third-Worldist nationalism – first in political theory, then in its literary reflection.

It was in this moment of retreat for socialism, and resurgence of the nationalism of the national bourgeoisie, that the *theoretical* category of ‘Third World Literature’ arose ... (Ahmad: 67-68)

The difficulty with such categorisation, as Ahmad would have us to believe, is double-edged. On the one hand, the effectivity of such designations rely on a generalised and oversimplified notion of certain key categories – space, tradition, experience; on the other, these designations, once in circulation, have severally been manipulated for overt political purposes. Ahmad specifically attacks two major critics – Edward Said and Fredric Jameson – for such purposive notion of categorisation, and further for their confused as well as

confusing political implications. Said, for example, surprisingly attests the category of Commonwealth Literature because of its 'invigorating' civilisational mission:

If configurations like Commonwealth or world literature are to have any meaning at all, it is ... because they interact ferociously not only with the whole nationalist basis for the composition and study of literature, but also with the lofty independence and indifference with which it has become customary Eurocentrically to regard metropolitan western literature. (Quoted in Ahmad: 211)

This surprising twist in Said does not end here: he continues this logic of salutary achievements through the very notion of Commonwealth Literature, commending the status and eminence of the English as *the* world language. It is through English, Said seems to suggest, that an effective and durable alternative can be established, which in turn would "interact" with the "nationalist" as well as "metropolitan" notions of literature. This idea of resistance through an international constellation reachable only via English is perplexing, as Ahmad goes on to argue, because it talks about an incredible idea of liberty or universality that prepares "the condition of becoming this perfect consumer [i.e. universal consumer] ... that one frees oneself from stable identities of class, nation, gender" (Ahmad: 217). This is, in a sense, an 'imperial geography' where the commodity status of literature has been affirmed and extended along with a cartographic trail that forms a perfect analogy for the transition from colonialism to late capitalism:

When cultural criticism reaches this point of convergence with the universal market, one might add, it becomes indistinguishable from commodity fetishism. (Ahmad: 217)

The problem with Third-World literature, however, is more complex as it directly involves the category of nation, especially the way Fredric Jameson employs it. Jameson arranges his argument in a not-so-very linear order in his text – that is to say, his argument quite often harps back on his stock logic of the "alienness" of the third-world text as the starting-point

for discussions that follow diverse directions. The repetition of this “alien” theme – often as a refrain, as it were – takes its origin from a preconception of the world as distributed between three ideological segments. This tripartite division of the world has been held as the underpinning of the “alienness”, and if we are to believe Jameson, it also works as the guiding principle of the hegemony of western canon. The reverse argument, that non-western texts are as good as the canonical ones, is, Jameson argues, preponderant since “it borrows the weapon of the adversary” (Jameson: 65). Such an argument, he further concedes, also glosses over the radical difference between the canonical and non-canonical texts; that is to say it refuses the different levels of satisfaction between, say Achebe and Proust, and “what is more damaging than that, perhaps, is its tendency to remind us [i.e. the first-world readers] of outmoded stages of our own first-world cultural development and to cause us to conclude that “they are still writing novels like Dreiser or Sherwood Anderson”” (Jameson: 65).

IV

Meenakshi Mukherjee’s concept of the ‘anxiety’ of Indianness concentrates on two major pulls in IWE – global homogenization of culture and national particularity. ‘The demands of economy’ and ‘the sudden communication revolution’, she argues, augment an era of cultural production where ‘local and regional sub-cultures’ are being successfully obliterated in favour of homogenized global cultures (Mukherjee 2000: 182). English, under such conditions, becomes the marker of this unprecedented thrust towards homogeneity that is evident in almost every form of social practice, and there are overwhelming indications that ‘the growing visibility of English as the preferred language of literature in India ...[is] an irreversible process’ (Mukherjee 2000: 183). The crisis is accentuated in the ways IWE has repeatedly been praised as the ‘New Indian Novel’ (assuming that India produces novels only in English), where other regional languages have been drowned in selective amnesia.

Alongside the self-conscious obliteration, however, even in its brief history IWE has been 'visibly concerned with defining [...] a national boundary' (Mukherjee 2000: 173-4). The construction of a national identity in narrative has two mutually informative aspects: to conjure a homogenous and enframed space, and then to demarcate it from what lies outside the border of that homogeneity. English as a language, as we have already seen, 'automatically' performs this homogenizing function, while the latter has been done by positing this imagined India against an equally homogenous and imagined 'West'. From the very beginning of its inception, the three stalwarts of IWE (i.e. Rao, Anand and Narayan), in spite of their variegated 'ideology, background and narrative modes' as if 'shared an unspoken faith in a distillable Indian reality which could then be rendered through particularized situations' (Mukherjee 2000: 174). And the practice, as is evident even in post-Rushdie phase of IWE, is still unabated. The otherwise 'discontinuous' tradition of IWE, it seems, at least carries one common trait of constituting and consolidating a discursive nation-space.

The tradition, conversely, presents a deeply political disruption in the canonizing drive towards what Mukherjee calls the homogenization of market economy and what we have designated the logic of sameness induced by global capital. Fredric Jameson has argued a similar case in his assertion of the difference of the non-western cultural production where 'psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms' (Jameson 1986: 72), a difference which he provocatively designates 'national allegory'. What follows is a radical understanding of 'the very unusual ratio of subjective investment and a deliberately depersonalized objective narration' prevalent in the non-western and therefore non-canonical cultural text where the difference in the ratio has primarily been prompted by different degrees of capitalist penetration and corresponding 'wholly different' relations between the subjective and the public – one of the determinants of

capitalist culture (Jameson 1986: 75, 69). The issue here is not to force a pre-ordained reading according to which every text needs to be chiselled out. It is not, further, an attempt to relocate nationalist political claim within what Edward Said would have called 'secular' critical practice. It is, rather, an attempt to bring in certain profound political claims within the relationship between cultural text in a given condition and what Jameson calls 'futuraity', claims which cannot satisfactorily be engaged with within a strictly literary-critical tradition, and which in any way have long been lost from our 'secular' critical culture. It would, perhaps, be a little optimistic to claim an exact and equally valid analogy between Lu Xun or Ousmane Sembene (Jameson's examples) and IWE, but the question of futuraity might still prove worth exploring. Jameson's argument revolves around his central concern of the 'structural difference' between the so-called first and the third worlds, in spite of distinctly western cultural forms like modern novel¹². The structurally different relation between the

¹² 'We have been trained', Jameson writes, 'in a deep cultural conviction that the lived experience of our private existence is somehow incommensurable with the abstraction of economic science and political dynamics' (Jameson 1986: 69). As a result one of the determinants of capitalist culture has been an intrinsic split between the private and the public, between the personal and the political, or, in other words, between 'Freud and Marx'. This split, which survives several theoretical attempts made to bridge the gap, has been one of the guiding powers behind the fashioning of the individual as well as the collective lives in the capitalist first world, and, consequently, this has also been the propelling force of the culture of the western realist and modernist novels. But when it comes to the third world this distinction between the private and the public blurs away, yielding a contested public space that not only permeates the private, but shapes it also. This different relationship between the public and the private, or what Jameson describes as the 'political dimension' to the 'libidinal dynamic', is the chief source of the alienness of a third-world text vis-à-vis its first-

public and the private in the 'first world' hardly lends itself to be bridged by any radically adequate theorization of the social milieu – as is the case with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire which is simultaneously social and individual – and stubbornly poses itself as the determining dimension of cultural production. In the 'third world', however, the gap is reduced through practice, the “floating” or transferable structure of allegorical [in the national sense] reference', since 'third-world' national allegories 'imply a radically different and objective relationship of politics to libidinal dynamics' (Jameson 1986: 78, 80). Allegory in Jameson particularly refers back to Gramsci and Lukacs, where the idea of subalternity can convincingly and purposefully be posed against the logic of cultural imperialism in the form of cognitive 'mapping', and it can further be defined in terms of futurity or what Benjamin calls 'afterlife' of translation. The argument in Jameson is also a spatial one, in the sense that what he finally poses as situational consciousness is dialectically predicated upon the contingency of enframed spaces and the technologies of power that govern such spatial displacement.

world reader, and this is also the theoretical context of the '*national allegory*', since '*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*' (Jameson 1986: 69, emphasis original).

CHAPTER: II

In his recent book *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty introduces his subject with a near-languid acknowledgement, that we have repeatedly come to realise that our critical acumen – which owes much to European thought and history “is at once both indispensable and inadequate” (Chakrabarty 2001: 16). The awareness, it seems, is also a historical creation, or a moment, but it certainly owes a great deal to the specific idea of history itself. The circularity of the situation is less enigmatic when we understand the profound political claims (imperial/colonial) woven within the ‘historicist’ arguments that structure (not to use a stronger term ‘manipulate’) history, or, to be more precise, the history of capital. Marx’s concept of ‘capital’, Chakrabarty argues, is crucial since it “gives us a way of thinking about both history and the secular figure of the human on a global scale” (Chakrabarty 2001: 18). His engagement with Marx, declaredly via Heidegger, leads to “plural or conjoined genealogies for our analytical categories” (Chakrabarty 2001: 20), specifically in the way he shows two alternative possibilities inherent in Marx’s idea of the

'abstract human'. On the one hand we perceive a distinct legacy of Enlightenment thought in Marx's concept of 'abstract human', which necessitates his critique of 'capital'; on the other this abstract human "occludes question of belonging and diversity" (Chakrabarty 2001: 18). The significance of this theoretical opacity can be perceived if we understand, even at the risk of slight generalisation, that in Marx's scheme of things the subject – or the 'abstract human' – gets constituted within a network of production relations, without any specific sense of location in strictly spatial terms. This hanging subject, so to speak, allows a certain degree of abstraction, it seems, only to be reinscribed, and therefore reinforced, within social division of labour.

The purpose of invoking Marx at the beginning of this chapter is to situate the nationalist imagination under the rubric of global capital, because, contrary to much popular belief nationalist politics needs to be viewed and judged against the unfolding of global capitalism, either in its now-liquidated version of colonialism or in its comprador continuation in the form of neo-colonialism. The understanding becomes more pressing in a country like India, where the nationalist ideology had to contend with colonial domination, and it is beyond dispute now that to attain prominence the nationalist subject had to overcome the cultural space that the economy of colonialism would have allotted. In other words, the 'abstract human' of nationalist ideology must perforce begin to question the premises of the imperial social relations in order to form its own identity, albeit without completely jeopardising those very premises for good. Partha Chatterjee puts this argument succinctly:

To both [i.e. 'the people' and the colonial masters], nationalism sought to demonstrate the falsity of the colonial claim that the backward people were culturally incapable of ruling themselves in the conditions of the modern world. Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people; it also asserted that a backward nation could 'modernize' itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a

discourse a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of 'modernity' of which colonial domination was based. (Chatterjee 1996: 30)

The paradox or contradictory claims within the nationalist discourse lead Chatterjee to understand the nationalist ideology, and by extension nationalist politics itself, as derivative discourse "because it.[nationalist thinking] reasons within a framework of knowledge whose representational structure corresponds to the very structure of power nationalist thought seeks to repudiate" (Chatterjee 1996: 38). The derivation, on another count, can be seen as tied irrevocably to the development of capital, where the unity of its structure is said to dictate/impose a totalitarian unity – political, moral, ethical – and where the 'difference', even in absolute terms, is negotiable within this totalising unity. The sense of derivation, further, exposes a structural continuity at an intellectual/discursive level, because the nationalist thought in India – and Chatterjee stretches his thesis to much of the so-called 'third world' – in spite of its radical departure from the colonial world, showed a continuity of the colonial capitalist organisation as well as the Enlightenment ideals of the 'abstract human' as the nationalist subject. Chatterjee's argument about a Gramscian concept of the 'passive revolution of capital'¹³ as the constitutive mode of bourgeois nation-states in the 'third world' has been criticised on several accounts, but it certainly makes sense in terms of the structural continuity of the nationalist ideology. In spite of the radical claims of the nationalists, Chatterjee argues, the major battleground was designed for them by the compulsion of finding "sufficient room for a certain degree of relatively independent

¹³ "Thus in situations where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorted to a 'passive revolution', by attempting a 'molecular transformation' of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order first to create a state as the necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production." (Chatterjee 1996: 30)

capitalist development” within the struggle with colonial forces, and yet to transform it into a “national struggle” (Chatterjee 1996: 48). Even within such an overtly Gramscian model of ‘passive revolution’ – which represented the ‘national popular’ within ‘molecular’ changes – we need to be aware of the general growth of capital that subsumed/contained historical difference of each unique case within its totalising unity.

What is perhaps even more immediate for our present purpose is the understanding that space and place, along with time, is one of the central concerns of the reproduction of capitalist societies. The inherent contradictions of capitalist societies have been documented in no uncertain terms, but what still needs to be explained is the empirical experience that in spite of these contradictions capitalist societies function with a considerable degree of cohesion. One plausible explanation is an understanding that time-space constitution of societies is an integral part of the overall structuration that links agency to structure and regulates the mechanisms of reproduction (Giddens 1981). It is an understanding, further, that might cast light on our perception of the rise of national bourgeoisie through ‘passive revolution’, primarily because it opens a possibility to explore the spatial attachment of class structures and its centrality in the historical processes of social class formation. As Benedict Anderson has argued, virtually all the capitalist societies have been constituted and held together in the form of competitive national states. The reason lies in the genesis of capitalist mode of production, where, as Giddens further argues, a territorial element has always been one of the defining features of actual class interest. As far as the nation is concerned, it is the collective class attachment to space that can be held responsible for the emergence of a shared location. Within a colonial political structure, as Chatterjee has argued, this attachment vents itself through the molecular changes of passive revolution.

The break in Anderson, however, comes in the way he revolutionises the long-standing Marxist position on nation(alism) – governed by Joseph Stalin’s oft-quoted formulation¹⁴ – which seeks to define nation in terms of a set of external and abstract criteria. Anderson accepts the inadequacy of such a rigorously held position, and its obvious myopic consequences for any serious theoretical exegesis, and further concedes that such theoretical *anomaly* is part of both Marxist and liberal theory of nation(alism):

My sense is that on this topic [i.e. the ‘anomaly’ of nationalism] both Marxist and liberal theory have become etiolated in a late Ptolemaic effort to ‘save the phenomena’; and that a reorientation of perspective in, as it were, a Copernican spirit is urgently required. (Anderson 1991: 4).

The theoretical anomaly that Anderson keeps on referring to, has broadly been located in Marx and Engels’ failure to explicate the vital lapse of reasoning in their foundational formulation of 1848 – ‘The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie’ – that tantalisingly stops short of recognising the segmentation of bourgeoisie as ‘national bourgeoisie’.¹⁵ Therefore, Anderson situates his point of departure in the fact that “nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that world’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a

¹⁴ ‘A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture...none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation’. (Stalin 1974: 194)

¹⁵ ‘How else to account for the use, for over a century, of the concept ‘national bourgeoisie’ without any serious attempt to justify theoretically the relevance of the adjective? Why *is this* segmentation of the bourgeoisie – a world-class insofar as it is defined terms of the relations of production – theoretically significant?’ (Anderson, p.4). Anderson’s emphasis on the particular adjectival of the above-quoted line – ‘its own’ – makes it imperative to think this segmentation of the bourgeoisie in Marx *only* in ‘nation terms.

particular kind” (Anderson 1991: 4), and further locates the creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century. Further impetus for Anderson comes from the world’s political scenario – especially the clashes between Vietnam, Cambodia and China¹⁶, which leads to a reassertion of Hobsbawm’s opinion that

Marxist movements and states have tended to become national not only in form but in substance. i.e. nationalist. There is nothing to suggest that this trend will not continue.(Hobsbawm 1977: 13)

What such a tidal wave – encompassing both the socialist and the non-socialist worlds - signifies is the nullity of the prophetic declarations of the ‘end of the era of nationalism’ and instead establishes nationalism as the most universally legitimate value in the contemporary political life. Mere facts like every year the United Nations admits several new members, or that the old nations, traditionally thought as fully consolidated, are plagued with sub-nationalisms are evidences enough to prove this fact.

Likewise Anderson declares that:

I will be trying to argue that the creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became ‘modular’, capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations. (Anderson 1991: 4)

¹⁶ While it was still just possible to interpret the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969, and the Soviet military interventions in Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1980) in terms of – according to taste – ‘social imperialism’, ‘defending socialism’, etc. , no one, I imagine, seriously believes that such vocabularies have much bearing on what has occurred in Indochina’ (Anderson, p.1). By highlighting these skirmishes between the socialist states Anderson seeks to prepare the ground for his theoretical interventions, as it were.

Anderson's text presents three key issues (or paradoxes) as the problematic for theorising nationalism and tries to answer them as well:

1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists.

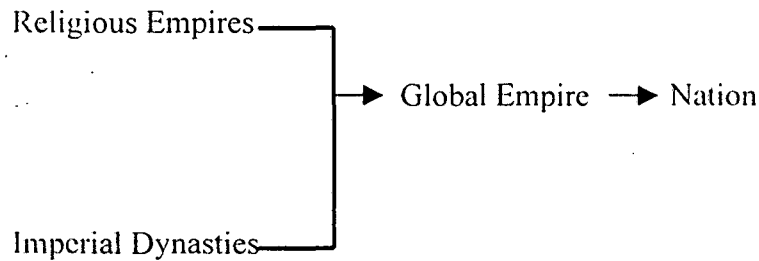
2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations.

3) The 'political' power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.

As an answer to all these paradoxes, as it were, he subverts the determinist scheme by defining nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991: 6) and not as a simple constellation of certain objective social facts. Initially this may seem to be closer to Gellner's position: "[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964: 169)¹⁷. In his gloss, however, Anderson quickly warns us against equating his position with that of Gellner – the chief mark of difference is the fact that Gellner has used 'invention' in the sense of 'fabrication' or 'falsity' and consequently he opens up the possibilities for 'true' communities that can advantageously be juxtaposed to the nation. Whereas in Anderson 'imagination' specifically refers to 'creation' or 'thought out', and accordingly he declares "[c]ommunities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. (Anderson 1991: 6)".

¹⁷ But Gellner, it would be interesting to note, writes as late as 1983 'It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically.... But this culturally creative fanciful, positively inventive aspect of nationalist ardour ought not to allow anyone to conclude, erroneously, that nationalism is a contingent, artificial, ideological invention, which might not have happened, if only ...those European thinkers...had not concocted it and fatefully injected it into the bloodstream of otherwise viable political communities' (Gellner 1983: 49).

Anderson's model works on a specific sense of history, which roughly corresponds to the following diagram, where there are overlapping and slippage between the categories –



The political community of nation historically emerged out of, or against, the previous 'cultural systems' of religious empires and imperial dynasties. This historical process entails a fundamental change 'in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to "think" the nation' (Anderson 1991: 28). This change was brought about by the 'coalition of Protestantism and print-capitalism' -

What, in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity. (Anderson 1991: 46)

Varied and innumerable ideolects of pre-print Europe for the first time got "assembled, within definite limits, into print-language far fewer in number". This was a crucial development, since print-language created a middle rung between Latin and the vernaculars of "unified fields of exchange and communications", and consequently gave a new fixity to language. This new fixity also created the 'language of power' since some of the dialects, by the virtue of being closer to the print-languages, dominated them while the rest, since they lacked their own printed form, remained dialects only.

In the next phase of his argument, Anderson describes the emergence of three distinct types or 'models' of nationalism.

1) The first 'model', the 'Creole nationalism' of the Americas was the production of the economic ambition of classes whose interests were deterred by the metropolis. Subsequently, it drew upon liberal ideas of the European enlightenment that provided the ideological critique of imperialism and *anciens regimes* and it was chiefly shaped by "pilgrim creole functionaries and creole printmen". But, as Anderson concedes, as a model for emulation this was incomplete, chiefly because of its lack of linguistic community as well as its state form, which was congruent with the arbitrary administration of the imperial order.

2) The second 'model', the linguistic nationalisms of Europe, was the model of the independent national state and it later became available for emulation.

But precisely because it was by then a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impossible.... Thus the 'populist' character of the early European nationalisms, even when led, demagogically, by the most backward social groups, was deeper than in the Americas: serfdom had to go, legal slavery was unimaginable – not least because the conceptual model was set in ineradicable place.

(Anderson 1991: 78-9)

3) The third 'model' is that of the 'official nationalism' as in the case of Russia. 'Russification' included cultural homogeneity from the top, and became available for copying elsewhere.

In the 20th century all these 'models' became available for the third world to emulate. With a striking similarity with the creole nationalists, who first perceived a national meaning in the imperial administration, the 'brown or black Englishman' also rediscovered his nation through his bureaucratic pilgrimage to the metropolis. When he returns,

the apex of his looping flight was the highest administrative centre to which he was assigned : Rangoon, Accra, Georgetown, or Colombo. Yet in each constricted journey he found bilingual travelling companions with whom he came to feel a growing communality. In his journey he understood rather quickly that his point of origin – conceived either ethnically, linguistically, or geographically – was of small significance... it did not fundamentally determine his destination or his companions. Out of this pattern came that subtle, half-concealed transformation, step by step, of the colonial-state into the national-state, a transformation made possible not only by a solid continuity of personnel, but by the established skein of journeys through which each state was experienced by its functionaries. (Anderson 1991: 105)

What all these facilitated was the emergence of a national consciousness – these journeys, now made by ‘huge and variegated crowds’ in the 20th century, were responsible for the unprecedented spread and acceptance of this consciousness. A vast group of bilingual people (the ‘native intelligentsia’) was created as a result of enormous growth of physical mobility, colonial-state-sponsored imperial ‘Russification’ and the spread of modern education, and they, as a result, could effectively mediate between the metropolitan nation and the colonized people. Bilingual intelligentsia, in fact, played a crucial role in the emergence of the third-world nation(alism):

Print-literacy already made possible the imagined community floating in homogenous, empty time.... Bilingualism meant access, through the European language-of-state, to modern Western culture in the broadest sense, and, in particular, to the models of nationalism, nation-ness, and nation-state produced elsewhere in the course of the nineteenth century. (Anderson 1991: 107)

Thus third-world nationalism in the 20th century attained a 'modular' character, mimeting the European model:

They can, and do, draw on more than a century and a half of human experience and three earlier models of nationalism. Nationalist leaders are thus in a position consciously to deploy civil and military educational systems modelled on official nationalism's; elections, party organisations, and cultural celebrations modelled on the popular nationalisms of 19th century Europe; and the citizen-republican idea brought into the world by the Americas. (Anderson 1991: 108)

The most conspicuous effect, however, was felt in the way the idea of nation spread its roots in virtually every print-language, and, consequently, the way it became part of the new political consciousness.

In a world in which the national state is the overwhelming norm, all of this means that nations can now be imagined without linguistic communality – not in the naïve spirit of *nostros los Americanos*, but out of a general awareness of what modern history has demonstrated to be possible. (Anderson 1991: 123)

II

While assessing Anderson's achievements, Partha Chatterjee comments,

Anderson's chief contribution to the Marxist debate on the national question is to emphatically pose the ideological creation of the nation as a central problem in the study of national movements. In doing this he also highlights the social process of creation of modern language communities. Yet, instead of pursuing the varied, and often contradictory, *political* possibilities inherent in this process, Anderson seals up his theme with a sociological determinism. (Chatterjee 1996: 21)¹⁸

¹⁸ Chatterjee's outright rejection of Anderson, by equating him with Gellner, as nothing more than sociological determinism however, seems a little harsh on him.

Chatterjee further tries to show a basic similarity between Anderson and Gellner by arguing that both, in effect, point out a radical change in the modes of perceiving the world which is a prerequisite for nationalism to emerge. While Gellner relates this change to the requirements of 'industrial society', Anderson, more ingeniously, to the dynamics of 'print-capitalism'. Both, he argues, try to account for the cultural homogeneity sought to be imposed upon the emerging nation: in Gellner the imposition is that of a common high culture on the variegated forms of folk culture, while in Anderson the process is much more complex, involving the formation of 'print-languages' and the shared experience of the 'journeys' undertaken by the colonized intelligentsia.

Anderson himself admits the anthropological strain in his formulation as he writes,

Part of the difficulty [in formulating nationalism] is that one tends unconsciously to hypostasize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-big-N (rather as one might Age-with-a-capital-A) and then to classify 'it' as *an* ideology. (Note that if everyone has an age, Age is merely an analytical expression.) It would, I think, make things easier if one treated it as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion', rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism'. (Anderson 1991: 5)

Anderson's observations, it seems, emerge out of an acute dilemma within a liberal-Marxist tradition as how to analyse a phenomenon that is impossible to deny, but hard conceding and thereafter theorizing as well. The easiest way-out is to "delineate the processes by which the nation came to be imagined, and, once imagined, modelled, adapted and transformed"(Anderson 1991: 141). Such a process has to be analysed as primarily concerned with social changes and different forms of consciousness; but what is important is to describe the *difference* of social consciousness in different parts of the world. The nationalism of Europe is fundamentally different from those of the New World, but what makes this difference possible is a more valid point to inquire about. An anthropological framework

seems to explain it by serving two ostensible purposes: while it describes the rise of civic nation(alism) in Europe as part of the social dynamics it also helps to distinguish the third-world 'modular' nation(alism) from that. Anderson's text, much like Gellner's, at the end succumbs to this kind of a simplistic answer, and sees a profound 'modular' character in the third-world nation(alisms). They are invariably mimetic in nature, imitating the given historical models, from which "too-marked deviations ... [are] impossible." It is here, specifically regarding the third-world nationalism, that Chatterjee points out the gravest setback in Anderson, that in spite of his initial emphasis on the intellectual process of the nation-formation,

he too confines his discussion to the 'modular' character of 20th century nationalisms, without noticing the twists and turns, the suppressed possibilities, the contradictions still unresolved. Consequently, in place of Gellner's superciliousness, Anderson has to conclude on a note of unmitigated pessimism.... Thus, it is all a matter of a vanguard intelligentsia coming to state power by 'mobilizing' popular nationalism and using the 'machiavellian' instruments of official nationalism. Like religion and kinship, nationalism is an anthropological fact, and there is nothing else to it. (Chatterjee 1996: 22)

Chatterjee's critique of Anderson, however, opens up a new range of possibilities for our study of nationalism and its polyvalent relationship with narration. The idea needs a little elaboration. Nationalism as a political ideology as well as a movement has always been a problematic area as far as political theory is concerned. An initial overview of the range of problems involved in theorising nationalism can perhaps be culled from the diversity of forms that it has been taking on historically – religious, conservative, liberal, fascist, communist, cultural, political, protectionist, separatist – and through which, consequently, it has been defying any singular definition. These variegated forms of nationalism have not

only asserted the fluidity and variety of national experience, aspiration or cultural values, but, at the same time, have established nationalism as one of the most powerful forces of the contemporary world, thereby making itself too strong to be neglected. In spite of this prominence within the zone of realpolitik, it has, rather strangely, been left out of high political theory until recently, and when the theorization began, at least in the nascent periods, the emphasis was largely on its historical and political viability as an irredentist ideology.

The spate of anti-colonial and 'ethnic' nationalism around the mid-twentieth century, however, opened up a whole new range of possibilities for nationalism not only as a political movement, but also as a subject for sustained academic investigation and historical enquiry. Even in this case the enthusiasm has rarely been matched with its productivity in the sense that serious attempts to grapple with the nuanced manoeuvrability of nationalism have often ended with a monolithic description of capitalist nation-state. Several attempts to produce a typology of nationalism – as good/bad, western/eastern or normal/deviant – show the extent of bafflement that was met while studying and classifying various empirical cases and then constructing a general model for Nationalism, in a very sociological sense. What has often been attempted, and has consequently been proved to be insolvent because of the very nature of these attempts, is to etch out an essential formula of Nationalism that would subserviently describe the replacement of the 'structures' of traditional antiquity with the 'culture' of modernity. This penetration of liberal-rationalism, with its telos-oriented methodology, exposes the academic concern to an array of arguments emanating from positivist sociology. What happens, as a result, is an imposition of an inevitable teleology of political development that strives to reconcile cultural homogeneity with a political unit.

It would, however, be a preponderant attempt on my part to engage here in a detailed presentation of political theory over the years in order to show a singular agenda of

establishing nation(alism) within the liberal-rationalistic framework; recent studies in social sciences are full of such descriptions. What I would, rather, attempt here is to deliberate upon the rhetoric of this liberal-rationalism in order to show newer, and consequently broader, possibilities for the cultural studies of nation(alism). To start with, Partha Chatterjee, in his overview of nationalism as a political idea, presents a wholesome account of the history of political ideas, which is profuse with contradictory claims.¹⁹ Chatterjee's narrative quite convincingly shows the ambiguity regarding nationalism within the liberal-rationalist framework, out of which emanates the urge to generate a paradigmatic form (or the classical one) in which nationalism can coalesce with reason, liberty and progress. The paradox of nationalism within a liberal framework, however, is not far to seek – history would provide copious evidences where nationalism gave rise to mindless chauvinism and xenophobia, irrational revivalism and oppressive regimes in different parts of the world, and, to top it all, nationalism provided the justification for the savagery of Nazism and Fascism. The accommodation of nationalism within a liberal structure, therefore, not only generates theoretical anomaly, but poses serious moral and ethical dilemma as well. This ineluctability of theory, Chatterjee argues, gives birth to several endeavours to come to terms with nationalism within liberalism. Several liberalists have tried to describe nationalism by essentialising it as a liberal-classical model, where all the discomfoting features of the same ideology have often been clubbed together as deviations. John Plamenatz, for one, distinguishes two forms of nationalism – 'western' and 'eastern' – Hans Kohn, for another, separates 'western' nationalism from the 'non-western' one; and numerous efforts have been undertaken to disentangle the paradox by reducing nationalism under two neatly separable varities – good and bad. By separating these two modes of nationalism, Chatterjee further argues, what the liberalist tries to do is to produce a 'historical unity' where the distinction is

¹⁹ See Chatterjee 1991, especially the first chapter.

held to explain how a liberal idea could be distorted into “grossly illiberal movements and regimes”, and further tries to construct a dichotomy between the *normal* and the *special* types of nationalism.

The normal is the classical, the orthodox, the pure type. This type of nationalism shares the same material and intellectual premises with the European Enlightenment, with industry and the idea of progress, and with modern democracy. (Chatterjee 1996: 3)

The deviation from this classical model is the special type emerging under different as well as difficult historical circumstances.

It is, therefore, complex, impure, often deviant; it represents a very difficult and contradictory historical process which can be very ‘disturbing’. (Chatterjee 1996: 3)

The logical repugnance between this special type of nationalism and liberalism is explained chiefly by referring to specific historical conditions, extremely unpropitious to liberal ideas. Though these context-bound variations of nationalism, as the liberalist would argue, are deviations from the classical form, yet they are marked by an urge for the latter. The mere fact that the nationalists of the ‘eastern’ type also accept and value the principles of European Enlightenment – progress, development, freedom – testifies their endeavour to replace the ‘structures’ of ancient society by the ‘culture’ of modernity. It is this rhetoric of modernity that opens up newer possibilities for cultural studies of the nation, especially the deviant type.

Elie Kedourie’s opinion that “nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century” (Kedourie 1960: 9), visibly fails to take account of nationalism as a form of ‘practice’ rather than ‘analyses’ that ineluctably harps back on pre-modern cultural practices. The ‘daily plebiscite’ of the nation, as Renan would have it, comes not so much from a political doctrine but from a large-scale solidarity that, as Renan further defines, has a typical temporality:

A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifice that one has made in the past and of those one is prepared to make in the future.²⁰

In his typical nineteenth-century vocabulary, Renan goes on to describe the nation as an essence, a 'soul', a spiritual principle or a moral conscience – terms which are essentially *irrational, pre-modern* and characteristic of 'thinking with the blood'. This element of irrationality has a close connection with the line of argument that I have outlined earlier. While accounting for the irrationality of the ethnic nationalism as opposed to the rational civic version of it, the liberalist often takes recourse to the rhetoric of Enlightenment within a temporal schema. Within this irrational ethnic nationalism, as has often been argued, the most notable feature is the historical drive to attain the classical (i.e. civic) ideals. It is a temporal scale – two different moments to be precise, which represent as well as designate two different modes of development of the same ideology. The temporal division in this particular case is defined by the tidal wave of modernisation, the penetration of industrialisation where the classification of people by culture inadvertently becomes that by nationality. The spatial difference of uneven development in terms of national culture takes on a temporal dimension – or, in other words, the diverse geographical regions are treated as manifestations of the same telos – i.e. development/progress – within a singular temporal frame. This is an attempt to invert the cultural logic of 'development', according to which the developed geographical and cultural regions are advanced not only because of the industrial development, but also because of their advanced political machinery – the civic nationalism –, which in subsequent theorisation becomes the precondition for development. The perception of the world in terms of uneven development, therefore, creates the possibility for nationalism – that is to say, when it was born, the world could already have been distinguished according to less and more advanced populations in cultural terms. Cultural homogeneity, therefore, becomes the

²⁰ As quoted in the Introduction, G.Eley and R.G.Suny (eds.) *Becoming National* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p. 53.

necessary prerequisite for the political unit – i.e. nationalism. Gellner also points out this theoretical manoeuvring when he argues,

It is not the case ... that nationalism imposes homogeneity; it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism. (Gellner 1983: 39)

It seems possible – or even productive – to treat this inverted cultural logic as a *spatial strategy*, comprising of an ideological hinge that connects cultural homogeneity with political unit. Seen from a slightly different angle, my argument contradicts Gellner in the sense that it seems less viable to conceive the nation's *coming into being* as two different, and distinct, temporal points – where the cultural homogeneity's quest for political unit is met with nationalism. What such an argument purports can be conceptualised as comprising of two consecutive moments, the moment of homogeneity and that of the political consciousness of that homogeneity, and these two together form the homogenous and politically charged space of the nation. But when I call this cultural logic a spatial strategy, the idea is to reconsider such a conceptual linearity and to treat these separate moments as not-mutually-exclusive in a way that not only they should be considered as coterminous with each other, but they are to be viewed as implicated in each other in such a fashion that it becomes difficult to delineate a unidimensional relationship between them as well.

The idea of 'spatial strategy' as used here is to some extent similar to Satish Deshpande's use of it in his analysis of the twentieth-century Hindutva phenomenon, though in the later part of my argument I would differ considerably.²¹ Deshpande takes off with Foucault²² in

²¹ Deshpande, 2000.

²² Deshpande refers to the unrevised text of Foucault's 'Of Other Spaces', tr. Jay Miskowiec, in *Diacritics*, Spring 1986. My subsequent references to the same text are, however, from a different translation in James D. Faubion, (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

conceptualising the lived space as “a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another”.²³ Deshpande uses this departure in Foucault in quite a phenomenological sense but treats Foucauldian ‘heterotopias’²⁴ as culturally mediated places:

...the unique natural properties of a place do help, and may sometimes be a necessary ingredient: but they are never sufficient, always requiring additional efforts that consciously transforms a mere place into a culturally meaningful, politically charged space.(Deshpande 2000: 171)

This is to consider spatial strategies, as Deshpande further argues, as ‘ideological practices’ which are part of the construction of heterotopias. This is, in effect, also to consider spatial strategy as establishing links between abstract spaces and real places in ideologically convincing and practically enduring ways, as is evident in the case of the nation-space.

Accordingly, Deshpande’s analysis of the emergence of the Indian nation-space takes into account two different – and often contradictory – spatial strategies, imperialist and nationalist. In analysing the imperial domination of the colonies, a distinctly Saidean idea of the crossmapping of a discursive space and a *real* place has further been pushed into the Foucauldian concept of the ‘surplus will to power’. This excess in an essential way shaped the colonies as a heterotopia. In recent studies (especially post-*Orientalism*) the colony has convincingly been projected as a site of struggle and contestation, and not only a monolithic spatial projection of imperial power politics. As Edward Said points out, in an important sense the same ‘crossing’ of ideas, places and power enables both the imperial domination of

²³ Such a view, eventually, discards any possibility of ‘confusing’ lived space with what might be called ‘homogenous empty space’, where, or within which, specific emplacement is impossible.

²⁴ ‘real places, actual places, places that are designed into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realised utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localisable.’(Foucault 1998: 178).

the colonies as well as the native resistance to it²⁵. This coincidence between colonialism and nationalism, Deshpande argues, “establish a spatial order and a territorial ideology that are then selectively utilized by an emergent nationalism to fashion its own spatial strategies.” (Deshpande 2000: 175)

But the same coincidence has special, and to some extent different, relevance for our present concern. What happens when imperialism tries to define its colonial domination morally and logically? How does it defend an otherwise gross political aggression (or excess, as Foucault would have it)? Almost invariably the spatial strategy involves, or takes on the garb of, history, where the logic entails at least two points – a description of undeveloped political (despotic) as well as economic condition of the colony and the ‘white man’s burden’ to facilitate development in those areas. This conceptual linearity of development, I would argue, is polyvalently associated with the theory of uneven development that I have tried to chart out in the previous section. The economy of imperial power obviously attempts to turn the colony into heterotopia, “one designed to reflect the imperialist self in its own power and glory”(Deshpande 2000: 174), but the interesting twist in this strategy is the replacement of geography with history. In an attempt to localize modernity, to facilitate the development in the post-Enlightenment sense, imperialism sought to homogenize the colony as an undeveloped space structured quite undifferentiatedly, and prior availability of this homogeneous space paved the way for political negotiations. But the development of the shared public space of the nation within/against this negotiation is also directly connected with this kind of spatial strategies.²⁶

²⁵ See especially Said 1993.

²⁶ It would obviously be a solipsistic stance in conceptualising only one kind of Nationalism, as it is incorrect to theorise only one form of Colonialism. But in this project, my endeavour would be to introduce a few concepts that have, by and large, been consistent features in different cases, and therefore might claim some sort of universality, albeit with considerable reservations.

Seen from a slightly different angle, my argument about nationalist spatial strategy can broadly be aligned with Foucauldian idea of the mirror, which is an intermediary phase of the utopia and the heterotopia. The mirror, Foucault argues, is a placeless place or an unreal space “a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent” (Foucault 1998: 179). But it would definitely be wrong to assume the mirror only as a utopia or unreal space, since “the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I could occupy” (Foucault 1998: 179). This duality of existence of the ‘mirror’, I feel, can provide a useful analogy to the emergence of the shared public space of the nation. As I have already argued, nationalism shares the same ‘coincidence’ of idea, place and power with imperialism but uses it selectively for its own spatial hegemony; it therefore appropriates the same imperial space, but radically transforms the meaning of it. The heterotopia of imperialism, the colony, metamorphosizes into ‘nation’, or, to quote Renan, a shared solidarity, a principle of conscience.²⁷ In other words, nationalist spatial strategies try to infuse a utopian dimension (the nation) within an otherwise heterotopia (the imperial colony). This transition of the social places into politico-cultural spaces (which is profuse with ‘irrational’ patriotism) needs conscious efforts, and this crossmapping of the homogeneous culture and political unit thrives on a distilled historicity – the historicity of nation(alism). Or, if we recall the Foucauldian analogy, this historicity operates as a cultural hinge connecting the cultural homogeneity (the utopia) and the political unit (the heterotopia) within the ‘mirror stage’ of the nation. The existence of the nation, therefore, mediates between two different modes of emplacements, the utopian homogeneity and the heterotopic political structure. But what is interesting to note here is the fact that this

²⁷ An obvious example of this can be the nationalist appropriation of the imperial map where, as Anthony Smith shows, maps are treated as legitimate legacy but the meaning of the same maps undergoes a radical transformation. In India different cartogenic representations of ‘Mother India’ might be a case in point.

nationalist spatial strategy almost always uses the imperial heterotopia (i.e. the colonial space) as the foundation of its own history.

III

Almost without exception, the first and most prominent sign of the emergence of nationalist consciousness is the construction of the history of the nation. It would, however, be short-sighted to think of this invented historicity as a nationalist projection of the 'past' only; what would be more enabling in this case is to take into account a radical disjuncture in modes of apprehending the world, the preparatory ground for 'thinking' the nation. Anderson traces this disjuncture in the break of apprehending 'time' – a break that distinguishes medieval period from the early modern one. The conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect and the division of time into past and present are fairly modern ideas, and the lack of such a conception of temporality is perhaps the most authentic mark of pre-modern historiography. As Auerbach explains, the major characteristic of the medieval idea of time is the conceptual simultaneity that operates vertically:

...the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omnitemporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly events. (Quoted in Anderson 1991: 24)

But for the emergence of the nation as a generic entity, Anderson argues, what is needed is a break from such a concept of simultaneity. The modern concept of simultaneity (which is different from this medieval concept of what Benjamin would have called Messianic time), he explains, has been in making for a long time and in a somewhat Foucauldian vein he aligns its emergence with the development of the secular sciences. But this emergence is crucial as far as the nation's *coming into being* is concerned. What such a 'modern' concept

of simultaneity means, Anderson further argues, can be understood in terms of what Benjamin calls 'homogenous empty time', in which "simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (Anderson 1991: 24). This concept of simultaneity, the *meanwhile*, is one of the instrumental factors in imagining the community that is the nation.

The emergence of national consciousness, it can be argued, got a strong impetus from the dominance of capitalism in Europe, but it can also be argued with similar validity that this apprehension of the nation as a generic entity with fixed territoriality was a product of vast social engineering, often deliberate and highly innovative. If the theory of uneven or delayed development prepared ground for the imperial domination of the colony, it also became a weapon for nationalist manoeuvring. As part of the nationalist spatial strategy in inventing the past of the nation, the present deprivation of the nation is almost always compensated with the projection of a homogenous empty past, the 'golden era', of the nation with at least two clear objectives;

- 1) to establish a sense of continuity between the past and the present, and thereby securing the promise of the secular regeneration of that past in future; and
- 2) to stress the specific historical experience that unites the community as a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous empty time.

The concept of 'meanwhile' or the assurance of the existence of the fellow-community-members, it should be noted, acts as the basic link through these two aspects. What such a concept of temporality engenders can well be understood as the mobilization through shared public memory of the common past and an equally common future. In a unique way the instantaneous presence of the nation operates as the Foucauldian 'mirror', both real and unreal space, combining the homogenous utopia of the national community and the heterotopic ground reality of politics. The inverted logic of uneven development is therefore

predicated, more often than not, upon the presence of a community whose existence, as the concept 'meanwhile' indicates, is largely imagined. The spatial strategy of the third-world nationalisms, thus, selectively appropriates the metropolitan myth of Progress, by turning it into a claim for their own resources – that is, their 'nationality' – which is, in an important sense, both real and unreal. This mixture of the spatial modes – the degenerated national community which had a glorious past and simply because of that has a possibility of a prosperous future – makes the nationalist spatial strategy in the third world a unique one.

The uniqueness, in other words, comes from the category 'imagination'. Though since Benedict Anderson, we have become aware how the mentalist category "imagination" becomes crucial in the ideological/intellectual creation of the nation, the category itself has curiously evaded serious attention in later writings. Even in Anderson the concept appears to be self-validating; the only gloss he provides is a caution against equating it with 'falsity'²⁸. Dipesh Chakrabarty, in a recent essay (Chakrabarty 2001: 149-179), opens up this category of 'imagination' and offers a sense of plurality for the basis of the use of it. In my analysis I would try to push this idea further in an attempt to understand how the narration of the nation employs imagination(s), both in a Coleridgean and a sociological sense, as a useful tactics not only to write of the nation but, in an important sense, to construct it as well. In course of my argument I would also try to take into account how the particular genre Indian Writing in English – at least in its nascent days – employs several national(ist) concerns, explicit and/or implicit, in order to etch out a set of spatial strategies²⁹ at a very textual level that call for a

²⁸ The specific context for this caution is to distinguish his formulation from Gellner's concept of the nation as 'invention'. While in Gellner, Anderson argues, 'invention' becomes synonymous to 'fabrication' and thereby confers a kind of false status to the national community, for him 'imagination' definitely does not have any pejorative sense and is close to mean 'creation'. (Anderson 1991: 6-7).

²⁹ Which also in a sense answer partially to what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls 'anxiety of Indianness'. See Mukherjee 2000.

revision of the category 'imagination' as far as the implied nationality of these texts are concerned.

The consequence of such discursive nation-formation, as I have argued, can be seen as a *spatial strategy* at a very textual level, comprising of an ideological hinge that connects cultural homogeneity with political unit. Seen from a slightly different angle, my argument contradicts the prevalent idea of conceptualising the nation-formation as two distinct moments where the cultural homogeneity becomes the necessary prerequisite for the political unit, i.e. nation³⁰. What such an argument purports can be conceptualised as comprising of two consecutive moments, the moment of homogeneity and that of the political consciousness of that homogeneity, and these two together form the homogenous and politically charged space of the nation. My argument, rather, would seek to demonstrate, at least at a textual level, that it seems less viable to conceive the nation's *coming into being* as two different and distinct temporal points – where the cultural homogeneity's quest for political unit is met with nationalism. But when I call the cultural logic of these texts a spatial strategy, the idea is to reconsider such a conceptual linearity and to treat these separate moments as not-mutually-exclusive in a way that not only they should be considered as coterminous with each other, but they are to be viewed as implicated in each other in such a fashion that it becomes well nigh impossible to delineate a unidimensional relationship between them as well.

Imagination, I would argue, plays the esemplastic role of synthesis in this spatial strategy of textual nation(alism) by connecting these two distinct moments, and it can broadly be

³⁰ For a classic example of such views consider the following lines from Ernest Gellner: "...it is not the case... that nationalism imposes homogeneity; it is rather a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism." (Gellner 1983: 39). For a detailed study of this particular question in the third-world context, see Partha Chatterjee 1996, especially the first chapter.

aligned with the Foucauldian idea of the mirror which is an intermediary phase between the utopia and the heterotopia. As I have shown already that the mirror in Foucault is a placeless place or unreal space but at the same time “the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I could occupy” (Foucault 1998:179). This duality of existence of the ‘mirror’, I feel, can provide a useful analogy to the emergence of the shared public space of the nation. As has often been argued, nationalism shares the same ‘coincidence’ of idea, place and power with imperialism but uses it selectively for its own spatial hegemony; it therefore appropriates the same imperial space, but radically transforms the meaning of it. In other words, nationalist spatial strategies try to *imagine* the simultaneity of a utopian dimension (the nation) within an otherwise heterotopia (the imperial colony). This transition of the social places into politico-cultural spaces needs conscious efforts, and this crossmapping of the homogeneous culture and political unit thrives on a distilled cultural practice – the collective imagination of nation(alism). Or, if we recall the Foucauldian analogy, this imagination operates as a cultural hinge connecting the cultural homogeneity (the utopia) and the political unit (the heterotopia) within the *mirror stage* of the nation. The existence of the nation, therefore, mediates between two different modes of emplacements, the utopian homogeneity and the heterotopic political structure.

CHAPTER: III

In her recent book, Rumina Sethi has argued that the single most achievement of Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* has been its passionate and rigorous construction of the 'implied author', who is, primarily at least, bilingual and nationalist (Sethi 1999). In a more definite sense, the novel anticipates as well as shapes the nationalist intellectual as its implied reader. The achievement, as we shall see, might at the outset look rhetorical only, chiefly because of the way Sethi unearths the persuasiveness of the novel and partly because of the way some of the critics have again and again valorised the typical Indianness of Rao's India. But the problem is more intense if we take into account Rao's other novels which have deliberately foregrounded a mystic philosophical view of India, where the high textuality of a caste-oriented imagination has been privileged almost to the exclusion of anything else. The idea gets further impetus if we corroborate to Sethi's account of the mythical nature of Rao's projected nation, in the sense of constructing "models of nationalist ideology in the cultural sphere" (Sethi 1999: ~~xy~~). The point is not to delegitimise any such attempt of construction, or to deny a particular form of such spatial imagination, but to acknowledge zones of tension within such all-embracing typicality of Indianness.

As a unique move of textual nation(alism)³¹, it has often been noted, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) is a microcosmic representation of the Indian nation itself. But what has generally been ignored is the underlying principle of such a representation. The uniqueness of *Kanthapura*, I feel, comes not so much from its social concerns³² but from the way this concern has been woven into the text. Unlike the general principle of such minuscule representations *Kanthapura* does not become wholly satiric or completely utopian, though covert streaks of both can possibly be detected in the text. What appears to be more conspicuous as an organising principle within the narrative structure is a conscious national(ist) concern to transport the sedimented cultural practices of a community (in a quite ahistorical, or outside history, fashion) into a language which is distinctly alien to those practices, at least at a certain level³³. The transference – or transfiguration, or even transmigration – of these residual practices of a nation within an emergent political environment creates a chronotope of a particular place by organising a sociological solidity of a community moving steadily in history. Consider, for example, how Rao invokes the legend of the land (*sthala-purana*) of an empirical place that confers a kind of cultural continuity within an otherwise geographical area. These legends, as Rao points out, are part of the sociological existence of particular places, and further secure their places within the tradition of the nation. At a very textual level, Rao invents these traditions in a more secular form by

³¹ As distinct from Nation(alism) *per se*, a political movement; it is, however, not to deny the peculiar politicalness of these texts, but to suggest a different organising principle which distinguishes the texts under consideration from a text like Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, for example.

³² Which might have been novel in IWE, but regional writers had already shown more intensive and varied forms of it.

³³ Consider the following lines of Rao: "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language." 'Foreword', *Kanthapura* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1996).

aligning the cartographic entity (i.e. Kanthapura) with the larger nationalist movement, where Gandhian nationalist movement provides a new *sthala-purana* for Kanthapura, as it were. With an overt emphasis on oral tradition of story telling within the narrative structure the text, other than attempting to secure an 'authentic' status within the corpus of IWE, dishes out a new *sthala-purana* for Kanthapura and as such serves at least two purposes: first, such invented traditions within the narrative schema help to establish a sense of continuity between the past and the present and the incorporation of the nationalist movement therein surely promises a secular regeneration of that past; and second, such a sense of continuity stresses the specific historical experience that unites the community as a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous empty time³⁴.

It is here that the imaginary aspect of the national community becomes prominent, and it seems hard to be persuaded by Chakrabarty's argument that 'imagination' in a Romantic sense bears an essentially subject-oriented (or subjective) connotation and therefore fails to account for the communal feelings of solidarity. It seems plausible, or even productive, at this point to make a case in favor of what I have called textual nation(alism)³⁵, where, I feel, it can effectively be argued that the concept of what Anderson calls "meanwhile"³⁶ (based on imagining the national time) or the assurance of the existence of the fellow-community-members acts as the basic textual link through the two aspects of communal imagination that I have noted above. The point is to reassert the organic quality of the Romantic concept of 'imagination' ('esemplastic' in Coleridge) as opposed to 'fancy', where the former is supposed to operate - in a Kantian sense - as the active faculty for synthesis. What such an

³⁴ For a brilliant discussion of nation as invented tradition see Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914" in Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

³⁵ It would definitely be short-sighted to ignore the point that what we are dealing with is a literary text, which, in spite of all theories of sociological determinism, is the product of conscious authorial effort.

³⁶ Anderson, *Ibid.*, p.24.

organic faculty engenders can well be understood as the mobilization (in a sense of social engineering) through shared public memory of the common past and the consequent promise of an equally common future. The obvious consequences of such national(ist) allegories I would take up shortly, but presently I would like to argue in favour of a 'collective cultural imagination' (which incorporates both senses of the word, sociological and Romantic) as the most prominent organizational principle for *Kanthapura*.

II

As we have already noted, the discursive creation of national community works on two basic imperatives: first, a generalisation and homogenisation of the national community within an enframed sense of space, and to demarcate that homogeneity from whatever lies outside that spatial framework. These two aspects, to be precise, are simultaneous as well as mutually constitutive. The sense is quite important in *Kanthapura* as we encounter the village and its construction. Before going into a rather schematic analysis of the text, let me remind us of Rao's much-quoted formulation of the 'problem' of English while one engages in writing about India because, as we shall see, the problem of language also helps Rao to steer clear some of the inevitable pitfalls of a discursive construction of India. While writing in English about India, Rao tells us, "[o]ne has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language" (Rao 1996: 5). In the very next sense, however, Rao inserts a qualifier in the sense that though 'alien', English is "the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make-up" (Rao 1996: 5). The result of such linguistic schizophrenia is an inevitable bilingualism, where we often write in and seldom speak two different languages. But at the same time this bilingualism ensures that "[w]e cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians.... Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect

which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American” (Rao 1996: 5).

This almost functionalist foreword neatly justifies the narrative technique of Rao, where the story of Kanthapura can only be told within an oral tradition, characteristically winding and interminable, where “[e]pisode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought” (Rao 1996: 6). The acknowledgement of the problem and its self-evident solution can be held as serving two purposes: first it establishes Rao as an insider, another bilingual intellectual like many of his intended readers in India; and second, the recognition also presupposes a common link between the author and the reader (consider the repeated use of “we”) where the reader will be able to share the “the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement” like the author intended them to be. In other words, the recognition also emboldens the argument about novel’s creation of the nationalist intellectual as its implied reader (Sethi 1999). But more crucial to our understanding that the relationship does not stop here. In an important sense, this sense of identity grows within the novel in the form of an imagined community where the history of the nation has been replaced with a fiction/allegory of the nation. The point here is not to maintain absolute opposition between history and fiction. Nor is it my intention to propose fiction as the solution of the problems of history, because as we know the institutional baggage accompanying fiction is no smaller than that of history. What I merely wish to argue here is a different form of national(ist) construction of the imagined community, where the community at once ‘real’ and ‘not real’, sociological and imagined, heterotopia and utopia – i.e. history and fiction.

Let me begin with the village Kanthapura. As the narrator begins her story, we have a vivid cartographic representation of the village, along with its strict caste restriction and class strata:

Our village had four and twenty houses. Not all were big like Postmaster Suryanaryana's double-storied house by the Temple Corner. But some were really not bad to look at. Our Patwari Nanjundia had a veranda with two rooms built on to the old house. He had even put glass panes to the windows, which even Postmaster Suryanarayana could not boast of. Then there were the Kennayya-House people, who had a high veranda, and though the house was I know not how many generations old, it was still as fresh and new as though it had been built only yesterday. (Rao 1996: 9-10)

Till now I've spoken only of the Brahmin quarter. Our village had a Pariah quarter too, a Potters' quarter, a Weavers' quarter, and a Sudra quarter. How many huts had we there? I do not know. There may have been ninety or a hundred – though a hundred may be the right number. Of course you wouldn't expect me to go the Pariah quarter, but I have seen from the street-corner Beadle Timmayya's hut. It was in the middle, so – let me see – if there were four on this side and about six, seven, eight that side, that makes some fifteen or twenty huts in all. (Rao 1996: 11)

The narrator evokes the cartographic details in passage after passage, where most of the characters are quite situated not only within their social milieu, but also within their geographical set-up. In an important sense, the geographical location of the community becomes crucial in maintaining the social cohesion of the village. Tabish Khair has made an interesting argument where he proposes a complex relationship between Rao's use of language and the particular sense of India evoked throughout the text.

Rao's experiment with English in *Kanthapura* presented no doubt a major and pioneering achievement in not only Indian English and postcolonial writing but, one can claim, modern English literature. ... Rao's experiments with English, it must be noted, are largely grammatical-syntactical – which betrays the textuality of his

English. He mostly employs a safe English English vocabulary, only incorporating occasional Sanskritised (also Sanskritised-Kannada) words and Sanskrit literary quotations. This fact itself points to the type of Sanskritised and textualised Babu-Brhminical discursive structures that enable Rao's narration of India.... His ideal (and presumably 'essentially Indian' in the words of critics) Indian places are those of a traditional order. Kanthapura with its separate caste areas comes easily to mind; in fact, one can argue that from this perspective Rao's narration is actually *enabled* by being situated in a place like Kanthapura, by the fact that both socio-geographical realities and narrative worldview manage to coalesce in this particular instance. (Khair 2001: 206, 210, emphasis original)

The sense becomes clearer in the way the village has been posed against the adjacent Skeffington Coffee Estate and the way village community refuses Bade Khan, a police constable but more importantly a Muslim:

To tell you the truth, Bade Khan did not stay in Kanthapura. Being a Mohomedan he could stay neither in the Potters' Street nor in the Sudra Street, and you don't, of course, expect him to live in the Brahmin Street. (Rao 1996: 20)

Within such a geographically segregated community we come across the clarion call of Gandhian nationalism.

The important thing about the introduction of this new political ideology is the way it finds its way to the heart of the village, i.e. as part of the *Harikatha* tradition. The oral rendering of religious and mythological narratives is an important part of the cultural life of village India. And Rao uses this simple technique to built a narrative within a narrative that at once lends credibility as well as legitimacy to his technique.

'Today', he [Jayaramachar, the *Harikatha*-man] says, ' it will be the story of Siva and Parvati.' And Pavati in penance becomes the country and Siva becomes heaven

knows what! 'Siva is the three-eyed', he says, 'and Swaraj too is three-eyed: Self-purification, Hindu-Moslem unity, Khaddar.' And then he talks of Damayanti and Sakuntala and Yasodha and everywhere there is something about our country and something about Swaraj. Never had we heard *Harikatha* like this. ... But the *Harikatha* he did, which I can never forget in this life and in all lives to come, is about the birth of Gandhiji. 'What a title for a "Harikatha!" cried out old Venkatalakshamma, the mother of the Postmaster. 'It is neither about Rama nor Krishna.' – 'But', said her son, who too has been to the city, 'but, Mother, the Mahatma is a saint, a holy man.' (Rao 1996:16)

The important thing is not only to mention Gandhi, not even to make a god out of him (though both these phenomena were quite common in contemporary Indian literature), but the way both these effects have been achieved. As I have already shown with quotation from Khair that there is a distinct attempt in Rao to create a textual and primarily Brahminical sense of place (note, for example, his depiction of Benaras in *The Ganga Ghat*) through his narrative; there is, one can argue, a parallel attempt to create representative places, in the sense of a metonymic India, as well. Kanthapura, in a sense has been conceived and narrated to present a microcosmic India, with its typicality and eccentricities. To create the ideal effect Rao employs a highly textual vision of an Indian village, which in addition to its physicality can also be traced discursively. Within such a type, the character of Gandhi also becomes in a sense essentialist, operating not only physically, but also as a metaphor. In course of the novel, Gandhi only functions as a referring point or a living metaphor, not only as a political leader but also as 'a saint, a holy man.' Moorthy, the young protagonist who typifies the Gandhian *satyagrahi*, realises this:

As everybody knew, one day he [i.e. Moorthy] had seen a vision, a vision of the Mahatma, mighty and God-beaming, and standing between the Volunteers Moorthy

had got on to the platform, and he stood by the Mahatma, and the very skin of the Mahatma seemed to send out a mellowed force and love, and he stood by one of the fanners and whispered, 'Brother, the next is me'. And the fanner fanned on and the Mahatma spoke on, and Moorthy looked from the audience to the Mahatma and from the Mahatma to the audience, and he said to himself, 'There is in it something of the silent communion of the ancient books,' and he turned again to the fanner and said, 'Brother, only when you are tired?' And the fanner said, 'Take it, brother,' and Moorthy stood by the Mahatma and the fan went once this side and once that, and beneath the fan came a voice deep and stirring that went out to those men and women and came streaming back through the thrumming air, and went through the fan and the hair and the nails of Moorthy into the very limbs, and Moorthy shivered, and then there came flooding up in rings and ripples. '*Gandhi Mahatma ki jai!*' – '*Jai Mahatma!*' ... And as there was fever and confusion about the Mahatma, he jumped on to the platform, slipped between this person and that and fell at the feet of the mahatma, saying, 'I am your slave'. The Mahatma lifted him up and, before them all, he said, 'What can I do for you, my son?' ... the Mahatma said, 'You wear foreign clothes, my son.' – 'It will go Mahatmaji.' – 'You perhaps go to foreign Universities' – 'It will go Mahatmaji' – 'You can help your country by going and working among the dumb millions of the villages' – 'So be it, Mahatmaji', and the Mahatma patted him on the back, and through that touch was revealed to him as the day is revealed to the night the sheathless being of the soul; and Moorthy drew away, and as it were with shut eyes groped his way through the crowd to the bank of the river. And he wandered about the fields and the lanes and the canals and when he came back to the College that evening, he threw his foreign clothes and his foreign books into the bonfire, and walked out, a Gandhi's man. (Rao 1996: 39-41)

The textual effect of this rather longish passage is tremendous. It at once establishes the mythico-textual figure of Gandhi outside the strict boundaries of politics, where he becomes a semi-mythical figure. Moorthy, on the other hand becomes transformed, as it were, no longer a slave of foreign clothes and university, but 'slave' only of Gandhi or more accurately of Mahatma. The protagonist, as is evident from the text, is more of a type character (Gandhi's man) who would now return to his own village Kanthapura not only as part of the 'dumb millions of the villages', but as someone who would in the following period pose serious challenges the rural *status quo* undisturbed for years. In another sense, this is a new model of community that Moorthy would bring in with him, which in consequence would replace the previous forms of community imagination. Caste, for example, is also an imagined community, but what differentiates caste from nation is a rather discursive quality. National imagination, when opposed to the caste one, is more inclusive because it works on certain definite purposes of social engineering. The difference, it seems, is not so much in constitution, but in purposiveness. Whereas caste imagination necessarily works on a given sense of hierarchy and hegemony, national(ist) imagination rather wishes to envision a *homogenous* as well as *empty* spatial construction.

Gandhian nationalism, it can be argued, has been accorded the status of generating a sense of social engineering, or constructing a sense of social space where it would be possible to imagine the national(ist) community. The chief instrument of such sense of construction, I would argue, is a profound sense of *practice*. As I have already argued in the first chapter that the idea of space needs conscious and continuous ideological as well as physical efforts. It is always renewed and still renewable. Imagination, I would argue, plays the esemplastic role of synthesis in this spatial strategy of textual nation(alism) by connecting these two distinct moments, and it can broadly be aligned with the Foucauldian idea of the mirror which is an intermediary phase between the utopia and the heterotopia. The mirror, Foucault argues, is a

placeless place or unreal space³⁷; but it would definitely be wrong to assume the mirror only as a utopia or unreal space, since “the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I could occupy.”³⁸ This duality of existence of the ‘mirror’, I feel, can provide a useful analogy to the emergence of the shared public space of the nation. As has often been argued, nationalism shares the same ‘coincidence’ of idea, place and power with imperialism but uses it selectively for its own spatial hegemony; it therefore appropriates the same imperial space, but radically transforms the meaning of it. The heterotopia of imperialism, the colony, metamorphosizes into ‘nation’, or - to quote Renan - into a shared solidarity, a principle of conscience.³⁹ In other words, nationalist spatial strategies try to *imagine* the simultaneity of a utopian dimension (the nation) within an otherwise heterotopia (the imperial colony). This transition of the social places into politico-cultural spaces needs conscious efforts, and this crossmapping of the homogeneous culture and political unit thrives on a distilled cultural practice – the collective imagination of nation(alism). Or, if we recall the Foucauldian analogy, this imagination operates as a cultural hinge connecting the cultural homogeneity (the utopia) and the political unit (the heterotopia) within the *mirror stage* of the nation. The existence of the nation, therefore, mediates between two different modes of emplacements, the utopian homogeneity and the heterotopic political structure. In other words, this coincidence between colonialism and nationalism, as Deshpande argues,

³⁷“...a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent.” Foucault, *Ibid.*, p.179.

³⁸ Foucault, *Ibid.*, p.179.

³⁹ An obvious example of this can be the nationalist appropriation of the imperial map where, as Anthony Smith shows, maps are treated as legitimate legacy but the meaning of the same maps undergoes a radical transformation. In India different cartogenic representations of ‘Mother India’ might be a case in point.

“establish a spatial order and a territorial ideology that are then selectively utilized by an emergent nationalism to fashion its own spatial strategies”⁴⁰.

And it is here that we get a striking contrast with G.V.Desani’s *All About H.Hatterr* (1948), which can be treated as a classic example of subject-oriented imagination at the outset - the search for a nation is primarily negotiated through the central character of H.Hatterr. The improbability of this Proustian agenda of thinking out the corporeality of the nation is part of the self-reflexive narrative itself, and it again and again unsettles its own assumptions. A joke, the Introduction confirms, after all is a joke, and the truth is never complete; likewise, the subjective construction in a jocular mood never tries to reach the Truth, and tantalisingly oscillates between narrating a life full of clashes and contests and ‘invention’ which is a mere euphemism for lie. The mere invention of the name H.Hatterr⁴¹ can well be a case in point where the personal caprice has subtly been balanced by a representational burden on the character to foreground Hindustan as an essentially imaginary homeland. In a classic mode of what might be called intertextuality, this central character searches the imaginary space through overpowering narratives that flow relentlessly. The search stumbles through these narratives, undercuts the not-so-serious mode of the text, but definitely foregrounds the improbability of establishing an essential India. The imaginary aspect has considerably been complimented with empirical backing – the overlapping narratives in different degrees mix and coalesce to mould a space which is contested, differentiated and extremely heterogeneous. Any possibility to distil an authentic, essential meaning of this space has been thwarted with a well-designed economy of irrational-excess⁴². This politics of aberration,

⁴⁰ Deshpande, *Ibid.*, p.175.

⁴¹ “‘H’ for the nom de plume ‘Hindustaanivala’, and ‘Hatterr’, the nom de guerre inspired by Rev. the Head’s too-large-for-him-hat”. (Desani: 19:33).

⁴² Consider, for example, Anthony Burgess’ comment on the organisation of the text: “The reader who expects the shapeless mind-wandering regularly associated with an amateur search for Truth, must now be informed that

within a textual sphere, affects the construction of the space in a peculiar way – in the narrative itself the nation operates as a deferred space (existing at the border of imagination, constantly evading any singular definition). yet the ubiquitous presence of the same space propels the narrative itself. The attempt to establish Hatterr as an authentic *Hindustaniwala* (the hybridity of the character is an analogy of the nation itself, as it were) is also shaped in turn by this ubiquitous existence of the discursive space called India. Ultimately, in an imaginatively picaresque mode Desani's text posits a discursive nation-space that is amorphous and irreducibly plural.

Surprisingly, Desani rejected some of these possibilities within his text, at least partially, in order to highlight a transnational and transhistorical human being. In quick succession he discards the very genesis of a colourful character like Hatterr, and suppresses every form of politics in writing. Let me quote Desani at length to clarify some of the positions.

My man H. Hatterr [...] hasn't much to do with the problems of an Anglo-Indian individual, if any such problems exist, or with the alleged problems of an Indian in search for a theory or a way or a philosophy of life. Parrots imitate and what passes for an alleged sickness among some Anglo-Indians or Indians as a struggle to choose a way of life, the British way, or the Indian, is no sickness. This kind of searching is no conflict in the soul of the victim, but a desire to imitate, to be led, and so strive for status. Whether one would imitate the once successful British thoughtlessly, or the not so successful Indians, equally thoughtlessly, might be appearing to some as a sickness or spiritual struggle or search.

Now this fellow, H. Hatterr, in spite of his innocence, can and does distinguish between "a mix up" involving "mysticism and brain failure." [...] I said H. Hatterr

H. Hatterr's story is as carefully, even as pedantically, planned as *Ulysses*.... Some such pattern, as Joyce knew, was essential if the fine flood of language was not to take chaotic control." Introduction: 10.

was a portrait of man, the common vulgar species, found everywhere, both in the east and the west. His fears, desires, appetites, aspirations – not his experience – are the same as those of any man, east, west, north, or south. (Desani 1978: 403)

It is an easy guess that the guiding principle for Desani's critical response to 'his man' is primarily governed by the overall critical milieu of the school of 'new criticism' (the dominant critical mode in Desani's prime, and he knew some of the practitioners as well), where the quest for a common human prototype in literature is of primary importance. More pronounced is the rejection of politics; there is a certain degree of naivety involved in Desani's claim that his man Hatterr is a true representative of any conceivable human being, east or west, and his subsequent argument that his character does not face the 'problems of an Anglo-Indian', in spite of the fact that if anything the character of Hatterr is conceivable only within an Anglo-Indian environment. No one in full senses would claim such universal standards for a character today. But what needs to be emphasised in Desani's argument is not his naivety, but the repeated claim of creating the subjective world of a character.

At the end of the book, he [i.e. Hatterr] gives us the list of his feelings, the feelings he had lived through, and his list does conform to Carl Jung's list of human emotions. He did include in his feelings, the attraction for the Unknown, the Mysterious, and the desire to submit to the authority of an Overlord. This sort of thing in our make-up, and the resulting behaviour, is often mistaken for a spiritual struggle which – oriental and occidental symbols vary – is, if anything, a struggle between material and the spirit, between God and Mammon, between self-love or the love of God. (Desani 1978: 403)

In other words, what he argues for his man is a sense of interior, a subject oriented depiction that then can further be claimed as a 'universal' or 'true' representative of human beings in general. The interior, Desani maintains, is in sync with contemporary understanding of

human psyche: the passage quoted above bears the testimony in no uncertain terms, but more pronounced is the passage where, though half ironically, the characters discuss both Freud and Jung vis-à-vis Hatterr's psychic developments.

In brief, for the information of the non-medical reader, I should say, that every human being has a libido. The Vienna school of medicine has discovered it. The libido is the master instinct to conquer the opposite in sex, and acquire therefrom untold satisfaction. This phenomenon is a sort of sympathetic motif action in mind, whereby a man must have his mate, his opposite her opposite, and the whole thing is due to one's obscure pseudo-sub-conscious, or something to that effect.

'I see the medical point, Banerrji,' I said to the feller. 'Well, what about it?'

'I consider it highly appropriate that you should have some female company in order to meet the naturally exciting requirements of your libido. I don't mean any misconduct thereby. That is not my line.' (Desani 1985: 66)

Throughout the text, there is a conscious attempt to understand the phenomenological world through its underlying psychic structure. The torrential outpour of language, more often than not, either promulgates a psychoanalytical understanding or shrouds it into what is generally called oriental mysticism. Hatterr's exploration of his bizarre experiences with the sages, or his diligent friend Banerrji's equally assiduous explanations underline a subjective understanding of the situations at hand. The episodes and their explanations are often weird, or even hilarious, but time and again they stand out as exceptional subjective understanding of situations, which attains its uniqueness from the fact of being exceptionally individual.

Consider, for example, the episode where Hatterr decides to 'go religious' on the well-meant advice of his friend Banerrji and, more crucially, to avoid a shrewd moneylender, the idea sparks off an array of comments on this profession which is, if odd at least personal.

Out in the Orient, if you wish to become an abbot, a curate feller, a deacon, a general soul-pilot, or even a bishop of a diocese, on the whole, there is no need to invest finance in a varsity education, pass exams, do the daily routine with St. Alban's Clean Shave, or ballyhoo constantly in order to raise lucre for the broken church organ, hold antimacassar sales, mock weddings, or organise home-made jam jamborces, garage sales, and junk bazaars. It is not necessary to entertain income-tax specialists with cherry, in order to get off with extra stationery-used expense allowance, wear different neckwear: or, if you are a bishop, travel first class, carry a crook, don gaiters, the rummy black apron round the west line, the half-coat with lapels turned-up motif, the mitre, cope and pastoral staff, the string attached to the headgear, stockings, or do anything! [...]

In India, if you decide to go religious, be a semi-Benedictine, a sacred chicken, belong to the Cloth, no need to hullaballo at all. You simply cast off clothing. You wear the minimum loin-cloth, walk freely on the plains of the country of Hindustan, and, if you are a genuine feller at all, you spend your life comforting, instructing, and teaching the populace. That's the bush theologia-indica in a nut-shell for you.

(Desani 1985: 117-8)

The point in quoting a rather longish passage from Desani is not only to relish his startling style (though that might be a perfect excuse) but to bring out the inner dynamics of his subject-oriented perception of India. As is common with any such imagined communities, there are two distinct and corresponding processes at work: first, there is the attempt to demarcate and distinguish a homogenous community that can be identified and classified according to certain markers shared by that community; and second, there is the corollary attempt to differentiate that homogeneity from what lies outside the border. India of Desani's imagination is quite perceptible in the form of Hindustan, a land that can be streamlined

under a single head of 'theologia-indica'. At the same time, this imagined community has been pitted against an equally imagined 'west', the visible difference being in the form the people in both communities 'go religious'. My argument here is not to nullify the possibility of such imagined constructions, not even to question the legitimacy of such creations, but to understand the critical question how such constructions are negotiated from a subject-oriented positions.

The difference becomes crucial if we juxtapose the construction with Rao's construction of miniature India. Even in Desani we have a highly textual understanding of the spatial category called nation, but crucially different is Desani's understanding (or should we say interpretation?) of this textuality. While in Rao the understanding is primarily governed by a high culture, and a strong sense of community propelled by a high brahminical culture, Desani's treatment is primarily directed by the subjective interpretation of Hatterr or his friends Banerji or Y. Beliram. Whereas characters like Moorthy, as part of the 'huge and variegated crowds' who were responsible for the unprecedented spread and acceptance of national consciousness, symbolises the enormous growth of physical mobility within the sociological structure of the nation, it is Hatterr who exposes the vulnerability of the effective mediation between the metropolitan nation and the colonized people. In both cases, however, the sociological solidity is largely imagined: or, as I have suggested, reminiscent of a Foucauldian mirror-stage where the social emplacement is at once both real and unreal. It is real because of the intensity of imagination to find "sufficient room for a certain degree of relatively independent capitalist development" within the struggle with colonial forces, and yet to transform it into a "'national' struggle" (Chatterjee 1996: 48). And, at the same time, it is unreal because of the very nature of imagination itself. In Rao, the negotiation between these two different senses of emplacement has primarily been sought through an intense evocation of the sociological solidity of the emerging national(ist) community; Desani,

however, chooses to interrogate some of these assumptions in more ways than one. In the following section, I would try to show this dialectics of possibility and impossibility of imagining the corporeality of the nation, and how such mentalist categories entail a profound political sense of survival.

III

IWE. from its caption has delicately been placed between two different, but not necessarily contradictory, linguistic discourses: English and the vernacular. The choice of language, however, has been crucial in the sense that the basic bilingualism of the Indian intelligentsia had to strike a subtle balance between two different modes of discourses as part of their daily existence. More often than not, this balance was also part of what Anderson calls physical as well as intellectual displacement, or a sense of mobility, that facilitated the emergence of the national(ist) consciousness. In Rao this sense of a bilingualism has been negotiated primarily through translation, that is to say, most of Rao's texts exist as the translation between these two different linguistic discourses – not only linguistically but ideologically as well. In *Kanthapura*, for example, the narrative operates on at least two levels. First is the level of a local close-knit community where the pros and cons of daily life, as I have suggested earlier, imitate the larger construction of a nation. On the other hand, there is always a second level of narrative referent, foregrounded intermittently and primarily through the character of Gandhi, which makes us aware of the larger political battle that spreads beyond the microcosmic representation through the village community. *Kanthapura* in a sense presents an instantaneous assurance of this larger political scenario, where characters like Moorthy operates as a link between these two senses of political battle. Moorthy's struggle against the traditional orthodoxy of the village almost always finds its justification from the larger political scenario. Consider, the following passage from the early

days of Moorthy's social reform where the symbolic presence of the *charkha* or the spinning wheel marks the beginning of a new era of social reform:

Post Office Suryanarayana is already a Gandhist. He asks for two charkas. Then he goes, Moorthy, to Pandit Venkateshia and Snuff Sastri and Rangamma's widowed sister Seethamma, and her daughter Ratna, and Cardamom-field Ramachandra, and they all say, 'Oh yes, my son. Oh yes!' And so he leaves the Brahmin quarter and goes to the Pariah quarters, and the pariahs are so happy to see a Brahmin among them that they say, 'Yes, yes, learned one'; and Left-handed Madanna's son Chenna, and Beadle Timmayya's son Bhima, and old Mota and one-eyed Linga and Jack-tree Tippa, all of them follow him home, and to each one of them he gives a spinning-wheel and a seer of cotton-hemp, and they go back with their spinning-wheels upon their shoulders, their mouths touching the ears with delight. Not a pie for this!... They would spin and spin and spin, and if that Brahmin was to be believed they would have clothes to wear, blankets and shirts and loin-cloths. They said it was all of the Mahatma! (Rao 1996: 26)

The spinning-wheel here combines the different social as well as caste strata within a single narrative of the nation – it is a social signifier, as it were, that obliterates the vast difference between diverse social roles and positions. The concluding line, however, combines this stray event in a small village with the larger political state of affairs, and Mahatma becomes the ultimate symbol of this social mobility. The text is full of such passages where these fragmented episodes have carefully been woven into the larger political matrix. Later such events take on the adequately radical political dimension, and Rao consciously blurs the difference between the two levels of narrative. In the following passage, the narrator recounts one such incident:

And when we were by the Tippur stream bridge, the Police Inspector comes towards us and says, 'You are forbidden to march to the toddy grove,' and Moorthy smiles back and says he knows that but he thanks him all the same for saying so, but that he is following the instruction of the Congress and he would follow unto death if need be. And the Police Inspector says. 'I warn you for a third time, and I say that what you do is against law, and the Government is ready to use all the force I possesses to put you down,' and Moorthy says again 'Thank you' and he moves on; and just as we are near the toddy grove, the morning carts of Santur turn round the Kenchamma Hi, Corner, and when they see us and the crowd behind us, they stop and come down to see what is all this procession and Police about, and we say, 'Well, there will be some more people with us'. We begin to count our beads and say Ram-Ram, and the nearer we approach the stiffer become the policemen, and as Moorthy and Range Gowda try to push open the gate of the grove, the police stand before them and push them back, and Pariah Rachanna cries out, 'Say *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!*' and we all cry out too, '*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!*' and we say we too shall enter the toddy grove. (Rao 1996: 132)

The process of translation is quite apparent if we juxtapose these two passages. What started as a small social movement in Kanthapura to bridge the social disparity got transformed/translated into a larger political movement at the behest of Indian national Congress and the Mahatma, and what we get as a result is a profound merger of the small village into the sociological solidarity of the nation. In other words, this is a profound spatial imagination, where the cartographic entity of the village has primarily been translated into a larger one.

Desani's treatment, on the other hand, is fraught with a sense of impossibility of the Proustian agenda of thinking out the corporeality of the nation. The language of Desani's text, notwithstanding his denial, exposes this impossibility in more ways than one. It is a language of hybridity, necessarily impure and always in search of an impossible ideology that would situate the central character in some perspective. The narrative is imbued in a form of textual imagination that is personal or subject-oriented, where the negotiation between different linguistic discourses has chiefly been sought to achieve through a character who, towards the end, declares, "I am not complaining against the Tyranny of Law. Every curse, every blessing, every injustice, every truth, every untruth, which is (or seems or *feels* so), is according to Law" (Desani 1985: 277). This is one of the central axes of the novel, a quest for some law, or at least some traceable patterns, within an utterly chaotic world. The idea has been presented as Hatterr's search for *truth*, a category which he believes can be retrieved and accessed through organising his empirical experiences. The journey from ignorance to truth, mediated by seven sages of India, however, turns out to be quite different than what he expected. In his absolute bewilderment, Hatterr declares:

Shmall mens, goot Frauen unt Fraulein auf straw! don'd you understandt, you
Alles act shust like ein ass! You care nicht for der vill auf Herr Gott in heafen!
You... *Das ist Alles!*

Maybe, delinquents, that's *Truth!*

I am not fed up with *Life*. a sportsman, if at all genuine, never stops shooting. He
must carry on.

I carry on.

Meanwhile, and regardless, I am putting questions to fellers: *and* regardless of the unanswerable *What is Truth?* (And, regardless, *too*, of whatever the word *Truth* is the *Translation of!*). (Desani 1985: 278)

Among other things, the passage signals at least two ideas, or exposes the contingency of them, which throughout the text have enjoyed privileged positions. First is the belief in a distillable and distinguishable meaning of life, as it were, because the protagonist again and again realises that,

I have written the work for one good reason: to shield myself from further blows of Fate, and to ensure me against drifting from isolation to utter eclipse, and, perhaps, deprivation of grub.

Because, friend, I have had a miff with Fate, for things are not what I thought they were, what they seemed they were, and what might-have-been I wish they were!
(Desani 1985: 36)

This 'miff', we might argue, is Hatterr's increasing incapability to come to terms with what he calls 'truth', elusive and evading, and he progressively the basic incompatibility between what he expects from his life and what he is being offered in exchange. This is not to suggest Hatterr as a failure, but to indicate his growing understanding of the absurdity of life, and the futility of his ideal of a situated life. He is a perfect outsider, both in India and in England, as he says,

I write rigmarole English, staining your goodly godly tongue, maybe: but, friend, I forsook my Form, School and Head, while you stuck to yours, learning reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic.

And, if I am in your way, in your Street, in this earth of majesty, this other Eden, this demi-paradise, this precious stone set in the silver sea, this blessed plot, this earth, this England, among this happy breed of men, and wouldn't avault, trudge, be gone: [...] but, because, by the Lord God of hosts, the Holy, who made you of the happy breed and me of the stricken. He alone knowing the aught of making mortal things. I am lonely! (Desani 1985: 37)

The second aspect, his attempt to find some sort of stability within this otherwise 'damned' piece of earth – i.e. India – starts precisely here. His attempts are manifold: either he tries to consolidate himself around a family, that he always wanted but never had, or he attempts to find an alternative in spirituality of the orient, but again his attempts are, more often than not, futile.

All these failures, I would suggest, are delicately predicated upon his quest for an essential Hindustan. His own hybridity, quite conversely affects his mission. What he encounters is an insurmountable complexity that feels his repertoire of experience, where every endeavour to distil a palpable and readily available sense of India has again and again been thwarted.

Let me get back to the debate between Jameson and Ahmad on national allegory. In Jameson's argument the reader from the first world, being faced with a third-world text, can hardly evade a sense of resistance and Jameson, while explicating the reason subtly infuses the politico-economic dimensions with the cultural developments of the three worlds. These third-world texts are, as he argues, not directed towards a first-world reader: "we sense, between ourselves and this alien text, the presence of another reader, of the *Other* reader, for whom a narrative, which strikes *us* as conventional or naïve, has a freshness of information and a social interest that *we* cannot share" (Jameson: 66, emphasis added). Here, this primary

difference between the self and the other (which might range from gender and race to social class and culture) is part of the superstructure, the base being the difference between the three worlds in terms of politico-economic development based on different degrees of capitalist penetration which has often been called, rather euphemistically, modernisation. What has been attempted here is a holistic approach to hold the social context responsible for the cultural representation and as the specific case in point is concerned, this Marxist model has been developed along with the model of uneven development of capital in the three worlds.

Ahmad's objection to this theory starts with Jameson's formulation of the "theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third-world literature", which he considers to be a purely polemical stance without any theoretical status whatsoever. He singles out the category *third world* and argues:

Polemics surely has a prominent place in all human discourses, especially in the discourse of politics, so the use of this term in loose, polemical context is altogether valid. But to lift it from the register of polemics and claim it as a basis for producing theoretical knowledge, which presumes a certain rigour in constructing the object of one's knowledge, is to misconstrue not only the term itself but even the world to which it refers. I shall argue in context, then, that there is no such thing as a 'Third World Literature' which can be constructed as an internally coherent object of knowledge.

(Ahmad: 96-97)

Ahmad further argues that such a stance can hardly evade the pitfall of becoming an altogether positivist reductionism, since the sweeping generalisation inevitably fails to take account of several fundamental issues – "of periodization, social and linguistic formations, political and ideological struggles" (Ahmad: 97) – implicated in literary production by aligning them within a single theoretical framework. The difficulty with such a generalisation starts with the fact

that not only all these issues have been clubbed together for the sake of the binary theory between the first and the third world, but this very theory also perilously perpetrates this rigid binarity to justify itself. The working of this binarity in Jameson is evident as he posits two different literary traditions based on the dichotomous relationship between the first and third world. The problem intensifies as Jameson seeks to define all non-canonical texts (which basically means non-western texts) on the basis of this tripartite division of the world, where the third-world texts become corollary to the so-called “Asiatic mode of production”(Jameson: 69)⁴³. and are held as the cultural representation of the aftermath of colonialism and imperialism. Though Jameson mellows his formulation considerably down through several hesitant distinctions, on the fifth page of his text we come across the following formulation:

All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel. (Jameson: 69, emphasis original)

In spite of his initial remark that it would be “presumptuous” to attempt any general theory of the so-called third-world literature, because it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the “enormous variety both of national cultures in the third world and of specific historical trajectories in each of these areas” within a single theoretical framework, here we hear from Jameson that it is necessary to arrive at some consensus, even though provisional, in order to generate “specific perspective for research and to convey a sense of the interest and value of these clearly neglected literatures for people formed by the values and stereotypes of a first-world culture” (Jameson: 68).

⁴³ Here Jameson, however, is working within the orthodox Marxist premises, where this particular coinage has wider connotations.

If this is the case, the argument to ensue should also attempt to theorize the radical difference between the two literary traditions in order to make the first-world reader comfortable with this *other* literature, notwithstanding the vast disagreements between the traditions. It would be more so since this difference between the two traditions of literature, when analysed in a Marxist model, seems to be part of the superstructure that has been structured and organised by the basic model of mode of production. But most conspicuous is the absence of any "description" of the third world – that is to say, Jameson almost always tantalizingly stops short of accrediting the vast geographical space, which he generalises as the "third world", any status in terms of its development vis-à-vis the penetration of capital. Though in his notes he explicitly refers to Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State* (1884), Emmanuel Terry's *Marxism and "Primitive" Societies* (1972) or Barry Hindss and Paul Hirst's *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (1975), it is always implied in the main text that he is treating this vast geographical space as essentially pre-capitalist or primitive only; and, therefore, it never comes across that his postulation of the third world as intrinsically different from the first has been mediated by the understanding that the third world represents outdated socio-political modes of advanced capital in the first world. This absence in the main text is the theoretical leap that enables Jameson to build up his succeeding formulation of the national allegory, and this needs to be delineated carefully.

This is an interesting manoeuvre as far as Jameson's overall schema is concerned. What would have been a reasonable chain of logic in an overtly Marxist analysis of the issue, that is, a statement highlighting the underlying principles of "pre-capitalist" third world, has conspicuously been evaded and what has rather been laid down is the "experience" of colonialism and imperialism as the unifying principle of the third world. While such an evasion provokes Ahmad to sharpen his argument against Jameson's theoretical step-jump, it also opens up Jameson's next phase of argument. If we concede Jameson's theoretical

manoeuvre, at least for the time being, it becomes quite distinct that the political category that necessarily follows such an exclusive stress on colonialism and imperialism is the *nation*, where nationalism becomes the only indigenous political mode available to posit against the onslaught of alien political domination. It is this valorisation of nationalism as the *only* ideology available to the third world that facilitates Jameson's argument to consider all third-world texts as *necessarily* "national allegory". What he foregrounds as part of his cognitive aesthetics of the third-world literature is a sense of (national) collectivity based on a simultaneity of the private/public domains in the third world when compared to the radical distinction of them in the first. "We have been trained", Jameson writes, "in a deep cultural conviction that the lived experience of our private existence is somehow incommensurable with the abstraction of economic science and political dynamics" (Jameson: 69). As a result one of the determinants of capitalist culture has been an intrinsic split between the private and the public, between the personal and the political, or, in other words, between 'Freud and Marx'. This split, which survives several theoretical attempts made to bridge the gap, has been one of the guiding powers behind the fashioning of the individual as well as the collective lives in the capitalist first world, and, consequently, this has also been the propelling force of the culture of the western realist and modernist novels.

But when it comes to the third world this distinction between the private and the public blurs away, yielding a contested public space that not only permeates the private, but shapes it also. This different relationship between the public and the private, or what Jameson describes as the "political dimension" to the "libidinal dynamic", is the chief source of the alienness of a third-world text vis-à-vis its first-world reader, and this is also the theoretical context of the "*national allegory*", since "*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*" (Jameson: 69, emphasis original). This identity of the two

domains has a deeper implication within the broader Marxist theoretical tradition, and it is precisely here that the question of allegory attains importance. What Lukacs calls "mapping", (Lukacs, 1993) as a form of grasping the social *totality*, relies heavily on a similar unified notion of the lived experience, and this is one of the determinants of the pre-capitalist (and, consequently, pre-reificative) world. In fact Lukacs proposes the category 'totality' as the chief difference of Marxism from bourgeois theory that promotes atomisation, and goes on to explain, "the category of totality, the all-pervasive supremacy of the whole over the parts is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and brilliantly transformed into the foundations of a wholly new science" (Lukacs: 27). And here allegory, as a representational system becomes crucial since it captures this essential *totality* by highlighting the interpenetration of these two domains - private and public - where the reader, more often than not, is offered the discomforting consciousness of the secret presence of one domain within the other. In fact, a historical trajectory of this cognitive function of allegory (which Lukacs calls 'mapping') can be shown within Marxist critical practice. This question of the distinct Marxist connotation of allegory I would take up in the next section; but what needs to be emphasised presently is the way Jameson infuses these two concepts - totality and allegory - in his binarity of the first and third worlds. The specific form of allegory, once in wide circulation in the west, has been discredited with the advent of Romanticism and consequent modernist symbolism or realism. Significantly, this time frame also coincides with the Industrial Revolution and ensuing capitalist proliferation as a result of which the following period, according to Jameson, saw the abundance of two different but mutually related incidents: the death of social *totality* as the split between the public and the private became unbridgably wide, and the form of allegory was liquidated within the western canon. But as far as the third world is concerned there is a resurgence of the

allegorical form precisely because, as Jameson argues, “the allegorical is profoundly discontinuous, a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysemia of the dream rather than the homogeneous representation of the symbol” (Jameson: 73).

CHAPTER: IV

Conclusion –

The rather schematic reading of these two texts, I would suggest, establishes two major arguments of this project. When we deal with the nationalist imagination, it would be better to bear in mind that we are making a plea for something similar to what Jameson calls ‘national allegory’ with some modification, where the idea is not only to foreground the auratic collectivity of the third world⁴⁴, but to suggest the irreducible complexity of nationalist politics. In the texts under consideration, for example, the emergence of the nation-space as a generic entity depends not only on a crude form of collectivity but on an organic imagination of the nation through homogenous empty space. Both in Rao and Desani the instantaneous presence of the nation operates as the Foucauldian ‘mirror’, both real and unreal and both possible and impossible space, combining the homogenous utopia of the national community and the heterotopic ground reality of politics. Imagination in such macro politics of constructing the nation operates as what I have called ‘spatial strategy’ or ideological hinge that combines together two different forms of emplacement – utopia and heterotopia.

In Rao, for example, the utopian imagination of the nation has largely been carried out within a cohesive social context and the national territory has chiefly been fashioned out of tradition. In an important sense, the sociological solidity of the society stems mainly from the collective cultural imagination of the community, and the imagination weaves the cultural practices and markers within the very social fabric. *Kanthapura*, in a sense, becomes a modern-day *Harikatha*, or even a *sthala-purana*, a narrative that submerges the territory into

⁴⁴ Fredric Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism”, *Social Text*, Vol.15 (Spring 1986). Jameson’s theorising quite unmistakably bears a nostalgic overtone of the early days of Marxist theorisation of the literary genre as evident in Lukacs and Benjamin. In a general way, even at the risk of being unsophisticated, this can broadly be hinted that Jameson’s formulation can be read in relation to contemporary

tradition. The overt reference of the *Harikatha* based on the life of Gandhi definitely points this out; but the narrative works in subtler ways as well. The form of *Kanthapura*, it has often been noted, works out the typical style of oral narration with long, winding sentences and a direct form of storytelling. What needs to be emphasised, however, is the point that such techniques heighten the *Harikathai* effect within the text itself, and, as I have suggested earlier, invent the tradition at a textual level. The invention/imagination is important spatially as well, because the tradition is in an important sense is also part of the territory.

In Desani, however, the invention is more fraught with a sense of incompatibility, where the subject-oriented imagination has almost always been pitted against the Proustian agenda of thinking out the corporeality of the nation. Hatterr's repeated endeavours to distil a palpable sense of Hindustan, like himself, cannot find any loci around which an accessible formation of the nation can be consolidated. The result is quite staggering: the narrative often takes heuristic turns, often breaking into sheer chaotic disorder, that foil any chance to arrive at what we have called a distillable sense of Hindustan. And it is here, I would suggest, we get to see the sheer dynamics of the mentalist category of imagination in the intellectual creation of the nation. The discursivity of the creation, as we might deduce, is based on a relentless dialectics between the subjective (as is evident in Desani) and the collective (as is evident in Rao) facets of imagination.

third-world fiction as taking the place that the epic does in relation to the novel in Lukacs' *The Theory of the Novel*, or that wisdom does in relation to information in Benjamin's "The Storyteller".

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