INTERROGATING INDIAN NATIONALISM: NARRATIVES FROM KASHMIR

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Interrogating Indian Nationalism: Narratives from Kashmir**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Introduction

Before I begin to speak about the story of nations and nationalisms I must tell my own story first. It is important to locate oneself in the story, for to tell is to get told too. One cannot seriously take stock of a generic concept such as the nation unless one begins to find a way to be constantly aware of one's own historic position. Our histories and experiences may be intricately bound up with the histories and experiences of nations (of those we call our own, and ones we call the "other"), but if we lose sight of the fluidity of our own position, we might run the risk of essentializing some identities as existing from eternity while others as having emerged from nowhere.

This is the dilemma one faces in understanding nationalisms in South Asia, where the notion of India as one nation, with a solid and continuous history dating back a number of millennia, has been naturalised, while other forms of belonging— communitarian, religious, tribal, or regional, are either relegated as sub-identities, or are seen as dangerous and, thus, intolerable. Sub-identities are seen as transitory (within the progressivist notion of Indian nationalism they are considered pre-modern), which will eventually give way to an unrivalled affiliation to the Indian national identity. Other identities, which have begun to look nationalistic in form, with statist demands, are seen as malignant and, therefore, to be erased.

Having grown up in a region, and at a time, where questions of rival sovereignties and competing narratives of nations contested bitterly and openly, it put me in a uniquely liminal position where I felt a sense of belonging and *un*belonging simultaneously. I felt a sense of oneness with Kashmiris, while Indian nationalism which asked for my unflinching loyalty, seemed to contradict its own democratic claims in the way it sought to force this injunction upon me.[1] It is not the idea of Kashmiri nationalism that made me feel solidarity toward fellow Kashmiris, but it was, what I saw as the steam-rolling idea of Indian nationalism and its inherent intolerance for diverse loyalties, which the Kashmiris, like many other communities in India, resisted. Was Indian nationalism's intolerance for multiple loyalties unique and *inherent* in it? Or, was it simply a result of imbibing the modern state conceptions of absolute sovereignty and territorial integrity?

Before 1947, when the British Empire ruled the Indian subcontinent, it was possible to share sovereignty. Kashmir,[2] for example, was ruled by a ruler, who was the final authority in the state, yet he paid homage to the British crown. Even later when the Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government without referring to the popular will, it was initially still possible for Kashmir to have its own President (*Sadr-e-Riyasat*), its own Prime Minister, its own flag, its own constitution, its own highest court, and yet remain within the ambit of India. The question, then, is: how were the centripetal urges of the Indian union responsible for accelerating the incipient identity clashes? Was the demand for a singular highest identity just a natural outcome of the modernity of the state? How were the conception and the foundations of Indian nationalism responsible for alienating a number of communities from the new Indian state, whose creation was already preceded by a bloody partition on communal lines?

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[1] This was literally the case in the early 1990s when Indian soldiers would beat up Kashmiri people for refusing to say they are Indians. During identification parades people were required to say "Jai Hind", forced to salute the Indian flag, and sing the Indian national anthem, Jana Gana Mana.

[2] I use 'Kashmir' instead of State of Jammu and Kashmir for two reasons: the State of Jammu and Kashmir was not simply constituted by Jammu and Kashmir alone, but had other regions like Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan too; when I use Kashmir I speak of those regions of the original princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which have in the past few decades seen the movement for self-determination. It is obvious that regions like Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, and some regions of Udhampur have seen militancy, but are not imagined as part of Kashmir, while what is referred to as 'Azad' Kashmir has not seen much militancy, but is still considered by Kashmiris (and by people of Azad Kashmir) as part of Kashmir. Another major reason is simply the convenience of the term "Kashmir".

In the process of the centralisation of the state, the "nation" consolidated its own story. There was one story to be remembered, a linear narrative of the nation's teleological movement toward its final delivery. Since memory always works in tandem with forgetting, the national story also required people in its own preconceived territorial realm to forget their own separate, unique historical experiences, and embrace the one constructed by a few elite. The memories and experiences of the national elite, and their knowledge of the past, became the mainstream history of India. The knowledge, memories, and experiences of people from the margins or of those who became minorities, or those who were discovered subsequently deep inside forests, for instance, were somehow to be connected to the *larger* national story, if at all.

Amidst the violence of imposing one institutionalized history on the memories of people, and the resistance of those memories against the hegemonic narratives, I was driven to seek and understand the nature of Indian nationalism. Was Indian nationalism simply a derivative of Western nationalism, both in form and in content? Were there any significant exceptional qualities to it? Its form was decidedly modern, but its content was not entirely lifted out of Western philosophy. Having lived my life in Kashmir and North India, I came to believe it is not the modern *secular*-nationalism (of India) which is fighting an ideological battle against forces of religious fanaticism (in Kashmir), as we were being told. It *is* a modern nationalism, yes, but one that has its fount in a modern reinterpretation of Hinduism, a political Hinduism, which is fighting a territorial war with communities it has not been able to conceive of as its equal. It is important to talk about the Hindu underpinnings of the Indian polity, because after many years of India's independence, India's institutions, which derived their organising principles from the British imperial system, are wearing away under the overwhelming weight of Hindu consciousness. In no way is this an argument against, what Ashis Nandy[3] has aptly described as, the "little cultures of traditional Hinduism," or Hindu values per se, but against a modernised Hinduism, which has been recast into an organic, territorial form that threatens communities that don't fall under this new Hindu realm. Hinduism, in its modern avatar, like the Indian state, has also acquired a centripetal pull. The role of

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[3] Ashis Nandy et al. (2005) "Creating a Nationality: The Ramjanamabhumi Movement and the Fear of the Self" in Ashis Nandy (ed.) *Exiled at Home*, New Delhi: OUP.

Hindu reformers and thinkers, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Vivekananda, in what many have called "semiticisation"[4] has been immense: they made Hinduism look more like the Semitic faiths in their efforts to "cleanse" society of its ills and, thus, formulated a doctrinal monotheism. The three conceptions, thus, materialised almost simultaneously: India, as a unified territorial entity; nationalism, which sought to impose a singular identity on diverse communities in the subcontinent; and, the modern centralising Hinduism, which excluded some religious communities, while assimilating others.

Kashmir, where I grew up, was mostly Muslim. By the time I began to take interest in social issues, Kashmir was undergoing great socio-political turbulences. Not only was an entire generation of Muslim youth rebelling against the older values of Kashmiri society, but it was also a generation bursting with energy to alter its stagnant political condition. Over the years, a strong Muslim Kashmiri consciousness had developed which was constantly referring to movements in other Muslim regions, in Palestine, in Afghanistan. In Kashmir, Congress politicians from Delhi were communalising the situation, claiming the resurgence among Muslim Kashmiris automatically meant a threat to Hindu Kashmiri interests (Bose 2003: 90). Hindu Kashmiris still occupied an overwhelmingly large proportion of government posts, and the rising education among Muslims over the previous years now had made it implausible that Muslims were themselves responsible for their sad plight, a constant refrain among politicians. This gave enough ammunition to Muslim communalists, who began to raise the bogey of Kashmiri Hindus being responsible for the condition of Muslims,[5] while at the same time, some Hindu Kashmiri leaders had begun to vociferously speak the language of Hindu-nationalism. News of events in India, like the *Shilanyas* ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya found a bitter reception in Kashmir, so did the frequently volatile communal tension in Jammu. It was impossible to miss the rising resentment of urban Muslims and Hindus against each other.

These were the years of a youth bulge in Kashmir. A large proportion of the population was young, and they were increasingly getting educated, yet unable to find

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[4] See Martha Nussbaum (2007), *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black.

[5] In 1986 brief anti-Hindu violence broke out in southern Kashmir, after which G. M. Shah, who had been made chief minister of J&K by congress intervention, was removed (Bose 2003: 91).

employment. The patronage politics in Kashmir, fostered over the years by the National Conference (NC) and Congress, had ensured that it was through political bosses alone that state employment could be possible. It gave rise to nepotism, with only certain sections of the society with political connections managing to find government jobs.[6] Government jobs were quite sought-after because they meant power in a traditional sense. Thus, even a lowly-paid government employee enjoyed more respect than a farmer. The other reason was very little industrial development in Kashmir, which could not, as a result, adequately absorb the growing working population of Kashmir that was pushed out of the agricultural sector as the per capita agricultural land-holding was reducing fast with every successive generation. Consequently there was bitterness toward the politicians and leaders but no democratic way was available to dislodge these powerful them, since the Indian government kept rigging the polls constantly to keep their favourite men in positions of power (Bose 2003: 48-49).

The Indian government's interventions in favour of these politicians, and the Kashmiri Hindu grip on the top and middle-level bureaucracy, was seen by common Muslim Kashmiris as a viciously knit power-mechanism which could not break down easily, or on its own. Some Kashmiri activists had begun to think about how it was the nature of India itself which was buttressing those forces within Kashmir that Muslim Kashmiris had perceived as oppressive. Ideas of Maqbool Bhat, the founder of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and those of the leaders of the Al-Fateh[7] group, were permeating the society. Bhat's hanging in Delhi's Tihar jail was widely believed to be a political revenge. When the 1987 assembly elections approached, Muslim Kashmiris believed the new coalition of Muslim parties, the Muslim United Front (MUF), would upstage the long-held Indian-government supported dominance of NC. The election process and results proved to be the proverbial last straw. Widespread rigging in favour of NC was reported, and the MUF leaders were arrested (Schofield 1996: 231).

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[6] A number of Kashmiris that I spoke to recently told me that after Pandits, it is the Pirs who have occupied most of the important jobs, and enjoy way too much influence compared to their number in Kashmir. Pirs are those families who believe that their ancestors were Muslims who traveled to Kashmir from Central Asia, and unlike other Muslim Kashmir were not converts from Hindus.

[7] Al-Fateh was one of the first dissident Muslim Kashmiri groups with an express aim to liberate Kashmir from India. It was formed in early 1970s but by the time full blown insurgency began in Kashmir in 1990, most of the Al-Fateh members had been arrested.

In a number of localities in my hometown, Anantnag, youths clashed with police. Stone-pelting duels became a daily affair, until one day I heard gun shots and bombs. The armed rebellion had begun. Daily news claimed killings of some important people. At the same time, the government clamped down on the public protests. In Srinagar, and other places, news of massacres by Indian forces spread. Militants assassinated some important Hindu leaders and bureaucrats. Hindus felt threatened, which triggered their flight from Kashmir. The Government became much more ruthless in suppressing the insurgency after a majority of Hindus had left (Bose 2003: 109). By 1991, the armed insurrection had become successful in not only shaking up Indian rule in Kashmir, but also in projecting the Kashmir cause onto the world stage. A number of other world events, however, like the Palestinian *intifada*, the Gulf War, and the imploding Soviet empire, kept Kashmir's popular armed struggle from getting any significant attention.

In India, the Ram Temple movement was in full force, and it was spilling over into Kashmir. The Babri Mosque was demolished in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, by Hindu activists. A little over a month later, in a symbolic fashion, one of the biggest leaders of the Hindu-rightwing Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), Murli Manohar Joshi, decided to launch his "Ekta Yatra", Unity Rally, into Kashmir. Joshi, one of the main leaders of the Ram Temple movement, flew to the historic Lal Chowk in Srinagar on India's Republic Day, January 26, 1992, with entire Kashmir under severe curfew, and hoisted the Indian flag. Muslim Kashmiris saw it not only as an assertion of Indian dominance over Kashmir, but also an assertion of its Hindu character. Joshi's much-hyped visit to Kashmir resulted in large scale protests by Kashmiris.

I did not register these events in my mind on my own; rather, these were the content of daily debates in Kashmir during the early 1990s. Popular belief in Kashmir was that the Kashmir issue would be resolved early, because the world-over small nationalities were gaining their own states. Almost twenty years have passed since that time, and the Kashmir issue has become mired in larger international issues. Mainstream notions about the Kashmiri insurgency are now coloured by discourses about Islamist terrorism; Kashmir is seen as part of an international movement of Islamic resurgence. Before the insurgency had started Kashmir was being discussed within the terms of India-Pakistan relations. As already pointed out, it was only during the brief period from 1989

to September 11, 2001, when Kashmiris had, to a large extent, reclaimed their own voice. Within Kashmir, old and established politicians were not being discussed any more; it was new young men, men from the locality, who were seen as heralding a new era. Earlier leaders, like Sheikh Abdullah, had made extensive use of an Islamic vocabulary in their politics but it was not viewed with reference to civilizational clashes. As soon as a similar vocabulary was used to express national demands, like the right to self-determination or independence, the context of this old language discursively shifted to fit with narratives of the global resurgence of Islam.[8]

In 1998, I left Kashmir to study in a north Indian university. It was a paradigmatic shift for me. In a number of ways, my entire vantage point changed. I was beginning to look at Kashmir from an entirely new position. In Kashmir, I was born as a member of the majority community, which saw itself as a nation. I had cartographically imagined Kashmir at the centre of India, Pakistan, China, and Central Asia. Viewing it from Delhi, it was just a border state, the periphery. I was now part of the India's Muslim minority, which was quite big compared to the actual number of Muslim Kashmiris, but quite small next to the Hindu majority. In Kashmir, I never had to call myself a Muslim Kashmiri; it is the same way that Hindus in India don't call themselves Hindu Indians (Indian and Hindu identity is not seen as mutually exclusive, like in Pakistan, Pakistani and Muslim are synonymous). In Kashmir, I was just another Kashmiri. In India the consciousness of being a Muslim was overwhelming. I began to increasingly take interest in Indian Muslims' issues, even though Indian Muslims saw me as Kashmiri, and quite distinct from them. Due to the vitiating communal atmosphere in India, where Muslims were often questioned in the public sphere for their loyalty to India, it was not easy to call oneself simply an Indian; even though one of the major projects in modern India has been to promote the feeling of a unified Indianness—that Indian identity is hierarchically on top compared to other identities. These shifting view points did not simply provide me with excellent opportunities to tie in my life experiences into a study of the Indian and Kashmiri nationalisms, but they also served like vignettes for the shifting state of sub-continental identities.

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[8] Remember, a similar vocabulary during the Khilafat Movement of early 1920s, had been approved by Indian National Congress and M K Gandhi as nationalistic, and desirable.

Before I could begin a study of Indian nationalism, I felt a sojourn through the intellectual history of the idea of nation was important. The first chapter captures the major debates about nation and nationalism through the ideas of some of the major thinkers of the modern era. The idea of the nation is shown to have tremendous elasticity in acquiring multiple forms: spiritual, political; primordial, imagined; pedagogical, performative.

Chapter two begins with the description of the independence of India and the symbols of the new state. It works its way through the ideas and actions of Nehru and later Hindu-nationalists, and traces their origins in the late 19th century Bengali Hindu writings. It attempts to show how the current politics in India, as well as the shape India eventually took, is based in the way India was conceived.

The third chapter talks about Kashmir from multiple points of view, from within as well as from outside. To elaborate further, I discuss the past century of politics in Kashmir as understood from within. At the same time, I also look at the new realities brought about by newly-formed India to give a synoptic view of Kashmir vis-à-vis the Indian state and its nationalism. A brief survey of the sources of Kashmiri identity is also brought into the picture to understand how Kashmiri nationalism has acquired doggedness in opposing Indian nationalism.

In June 2008, when I was giving finishing touches to the final draft of this thesis, Kashmir erupted into massive public protests yet again. This time the protests were so powerful and public participation so vehement that it surprised the estimates of even the pro-independence leaders in Kashmir. A number of people I spoke to told me they had witnessed such powerful protests only during the early years of the armed movement of the 90s and not since then.[9] The issue was, on the face of it, not a very important one, at least not important enough to warrant 6 deaths, more than a thousand injured, and 8 full days of violence and shut down. The coalition government of Jammu and Kashmir had allotted around 40 hectares of forestland into the hands of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board

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[9] *Greater Kashmir* daily had big banner headlines reading "Back to the 90s" and "Kashmir Out on Roads" (see Greater Kashmir, 26 June, 2008 and June 28, 2008). Hindustan Times of June 25, 2008, put it like this: "Land transfer singes Valley".

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(SASB),[10] to create residential facilities for Hindu pilgrims. Indian newspapers simply characterized the Kashmiris' movement against land transfer as communal, but in reality it was one more instance where Kashmiri nationalism and religious identity fused, with the latter only providing a context in which the former played itself out.

It is tempting, given the discourse surrounding the "War on Terror", to see this brief movement as an assertion of a universal Islamic identity over the Kashmiri national one.[11] The contest over a piece of forest land was portrayed as fundamentalist Islam-driven. However, Kashmir's land has not been traditionally seen as constituting the sacred geography of Islam. Sacred places of Islam are far away in the West Asia; the forest land deep inside the mountains of Kashmir has not seized any religious imagination of Muslims in general, or Kashmiris in particular. The struggle of Muslim Kashmiris cannot be seen in global Islamist terms. For similar reasons, it can also not be compared to "religious nationalism"[12] of movements like Zionism, Hindu nationalism, or the Khalistani movement, whose national imagination is pegged around the conception of a holy land and its liberation.

This is not to say that religious symbolism, in polemical sense, was not used in the June 2008 protests. For instance, in the northern town of Sopore, I witnessed thousands of protestors marching down the streets, full of passion. One huge banner they carried read in Kashmiri, "*Harm-e khoat bod chuy arz-e Kashmir*"—Land of Kashmir is more important than Mecca—a very unlikely, or as orthodox Muslim scholars would say, a rather blasphemous, comparison for Muslims to draw. Amid chants demanding complete independence for Kashmir, there were also incidents where green flags, ambiguously representing both wider Muslim identity and an affiliation with the modern Pakistani state, were put up at important and sensitive places. One was put up at the same place where Murli Manohar Joshi had come to hoist the Indian flag, almost two decades

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[10] Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) was formed around 2001 to look after the management of the Amarnath pilgrimage. (The pilgrims climb up the mountains to reach a cave that houses an icicle believed to be Hindu deity Lord Shiva's phallus-shaped symbol). The head of SASB is the governor, who is the representative authority of Indian state in Kashmir. After the agitation in Kashmir, government gave management of the pilgrimage in the hands of the state's department of tourism.

[11] See for example Praveen Swami's "Piety, paranoia, and Kashmir's politics of hate", in *The Hindu*, July 1, 2008

[12] For an elaboration of this idea see Mark Juergensmeyer (1993), *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

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before.[13] However, these contradictory meanings within the same motifs, and spaces, show the amorphousness of Kashmiri public sphere. The fluidity of the Kashmiri struggle suggests some of its elements have gone beyond referring to the traditional statist components of territory and absolute sovereignty. ('Territory' and 'land' here in conceptual terms are different). The issues raised were not even communal, for people I spoke to, and speeches that the movement's leaders gave, pointed out that protests were not happening against the Amarnath *yatra* (pilgrimage) per se, or against Hindus. The way in which Hindu pilgrims were constantly reassured by the protestors and their leaders, also bore this point out well.

The land transfer was, rather, perceived as part of an elaborate Indian effort to neutralize the political demand for an independent Kashmir.[14] A constant refrain was made that India was using a Hindu religious mark to assert its nationalism; that by bringing in hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims into Kashmir the Indian government was trying to psychologically reclaim Kashmir. Government propaganda, on its fever pitch just before the protests started, claimed that the increased inflow of *Yatris* (pilgrims) was a sure sign that "normalcy" had *returned* to Kashmir. Kashmiris, I spoke to, among whom some are working in the government itself, found the definition of "normalcy" curious enough: for India, they said, it was 'normal' when conditions are good for hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims to be in Kashmir; Muslim Kashmiris found this idea of 'normal' as unacceptable. A constant cry in protests was "justice before peace", thus somehow taking the discourse away from its political context to an ethical plane.

A number of people also believed that India was conspiring to make demographic changes in Kashmir, where Muslims would become an inconsequential minority.[15] These fears, perhaps misplaced, were no less fuelled by other interesting goings-on during this period: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who arrived in the valley in April, announced a huge financial bonanza for Hindu Kashmiris to return to Kashmir. He also announced the creation of residential facilities for Hindus. The trip and

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[13] See "When green flags were put atop Clock Tower", *Greater Kashmir*, June 30, 2008.
[14] Read statements of Syed Ali Shah Geelani "I Caution my Nation, wake up: Geelani", in *Greater Kashmir* June 24, 2008.
[15] Geelani was reported to have said: "Transfer of forest land and construction of structures on it is a part of conspiracy to change the demography of the state...India is doing all this to perpetuate its occupation in the state" in "Arun Kumar draws flak", *Greater Kashmir*, June 19, 2008.

the announcements triggered anxieties among Muslim Kashmiris that the government might be trying to create Hindu settlements in Kashmir on the model of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. People on the streets were also referring to Panun Kashmir's plans to create a homeland for Hindu Kashmiris to the north and east of the river Jhelum (which virtually constitutes almost half of the Kashmir valley).[16] Since the land allotted fell into an area that Panun Kashmir has demanded, it was bound to create fear. Yasin Malik, a pro-independence leader based in Kashmir, voiced these fears when he accused SASB of trying to "create a Hindu society in Baltal (area where the land was allotted)".[17] Around the same time, Jammu and Kashmir's outgoing governor, S. K. Sinha, announced his plan to start the Sharda Peeth University, which is touted to be a Hindu Kashmiri educational and cultural institution. Then a few days later, the Indian President arrived in Srinagar to inaugurate the Institute of Kashmir Studies in the University of Kashmir, which again created a controversy because of its vision document and the polarising arguments of its main votaries.[18] All in all, these successive events created ground for Muslim Kashmiri anxieties to grow. The intensity of protests was no little a result of political stagnation over the last few years. The much-hyped peace process between India and Pakistan, which promised movement on the final resolution of the Kashmir issue, was becoming redundant with nothing substantial coming out of it.

In response to Muslim Kashmiri protests against land transfer, which not only forced the state government to revoke the order but also led to the government's eventual fall, the Hindu nationalists all over India violently protested the revocation of the order. BJP leaders along with leaders of other Hindu-right organisations made a constant refrain to Hindu religious nationalism during these protests. One demand raised was the abrogation of the article 370 of the Indian constitution which theoretically gives a special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Threats were issued to disrupt Haj pilgrimage of Indian Muslims, and block supplies to the Kashmir valley. Mainstream Indian journalists categorised these Hindu-right protests as blatantly communal in nature.[19]

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[16] Panun Kashmir is an organisation that works for the interests of Hindu Kashmiris. For more on Panun Kashmir, see A. G. Noorani, "In Pursuit of Trifurcation", in *Frontline*, April 14-27, 2001.
[17] See "Yasin Malik threatens fast over land issue", *The Hindu*, June 24, 2008.
[18] Read my article "Kashmir: One subject, many stories" in *Greater Kashmir*, June 30, 2008.
[19] See *The Hindu* and *Greater Kashmir* from July 3 to July 7, 2008.

More than anything, the events leading up to the protests of June 2008 may have highlighted the nature of the nationalistic contest over Kashmir: that Indian and Kashmiri nationalisms may some how be, to a large extent, similar in form. The content is different though. Religious rhetoric of Kashmiris hides the more secular aspects of Kashmiri nationalism, while the secular rhetoric of Indian state camouflages its underlying religious nationalism. In practical terms, at any rate, the consequences of Indian Hindu nationalism are exceedingly more perilous than the Kashmiri nationalism. And this last aspect is a crucial one.

In any study, as Cynthia Keppley Mahmood points out in her work on Sikh militancy,[20] what we write has practical consequences for actually living humans. The old social science notion of "objective truth" assumes its own subjects to be abstractions. In situations where power differentials between contesting groups is vast, to remain "objective" and 'balance the story' as in journalese, may put the detached scholar unwittingly in the camp of the powerful. As I have mentioned earlier, my own Muslim Kashmiri background does play a huge role in shaping my ideas, but my experiences living in different situations, have put me in doubt about many of them. The movement for independence in Kashmir has been fraught with numerous injustices. Militants at a number of places, and especially in times when their power peaked, resorted to unjustified killings. This knowledge has tormented me in my search for my own identity, since I could not identify with individuals who committed such crimes in the name of ideology. Yet, in a collective sense, their struggle was something to be looked at closely, and even sympathetically. Possibly, what they were *fighting to create* was not much different than what they were *fighting against*. To me, however, this uncomfortable knowledge logically has not created a basis for my neutrality. But that doesn't mean I could justify all acts of violence by militants, or even accept uncritically notions prevalent in the larger Kashmiri society. In anthropological terms, therefore, even though I am an insider but attitudinally I have not "gone native".

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[20] See her, *Fighting for Faith and Nation: Dialogues with Sikh Militants*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press (1996).

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Chapter One

Revisiting the Concept of Nation

> There is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live it.
>
> HOMI J. BHABHA (1994)

> FUELLIN: Captain Mac Morris, I think, look you, under your correction, there is not many of your nation—
>
> MAC MORRIS: Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain and a bastard and a knave and a rascal? What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation?
>
> SHAKESPEARE, in *Henry V* (1599)

I

"Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?" Ernest Renan asked famously in his 1882 lecture at Sorbonne[1]. Defining what is 'nation' is as difficult as to find the one who first asked for its definition. I will, therefore, begin in the middle, where I face neither originary anxieties nor the embarrassment of conforming to a looming future. "I propose to analyse with you an idea, simple in appearance, but capable of the most dangerous misunderstanding" Renan cautioned before beginning. Renan was neither the first to ask this question, nor any more successful than others to describe it—a concept whose long intellectual journey has afforded it a place in both the divine as well as the human realms.

In West, where the history of nations and nationalisms has been intensely enacted, and documented, 'nation' found a conceptual trace in the Genesis of the Hebrew Bible

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[1] Renan's essay "What is a Nation?" appeared in his book *The Poetry of the Celtic Races and Other Studies,* which was translated by William G. Hutchinson in London in 1896. This essay has been reproduced in a number of subsequent anthologies on the topic of nationalism. See especially Homi J. Bhabha, ed. (1990) *Nation and Narration,* New York: Routledge.

which made the first associations between land, language, and kinship explicit in the story of dispersion of Noah's sons after the Deluge. It was Giambattista Vico, writing in 1725 in his *The New Science*, who put nation firmly within the human sphere (Pecora 2001: 1-3). However, Vico's work only led to the subjectivisation of the *nations*, but did not demystify the *concept of nation*. It simply meant: Divine or not, nation was a topic for analyses and explanation.

The German Romantic notions of the nation were expressed more or less in Kant's student Herder, a Hellenist who proposed an organic understanding of the national, or *Volk*, culture. For him, a common language in a common territory marked a nation; its spirit expressed in its inherited myths and traditions.[2] Herder, therefore, becomes one of the earliest precursors of the ethnic national identity formulation. Meinecke later took up Herder's notion of *Volk* and called it *Kulturnation*—'an extended family with one national characteristic'[3] (Pecora 2001:88).

An influential intellectual streak, however, continued to see divinity in nations. In the last decade of the 18th century, Joseph de Maistre, a champion of monarchy and state religion, wrote: "...man cannot bestow rights on himself; he can only defend those which have been granted to him by a superior power; and these rights are good customs, good because they are not written and because no beginning or author can be assigned to them."[4] His was a desperate attempt to salvage monarchy during an event which transformed the course of subsequent histories in the world: the French Revolution. Hegel in Germany and Burke in England shared Maistre's perspective: They recognized that communally accepted *and* religiously-based norms—which Hegel called *Sittlichkeit*—were an essential element of positive law (Pecora 2001: 4, emphasis mine).

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[2] Herder accepted Montesquieu's understanding that climate affects character; he was critical of European 'export' of their culture to Asia and Africa. He argued that language and myth can be used to chart a "physico-geographical history of descent and diversification of our species". See Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of History of Mankind*, (1784-91). Also see F. M. Barnard (trans. and Ed.) (1969) *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[3] Friedrich Meinecke, in 1908, made a distinction between *Kulturnation*—"the largely passive cultural community" and *Staatsnation*—"the active self-determining political nation". Anthony D. Smith, for one, has used this formulation in his work on national identity.

[4] See Joseph de Maistre, *Study on Sovereignty* (composed in 1793-8, first published 1884), excerpted from *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, ed. and trans. Jack Lively, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965, p.108 (Cited in Pecora: 2001).

It was acknowledged by others too that all nations depended on myths of origin, and that these myths flourished because the early history of nations was unknown or forgotten, as, for example, Renan argued (Kramer 1997: 533). These myths were generated by humans over time. But Maistre and Burke criticised any attempt (especially Robespierre's) to invent a new religion of the state *ex-nihilo*. Maistre believed that the character of modern nationalist allegiance and patriotic sacrifice was a religious phenomenon; the government with its dogmas and mysteries was a true religion, which could not be submitted to any individual's mind for that will destroy it; its life was lived in the national mind; and the political faith was nothing but a creed.[5] As Pecora (2001:6) points out, "What Maistre (as advocate) and Durkheim (as sociologist) glimpsed was the degree to which modern national identity, whether already enshrined in a state or still in the process of consolidation, would become the modern secular religion".

For Hegel nation represents a unified whole. "It is the matured totality which...constitutes *one* Being, the spirit of *one* People. To it the individual members belong; each unit is the Son of his Nation."[6] It will not be totally irrelevant to quickly flag Hegel's different notions about nation in the East and that in the West, since our discussion will move towards that direction also. Hegel's universal history, embracing the zeitgeist of the 19th Century, but also in coherence with his general philosophical attitude, conceives each nation as representing one animating spirit or collective individual in a development that follows the sun's trajectory from the despotism of the East, where consciousness is simple and undifferentiated, to the flowering of the World Spirit in Western religion, art, science, and philosophy.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, drawing from Herder and Hegel in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) described nation as a people created historically according to a "natural law of divine development". For him nations are eternal in spirit, but their practical continuity depends on the development of a conscious national will in harmony with that spirit. For Fichte, diverging from Herder, state is subordinate to the nation: while state involves government of human life, it is not something which is primary and

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[5] One can notice that on this subject Maistre's secular echo can be found in Durkheim's work.

[6] See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover Publications, 1956, 52-3, emphasis as in the original). Hegel rejected the Kantian dualism in favour of a unified view of reality, in which subjective perception and the objective world were dialectical moments in the unfolding of the absolute knowledge.

which exists for its own sake, but is merely the means to the "higher purpose of the eternal, regular, and continuous development of what is purely human in this nation". Pecora (2001) points out that this formulation allowed Fichte to acknowledge that the German nation and the German state had never up to that point been the same. Fichte insisted that the two were divinely destined to coincide.[7] His arguments supporting education's role in the complete destruction of the freedom of will in the larger move toward the necessity of cultivating the will of the nation-state was eventually taken up by Hitler who visualised "a national organism: A Germanic State of the Germanic Nation", as the instrument that would reverse through a millennial Reich the degeneration of the Aryan race caused by the Jews.

This brings us back to Renan. His influential essay "What is a Nation?" questioned Fichte's organic understanding of nation and state. For Renan there are no nations that could trace a history into antiquity; they are loosely held aggregates.[8] Pecora (2001) states there are two possible consequences that can result from these observations for Renan: First, nations must not be confounded with either biological or linguistic races; and the second, one should not attribute to linguistic groups a "sovereignty analogous to really existent peoples".[9] But my purpose here is not to go into Renan's prescriptive side so early.

There is an aspect to Renan's thinking which in early 1990s made contemporary theorists and thinkers resurrect him. Nation for Renan still refers to a "spiritual principle" and to a material substrate of land, but its "large-scale solidarity" is a product of fusion enabled by selective processes of memory and forgetting, by the reification of a shared glorious past and the deployment of this solidified memory *in the present* as an object of consent and communal, proleptic imagination: "We are what you were; we *will be* what you are" (Baucom: 1992 emphasis mine both places). The most crucial aspect in his

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[7] Germany as a single nation-state would not exist for decades after Fichte's *Adresses*. This formulation would help us understand in the following chapters a number of similarly formulated arguments regarding India and the Hindu nation, or the two parts of the 'divided' Kashmir. It also reminds us of Lord Acton's remarks regarding the partition of Poland: "..a nation demanding to be unified in a state—a soul, as it were, wandering in search of a body in which to begin life all over again".

[8] In Renan's view, nations are historically delineated political forms that can be at most dated back only to the end of what he calls 'Teutonic Invasion' of the fifth to the tenth century, and instead of being a result of a peaceful development of *one* people in the same territory, they were born amidst conflict between warring dynasties.

[9] Pecora feels it could possibly be a reference to existent nation-states.

thinking emerges from this "will be" formulation—the aspect of nation's performativity. Renan insists that "nations are not...eternal" as Fichte believed but something which depends on a constant popular affirmation and re-affirmation: "A nation's existence is...a daily plebiscite". Renan's consensual principle of a nation's act and performativity is expressed as a counter to the divisive politics of race, language, geography and religion, which was a staple among his predecessors and contemporaries. Renan's ideas have been embraced as a herald of the postmodern celebration of cultural hybridity *within* nation-states; which is evidently why Homi Bhabha chose "What is a Nation?" as the inaugural essay in his edited volume of essays titled *Nation and Narration*.

Before we move to Bhabha, though, we need to take our concept—the nation—through the post-World War II debates around it. It is a time when German Romantic understanding of a nation goes on the back-foot, in the face of a severe indictment it receives from an understanding that bases itself in the Enlightenment Rationality.

II

"Was ist ein Volk?" Habermas asked, more than a century after Renan, in his address at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt/Main[10]. I will again begin in the middle—the middle of things, not the centre of the 20th century, but in the middle of debates around which nations are merging and emerging; *in medias res*, where the story comes to us in flashbacks. Habermas had chosen to speak about the Germanists' Assembly of 1846 where philologists, historians, and the jurists from different parts of the German federation gathered at Frankfurt with the purpose of founding a union of the three disciplines of German language, German history and German law. The meeting he was speaking of was animated by the spirit of Romanticism and its delegates had given a call to purify the German language from what was seen as foreign words and expressions. They spoke of the *Volksgeist* (the spirit of a people), 'a people' defined by one of its participants Jacob Grimm "as the essence of all those people who speak the same

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[10] "What is a People? The Frankfurt 'Germanists Assembly' of 1846 and the Self-Understanding of the Humanities in the *Vormarz*" was first published in Germany in 1998 in *Die postnationale Konstellation: Politische Essays*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

language". This spirit of a people, grounded in the history of *its* language, is continuous and affords the nation-people organicity.

Habermas' anti-historicist anti-identitarian critique of the notion of "the spirit of a people" shows how Germanists' particularistic, organic conception of the language, and nation, which sought to purify it from foreign ad-mixtures, not only led to leveling out of other particularities (dialect forms of German) but also, in the case of nation, to the disastrous Third Reich. Habermas (2001) spotted a number of contradictions in the Germanists' project. He argues that whoever uses a naturalized conception of language as a definition of 'a people' and its spirit needs to delimit the nation unambiguously in time and space, and thus eschew the *constructive* character of national unification conceived as the production of a modern nation of citizens. Since a temporal continuity of 'a people' echoes a spatial continuity, it becomes problematic because the natural facts of a linguistic geography does not lend the linguistic community be coextensive with the nation, thus militating against the formation of a liberal constitutionalist order, as was desired by many Germanists. Habermas also criticized the endorsement of the notion, found in Hegel and Schelling, of a stubborn individuality of the particular within the structure of an organic whole as opposed to the abstract and the general. He acknowledges that "philosophy appropriated this very opposition as the problem of a contradictory moment of *reason* itself; whereas for historicism, concepts for the rational and the general remained lacking" (2001: 9 emphasis added). For Habermas this irrational element in the demand for linguistic purity extended later into a militant argument for national/racial purity.

Habermas replaces historicist national chauvinism, derived from the idea of an originary, homogeneous and clearly defined 'nation of the people', by a normative notion of a people who have freely chosen fellowship and desire democratic self-determination. The freely chosen fellowship becomes an ethical, free and political moment in the existence of a people, and legitimates their demand for political independence.

As Kramer (1997) suggests, the texts about nationalism have always drawn perspective and passion from the evolving political and cultural contexts in which their authors have lived, one may quickly therefore point out that the context in which Habermas is writing is one where European countries are transforming themselves into a

union—*Die postnationale Konstellation*—that prides in its "normative power".[11] And ironically it is also a time when, on the same continent, national feelings in Balkans are steaming. Habermas' understanding of a nation in the context of contemporary Europe helps us avoid reaching any kind of closure on a nation, as a subject and as an object. The contextualization of Habermas' narrative of a nation alone is not sufficient, though; it has to be viewed within the larger modern liberal-rational context that is afforded to European thinkers by the Enlightenment. Although Habermas is quite aware of this context, not least because of the postmodern criticism liberal-rational paradigm had to face since 1970s and 80s, his universalistic arguments still betray the old Eurocentrism.[12]

The contemporary rational liberal understanding of a nation more or less assumes shape in Hans Kohn's and Elie Kedouri's writings. Kohn argued that nationalism developed during the Enlightenment in response to the intellectual and political crisis that accompanied the desacralisation of the monarchy and the rise of individualism. Writing in America as an exile from Nazi-controlled Czechoslovakia, Kohn stated the idea of the nation had an intellectual history, but he could not specify how the idea becomes part of the everyday life of people.[13]

For Kedouri nationalism emerged from "guilt, indignation, and moral passion...powerful and corrosive feelings of guilt". He argued that as an ideology nationalism is irrational, narrow, hateful and destructive. His alternative is empire, whose values he expounds over nation (Chatterjee 1986: 7). He condemned nationalism as a discourse of disappointed, frustrated intellectuals who mostly repeated the mistakes that German Romantic theorists had made in the era of French Revolution (Kramer 1997: 535). It was an illusory set of "eternal" truths based in Romantic metaphysics, which he

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[11] See Ian Manners (2002) 'Normative Power Europe: a Contradiction in Terms?' *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(2): 235—58. In the 1970s Francois Duchene called Europe a 'civilian power', Manners found 'normative power' a better suited term. See Francois Duchene, (1972) 'Europe's role in World Peace', in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, ed. Richard Mayne, London: Fontana, 43. All cited in Thomas Diez (2005) 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe', *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), pp. 613—636.

[12] Eurocentrism and the awareness of the European context are not the same. Eurocentrism would mean making universal claims about ideas that emerge from Europe—and there is a history to it, while the awareness of the European context makes one more circumspect about these universal claims. But I am neither saying that there are no universal claims to be made, nor am I denying the applicability of ideas in cross-cultural contexts.

[13] See Hans Kohn (1944), *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, New York: Macmillan. See also his *Nationalism, Its Meaning and History*, Princeton NJ: Von Nostrand, 1955.

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thought was a nineteenth century invention driven by a messianic contempt for things as they are and directed at other-worldly objectives. Nation for him is based on a quest for idealised social coherence and utopian community rather than on the more mundane social tasks of self-defence, distribution of justice, and enforcement of the law. Nationalism imposes homogeneity among the society that calls itself a nation (Pecora 2001: 25).

Kedouri stressed the modernity of the nationalist dream, as opposed to arguments that seek to explain it by tracing its ethnic history on the lines of *Kulturnation*. For him national identity is the creation of nationalist doctrine rather than nationalist doctrine being an expression of national identity (Kedouri 1996: 141). Ernest Gellner[14] agrees: "It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round." Along with Hobsbawm,[15] Gellner argued *modern* nation's emergence had an analytical reality behind it, making it sociologically explainable. So the real search is not for the spirit but the conditions in which it came alive.

Gellner thought nationalism was simply the rationalised form of political life falsely robed in Romantic ideals. This rationalised form, unlike what Kedouri believes, is not so much a discursive invention than an imposition by objective, inescapable conditions, and the structural imperatives of an industrial society. Hobsbawm argues the reverse in emphasising nationalism's role in the creation of industrial economies and the transition from local to national economic systems; nationalists served the needs of the elite when they celebrated shared linguistic or racial traits and ignored the differences and conflicts within national economies. Kramer (1997: 530) points out that for Gellner and Hobsbawm nationalism is a powerful political and cultural expression of modernizing economic processes that have created new social anxieties and new legitimating ideologies.

The causal value of 'conditions'[16] to explain a nation helps Gellner to also explain the homogenising tendencies in nations. The commitment of an industrial society to a

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[14] See Ernest Gellner (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; p. 55. Cited in Pecora: 2001; Chatterjee: 1986; and Kramer: 1997.

[15] See Eric J. Hobsbawm (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cited in Pecora: 2001; Chatterjee: 1986; and Kramer: 1997.

[16] Not the context in which knowledge gets produced, but the objective conditions out there in a defined reality; in a positivist sociological sense.

productive system based on cumulative science and technology, he says, forces societies to come to terms with it, and involves the "general imposition of a high culture on society" where "low culture" had been the norm. The diffusion of this high culture happens through bureaucracy, much like Durkheim and Max Weber elaborated in their work on the relentless drive toward social rationalisation. It creates "an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable, atomised individuals held together by a shared culture of this kind", in place of a complex mix of local folk cultures and "micro-cultures" that had previously existed (Chatterjee 1986: 5 & Pecora 2001: 26). This high culture that nations draw on may be an older culture, admits Gellner, but he sees no significant continuity between the new industrialising culture of nationalism and the mythic "pre-existing cultures" that nationalists claim as their origin (Kramer 1997: 530).

Liah Greenfeld's understanding of nationalism seems to combine elements from Kedouri on one side and Gellner and Hobsbawm on the other.[17] She argues that rapid economic changes altered the status of various occupations, social groups and modes of production, and it's those who lose in the transformations that are attracted to nationalism. The "status anxiety" of such groups produces a "profound sense of insecurity and anxiety" that makes them receptive to the status-enhancing claims of nationalism. She calls this feeling *ressentiment*, which she locates within, for instance, 18th century nobles in France or the unattached intellectuals in Germany. Nationalism in her view becomes a modern, ideological expression of the perennial human quest for social recognition, and it appeals most to those "people who feel the least respected"[18] (Kramer 1997: 531). This argument may explain the rise of certain movements, like Nazism, but it is not sufficient for it ignores the role of elite, who should have an equal stake in maintaining their status. At the same time the "least respected" in society are generally those who are barely allowed, using Edward Said's expression, a "permission to narrate" or hardly possess any organising influence at the communal level.

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[17] See Liah Greenfeld (1992), *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*,
[18] This notion is expressed in a more categorical terms by a rather largely sympathetic scholar of nationalism Tom Nairn, who writes: "Nationalism is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as "neurosis" in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in-capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable." See Tom Nairn (1977) *The Break up of Britain*, London: Routledge, p. 359. The above quote is also cited in Anderson (2006), p. 5.

The modernist thesis on nationalism, as it has come to be called, has not answered a number of questions, especially the telling one from Anthony D. Smith: If nation is really just based on an invented tradition, why does the claim so often, and in such different social and cultural settings, appear to have such sustained and protracted influence? Smith, who forcefully argues the case for "primordialists" in his work,[19] asserts that there is more to nations than nationalist fabrication. 'Invention' of the nation must be understood in the novel combination of pre-existing elements. For Smith these elements could be the myths of collective descent, shared memories, common culture, and affiliation to a homeland. The other contributing elements could be war, migration, or conversion in the past or Renan-like shared memories of them. Smith speaks of *pre-modern* ethnic community, or *ethnie*, which he classifies into two kinds: lateral aristocratic ethnies, which incorporate outlying and lower-class structures through expanding bureaucracies (e.g. "old nations" like England, France, and Spain); and the more numerous vertical demotic ethnies, which are passive, religiously defined communities mobilized by intellectuals into a political state (e. g. Ireland, and most of the "new" nations produced after the decolonisation process) (Hutchinson and Smith: 1996, and Pecora 2001: 27).

Smith attributes "irrational and uncivil" qualities to the "new", mostly non-Western, nations, and in this he complements what Clifford Geertz had already called "the recalcitrance of primordial issues" in these countries (Geertz: 1973 and Pecora: 2001). This classification, in the typical Western social sciences tradition, seeks to box a vast diversity in the rest of the world into a single category of "non-West", which embodies all antagonistic characteristics of what is the self-perception of the West—rational and progressive, as Edward Said shows us. It subjects non-Western nations to a judgement that has foundations only in the Western tradition. In any case, it has left the question, which Habermas asks "What is a People?" still open, even though Habermas himself is celebrating "postnational" moment in Europe.

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[19] See Anthony D. Smith (1971) *Theories of Nationalism*, London: Duckworth.

III

"The reality is quite plain: the 'end of the era of nationalism', so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight," Benedict Anderson (2006: 3) announced. "Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time." Widely acknowledged as one of the most influential contributions toward understanding the concept of nation, Anderson's *Imagined Communities* has already acquired classic status.

For Anderson, nations, like religions, are 'cultural artifacts of a particular kind'; they are products of a certain trajectory of history in Europe. These artifacts emerged toward the end of the 18th century as "the distillation of a complex crossing of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, became 'modular' or 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 2006: 4). Like Gellner, who emphasizes the "invented-ness" of a nation, Anderson too speaks of the "thought out-ness" or "created-ness" of nations, but there is a fundamental difference to be marked: while Gellner takes this invention as a fabrication or a piece of historical disingenuousness, for Anderson this invention connotes a certain imagining—a rather benign one—that is made possible at a particular juncture in history.

Anderson connects the gradual birth of the idea of nation to the concomitant phasing out of religion as a dominant mode of apprehending the world in the 18th century Western world. People have a deep need for a purpose in life; they need reassurances of life after death. Religion filled this need for a long time, giving life and death a meaning; man was conceived as a man-in-cosmos, his life fulfilling a divinely predestined course: fate. "Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary...Religious thought responds to obscure intimations of immortality, generally by transforming fatality into *continuity*" (Anderson 2006: 11 emphasis mine). The only other viable idea worth dying for turned out to be nation. The bodies of individuals unknown and unrelated, but by those of an imagined nation-ness, become the representative bodies. By *sacrificing* our personal lives in the service of nation we achieve *martyrdom*—a promise

of eternal life in the memory of the nation.[20] This idea is powerfully put forward in Anderson's introductory example of the deliberately emptied cenotaph of Unknown Soldiers that becomes a national memorial.

Before nations, religions—especially Christianity, Islam and Buddhism—as great sacral cultures, pulled together great followings across complex geographies. These were imagined communities of followers who had conceived themselves as cosmically central and linked to a superterrestrial order of power. They are imaginable largely through a medium of a sacred language and a written script. It was the non-arbitrariness of the sign[21] imbued with the impulse toward conversion—picturing man's being as sacrally malleable—that allowed the regeneration of such great communities by the spread of the holy word. These communities, as Anderson tells us, were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than bounded and horizontal.

A number of factors led to the creation of fissures within the 'unselfconscious coherence' of the religious communities. These include: exposure to wide geographical and cultural horizons due to the explorations in the non-European world, and the gradual demotion of the sacred languages themselves. The latter were replaced by the rising higher-order vernacular, a process that was hastened by a massive expansion of book publishing.[22] Writing afforded a new fixity to languages and created new kinds of languages-of-power. In short, it was the relativisation and territorialisation on one hand and the rise of print capitalism on the other that saw religion lose its binding power in western societies.

At the same time, the only *political* ordering of society had been conceivable within a dynastic realm that derived its legitimacy from divinity and not from populations. With porous borders and fluid sovereignties, sexual alliances and warfare,

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[20] See Hayes, Carlton J. H. (1960), *Nationalism: A Religion*, New York: Macmillan. Hayes argues that nationalism gives new meaning to death and helps assuage anxieties about human mortality because nation continues to live beyond the death of each individual. Hayes further points out, nationalism did not always replace religion; he suggests that the new faith frequently gained over greater appeal when it could be fused with traditional religious beliefs and rituals. Nationalist creed requires a language, a literature, and a group of interpreters who sustain the narratives of the nation like theologians or priests sustain the narrative of religion.

[21] Emanation of reality than just randomly fabricated representations of it—language *un*seperated from the world where the ontological reality is apprehensible only through a single, privileged system of representation, like the truth language of Church Latin or Quranic Arabic.

[22] Anderson cites Febvre, Lucien and Martin, Henri-Jean (1976) *The Coming if the Book: The Impact of Printing*, 1450-1800, London: New Left Books.

pre-modern empires and kingdoms were able to rule over immensely heterogeneous, sometimes not even contiguous, populations for long periods of time. However, events like the English Civil War between the Parliamentary Roundheads and the Royalist Cavaliers between 1642 and 1651 (after which an ex-monarch was beheaded and the ruling one was sent into exile), the "Glorious Revolution" in England in 1688, and the 1789 French Revolution, brought an abrupt end to this political ordering.

Anderson argues that the waning of religious authority and the dynastic realm was attended by an associated rise of "modernity", which made possible other kinds of imaginings. The material side of this modernity, a half-fortuitous but explosive interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism) and a technology of communications (print), combined with Protestantism to provide the substrate for the growth of the idea of a nation. The mass industrial production of books and the mass-consumption of newspapers 'as a commodity', had a profound temporal effect on this imagination. I will return to discuss that aspect in some detail soon; but before that there is an important feature in Anderson's conception of a nation that is worth some attention: his conception of non-western nations.

Anderson argues that three distinct types or 'models' of nationalism have emerged historically. The first model, Creole nationalism in America, was created by pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen, who drew from liberal and Enlightenment ideas of Europe (but the main reason was the protection of economic interests of the upper classes). As a model it was retrograde, shorn of a linguistic commonality, and arbitrary in its administrative boundaries. The second model was the linguistic nationalism of Europe, which became "available for pirating". The third model was the official nationalism, which sought to impose cultural homogenization from above like the Russification drives in Czarist Russia. For Anderson, the Third World nationalisms "can, and do, draw on more than a century and a half of human experience," manifested in these three models of nationalism (Chatterjee 1986: 19).[23]

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[23] In one of his later books (see Anderson, Benedict (1998) *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, London: Verso) he distinguishes between nationalism and the politics of ethnicity. He spoke of them in terms of serialities: Unbound Seriality driven by print capitalism and the novel; and the Bound Seriality driven by modern census and electoral systems. The former arises out of progressive historicist thinking that transcends by an act of political imagination the limits imposed by traditional practices; in solidarity with those beyond face-to-face familiarity. A hallmark of Western

This characterization of the Third World nationalisms as "modular" in nature has come under criticism from postcolonial theorists. Chatterjee (1986: 21) argues that Anderson's chief contribution to the Marxist debate is to pose the ideological construction of the nation as a central problem in the study of national movements by highlighting the social process of the creation of modern language communities. "Yet in pursuing the varied, often contradictory, *political* possibilities inherent in this process, Anderson seals up his theme with a sociological determinism" (emphasis as in the original).

Chatterjee thinks there is in fact not much difference between Anderson and Gellner regarding 20th century nationalisms. Both point toward the shift in perceiving the social world, which occurs *before* nationalism can emerge: Gellner relates it to requirements of 'industrial society', and Anderson to the dynamics of 'print-capitalism'. Where for Gellner, the new cultural homogeneity is the result of the imposition of 'common high culture' on a diversity of local folk cultures, for Anderson the process involves the formation of a 'print-language' and the shared experience of journeys undertaken by the colonized intelligent bilingual travelers—who could mediate linguistically between the metropolitan nation and the colonized people. As pointed out above, for Anderson the explorations of the non-European world by Europeans in earlier centuries exposed them to immense diversity within religion, thus leading to the fragmentation of the religiously conceived sacral community, and the beginnings of the national consciousness. The agency continues to lie with the European travelers who imagined themselves differently, but did not accept any pre-given template. However, the journeys of the colonised travellers made them abandon their own conceptions only to take up the models that had already been imagined by someone else. Chatterjee asks rhetorically: "Where in all this is the working of the imagination, the intellectual procreation?" This question is not only directed at Anderson, but at the national elite in

nationalism this one is good. The latter, Bounded Seriality works with integers 0 or 1, which means either you belong to a defined ethnic group or not. This often leads to a demand for ethnic/national purity.

the Third World countries too, whose discourse Chatterjee agrees is a "derivative"[24] from the Western nationalisms.

It is worthwhile here to mention Edward Said, who criticizes the repeated insistence on the Western provenance of nationalist philosophies by theorists like Kedouri, Gellner, Hobsbawm, as well as Anderson, as marked by an "ahistorical discomfort" with non-Western societies acquiring national independence, which is believed to be foreign to their ethos. Said states that the implicit notion in the arguments these theorists make is: only the original proponents of an idea can understand and use it. However, cultures, according to Said, "are not impermeable...or a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures" (Said 1993: 217). Said, however, also criticizes the nationalist resistance for remaining fiercely exclusivist sometimes, even after the end of colonial control. He suggests that "we must also focus on the intellectual and cultural argument within the nationalist resistance that once independence was gained new and imaginative re-conceptions of society and culture were required in order to avoid the old orthodoxies" (Said 1993: 218).

In the latest edition of *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (2006: 163) writes this: "My short-sighted assumption then was that official nationalism in the colonised worlds of Asia and Africa was modeled directly on that of the dynastic states of 19th century Europe. Subsequent reflection has persuaded me that this view was hasty and superficial, and that the immediate genealogy should be traced to the imaginings of the colonial state." He points out three institutions of power which profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its domain: Census, Map, and the Museum. These three institutions aided the understanding of the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry, respectively.

As the old census categories, such as those based on religious identity, wore on, new ones based on ethno-racial-linguistic identities emerged. With a passion for completeness and unambiguity, the classifying mind of the colonial state developed

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[24] Partha Chatterjee (1986) argues that Asian intellectuals want their nations to modernize without simply following Western precedents; yet their organizing categories of analysis rely on a Western tradition from which they wish to declare their independence.

intolerance for multiplicity, politically transvestite, blurred, or changing identifications. The construction of supposedly pure census categories was, at the same time, made systematically quantifiable. The map turned places that had been imagined differently, like sacred places, into dots. The sacred dots intermingled with the profane dots; and boundaries that had remained inconceivable in a geometric fashion became cartographically visible, and measurable. The museum emerged with the archeological efforts of the colonial state to restore monuments. Anderson finds three possible reasons for this: first, it was a result of the political struggle between conservatives and progressives over the state's educational policies (and colonial state favoured the conservatives); second, the formal ideological programme of the reconstructions always placed the builders of the monuments and the colonial natives in a certain hierarchy; and finally, it made state seem as a guardian of a generalized, but also local, tradition. "Museumised, this way, these monuments [and their surrounding lawns] were repositioned as regalia for a *secular* colonial state (Anderson 2006: 182)."

Anderson emphasizes this profane state's "infinite reproducibility, made technically possible by print and photography, but politico-culturally by the disbelief of the rulers themselves in the real sacredness of local sites." It was so profoundly political that it became unconsciously normal and everyday. He argues that the "warp of this thinking was a totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied to anything...under the state's real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments, and so forth." It led to their bounded-ness, determinate-ness, and thus quantifiabiltity and serialization. The world had become one made up of replicable plurals, where "particular always stood as a provisional representative of a series, and was to be handled in this light" (Anderson 2006: 183-84). Thus, the three institutions of the colonial state—Census, Map, and Museum—managed its Population, Space, and Time.

Returning now to what was flagged off earlier, and that which sets our debate up against a phenomenology of time, we may ask why it really matters when we emphasize the sudden mass-consumption of newspapers and books[25] by a reading public as having

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[25] Anderson is referring to novels written in vernacular, whose huge production rode the already expanding book publishing industry.

had any impact on imagining the nation? Does it like other cultural aspects of nation suggest *continuity* from pre-national religious community, or give us a Foucauldian sense of *abrupt discontinuities of consciousness*?

Instead of falling into erstwhile temporal logic of fatality, where man and the community followed a divinely pre-destined course, Anderson plots his understanding of nation in an 'empty homogeneous time'[26]. He says the earlier conception of *simultaneity* is wholly different from the modern conception of *meanwhile*. Simultaneity is closer to what Walter Benjamin calls a Messianic time, "simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present."[27] In place of this medieval notion of simultaneity-along-time, what has come is an idea of "homogeneous 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 2006: 24).

The novel and the newspaper become representative cultural artifacts of this modernity. The novel is a device to present simultaneity in homogeneous empty time or put a "complex gloss upon the word meanwhile." It embeds its characters in societies, but also, and more importantly, in the readers' mind. Its characters may be unaware of what is happening at the same clocked, calendrical time with other characters, (unless one of the characters is a narrator of the novel), but it conjures up an imagined world in the reader's mind who may see all. "The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history."[28] Anderson traces the spilling out of the 'interior' time of novels to the 'exterior' time of everyday life of people to show how individuals come to have complete confidence in the steady, anonymous, and simultaneous activity that happens during the meanwhile. This in turn, makes it possible to imagine a nation, a body of anonymous compatriots. As Anderson (2006: 26-28) points out, fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in

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[26] Anderson draws his notion of time from Walter Benjamin (1973), *Illuminations*, London: Fontana.
[27] *Illuminations*, p 265.
[28] Anderson suggests the absence of prefatory genealogies seen in ancient chronicles, legends, and holy books that generally reach back to man's origin, shows the novels' temporal logic as the homogeneous empty time. Stories in newspapers are like characters that disappear from it, but lie in wait to reappear in the plot. The newspaper, for Anderson (2006: 33-35), is "merely an extreme form of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity...one day best sellers."

anonymity. The novel also traverses the sociological landscape of fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside. It assures us of sociological solidity through succession of plurals, like comparable prisons, hospitals, schools, etc. Together it completes the loop, where anonymous compatriots are assigned to a sociological solidity: the flesh and blood of nation.

Newspapers have a novelistic format.[29] Anderson (2006: 33) says that "the date on top of the newspaper, the single most important emblem on it, provides the essential connection—the steady onward clocking of homogeneous empty time." Not only is the simultaneity within newspapers important but, more than novels, there is also the simultaneity of their mass consumption, which reassures each reader that there are millions of others, of whose existence he is confident but of whose identity he has no idea, that are reading the same.[30]

Journey of nation through time has not, however, reached any closure either conceptually, or in any substantive sense as Habermas reckons. It beckons us to complicate it further, in hope that it may lead us to a greater clarity, if at all. Chatterjee (2004: 6), for one, feels the Andersonian conception of politics "requires an understanding of the world as *One*, so that common activity called *Politics* can be seen to be going on *Everywhere*. One should note that time in this conception easily translates into space, so that we should...speak...of the time-space of modernity." Thus politics, in this sense, inhabits the empty homogeneous *time-space* of modernity. Chatterjee points out that people can only *imagine* themselves in an empty homogeneous time-space utopia; they do not *live* in it. The real space of modern life, as Foucault argues,[31] consists of a *heterotopia*. Time in 'heterotopia' is heterogeneous and unevenly dense.

We are not yet exhausted of the question of time, though.

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[29] Anderson suggests that reading a newspaper is like reading a novel whose author has abandoned any thought of a coherent plot. One may say, as one keeps reading the newspaper, over a period of time, a plot may emerge in the newspaper too.

[30] Anderson (2006: 35) cites Hegel who observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers. Although performed in silent privacy, "each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others..."

[31] See Foucault, Michel (1998), "Different Spaces", in James D. Faubion ed. *Essential Works of Foucault, vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, New York: New Press, pp.175—85.

"Why do nations celebrate their hoariness, and not their astonishing youth?" Anderson asks, in response to the atavistic apologues that characterise the languages of national belonging.[32] Bhabha (1990b: 294) suggests the answer lies in understanding the *double-time* of nation as narration, which shows us instead of its complete preoccupation with a hoary past the nation actually gets torn between a solidified past and an ever fluid, fleeting present, making nation almost a daily performance. Of course, Renan, as we might recall, wasn't far from Bhabha when he called nation "a daily plebiscite".

Homi Bhabha has emerged as one of the most important poststructuralist, postcolonial theorists of nation and culture. His seminal essay "DissemiNation", which became the concluding essay of his edited volume *Nation and Narration*, has dealt with the question of nation by rigorously reworking the concepts of time and narrative, and by privileging the voices from the margins and of the exile.

Bhabha (1990b: 292) proposes "a cultural construction of nation-ness as a form of social and textual affiliation, without denying categories like gender, race or class their historicity". He speaks of the nation as a metaphor, which needs its own set of interpreters. This metaphoricity comes alive in the imagined communities, of migrant or metropolitan, and which never lets the nation-space be horizontal. In "DissemiNation" he explains the complex strategies of "cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of 'the people' or 'the nation' and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives." Bhabha emphasizes temporality in place of historicity. Temporality resists "the transparent linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes; it provides a perspective on the disjunctive forms of representation that signify a people, a nation, or a national culture."

Double-time is a disjunctive time of nation's modernity. It is the ambivalent temporalities of nation-space where the language of the "culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present that become the rhetorical figures of a national past" (Bhabha 1990b:294). From this 'double time' which is also a 'split time' he poses the

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[32] See Anderson, Benedict (1986) "Narrating the Nation", *The Times Literary Supplement*, London, 13 June, 1986 (Cited in Bhabha: 1990b).

question of nation as a narrative. This idea of double-time of national representation also helps him to question the homogeneous and horizontal view generally associated with it.[33]

Bhabha (1990b: 297) says the nation-space is never simply horizontal and is always marked by an ambivalence. It is in reading the borderlines of this nation-space that we can see how the 'people' come to be constructed within a range of discourses as a *double-narrative* movement.[34] Bhabha believes that people are not simply historical events, "but a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference where the claim to be representative provokes a crises within the process of signification and discursive address." It produces a cultural contest where people are narrated in a double-time. The double-time gives it a shape of a double-narrative, which is not two narratives, but rather represents the irresolvable predicament within the single national narrative. On one side of this predicament people become historical *objects* of, what Bhabha calls, a national pedagogy, whose discursive authority emerges from an *a priori* historical given-ness. On the other, this originary presence of the people has to be constantly erased, by turning them into *subjects* in the process of signification. The latter helps to demonstrate the "prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and a reproductive process" (Bhabha 1990b: 297).

The pedagogical aspect of the split-narrative of the nation stands as the continuist, accumulative temporality; the performative part is repetitive and recursive. Between these temporalities hangs the liminality where nation gets written—or double-written.

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[33] Bhabha (1990b: 295) says: "There is always the distracting presence of another temporality that disturbs the contemporaneity of the national present" as in national discourses.

Bakhtin, despite his realist vision, points out that nation's visual presence is the result of a narrative struggle, where national time becomes concrete as the structural aspects of the visualization of time *surmount* the "necessity of the past and the necessity of its place in a line of continuous development...finally the aspect of the past being linked to a necessary future." But Bhabha asks if this national time-space can be fixed or immediately visible. He cites Freud's essay "The Uncanny" in which Freud associates 'surmounting'—of a ghostly double-time—with the "repressions of a cultural unconscious; a liminal, uncertain state of cultural belief when the archaic emerges in the midst or margins of modernity as a result of some psychic ambivalence or intellectual uncertainty."

[34] Bhabha points out that the positions of authority in a nation are themselves part of a process of an ambivalent identification because "the forces of social authority and subalternity may emerge in displaced, even decentered, strategies of signification." He also talks of how the exercise of power may also be both "more politically effective and psychically affective because their discursive liminality may provide greater scope for strategic maneuvers and negotiation."

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This is the dissemiNation. Shorn of historicism, which legitimizes the present cultural autonomy from past generalizations, the nation stops being a symbol of modernity. It becomes rather the "symptom of an ethnography of the contemporary within culture" (Bhabha 1990b: 299). This shift in perception emerges from the realization of the nation's "interrupted address", articulated in the anxiety between objectifying pedagogical, and the construction of people in the performance of a narrative.

The liminal contested space that nation becomes, as it gets alienated from its "eternal self-generation", is a space that is "internally marked by cultural difference and heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense cultural relations" (Bhabha 1990b: 300). The contestation of narrative authority between pedagogical and performative, which is made possible by the splitting of the subject and the disjunctive temporality of the nation, creates conditions for representing those left-behind or ignored meanings that emerge from the margins of the contemporary experience of society.[35] These are experiences of periods, practices, and meanings that because of their assumed anomalous nature the dominant culture is unable to recognize. These experiences come from liminal and ambivalent boundaries that speak the signs of nation as, what Edward Said calls, zones of control, of abandonment, of force and dependence, memory and forgetting, of exclusion. Bhabha (1990b: 300) argues that nation, thus, ceases to be "the sign of modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in the horizontal view of society." Nation reveals the ethnography of its own historicity, creating possibilities of its multiple narrativisations. The *counternarratives* that emerge from these margins "continually evoke and erase its [nation's] totalizing boundaries—both actual and conceptual—[they] disturb those ideological maneuvers through which imagined communities are given essentialist identities."

Bhabha believes that as the liminality of nation-space is recognized, its narrators, those doing the speaking from the margins, get told themselves.[36] It helps prevent the ascension of supremacist nationalist claims, for in this ethnographic act the observer herself is an object of her observation. The splitting of the national subject then provides

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[35] See Williams, Raymond (1980), *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, London: Verso. Cited by Bhabha (1990b: 300).
[36] Lyotard calls it the 'privileged pole of the narrated'.

"a theoretical position and a narrative authority for the marginal voices or minority discourse" (Bhabha 1990b: 301). The articulation of this liminality demands a 'time' of narrative that disavows historicism.

Bhabha's (1990b: 311) reading of Anderson tells him that in conceiving the imagined communities "he [Anderson] fails to locate the alienating time of the arbitrary sign in his naturalized, nationalized space." Although, Anderson borrows his notion of the homogeneous empty time of the nation's modern narrative from Walter Benjamin, but according to Bhabha, he fails to read that profound ambivalence that Benjamin places deep within the utterances of the narrative of modernity. The 'other' times, or temporal ambivalences, are not, as Anderson suggests, pre-modern which after a sharp break streamline into the empty homogeneous time of modernity. They are, as Chatterjee suggests, "the new products of the encounter with modernity itself." Chatterjee (2004: 8-9) calls it the "heterogeneous time of modernity".

In his profoundly influential essay "Narrative Time", Paul Ricoeur criticizes the notion of homogeneous clock time, which is the linear succession of instants, as a traditional view. Ricoeur's arguments stem from Heidegger's notion of three phenomenological levels of time. He points out that time is afforded meaning *only* in narrative activity, and narrative performs the deeper existential critique of the ordinary representation (homogeneous clock) of time. But to understand the temporal implications of narrativity, the narrative structure that is relevant is the "plot". Plot is the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in the story. "The story is made out of events to the extent that plot makes events into a story" (Ricoeur 1980: 167). The plot, thus, places us at the intersection of temporality and narrativity: the narrative matrix constituted by the plot reveals to us the temporal complexity.

Is nation then a plot that like the simplest story, as Ricoeur says, conceives a series of instants succeeding one another along an abstract line oriented in a single direction? In this sense, the story's conclusion is the pole of attraction of the entire development. The 'nation', as a colligatory term like Renaissance and Industrial Revolution, allow us to put varied events and histories, which could have assumed different meanings within different plots, or around different conceptual poles, under a common denominator. It affords us, in its anticipated project, a backward move toward

the past. As Ricoeur (1980: 179) tells us, "we learn to read time backwards as the recapitulation of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequence".

The national narratives of a nation's past are, therefore, self-projections of the nation-as-a-plot on a chaos of what get conceived of and acknowledged as "events". What about the narratives of the nation's present? Ricoeur (1980: 184) reminds us: "the most detailed chronicle, and eventually the most misleading one, remains bound to and guided in advance by the *destiny* of people"[37] (emphasis mine).

It remains to be seen if it is possible to integrate the experiences from the margins of nation (Bhabha) with the deeper experiences of time (Ricoeur). Double-narrative of the nation's split subject has also to be placed alongside the heterogeneity of nation's time (Chatterjee). I will keep it open, the Renan's question, in the spirit of liminality, middle-ness, within-time-ness, but one which must still be dependent on points of reference from this world.

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[37] Ricoeur (1980: 184) discusses how thanks only to the transfer of senses of *fate* (individual), governed by the theme of being-toward-death, to the notion of common *destiny* that we reach a communal dimension of historicality. The destiny becomes the "co-historicality" of a community.

Ricoeur also points out that "the impulse toward future is, at a deep level of temporality, a finite movement to the extent that all genuine expectations are limited from within by being-toward-death. Being-toward-death is the organizing pole of the Heideggerian analytic of time.

Chapter Two

Origins and Consequences of Indian Nationalism

We have no history! We must have a history!

BANKIMCHNDRA CHATTERJEE, (1880)

How is it that the shrunken imaginings of recent
history generate such colossal sacrifices?

BENEDICT ANDERSON, (1983)

I

The British withdrawal from the subcontinent in 1947 occasioned the birth of two new states, India and Pakistan. The process of withdrawal, which was supposed to happen gradually, was hastened by the British government, leaving little time for a smooth transition. The planned partition took place, but was attended by massive blood-letting; a consequence of sharp communal divide fostered over the preceding years.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, in his August 11, 1947 speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, justified the division of British India, but added:

"I think we should keep...in front of us...our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."[1]

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[1] http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html. Last accessed April 4, 2008.

Jinnah, as the first president of the constituent assembly, spoke about law and order, and the need to curb bribery and corruption in the new state of Pakistan. His ordinary speech about mundane issues betrayed a lack of sense of historical destiny of the new state of Pakistan.

In India, a few days later at the stroke of midnight on August 15, Jawaharlal Nehru, standing in the British-made Parliament's central house, made his grand and even poetic "Tryst with Destiny" speech. In all fairness he too did speak of the need to fight communalism, but that was just a marginal reference. He ended his speech with these lines:

"...to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service. Jai Hind (Victory to India)."[2]

The effort to draw continuity with "the ancient" and "the eternal" in Nehru's speech strikes one as natural. Pakistan was a new state whose history, according to its own *raison d'etre*, must be confined to the Muslim rule in the subcontinent (and, even then, the most important centres where the Muslim history unfolded were in a realm outside of Pakistan). But for India, which became the successor entity to the British India, there were many pasts to draw from. So many pasts of so many India's, including of those who did not even know that they were being recruited as parts of India.

Nehru had already constructed a seamless narrative of the sources of Indian nationhood. In his book *The Discovery of India* he spoke of how from the "quest" and the "discovery of India" in Indus Valley civilization and with the coming of Aryans, India flourished "through the ages" of Buddhist philosophy, old Indian art, trade, progress and peaceful development. Then India faced "new problems" with Arabs and Mongols emerging on the scene, and though there was a process of "Indianization" during Akbar's time, Aurangzeb "put the clock back". With the coming of British, "plunder" and

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[2] http://www.guardian.co.uk/greatspeeches/story/0,,2059920,00.html. Last accessed April 4, 2008.

"destruction" began; India became an appendage of another country "for the first time."[3] The book was finished before India was freed; "Tryst with Destiny" can be seen as the concluding chapter of *The Discovery of India*.

The narrative structure of Nehru's story is a familiar one—a glorious past, then foreign invaders and trouble, followed by a new consciousness, and finally the hard fought liberation. Nehru, in the same speech, put it this way:

"A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

It seemed that the history of India had come to an end; there may still be daily events that will continue, but the epochal journey of a nation through history had concluded successfully, albeit amidst a heavy sacrifice. This narrative structure that Nehru employed, as we will see, was neither new nor was it immune to being put in use of constructing other versions of the past, including ones that will bedevil Nehru's apparently secular vision in years to come. He, however, would not want to stop at that, declaring independence; India had to take its rightful place in the world, and Nehru his own role.

On the morning of August 16, 1947, Nehru stood atop the ramparts of the Red Fort, the imperial centre of Mughals in Delhi, and addressed a crowd numbering, according to some sources, about a quarter of a million. With this act he had upstaged the erstwhile British rulers. After the suppression of the 1857 rebellion, the British for a number of years had turned the fort into a garrison and a cavalry base. By raising the flag from that same place, Nehru reclaimed its lost glory.[4] But Nehru's act had a different import as well, perhaps a more important one; the new flag that he unfurled had an ancient Ashokan Wheel of Dharma emblazoned on it, instead of the other circular

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[3] Nehru wrote his "The Discovery of India" in Ahmednagar Fort prison during the five months, April to September 1944. I put these phrases within quotes because that is how Nehru divides the chapters in his book.

[4] It is a separate matter that after 1947 the Indian government continued to house troops inside the fort. They were recently moved after a terrorist strike.

emblem—the Gandhian spinning wheel.[5] The Mauryan symbol and the Mughal fort; it was a move to assume continuity with past empires in India. Both the Mauryan and the Mughal empires at their peaks filled huge swathes of the present nation-space of India. All other smaller empires and kingdoms would fall short. India was not only successor to the British empire in India, but also to the Mauryan and the Mughal empires. India, after 1947, especially the way Nehru and Vallabhai Patel dealt with state formation, was an *empire* that was congealing—on its own, by force, or the threat of it—into a state.

Nehru, on that day, spoke of the historical "vicissitudes" to which the Red Fort had been witness; he acknowledged the struggles and sacrifices of the many who had fought for the cause of independence. He gave a call to his listeners to unify and cooperate in realizing the national goal. This flag raising ceremony did not ritually lead to the transfer of power from British or assumption of power by Indians, but replete with historical allusion and geographical connotation it was the flag-hoisting day after Independence that became the paradigm for subsequent annual re-enactments of India's gaining of independence. On India's republic day, similarly, tableaux from different "parts" of India would arrive in Delhi every year on January 26, and after the display of India's military might, would ceremonially, year after year, showcase their cultural achievements in front of national leaders and foreign dignitaries. The national ceremonies symbolically submitted diverse identities, regions and nationalities, under the single central Indian identity from where all power flowed. Delhi was the centre which represented India's essence, the same essence, or the "distinguishing mark" that Nehru spoke of in his book:

"It is fascinating to find how the Bengalis, the Marathas, the Gujaratis, the Tamils, the Andhras, the Oriyas, the Assamese, the Canarese, the Malayalis, the Sindhis, the Punjabis, the Pathans, the Kashmiris, the Rajputs, the great central block comprising the Hindustani-speaking people, have retained their peculiar characteristics for hundreds of years, have still more or less the same virtues and failings of which old tradition or record tells us, and yet have been throughout these ages distinctively Indian, with the

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[5] Although Nehru explained the asymmetry of the spinning spindle on the flag, and the dual valence for the insignia, as simultaneously Chakra and Charkha, Gandhi was not fooled and protested the replacement, but unsuccessfully (Davis: 11 footnote 13).

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same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities. There was something living and dynamic about this heritage which showed itself in ways of living and a philosophical attitude to life and its problems. Ancient India, like ancient China, was a world in itself, a culture and a civilization which gave shape to all things." (Nehru, 2002: 61-62)

Having seen an end to the age of empires, for India to lay a claim on Mauryan, Mughal and British Indian empires, it not only had to congeal into a state, but into a single nation too. This process, which began much before Nehru, had not in any real sense been finished when Independence happened. Even after partition India was left with many diverse ethnicities and nationalities, obviously because of the nature of the state itself: varied territories in which multifarious ethnicities lived with their unique historical experiences were being asked to melt into the 1947 map of India. These constituents of India, with their own cultures and histories brushed aside (at least under British rule they had maintained their ethnic identity), were told to imagine themselves anew. Ashis Nandy (2005) argues this point well when he observes that the ideology of the state and official nationalism are not isolated entities; they are embedded in a world-view that systematically fosters the breakdown of traditional community ties and traditional socio-cultural interdependence of communities. And as Partha Chatterjee (1986) asks rhetorically, criticizing Benedict Anderson's notion of "modular" nationalism in which the latter argued that Third World nationalisms model themselves on Western-style nationalism: "Where in all this is the working of the imagination, the intellectual procreation?"; *in* India, too, the official nationalism was imagined by few, and did not emerge from different traditions present in India's territorial nation-space. Although there was a parallel effort at creating nationalism, which claimed to be more grounded in historical reality (or, what was presumed to be so), *most*[6] of what became India was not

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[6] Partha Chatterjee describes these people as those parts of the world that were not direct participants in the history of the evolution of the institutions of modern capitalist democracy, not only in the West but in equal measure in the non-West. By his estimates it numbers close to the political life of well-over three-fourths of contemporary humanity. See Partha Chatterjee (2004), *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, New Delhi: Permanaent Black.

given any choice at all.[7] In fact, a disproportionately large part of the national imagining happened in 19th and 20th century middle-class Bengal, toward which our discussion now moves.

<center>II</center>

The structure of the narrative of official Indian nationalism articulated by Nehru was, in part, an adaptation from British colonial historiography. But this structure reached Nehru through Bengali historians and writers. Before I discuss that structure, though, I would argue it was not the structure alone but the vocabulary as well that the latter-day Indian elite borrowed from the Bengali Hindu intellectuals.

Nehru recounts in his book how he often asks common people, who chant "*Bharat Mata ki Jai*" (Victory to Mother India) whenever he addresses them, what they mean by *Bharat Mata*. Nehru tells the people that *Bharat Mata* is not only the territory of the country or its soil, air and water, an oft-repeated reply, but they too (the people) are the *Bharat Mata*: "I told them you are in a manner yourselves *Bharat Mata*" (Nehru, 2002: 60). *Bharat Mata*, the territorial deity. One might discount Nehru's intention of using the phrase that has overt religious connotations because Nehru was a self-confessedly irreligious man. However, the way official national imagination, which is ostensibly secular, gets entwined with the imaginative construction of India as essentially Hindu must be taken account of, as it is very important to our story.

Benedict Anderson (2006) has described the quality of political love within nationalism in terms of the language with which nationalism describes its object. Nationalism puts in use a vocabulary of kinship, like mother, or home (where again the figure of mother is central); both point toward something to which one is naturally tied, which one chooses selflessly. How does one see Indian nationalism in this light? Coming into touch with western civilization created contrary pulls in the thought of the Bengali intelligentsia: on one hand, there was the awe of, and the attraction toward, the power of the western world, while at the same time it created a desire to escape from it; return to the past, revert to the womb of mother: the state of innocence and pleasure, a zone where

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[7] I am thinking here primarily of Kashmir, Ladakh, Nagaland, in fact the whole North-East, or even South India. I will subsequently discuss how Kashmir continued to imagine itself differently despite state efforts to inculcate Indian nationalism.

the child is still undifferentiated from the mother (Sarkar, 2001: 253). For western-educated Bengali elites, it produced an agonized quest for authenticity, the search for an authentic past. In representational terms the figure of mother stood for that past, to be re-appropriated either as religion or motherland.

Bharat Mata appears for the first time in literary form in Bankim's 1882 novel "Anandmath", where she is both viewed and celebrated in a song "Vande Mataram"[8] (Hail Motherland). The song, which inspires devotion, and which for sometime became the anthem for anti-colonial struggle, has been a hugely divisive issue as well as a marker of the state of Indian nationalism. *Bharat Mata*, as depicted by Bankim in his song, and later translated by Sri Aurobindo, transforms from a territorial deity full of riches into one full of anger. Her devotees give a call to arms to defend her:

Who hath said thou are weak in thy lands,

When the swords flash out in twice seventy million hands

And seventy million voices roar

Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?[9]

In Bankim's work the transformation takes place in three stages—the past, the present and the future—correspondingly represented in three iconographic sets. The bounteous Mother of the past, a *Jagaddhatri* (nurturer of the world) or an *Annapurna* (the provider of food), is when India had rich soil that produced food for its children. The second image is one represented by *Kali*, a have-not figure of goddess, who has abandoned all sense of shame, and feminity. She is drunk with blood, and arouses a sense of anger (Sarkar, 2001:255). She demands sacrifice from her sons. Finally, with *Kali's* victory a new age of abundance and nurture are superimposed with power in the triumphal image of *Durga*. *Durga* is often depicted as a warrior goddess who has just killed an *asura* (demon), but also as a married woman visiting her natal home with her

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[8] Bankim originally wrote the song in 1875, and inserted it later into his novel, investing it with narrative functions (Sarkar, 2001:176).
[9] Translated from the Bengali by Sri Aurobindo. Available online at http://intyoga.online.fr/bande.htm. Last accessed April 10, 2008.

children. Thus, a triumphant strength and a domesticated feminity are grafted on each other.

Too closely affiliated with Hindu goddesses to serve as an official icon, *Bharat Mata* nevertheless hovers through the popular imagery of 1930s and 40s (Davis, 2007: 21). Vande Mataram was also detached from the novel and appeared as a popular slogan. Quite early, by 1906, *Bharat Mata* had appeared in visible form when Abanindranath Tagore (Rabindranath Tagore's younger brother) painted—in Bankim's scheme—the image of *Kali* as a slender, calm, rather ascetic young woman dressed in an ochre sari pulled up to cover her head, floating in a kind of golden ether. Early nationalist poetry struck a note of melancholy around this figure. In later poetry, the metaphor of disrobing of Draupadi in Kaurava court lies hidden behind the depiction of Gandhi as Krishna, who covers shame of the nation with an endless supply of cloth produced by his charkha—his version of Krishna's *Sudharshan Chakra*.

For champions of the Hindu nationalist movement, toward which the discussion will eventually move, Vande Mataram expresses a conception of Indian identity as a matter of adoring the motherland as goddess, and being prepared to shed one's blood in her cause. The song insists that the motherland should be an object of slavish and uncritical devotion. Above all, its idea of the unity of India and Indians as depending on a blood tie to a mother is an idea that seems, at least, potentially exclusionary (Nussbaum, 2007: 11-12). Sumathy Ramaswamy (2007: 32) describes how K. M. Munshi (1887-1971), a lawyer and a Hindu nationalist politician, met Aurobindi Ghosh (1872-1950) and asked him, "How can one become patriotic?" To this Aurobindo pointed at a wall map of India and replied:

"Do you see this map? It is not a map, but the portrait of Bharat Mata: *its cities and mountains, rivers and jungles form her physical body. All her children are her nerves, large and small...Concentrate on* Bharat *as a living mother, worship her with the nine-fold* bhakti *(devotion)."*

The Indic term *bhakti* is not just devotion but also conveys a sense of participation. It refers to the relationship between beings who are in one sense separate

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and ranked, with devotion from lower towards the higher, and who, in another sense, jointly participate in some encompassing unity (Davis, 2007: 28). Although this term has its roots in the medieval *bhakti* movement, in modern times the nation-as-mother has served as a fit recipient of *bhakti*. The act (or feeling) of devotion toward motherland is described more accurately as *deshbhakti*, which in the Indian context becomes synonymous with patriotism. To be patriotic, therefore, one has to worship the *Bharat Mata*, the territorial deity. No individual, no one, is above the country. However, its uses can be quite perverse. Read the statement that Hindu right-wing websites often attribute to Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's assassin:

*"If devotion (*bhakti*) to ones country amounts to sin, I admit I have committed that sin. If it is meritorious, I humbly claim the merit thereof. I fully and confidently believe that if there be any other court of justice beyond the one founded by the mortals, my act will not be taken as unjust. If after the death there be no such place to reach or to go, there is nothing to be said. I have resorted to the action I did purely for the benefit of the humanity. I do say that my shots were fired at the person whose policy and action had brought rack and ruin and destruction to lakhs of Hindus."*[10]

The devotion for the figure of mother is not a one sided, inert viewing, and does not merely convey messages. Icons of the nation also work an 'awakening' on the part of the audience towards *deshbhakti*. The Hindu theology of presence assumes 'divine' presence in icons, which is close to physical presence. Thus, there is a reciprocal viewing too, or what is termed as *Darshana* (Davis, 2007:29).[11] As Jain (2007) argues, this visual schema extends beyond the religious sphere of the icon, into representations that impinge on the nation. As a temple is seen as housing a divine being, so may a statue of Gandhi or Nehru be seen as housing the spirit of those figures. Investment of national embodiments like

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[10] Although this is not the actual text, but a number of Hindu right websites have this in their mastheads. See especially www.nathuramgodse.com. Martha Nussbaum (2007: 167) also cites this text. The actual text can be found at http://ngodse.tripod.com/defense.htm. Both accessed last on April 10, 2008.

[11] It might be interesting to recall that many people in India worshipped the gods on TV when the Ramayana was being telecast in late 1980s. This hugely popular serial, which almost coincided with Advani's Rath Yatra, was telecast on Sunday mornings for maximum viewership on the only available TV channel DD. Some people told me they believe it was a way to keep people away from attending Christian mass on Sundays, apart from its main ideological objectives.

Bharat Mata and the tricolour flag with presence may draw them similarly into an intimate relationship with their audience.[12]

Bharat Mata and *deshbhakti* imbued with clear Hindu connotations, as Martha Nussbaum argues, are exclusionary and put to doubt claims of secular nationalism. Interestingly, *Bharat Mata* has competitors within India's nation-space itself, a scenario that doubly complicates the national imagination. In southern India, *Tamilttay*, a language goddess that also appears in late 19th century Tamil poetry, represents ancient glories of the Tamil. She holds not a modern printed book but a palm leaf manuscript, and she plays not a *veena* as goddess Saraswati does, but the ancient Tamil *yal*. Like *Bharat Mata* she too is variedly depicted in paintings: under duress behind bars, or in her crowned glory astride the world she claims for her own. Together her images set forth a narrative of the golden past of Tamil, its degenerate present, and its utopian reign in the future (Ramaswamy: 2007). Other examples from southern India are *Telugu Talli*, a revered mother figure among the Telugu-speaking people of Andhra, and also *Telangana Talli*, which has in recent times served as a symbol for Telangana's movement toward separate statehood. In Kashmir the figure of *Mauj Kasheer* (Mother Kashmir) has been powerful. Especially in early 20th century Kashmiri poetry *Mauj Kasheer* evoked a sense of nurture and affection, and also a sense of sorrow because of Kashmir's condition under foreign rule. Due to the Islamic injunctions against any pictorial representation *Mauj Kasheer* has not been depicted in the form of paintings or statues. The quite vague national cartographic sense among Kashmiris has meant that even the map of Kashmir has not served as a replacement figure that could embody the 'spirit' of *Mauj Kasheer*. Alternatively, *Bharat Mata*, who is most of the time depicted with India's map in the backdrop (sometimes even spilling over into adjoining Pakistan), has her crown always in front of Kashmir. In the clichéd mainstream discourse when Kashmir is described as the "Crown of India", it is the crown of *Bharat Mata* to which the reference is made.[13]

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[12] The figure of Mother India was also portrayed in a popular 1957 Hindi film with Nargis playing the role of the 'Mother' of a village. The film, full of allusions, was pictorially more telling. Its promotional poster showed Nargis, wearing plain clothes unlike bright shining saris and bridal jewelry of Bharat Mata, in a field carrying a plough. The angst-ridden body of Nargis, however, is characteristically transposed against a red sky, which brings to mind images of *Bharat Mata* as portrayed in a number of paintings with nationalist motifs.

[13] The idea of Bharat Mata has permeated not only into the everyday discourse among Indian masses, but it also finds liberal reference in the courts. Witness a recent observation by Justices H. K. Sema and

Vande Mataram's competitor for national acceptance has also been its earliest critique, the song "Jana Gana Mana", which was written by Rabindranath Tagore in 1911. Despite a huge popular support for Vande Mataram, independent India chose Jana Gana Mana as its national anthem on January 24, 1950. Although Jana Gana Mana is shorn of any militaristic rhetoric, but it evokes a feeling of divine spirit pervading India, like Vande Mataram:

"*Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people,*

Dispenser of India's destiny...

Thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee (Tagore, 1985:29).

We must ask, when Nehru told a group of Jats that they are themselves Bharat Mata, was he saying the same spirit is present in them which, according to him, runs through the entirety of India. Is it the same spirit whose fount is what Sri Aurobindo referred to as the "living" Mother? How close are these formulations to the Hegelian notion of nation as a unified whole: "It is the matured totality which...constitutes *one* Being, the spirit of *one* People. To it the individual members belong; each unit is the Son of his Nation."[14] Would it be fruitful to draw parallels to Herder's understanding who proposed an organic quality in national cultures, and to Johann Gottlieb Fichte's remarks, in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808), describing nation as being "eternal in spirit"?

III

A key sign of national consciousness is that it would want to write its own history. It is the result of a deep desire to discover a purer past that appears at an interface with perceived foreign rule; and it comes as an apparent counter to histories written by foreigners about it. But quite often the nationalist thought and discourse becomes only a

Markandey Katju regarding Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's campaign against North Indians in Mumbai. Condemning tendencies toward Balkanisation in the country, Justice Katju said, "*We are one nation and must respect each other...Bharat Mata has...crores of faces! But her body is one. She speaks eighteen languages but her thought is one.*" See "Indians free to settle in any part of country says SC", *Times of India*, March 15, 2008.

[14] See G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover Publications, 1956, 52-3, emphasis as in the original). See chapter one for an elaboration.

derivative of the colonial historiography itself (Chatterjee: 1986). Bengal, the centre of the first British colonial operations in India, became a cradle of such thought. 19th century Bengal provided the vocabulary and the icons to a new nationalist consciousness, and also wrote down the nation's history.

One of the earliest books that claimed to be a history book[15] was *Rajabali*, written in 1808 by Mrityunjay Vidyalankar. It was a story of the *Rajas* and *Badshahs* who had occupied the throne in Delhi and in Bengal, an account that was already in wide circulation in the Brahmin memory. In a Puranic tenor, *Rajabali* wrote of India's successive rulers' history extending back to hundreds of thousands of years. Vidyalankar's work was not a history of a nation, because its protagonists are never the people. As Chatterjee (1995: 84) argues, ties of 'nation-ness' had still not been imagined to give reason for the historian to identify himself with the consciousness of a solidarity that is supposed to unfold in history. Around the same time, Orientalists had begun to "recover" and reconstruct for modern historical consciousness the resources to understand Indian history and society. English-educated Bengalis became deeply interested in this new discipline of Indology[16] (Chatterjee, 1995: 88). Colonial historiography had periodized India's history into Hindu (which subsumed Buddhist rulers too), Muslim, and British eras. Most of them portrayed the British era as a boon for the Indians after having suffered for centuries under the earlier two. Some painted the Muslim era superior to the Hindu one (like in Mill's work); while others claimed that British had liberated Hindus from a tyrannical Muslim rule.

Soon Bengali writers began borrowing the Orientalist trope, if not in full measure but substantially, to invoke a historical consciousness. This consciousness, as Chatterjee (1986 and 1995) has shown, was not an 'indigenous' consciousness, but one informed heavily by a modern European discursive form. Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay[17] was

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[15] It is often claimed that the first recognizably historical account "in India" is Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (The River of Kings). The book, however, written in 12th century Kashmir, only chronicles the reign of kings and queens who had ruled Kashmir from time to time, and not what is now called "India". This account was subsequently added on under the supervision of Jonaraja and Srivara, who lived under the reign of Kashmir's sultans. Perhaps Kalhana gets recognized as an Indian chronicler because he is Hindu.

[16] Some major texts include James Mill's *History of British India* (1817), Elphinstone's *History of India* (1841), J. C. Marshman' *History of Bengal* (1858), and Elliot and Dowson (ed.) *The History of India as told by Its Own Historians* (1877).

[17] His work is *Bharatbarser ithas*, Vol. 1. (1858). Reprinted, Calcutta (1878). Cited in Chatterjee (1995).

possibly one among the first Bengali writers who proclaimed, "Never again will *Rajabali* be written; from now on, everything will be the history of this *des* (country)." In his works he separated the 'realm' from the 'ruler', which implied that rulers might keep changing but the realm or territory (*des*) *continued*.

Although Tarinicharan categorised rulers according to their religious affiliation, the territorial idea was pivotal. It naturally instigated a search for centre and a true sovereign for this territorial continuity, which affected the fortunes of the whole of India. For instance, why did the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan and the capture of Delhi usher in the Muslim phase of India? These arguments bore a clear imprint of colonial historiography which had given up the earlier practice of describing "Muslim" rulers as merely Turks or Afghans instead of emphasizing their religious background. It would be relevant here to ask why the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan at the hands of Mohammed Ghori was really such an important turning point in "India's history". Why would not, for example, the Kushan dynasty's conquests in the Indo-Gangetic heartlands, earlier, constitute one? After all, Kushans were not 'native' to India; their heartland was in contemporary Afghanistan.[18] Later, Nehru (1986: 236) too, saw Mahmud Ghaznavi's raids and Mohammed Ghori's arrival into India as a historical break, classifying them in his book as "New Problems", and mentioning that Chauhan's defeat marked the beginning of the "arrival of Islam" in the form of ruthless military conquests. In contrast, Nehru views the Kushan period in continuity with the pre-Islamic period. He writes (1986: 137): "Some of them (Kushans) became converts to Hindu faith, but most of them became Buddhists," suggesting his own subscription to the religion-based division of India's history. He goes on to say:

"*The Kushans had* Indianized *themselves and had become patrons of Indian culture; yet an undercurrent of* nationalist *resistance to their rule continued, and when later fresh tribes poured into India, this nationalist and anti-foreign movement took shape at the beginning of the fourth century A.D.* (page 137, emphasis mine)."

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[18] Kushanas were tribes from Central Asia, especially the regions around Bactria. Although their territory extended into present day North India, but the area near Bagram in Afghanistan was their centre.

Not only does this point to Nehru's anxious search for traces of nationalism in India's history, but, more importantly, he conflates "Indianization" with conversion to Hinduism and Buddhism. However, we must briefly return to 19th century Bengal where the resources for the Hindu nationalist discourse were brewing alongside the nationalist historiography, especially in Bankim's writings.

Bankim was not just a simple novelist or poet; he was a social reformer too. He questioned, at least until the 1870s, the different forms of caste, class, and gender oppression. But towards the end of the decade Bankim had transformed his position from seemingly liberal to a markedly Hindu revivalist one, a phenomenon that was also sweeping across entire Bengal at that time (Sarkar 2001: 168). When he gave the call: "We have no history! We must have a history!" exhorting his fellow Bengalis to write the history of India, Bengal already had some written history work, but they were not ones that drew a linear trajectory of the nation. He, however, termed these previous works "adolescent literature". He also repudiated both English historians as well as the Muslim chroniclers as "liars" and "Hindu-hating zealots" respectively (Chatterjee, 1995: 77). In his works,[19] Bankim identifies his subject nation sometimes as Bengal and at other times *bharatavarsiya* (India), and in both cases names the foreign ruler and aggressor as the Muslim. He speaks of the history of resistance to foreign rule but confines it solely to the pre-British past, couching it in terms of Hindu *jati's* struggle against Muslim rulers through history. He speaks about the scourge of colonialism, but does not see British rule as a manifestation of one enough to be fought against. Bankim, like many others, did not see any difference between the idea of India and Hinduism. People following religions which had origins outside India were foreigners in his view. Thus, the vast diversity which gets labelled as Hindu, and traditions which historically had acrimonious relations with it, like Buddhism, can sit together, but Islam and Christianity may not. I will return to this topic again, but it is important to note here how "India" was fast becoming a generic unit, with rather fixed territorial definitions, that acted as an eternal realm for the history of "Hindu *jati*" to pan out. The nation—Hindu *jati*— was getting imagined simultaneously with its future state—India.

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[19] See Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Bankim Racanabali*, edited by Jogeshchandra Bagal, Vol. 2. Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965.

This imagining of 'India' and 'Hindu' nation as one was not independent of the influence of European modernity. As Chatterjee points out (1995: 110), the synonymy between "Indian nationalism" and "Hindu nationalism" is not a remnant of a pre-modern era; it is an entirely modern, rationalist, and historicist idea: both strongly defend the state's central role in reforming society and in modernization, and to strengthen national-state's unity and sovereignty. Hindu nationalism has rather more pronounced political dimensions than religious ones. He argues that the notion of "Hindu-ness" in this historical conception cannot be, and does not need to be, defined by any religious criteria at all. There are no specific beliefs or practices that characterize this "Hindu," and many sectarian and doctrinal differences are irrelevant. There is a convergence in Chatterjee's and Nandy's views on this. Nandy et al (2005), in their work on the 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque and the Ramjanambhumi movement, argue against the evolutionist theory of "communalism"[20] that sees the latter as marking a transient, earlier stage of social development, which the forces of modern secular individualism will eventually defeat. In fact communalism, they point out, is an intrinsic product of the secular modern ideology itself.[21]

Hindu communalism and nationalism coalesce. This commingling gets a boost too because the modern ideas of nationalism and state have sanctioned the concept of a "mainstream national culture" that is fearful of diversities, intolerant of dissent not cast in the language of the mainstream, and panicky about any self-assertion or search for autonomy by ethnic groups. India's unity is similarly seen as dependent on a cultural uniformity, and, therefore, in a firm belief that the legitimacy of the modern state can be maintained only on the basis of a stream-rolling concept of nationalism that promises to eliminate all fundamental cultural differences within the polity (Nandy, 2005: 19). The project of nation-state divides people into the nation and the ethnic minorities, and if it is

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[20] There is a vast convergence between Hindu communalism and Hindu nationalism, historically as well as politically. In a post-independent India the term 'Hindu communalism' does not adequately reflect its real contents. Muslim communalism, on the other hand, does properly point to the phenomenon it seeks to represent: sub-state demands, like better representation and additional protections, etc. For Hindu "communalism" in India these demands have more rhetorical import than substantial, for when Hindu communalists make such demands it is generally a noisy reaction to any government favour to Muslims or Christians.
[21] They give examples of how communal cleavages are prominent in urban areas, especially where industries are conspicuous and modern values are dominant.

a mass electoral system, into a majority and the minorities. The search for a nation (a majority) that could provide the "mainstream national culture" led to the discovery of Hindu unity of India.

Over the past two centuries there has been a defensive attempt to redefine Hinduism as a "proper" religion along Semitic lines and to make this redefined Hinduism the main facilitator in an indigenous vision of developing the mind and the society.[22] The categories and concepts like nation and state remained modern but were to be represented through and imbued with a Hindu subjectivity. Rediscovery of classical Hinduism by sympathetic European scholars[23] who saw British rule as the liberation of Hindus from the Muslim yoke provided ready-made resources for thinkers and social reformers to give shape to a discourse of unitary Hinduism. Desire to imitate Semitic religions was also instigated by an onslaught of aggressive modernism of mainly the Utilitarians and Social Darwinists, the Christian evangelism, and an exposure to European ideologies of nationalism. It produced various responses with more or less a similar agenda of what I call *monotheisation*. Nandy (2005: 57) points out that these responses, which came as a result of feelings of inferiority, insecurity about the future, and moral disorientation, were a mix of classical, folk, and imported Western categories that had produced cultural and psychological disruption in the first place[24]. Movements like Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj with monotheistic zeal devalued the little cultures associated with Hinduism. They constructed a notion of a 'real' Hinduism which transcended the 'trivialities' of local traditions. Modernists and missionaries also delegitimized Hinduism as a lived experience and left open, for the increasingly insecure Indian thinkers, the option of defending only philosophical Hinduism as the real Hinduism. Some scholars have argued that the "real" Hinduism was supposed to be only a classical Brahminical version, which boasted about its Aryan heritage (Nandy 2005: 59).

The vision of a unified territory to be populated by a unified people, both constructed and sacralized, was being realised simultaneously. This vision bears close

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[22] See Brian K. Pennington (2005), *Was Hinduism Invented?* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

[23] Nandy speaks of the important role played by William Jones and Max Mueller whose enthusiasm for ancient India was matched by an equal distaste for the everyday life of Hinduism.

[24] An important case is the life and writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (1861-1907) one of the first activist-scholars to systematically develop the ideological content of Hindu nationalism. Born in a Brahmin family, he later adopted Protestant Christianity, only to drop it and become a Catholic. He finally moved to Vedantic Hinduism. This uprootedness can be seen in other writers of the age as well.

resemblance to Fichte's formulation which allowed him to acknowledge that the German nation and the German state had never up to that point been the same. Fichte insisted that the two were divinely destined to coincide. Like the Germans, who nursed the ambition of taking back lands that were believed to have been part of the Deutschland in the past, the Indian intelligentsia too, having conceived of the entire subcontinent from Kabul to Calcutta (and, later on, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari) as India, were not willing to let anything break this geographic unity.[25] 1947 was the moment when finally this vision came to an epochal closure—an immensely successful one historically, but in the eyes of the Hindu masses, seen partly as a tragedy. Almost forty years after India's independence the veiled Hindu undercurrent of an institutionally secular India became accentuated.

IV

Nehru largely kept away from the religious iconography of the nation, yet he found himself unable to completely prevent the Hindu chauvinistic course India was to take gradually. Nation in the popular Hindu imagination, carefully nurtured over the years, had to play out in reality; even under the compulsions imposed by the daily business of the state. Gandhi's assassination at the hands of Godse gave Nehru some leverage to deal with the Hindu right-wing temporarily, but he could not completely put a lid on the Hindu upsurge. Even in his own Congress party there were people, more connected to the masses on the ground than Nehru himself, who understood and played to this public sentiment better. A few months into Independence, a demand was raised that the temple of Somnath be rebuilt. The temple, which was a target of an 11th century raid by Mahmud, the ruler of Ghazni, had been ascribed much symbolic value by the colonial and Indian historians, the writers, and the politicians. Prominent in raising this demand were Vallabhbhai Patel, the deputy prime minister in Nehru's cabinet (also known as the "Iron Man of India"), and K. M. Munshi. Fearing that the reconstruction would be seen as an exhibition of Hindu revivalism, Nehru opposed the plan and sought to extricate the state from the project. Nevertheless, the temple got completed in 1951. Munshi wrote:

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[25] Jinnah is not blamed so much for instigating communalism in India as dividing the motherland.

"This national urge was reflected when Sardar (Patel), with uncanny insight, saw that we would never genuinely feel that freedom had come, nor develop faith in our future, unless Somnatha was restored" (cited in Davis, 2007: 14).

In 1949, the Babri mosque episode[26] erupted. An idol of Ram and Sita appeared in the famous mosque in Ayodhya. The mosque had been built in 16th century by Mir Baqi, a general in Mughal emperor Akbar's army. Hindus popularly believed that the mosque was built at the exact site of mythical Hindu god Ram's birth; that a temple of Ram had existed before Baqi destroyed it to make space for the mosque. Muslims, blaming a Hindu-communalist hand in the conspiracy, regarded the events of 1949 as an act of desecration; Hindus thought it was a miracle. As crowds of Hindus came to offer worship, Nehru ordered the images to be removed.[27]

Although communal rioting continued to take place across India on a regular basis, with mostly Muslims (now a minority, and after the creation of Pakistan, increasingly on the defensive) becoming victims, the Babri issue erupted again only in 1986, when India's Congress-led government allowed *Shilanyas* (foundation-laying) ceremony to be held inside the premises. By this time, Nehru's Congress, now under control of his daughter and grandson, had to a great extent given up the tough rhetoric of his secularism. Two leading figures, and opponents, on the question of the Ramjanambhoomi/Babri Masjid issue, one a Hindu—Atal Behari Vajpayee—and another Muslim—Syed Shahabuddin—concurred on this. Vajpayee said:

"It was not BJP which made Ayodhya into a burning issue. It was the Congress which did that. It was they who allowed the shilanyas *ceremony. It was Rajiv Gandhi who went to Faizabad to start his election campaign and he solicited votes on the promise of ushering in* Ramrajya *[literally the kingdom of Ram but connotatively, an ideal polity]. The BJP had to respond to the situation* (Nandy et al 2005: 38)."

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[26] For a more elaborate description of the controversy see Ram Puniyani's *"Communal Politics: Myths versus Facts"*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, (2003).
[27] Initially the Fiazabad district magistrate refused the orders. He was eventually removed along with the idols, and the Hindu Mahasabha was held responsible for it.

Shahabuddin had this to say:

"*Rajiv Gandhi played his cards very badly. Mrs. [Indira] Gandhi from 1979 onwards indirectly helped the Hindu communal and chauvinistic forces. I don't say that she was communal in a strategic sense. But in her quest for power she could take help from Hindu communalism as a tactical measure. It was she who really opened the Babri Masjid issue...And, of course, her son was the beneficiary...In 1986...when the lock was opened... the order of the district judge of Faizabad was a contrived order. The entire scenario was written by the government. It was done as a matter of state policy* (Nandy et al 2005: 39 footnote).*"*

It would be a little too far-fetched to suggest that it was simply Congress leaders who roused the Hindu "communalism", because the order, contrived or not, the decision taken as a matter of state policy or not, Congress knew well that the Hindu resurgence, which was already brewing, must be pandered to more openly, if it hoped to remain in power. The template of this resurgence, already manifested substantially, was ready to bear out in a symbolic fashion too.

During the 1991 election campaign, BJP's second-in-command, Lal Krishna Advani, launched his famous *Rath Yatra*. It was a symbolic and highly emotional journey. In his vehicle, designed to represent an epic chariot and decorated with electoral symbols of the BJP (a lotus) and the Hindu sacred syllable *Om*, Advani traveled some six thousand miles. He kept insisting that the *Rath Yatra* was no religious crusade, and he was not a religious leader. The journey, he often told the media, was against "pseudo-secularism and minority appeasement".[28] But people certainly treated him as a religious figure, offering him jars of their own blood and performing religious dances in front of him (Jaffrelot 1996: 416-417). As Nussbaum (2007) points out, Advani posed sometimes like Krishna with his *Sudarshan Chakra*, and sometimes with a bow and arrow like Ram. In rural areas Advani emphasized the devotional nature of his campaign, but in Parliament and in urban areas he turned to political themes. The symbols of nationalism

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[28] See Arvind Rajagopal, (2001) *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

like *Bharat Mata* and Vande Mataram were invoked along the way. Congress, Nussbaum maintains (2007: 176), instead of repudiating the politics of Hindu supremacy, rode the wave of religious feeling, simply offering a softer version of the Hindu-first message. Sure enough, Indian Muslims were in for a shock as the Babri mosque, not so important religiously, as symbolically, was pulled down. For them the act represented a case of Hindu assertion to affirm Hindu potency and pride, and to humiliate Muslims.[29] In the Hindu right-wing narrative of history, the Babri mosque had been constructed to be a symbol of medieval Muslim tyranny against the Hindus; that is why the moment was presented as cathartic for the Hindu nation. But Hindu nationalists were not to stop there. The slogan "*Babri to bas jhanki hai, Mathura Kashi baki hai*" (Babri was just a curtain raiser, Mathura and Kashi are still left), made clear their intentions. Demand was made to "liberate" thousands of other temples on which, they believed, mosques had been built.

Hindu nationalists were going by the book; the ideas expounded by their main thinkers: Golwalkar, Hedgewar, and Savarkar.[30] The gist of their arguments was that Muslims, if they have to live in India as equal citizens, must adopt "Indian culture"; otherwise, they would always have to live at the mercy of the majority Hindus. For Muslims, "Indian culture" was synonymous with "Hindu culture," which demanded of them that they deny their own history: they would have to adopt Hindu heroes as their heroes. Savarkar's formulation on nationhood, which caught on and has been uttered countless times by those who follow his lead, was that the Hindu was one who considered India to be his *matribhumi* (motherland) as well as his *punyabhumi* (holy land). In his view, this dual bond to the land created a very precious type of "perfect solidarity and cohesion," where as religions like Islam and Christianity, by teaching that the holy land lay elsewhere, divided the loyalty:

"*For, though, Hindusthan to them is motherland as to any other Hindus yet to them it is not a holy land too. Their holy land is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names*

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[29] See Syed Shahabuddin's interview with Ashis Nandy et al (2005: 39).

[30] See Nussbaum (2007: 155). She extensively discusses the role that ideas of Golwalkar, Hedgewar, and Savarkar played in influencing the subsequent shape the extreme Hindu right-wing took in India. See also V. D. Savarkar (1969), *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* 5th ed., Bombay: S. S. Savarkar, and M. S. Golwalkar (1947), *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*, 4th ed., Nagpur: P. V. Betwalkar.

and their outlook smack of a foreign origin. Their love is divided" (cited in Nussbaum 2007: 159).

By contrast, Dalits and tribals, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains could all count among Hindus, even if their religion was not the mainstream one. Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsis could count as Hindu if they give up their allegiance to their holy lands. This parochial vision of India—an offspring, nevertheless, of the same 19th century Bengali nationalist imagination—ran quite close to what came to be described as the "mainstream" national vision. In fact, the mainstream vision only existed at the constitutional level, while as stated earlier it neither repudiated the extremist vision fervently nor intensified secularism any more vigorously. At many places, especially during the Gujarat riots of 2002, cadres of supposedly secular centrist political parties were seen participating in the anti-Muslim pogrom.

For Muslims in India, divided in their own complexities, present-day India presents no win-win situation. No more Pakistans are possible; and faith in the Indian system is fading too.[31] The National Minorities Commission interprets its task of "safe guarding the interests of minorities" as a mandate for assimilation, believing that security for minorities comes from turning them acquiescent. It exonerated Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), another Hindu-right organisation, for its *Trishul* (trident) distribution programme, held just before Gujarat riots, which is believed to have been an exercise in polarizing the atmosphere by exhorting violence against Muslims. In meetings with VHP leadership the Commission attempted to define the "acceptable standards of behaviour for minorities". The Chairman of the Commission said after one such meeting:

"We have understood the VHP's irritations. We will try our best to remove these. Unless we know what the majority community wants, we can't succeed" (Cited in Mathur, 2008: xi).

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[31] After the Godhra incident about 257 people were arrested under the draconian POTA: 256 were Muslims and one was a Sikh. However, post-Gujarat riots have seen no such arrests. The perpetrators of Gujarat pogrom are still roaming free. For a perspicacious analysis of the Gujarat riots see Martha Nussbaum (2007).

India's politicians and leading scholars regularly remind Muslims that their safety hinges on Kashmir. More than one academic, argue that if Kashmir separates India's Muslims would have to face the worst consequences. A leading US-based Indian academic, Ashutosh Varshney says:

"If Pakistan tries to liberate Kashmir, or if Kashmir breaks away with its help, Pakistan runs the risk of engendering the welfare of 100 million Muslims (sic) *in India...Kashmir's breakaway threatens to empower Hindu nationalism for it legitimates its main argument that Muslims are essentially disloyal to the country"* (Varshney: 1991).

Ganguly and Bajpai concur with Varshney's argument:

"...the crisis...will have serious consequences for Indian secularism, which is under increasing attack from right-wing Hindu nationalist organisations...it is clear that it (the debate over secularism) *will be sharp and divisive and will have to be conducted in the midst of ethnic and religious violence"* (Ganguly and Bajpai 1994: 406).

One fails to understand why Muslims of India should be held responsible for what Muslim Kashmiris seek. That the safety of 130 million Indian Muslims should be dependent on 7 million Muslim Kashmiris cannot be good news for secularism.

The above discussion, which brings together some dominant themes in the discourse of Indian nationalism, is not designed to help us understand the story of Indian Muslims. In fact, it brings us to a vantage point from where one can begin to look at Muslim nationalism in Kashmir, and how the hegemonic Indian nationalism has failed to come to terms with it, because of its own exclusivist nature. In 1987, when a Hindu-right wing person, Jagmohan, appointed by Indira Gandhi as the governor of Kashmir, banned meat on *Janmashtami* (a Hindu festival), a defiant Muslim religious leader went out in the square near my home, and slaughtered a bull. I was only six then and was unable to figure out why a huge crowd of people had gathered; the incident, however, remained etched in my mind like a photograph. I heard later why Qazi Nisar, who was shot dead by

Hizbul Mujahideen militants only a decade later,[32] had defied the government order. He was at that time one of the founders of the Muslim United Front, a party which contested polls to the state assembly in 1987, but soon became a platform for the separatist politicians in Kashmir. His act had a long history. In 1931, when the first stirrings of Kashmiri Muslim consciousness began it was to defy a ruler who, according Mridu Rai[33], had turned Kashmir into a Hindu state. The Islamic vocabulary of the discourse of nationalism in Kashmir, though its initial articulations were a derivative of the Hindu nature of the Dogra rule, in its present form also is, to a large extent, a reaction to the discourse of Hindu nationalism in India.

When the Babri mosque was pulled down in far away Uttar Pradesh, Kashmir erupted in protest. A senior at my high school who had gone on to study at Aligarh Muslim University was stabbed to death in a train in UP during the post-Babri riots, upon being identified as a Muslim. In my school, and in Anantnag, not a single anti-Hindu slogan was raised when his body reached home; all the slogans raised were against India. For people India and Hindu were synonymous. The Islamic vocabulary of the latest insurgency, however, continues to be underpinned by deep historical memories of belonging to a realm distinct from rest of the subcontinent.

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[32] I incidentally was one of the first persons who found his bullet-ridden body lying on the road side very early in the morning. By the time news spread around two hundred thousand people had gathered for his funeral.

[33] See her Mridu Rai (2004), *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects,* New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Chapter Three

Contesting Nationalisms in Kashmir

> Come, O Gardener, create the glory of a new spring day
> Where flowers bloom and bulbuls dance, O craft such a way
>
> GHULAM AHMED MEHJOOR[1]
>
> Seeing that Kashmir is predominantly Mussalman it is bound
> one day to become a Mussalman State.
>
> M. K. GANDHI[2] (1934)

I

In October, 1947 the ruler of newly-independent princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, signed a pre-dated[3] document, which, in theory, provided legal authority for Indian troops to land in Srinagar, with an ostensible aim to defend Kashmir from the "invading tribals from Pakistan". Maharaja, who had fled his capital in Srinagar for Jammu, signed the Instrument of Accession with India without consulting his Kashmiri subjects, an overwhelming majority of them Muslims.[4] Soon the "tribals", and

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[1] Mehjoor was declared by Sheikh Abdullah government as the national poet of Kashmir. These lines are from a prayer song written by Mehjoor, which is very popular in Kashmir. Originally in Kashmiri "*Walo ho baghwaano nav baharuk shaan paida kar; Pholan gul gath karan bulbul timay samaan paida kar,*" the above translation is mine.

[2] In a letter to P. N. Bazaz dated May 15, 1934 (Bazaz 2005: 176).

[3] The date of signing is mired in controversy. The official Indian position is that the document was signed on October 26, 1947, but it is believed that the Indian representative, Krishna Menon, could not fly to Jammu on October 26 to get the Maharaja's signature due to bad weather. According to Alastair Lamb some Indian troops had started pouring into Kashmir even earlier than 26 October. In any case a number of such controversial incidents would come to have a great impact on the future conflict in Kashmir (Lamb: 1966).

[4] Although, British had vested the authority of accession, at the lapse of British paramountcy, with the rulers of the princely states of British India, but they were encouraged to keep in view the general religious affiliation of their subjects, and the geographic suitability. Accordingly, Pakistan believed that Kashmir should have signed up with it [while Jammu and Kashmir State's 78 percent population was Muslim, for

the Pakistan army which had joined on their side some time later, were pushed back but not entirely pushed out of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. United Nations passed a ceasefire resolution, which came into effect and led to the division of Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

The event is described by the Indian government as the liberation of Kashmir, and an end to its troubles. The Pakistan government, however, views the same event very differently, calling it the beginning of Kashmir's travails and of its unpopular occupation (Jha: 1996). The Indian argument was based on the Maharaja's assertion that the invaders were simply tribals from Pakistan, denying the fact that it was a rebellion mostly led by his own subjects at a number of locations within his state, especially Poonch, and only later on helped by the tribals from north-western Pakistan. He even ignored the quite visible fact that most of his subjects had in the past few years been involved in a vigorous anti-monarchical movement that belied any popular acceptance to the Dogra rule.

Some historians, like Chitralekha Zutshi, have pointed out that the rebellion in Poonch and its adjoining areas was followed by its violent suppression by state troops. Before the rebellion, Partition violence had engulfed Jammu leading to communal massacres of Muslims in the region. When the tribals of frontier regions in Pakistan, who shared age-old tribal ties with the people of Poonch, heard of the massacres and the suppression of the rebellion, they came in aid of their kinsmen. The Indian government maintains a tribal army was raised in an elaborate conspiracy to run over Kashmir, and win it for Pakistan. In fact, a similar rebellion against the Maharaja's rule broke out in Gilgit in November of the same year, with Gilgit Scouts at its forefront, who quickly declared accession to Pakistan. The tribals and irregulars from Poonch came close to taking Srinagar, but without any proper strategy they lost track and eventually had to withdraw under intense Indian attack. Soon, Pakistan joined in the battle full force. The Indian government referred the matter to the UN which brokered a ceasefire. The status quo of the Indian and Pakistani forces at the time of cessation of hostilities was maintained, and that line, the line of control, came to divide Kashmir.

Kashmir Valley it was 93 percent (Bazaz 2005: 172). At the same time, all the rivers in Kashmir flowed into Pakistan, and Kashmir had traditionally been connected to the Indian subcontinent through regions that were now part of Pakistan. When the British withdrew the Maharaja signed a Standstill agreement with Pakistan, while India rejected it.

The UN Security Council in its resolutions called on India and Pakistan "to create conditions for, and to conduct, a free and impartial plebiscite to determine the will of the people in the state."[5] Since 1947, however, India has not seen it fit to find out the will of the people of the state, despite the latter's constant clamour for it, or even after a full-blown insurgency against its authority in Kashmir. Pakistan on its part sought to internationalise the issue by appealing to the conscience of the member states of UN and making a legal case in front of international organisations; however, after the loss in the 1971 war with India, Pakistan in effect accepted,[6] albeit briefly, the Indian position that Kashmir is an issue which they can bilaterally resolve. The leaders of both countries also agreed that the dividing line drawn through Kashmir in 1947-49 war should continue to be "respected on both sides without prejudice to the recognized position (on the Kashmir dispute) of either side" (Bose 2003: 225-26). For sometime, Kashmir, for these two countries, was relegated to the backburner. It was only in the late 1980s that Kashmir erupted onto the front stage again. In fact, this time it was not so much Kashmir that erupted as Kashmiris themselves.

Although Kashmir saturated the post-1947 discourse on India-Pakistan relations for forty years, "Kashmiris" were quite systematically erased from it. For India, Kashmir became a question of its *territorial* integrity and for Pakistan, Kashmir and its *rivers*, became its lifeline. The popular uprising in the 1990s was an attempt by Kashmiris to reclaim their place outside the mainstream discourses in India as well as in Pakistan. It made possible an alternative discourse which refused to be held hostage to the binary of accession debate that began with the late British rulers of the subcontinent and was carried into the post-1947 phase by India and Pakistan. Arguably the uprising was against India, however, the popular discourse of *Azadi* in Kashmir, was not an assertion of a will to join Pakistan. Sumantra Bose argues that in political terms it "unambiguously and unequivocally meant independence" (1997: 63), and though this perception is closer to reality, it would be naive to assume *Azadi* and independence are absolutely synonymous. Pakistan saw Kashmir as an unfinished business of the Partition which meant that

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[5] UNSC Resolutions 47(1948), 80 (1950), 91 (1951), 96 (1951) etc. See http://www.kashmiri-cc.ca/un/. Last accessed on April 30, 2008.

[6] The Shimla Agreement of 1972 signed between Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto faced opposition both in Pakistan and in Kashmir.

resolution to the Kashmir issue should be based on the same logic under which Pakistan had come into being. As a consequence, it would mean Kashmir must go to Pakistan.

The Kashmiri uprising, led mostly by Muslim Kashmiris, was, therefore, able to create a radical rupture within the discourse on Kashmir: it replaced the vocabulary "dispute" with its legalistic and inter-state dimension, and allowed itself to be addressed in terms of "nationalism", as a struggle for the national rights of the Kashmiri people. The uprising, in the words of John Breuilly,[7] stated loudly to India that "your" state does not represent "us" (cited in Bose 1997: 106). Kashmiri Muslims saw India as a Hindu state,[8] which had *annexed* Kashmir.

The normative underpinnings of the post-World War II era, which were formulated in the charter of the United Nations and the subsequent covenants, like the UN International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, forced states to be more responsible to the needs of their citizens. The newly-formed India, despite inheriting an imperial template (as we saw in the earlier chapter), had to base its legitimacy to rule in Kashmir on popular authority. It meant Kashmiris could no longer be made subjects; they had to be granted citizenship rights. The Hindu character of India, both as a demographic fact as well as the basis of its predominant nationalism, stood in the way of this process. At the same time, the Indian state's insistence on singular nationalism could not countenance any other claims to nationalism within its territorial confines, which led to denial of the existence of Kashmiri nationalism altogether, and automatically the question of the Kashmiri national rights (Zutshi 2003: 327). Yet, the need to come up with a semblance of popular acceptance of its rule in Kashmir made India patronise one political party at the cost of other contending political organisations in Kashmir; in fact, India vested the power of representation in the body of a single person, Sheikh Abdullah.

Sheikh Abdullah had come into prominence during the 1931 uprising against Dogra rule with the support of traditional religious leadership in Kashmir. He founded the Muslim Conference, which demanded better representation of Muslim Kashmiris in bureaucracy and administration, and found the roots of discrimination against Muslims in

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[7] See John Breuilly (1992), *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd edition, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[8] In a public speech delivered by Yasin Malik in Anantnag, on June 25, 2005, he referred to India as a "Brahmin Empire".

the Hindu nature of the Dogra rule. But by 1939, he had changed the Muslim Conference to National Conference under the influence of the Indian National Congress, and claimed to represent all the communities in Jammu and Kashmir State. Hindus of the state saw this move as only nomenclatural; they felt that the National Conference was a party representing Muslim interests alone. However, even among Muslims of the state, the National Conference did not have a unanimous support. Its support was deeply undercut because of the revival of old Muslim Conference in early 1940s by leaders like Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and the main Muslim Kashmiri preacher, Maulvi Yusuf Shah. It represented a significant challenge to Abdullah's claims to being the sole spokesperson not only in Kashmir, but also among the Muslims of Jammu and Poonch, where Muslim Conference held a sway.

Major reasons for Abdullah's fall in popularity were his alignment with the Dogra government during the 1940s, his proximity to the Indian National Congress, and his political style that was marked by hooliganism against the opposition. Pre-1947 it had been his socio-economic program which boosted his popularity;[9] his rhetoric against landlordism, mixed with an Islamic imagery, had endeared him to the peasantry (Zutshi 2003: 284). Indian leaders sought to give a further boost to Sheikh Abdullah's standing by endorsing him completely. It is a different matter that throughout his career, Abdullah gained popularity in times when he divorced himself from Congress, or stood against India. It seems that Congress' idea of projecting Abdullah had the twin–purpose of not only having a Muslim Kashmiri leader on their side for future, but also to create a counter to Jinnah. Nehru advised Hindu Kashmiris that they should follow Sheikh Abdullah; he also told Muslims of the state that they were fortunate to have a leader like him. Entire Congress followed in the steps of Nehru and put its weight behind Abdullah.

At the same time, Nehru had already stated his feelings toward the future of Kashmir. In his letter to Bazaz, in 1936, Nehru stated that Kashmir is an "integral" part of the larger (Indian) nationalism issue. He maintained that:

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[9] The National Conference adopted the Naya Kashmir (New Kashmir) manifesto at its Srinagar session of September 1944. It was a comprehensive plan for social, economic, political and cultural reconstruction of Kashmir. Though it referred to the idea of a Kashmiri motherland, it remained vacuous about the future status of Kashmir.

"The larger struggle of Indian independence governs the situation and more of less (sic) *local struggle in Kashmir must be viewed in the light of the Indian struggle* (Bazaz 2005: 179)."

In the same letter Nehru expressed his uneasiness with Gandhi's suggestion that Kashmir would become a Mussalman state. Although, Sheikh Abdullah sought wider acceptance as the exclusive leader of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, his propinquity with Congress leaders backfired on him. He had decided to join the Maharaja's Praja Sabha (Subjects' Assembly) and even had a *Wazir* nominated. By early 1940s, his popularity had sunk even among the peasants of Kashmir, who started forming anti-NC Kisan (Peasant) Conferences.

In 1944 he suddenly distanced himself from the Dogra government and launched the "Quit Kashmir" movement. The movement was a failure with major National Conference leaders put behind bars, and Abdullah himself sentenced to three and half years in prison. It was a very crucial time for Kashmir because the British paramountcy was ending earlier than predicted. Abdullah still had no clear plan. He proposed a confederation plan for the entire subcontinent, but he had no idea of what Nehru and other members of the Congress were thinking. He had not understood the imperial urge within the new Indian Hindu elite, with their strong desire to centralise the British territorial legacy that fell into their lap.

The Muslim Conference, on the other hand, was more pragmatic. In May 1947, the acting President of the Muslim Conference, Chaudhary Hamidullah, told the Praja Sabha that if Hari Singh conceded the principle of majority rule the Muslims would remain loyal to him. He later urged the Maharaja to declare independence, an option made technically possible by the impending British withdrawal.[10] The Muslim Conference's sense of urgency was provoked by Indian Congress leaders' attempts to influence the Maharaja's decision.[11] In any case, during those fateful months of 1947 Sheikh Abdullah was rendered irrelevant due to his imprisonment. Finally released in

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[10] See Ian Copland (1991), The Abdullah Factor: Kashmiri Muslims and the Crisis of 1947, in D. A. Low (ed.) *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, New York: St. Martin's Press (Cited in Zutshi 2003: 303).
[11] In May 1947, Congress had sent Acharya Kriplani to convince the Maharaja to join India; in August Gandhi himself arrived to convince him.

September 1947, he wavered yet again; knowing that the Maharaja had signed the Standstill agreement with Pakistan, he was convinced that India had no designs for Kashmir. So when regions like Poonch, where the Muslim Conference was popular, erupted in rebellion against Dogra rule, Abdullah again landed on the side of the Maharaja who had imprisoned him, and against whom he had ostensibly launched the "Quit Kashmir" movement. His opportunism, by this time, had further reduced his credibility among the people of Kashmir. Meanwhile Indian leaders' attempts to buttress Abdullah's personality continued. On November 11, 1947, Gandhi stated without a hint of doubt that:

"*Sheikh Abdullah is the real ruler of Kashmir. He is fighting bravely there. If he had just spoken on behalf of the Muslims there, he wouldn't have been the real ruler of Kashmir. Kashmir's Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis* (sic) *and Christians are with him*" (Abdullah: 1982).

Gandhi's statement came after Abdullah had endorsed the Maharaja's signing of the Instrument of Accession.

Sheikh Abdullah was a perfect candidate for India. During the late 1930s, he had, in his attempt to claim his popularity beyond Muslim Kashmiris, constructed the term *Kashmiriyat*, which was ostensibly based on the belief that Kashmir had a history of shared coexistence among different religious communities, particularly its unique Hindu-Muslim amity. The concept, however, could not have been more fraught with internal contradictions. Hindu Kashmiris, who constituted a miniscule proportion of Kashmir's population, had over the past few centuries acquired a highly disproportionate amount of power in Kashmir. Whereas the Muslim majority had been largely the peasantry and working class, and had almost no say in the administration, the Hindus were either landlords or occupied most of the positions in the powerful revenue administration. Hindu Kashmiris became the visible face of Dogra tyranny; with the state imposing heavy taxes on almost everything Kashmiris produced, the sources of bitterness between Hindus and Muslims was bound to increase.

The spontaneous and popular July 1931 uprising against the Dogra rule also involved a confrontation with Hindu revenue officials. Resentment continued between

the two communities, who more or less functioned as antagonistic classes. Hindus perceived their own community as "enlightened, educated, and law-abiding" while Muslims were seen as "barbarous and ignorant".[12] The emerging Muslim leadership felt the overtly Hindu Dogra rule discriminated against Muslims in favour of its coreligionists. As both Mridu Rai (2004) and Zutshi (2003) have shown this realisation was not ill-founded. *Kashmiriyat* was a discursive legerdemain to paper over intercommunity contradictions and conflicts. For some Congress leaders, who propounded an ideology of singular nationalism to counter the Muslim League's rhetoric of Hindus and Muslims forming separate nations, and branded any other idea of nationalism as communal, Sheikh Abdullah's *Kashmiriyat* was accomodable, but only if it was shorn of any of its own nationalist dimension and used strictly to designate inter-communal relations.

In Kashmir, the deep historical memories of an independent past that had in part developed in reaction to centuries of foreign rule, submission to Indian nationalism, as Indian leaders demanded, may not have been easily acceptable. It was doubly so because Indian nationalism underpinned by a Hindu subjectivity, was also seen as imperial. India was a realm where Kashmiris had not been able to gain their long-standing demand of citizenship rights and power; and decisions that affect their collective life would always be taken from a place where they barely had any major influence, not least because of Kashmir's Muslim identity.

II

In Kashmir a deep-rooted sense of regional identity has existed for many centuries. This feeling generally gets expressed in terms of a home/foreign dynamic. Home, the *Kasheer*, and *Koshur* that which belongs to the home, have always been counterpoised in public discourse and memory against that which is foreign, the *Nebar*, and *Nebrim* the things that belong to the outside realm. *Kasheer* has distinct features, its landscape is bounded by snow-capped mountains, and is cut through by a number of

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[12] Petition from a Pandit organization to Viceroy and Governor General of India, in 1931 (Cited in Zutshi 2003: 222).

rivers and streams (Jhelum for instance); it is dotted by lakes (Wular, Dal, Nagin and Mansbal) and springs and waterfalls; it is endowed with forests and gardens. In fact, Kashmir itself is imagined as a garden—a *bagh*, of which God himself is the gardener. *Kasheer* is bequeathed with feminine qualities of care and nurture. She is referred to as mother, the *Mauj*. Its bountiful landscape is rich enough to provide for its children/people, who are its *guls* (flowers) and *bulbuls* (birds), as in Mehjoor. Kashmir is not just the *bagh* of bounty alone, but it's also a *rishiwaer*, a garden of Sufi masters, a garden of spiritual bounty. Thus, on its cultural side, the centres of Kashmir's social life have been its shrines. Shrines, and the tremendous faith Kashmiris vest in them, have become anchors that hold Kashmir's social and moral fabric together. The metaphoric narrative of the land (*bagh*) and its people (*bulbul*) emerges from Kashmir's strong poetic tradition. Poetry has over centuries become a way of making sense of Kashmir's situation.

In the people's imagination, *Nebar* was always beyond the mountains. Something unfathomable it was also beyond the imagination, but whenever *Nebar* came into *Kasheer* it only brought misery. Kalhana's work, "Rajatarangini"—The Book of Kings, written in the 12th century, is generally regarded as the first chronicle in South Asia that looks more like a proper history than a mythology. Kalhana traces Kashmir's history back to antiquity, and in doing so, displays a sense of consciousness of Kashmir's distinctness even in the early medieval period. He lauds some "Kashmiri" rulers for their just rule, and censures those who by their actions made it possible for "foreign invaders" to come to Kashmir. He specifically mentions how the ineptitude of Kashmir's ruler allowed the defeated Hun, Mihiragula, to come and occupy the throne and oppress the people.[13]

In Kalhana's work, however, the sense of "a people"—an awareness of common purpose among the people, is not visible. The historical consciousness of difference of Kashmir as a realm distinct from others, however, continues to pervade in Kashmir even after its transition to Islam, which connected the region to the larger world of Islam. Jonaraja and Srivara updated Kalhana's chronicle during the time of Sultan Zainul Abidin

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[13] See Kalhana (1900, reprint 1961), *Rajatarangini: The Saga of the Kings of Kasmir*, trans. M. A. Stein, 2 vols, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (Cited in Schofield: 1996).

(1420-70), and the story of the rulers' transition to Islam is marked by a narrative continuity rather than a break, or turn. It underscores how the regional identity outweighed considerations of religious identity in Kashmir. Only in the historical writings of last one century has the King Rinchana's conversion to Islam in the 14th century come to be seen as a radical break in Kashmir's history.[14] The partition of Kashmiri history along the religious lines (defined largely by the ruler's religion), all too similar to colonial historiography, with its own implicit moral-political uses for the present times, was arbitrary. Major changes, enough to mark a historical break, in Kashmir during 14th century did take place, but they did not have necessarily to do with religion.

Zutshi argues, citing the work of Sheldon Pollock,[15] that vernacularization in Kashmir began in the 14th century, with one of the major Sufi mystics of the time, Nurruddin Wali (b. 1378), creating verse in the Kashmiri language at a time when Persian was the language of the royal court, which also acted as the literary language of the court poets and writers. Nurruddin, who established the indigenous *Rishi* order of Sufis in Kashmir to break away from the practice of only accepting the authority of Sufis from Persia and Central Asia (he, however, did not deny the influence of non-Kashmiri Sufis), expressed a strong Kashmiri identity but couched it in the Islamic idiom; yet, at the same time, in the Kashmiri language he preached universalism:

> *"Know that this world of being is naught;*
> *The true world, be sure, belongs to me.*
> *I chose solitude in Kashmir,*
> *For this universe is my garden"* (Zutshi 2004: 28).

This phase of vernacularization begins to mark a break in Kashmir with the contradictory processes of regionalisation and trans-regional cultural articulation happening simultaneously, almost in the same breath. It was an attempt toward reconciling the

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[14] See for instance R. K. Parmu, (1969), *A History of Muslim rule in Kashmir: 1320-1819*, Delhi: People's Publishing House.
[15] See Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500," *Daedalus* 127 (Summer 1998): 41-74.

Kashmir's regional difference and the Islam's moral universe, a process that has never reached a conclusion, and perhaps never will. Nurruddin's poetry contributed a great deal to the development of the Kashmiri language, and later to the articulation of a self-conscious Kashmiri culture (Zutshi 2003: 25).

By 1586, Kashmir had been annexed as a part of the Mughal Empire by Akbar's army. 20th century Kashmiri historians like G. M. D. Sufi consider this not only as a loss of Kashmir's independence, but also a weakening of Kashmiris' independent spirit.[16] Otherwise regarded as the halcyon era in Kashmir, it was during the Mughal rule that the tradition of effacing Kashmiris from narratives about Kashmir, and its depictions, began. The tradition reached its peak in Dogra and Western travellers' narratives of Kashmir, and would continue well into the present period (Rai 2004: 5). Some Kashmiri poets themselves, to please the Mughal emperor, wrote long narrative poems—the *Masnavis*— about the landscape, bereaving it of its people. In some cases the poetic articulation of religious renunciation marked this effacement.[17] It is during the same period, however, that a number of Kashmiri poets would begin to write more self-consciously about their sense of regional belonging, and tie it into the narratives about its landscape. It was a discursive coming together of the land and its people. This tradition, needless to say, remained overwhelmed by narratives in which Kashmiris were missing.

C. A Bayly points out that the pre-colonial discourse in India was about the demand of good governance, which laid stress on the exclusive bonds of religious community, while expressing a variety of regional patriotisms.[18] In Mughal Kashmir, during times of distress, many poets lamented the misery of the people. Consider this poem by Khwaja Mohammed Azam, written after the 1773 famine, which makes a plea for help to the Mughal court:

"*So great is the distress of the people of Kashmir,*

That it escapes even their own comprehension.

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[16] See G. M. D. Sufi (1974), *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to Our Own*, 2 vols. New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers.

[17] Zutshi notes in the mystic poetry of Habibullah Ganai (1556-1617) the element of renunciation articulated in religious terms (Zutshi 2004: 31).

[18] See C. A. Bayly (1998), *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and the Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India*, Delhi: OUP.

No rice or grain can be found anywhere,

Except in the wheat-complexioned beauty of the beloved" (Zutshi 2003: 33).

With the weakening of Mughal control over Kashmir due to Nadir Shah's attack on Delhi (1738), Kashmir came under rule of Afghans (1753-1819). A number of accounts from the Afghan period, for example one by George Forster, a civil servant in the East India Company, who visited Kashmir during that time, have left harrowing tales of torture of the common Kashmiris. Even though the Hindu minority of Kashmir quickly learned the ways of Afghans and acquired jobs in the revenue administration, they suffered almost as much as Muslims (Zutshi 2003: 62).

A number of histories of Kashmir by Kashmiris themselves were written during the late Mughal and the Afghan periods. These histories which depict Kashmir as *Mulk-i-Kashmir*, or the homeland of Kashmiris, delineated not only the geographical space of Kashmir, but also spoke about the pain of the common folk. They invoked earlier histories of Kashmir, like Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, to suggest continuity and a deep historical consciousness. Some examples of such histories include the versified histories, *Bagh-e-Sulaiman* by Saiduddin Shahabadi and *Shahnama* by Mulla Mohammed Taufiq (d. 1765). Shahabadi wrote:

"The garden of Kashmir became a wound of pain,

The master's pleasure became the people's indigence.

They fell upon the soul of Kashmir,

As voracious dogs set lose."

Taufiq, in his turn, invoked the last indigenous Kashmiri ruler Yusuf Shah Chak and his just rule:

"That when Kashmir for the second time

Came under the command of the famous king Yusuf,

He endeared himself in the hearts of the urban and village dwellers

With generosity, with gifts, justice and fairness."

Shahabadi also exhorted his countrymen into action, writing in Persian:

"Rishta abul watan az dil-e-burid
Raft Dighar Barkas roshan nadid."

"When patriotic love for our country rises together from every heart, you will see it can never be a burden for the individual's heart" (all of these cited in Zutshi 2004: 43). It is clear that the first stirrings of the sense of common purpose among people in Kashmir preceded the same processes in Bengal by a few centuries, as we have noted in the previous chapter.

After the Afghans, Kashmir came under the rule of Sikhs (1819-1846), and then under the Dogras (1846-1947). Persecution of Kashmiri people by foreign rulers that began with Afghans changed its form under the Sikhs and the Dogras, as now it was only Muslims of the region that faced the brunt. As Ranjit Singh led his Sikh army into Kashmir, the parameters of the future inter-community schism were firmly laid. Almost immediately the new rulers started persecuting the Muslims: cow slaughter was banned by death (a number of butchers were hanged to set an example); the Muslim call to prayer—*azaan*—was prohibited; a number of major mosques were shut down; Jama Masjid was closed, and the "Pather Masjid" was converted into a state grain store. A familiar pattern had begun where Kashmiri Hindus became part of the repressive government machinery, and Muslims stood at the receiving end. During the Dogra[19] rule it became normal to see Hindu landlords and revenue officials, through the government's extremely heavy taxation policy, make the lives of Muslims, who were mostly peasants, unbearable. The peasants on many occasions would leave lands uncultivated because the government and the Hindu intermediaries would take away most of the produce in taxes,

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[19] Gulab Singh, a Dogra chieftain in the Sikh army, betrayed the Sikhs during the Anglo-Sikh war of 1846, and as a reward he was sold the Kashmir province by the British East India Company. The sale deed came to be known as the Amritsar Treaty, whereby Gulab Singh was given free reign over Kashmir, and over its people. As argued by Mridu Rai (2003) Dogra sovereignty, especially in the earlier decades was almost absolute, and not a case of "Hollow Crown", as Nicholas Dirks describes the Princely States in British India.

leaving barely anything for the peasants' self-sustenance. For Muslim Kashmiris, Hindus became the face of the oppressive government; and it bred resentment.

The Dogra rulers sought to legitimize their rule by drawing a fake lineage to Rajputs, a process in which British provided them valuable aid. At the same time, the Dogras emphasized the Hindu character of the state very overtly. Temple constructions were liberally funded in the state, while a number of Muslim places of worship were kept shut. Hinduism was promoted by the state actively; state grants in the form of Dharmarth were created to fund preaching of Hinduism, and Hindu students were given scholarships to study religion. On paper, though, the state claimed religious neutrality. Mridu Rai has convincingly shown how Dogras rulers turned Kashmir, a state with an overwhelming Muslim population, into a veritable Hindu state (Rai 2004: 113-126).

From the 1846 take over of the Dogras, which was briefly resisted in Kashmir (and quickly suppressed by the East India Company forces for the Dogras) to 1931, Kashmiris failed to resist collectively. In Kashmiri public memory the Dogra rule is remembered as one of the worst. Dogra rulers impoverished peasants into destitution and exploited the workers (especially the shawl workers) through their taxation policies. The brief periods of lull in the economic ruin of Kashmiris happened in the later years of the 19th century when British, in response to public pressure from British travellers who wrote about the sad plight of Kashmiri Muslims,[20] temporarily took over the administration and initiated land settlements. The land settlement however remained dependent on the unscrupulous Hindu Kashmiri revenue officials, and proved of little effect (Zutshi 2003: 70). At the turn of the 20th century, Muslim Kashmiris were not only disadvantaged in politico-economic terms in the Dogra state, whose blatant pro-Hindu bias rendered any appeals for restitution by Muslim Kashmiri religious leaders useless, but in educational terms too there was a sense of hopelessness.

The Muslim majority of the state saw the solution to their problems in getting educated and joining the administration. Education emerged as a contested field in Kashmir during the first three decades of 1900s. Although the state washed its hands from providing any serious education to its Muslim subjects, under the often-voiced

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[20] Some works of this nature were Robert Thorp's *Cashmere Misgovernment*, Sir Walter Lawrence's *The Valley of Kashmir*, and Arthur Neve's *Thirty Years in Kashmir* and many more.

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pretext that Muslims by nature had no inclination toward education. At most, the state employed some Arabic teachers in a few state schools for religious education, but it fell on the shoulders of Muslim religious leadership to make arrangements for the education of their community members. The role of Muslim Kashmiris, who had migrated to Punjab in British India and were influenced by educational movements among Muslims in northern India, in emphasising the need for education in Kashmir was also important in this regard.

Kashmiri Hindus on the other hand were a highly literate minority. Due to the fear that Muslim education would mean plum administrative jobs slipping out of Pandit hands, some Kashmiri Hindus formed organizations to press for their community's demands more vigorously. At the same time, the Maharaja had started employing Hindus from Punjab in the administration, which irked Pandits, who launched a "Kashmir for Kashmiris" movement. In reality, the message was 'Kashmir for Kashmiri Hindus,' as it became increasingly clear later. In any case, some Muslims in Kashmir benefited from community efforts at education through institutions like Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam, and would in the 1931 uprising be at the forefront. It is important to underline here that unlike in British India, where Deobandi and Firangi Mahal schools opposed modern education (and launched bitter critiques of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's attempts at providing Western education to Muslims), in Kashmir religious leadership favoured modernization.

Meanwhile, numerous grain shortages, redundancy in the industry (especially shawl industry, in which a fall in demand due to the 1870 Franco-Prussian war turned the industry unprofitable, and rendered many people jobless), and general unrest among people (the Silk Factory agitation in 1924) due to exploitative policies of the state government, led to further distance between the ruler and the ruled. By 1931, this simmering tension came out in the open. The Muslim majority of the state rose up in an uprising at a number of places in Kashmir, allegedly incited by a perceived desecration of the Quran. (This last charge that Kashmiris gets incited only because of slights to Islam has become a common trope, and is used to hide the real causes of these protests). Largely an anti-government agitation, at some places in Srinagar the ire turned against the Pandit officials who were seen as representatives of the Dogra state. The agitators ransacked some Hindu moneylenders' homes, and in reply the State unleashed its full

force against the Muslim protestors. Hundreds of them were shot dead in Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian and other places.

The uprising was crushed, but it emboldened Muslims enough to make increased demands from the state, which continued to disregard Muslim grievances. The Kashmiri Hindus organisation levied the charge that the state was becoming "pro-Muslim". A number of them started petitioning not only the Maharaja, but the Viceroy of British India also, demanding more guarantees at getting jobs, in spite of the fact that they already occupied a bulk of them. On the basis of their claims of "special" rights, they demanded positive discrimination. Many educated Muslim youth, on the other hand, could still not find jobs that matched their education (Zutshi 2003: 208). Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha, a Pandit youth organisation, played an important role in representing the interests of the Hindu Kashmiris, while protesting against demands of the Muslim Kashmiris' for their rights.

The Muslim Conference, formed amidst the unrest of 1931, saw itself as an organization that represented the interests of Muslims of the entire state, and not just of Kashmir's Muslims alone. Considering Muslims comprised 80 percent of the population (petitions from Muslim organizations of the period claim the actual number was 95 percent), the Muslim Conference did not see itself under any immediate pressure to speak in a secular language. It was more like a nationalist organisation, which couched its national demands in the moral language of a religion understood and believed by most of the people. In fact, it was the Hindu Kashmiri organizations, like Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha, which worked exclusively for the interests of Hindu minority, while opposing Muslim demands, and creating the bogey of Muslim dominance in Kashmir. In one of the petitions to the Viceroy of British India, Yuvak Sabha called Hindus of Kashmir "enlightened, educated and law abiding," while they characterised Muslims as "barbarous and ignorant".

The Pandits began to present themselves as a beleaguered minority, while they called Muslims the "spoiled child" of the state (Zutshi 2003: 222). The "pro-Muslim" approach of the Dogra state was nothing more than a discursive spin, an emotional weapon to get more favours over and above what Pandits already enjoyed. The Muslims were at the bottom of the social ladder, economically, politically, as well as

educationally, with no hope of early redress. The Dogra government launched no programme nor had any desire to formulate any policy to rectify the historic wrongs committed against the Muslims of the state, especially the Muslim Kashmiris. Nevertheless, growing national consciousness among the Muslim Kashmiris, drawing from traces of distinct regional belonging already present in history, was bound to create nervousness in the Hindu minority.

The rumblings in the Indian subcontinent seemed poised to change the context within which the anti-monarchical struggle in Kashmir would be fought. The rise of Hindu nationalism in the subcontinent, and the increasing overtures of the Indian Hindu organisations in Kashmir [earlier the Hindu reform movements, like Arya Samaj, too had tried to influence the discourse in Kashmir (Rai 2003: 240)] allowed Hindu Kashmiris a possible way to maintain their predominance in Kashmiri society. Many organisations increasingly began to align themselves with rightwing groups in British India. Yet at the same time, the secular rhetoric of the Indian National Congress began to be articulated in Kashmir too. Muslims, however, saw in Congress a hegemonic Hindu majoritarian movement, whose pretension of secularism was a farce. At the same time, the influence of Indian Muslim groups, like Ahrars from Punjab, who represented the interests of Muslims in India, was also felt in Kashmir. Muslim Kashmiris did not want to get sucked into the Hindu-Muslim dynamic of the subcontinent. It was easier to reconcile differences between an overwhelming Muslim majority and a miniscule Hindu minority in Kashmir, than between a majority Hindus and a substantial Muslim minority in British India.

Sheikh Abdullah, who had earned his popularity with the help of religious leadership of Kashmir, realised this, and in 1939 rechristened Muslim Conference as National Conference. But having already come in touch with the Congress leaders, he began to move even closer to them. He also shifted closer to the Dogra government, and, thus, alienated Kashmiris, who had seen him as icon of resistance against both the monarchy and the Congress hegemony. In 1942, leaders like Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and the Mirwaiz of Kashmir revived the Muslim Conference, which found immediate resonance among the Muslims of the state. Congress, as we have seen, made every possible effort to project Abdullah as the undisputed leader of Kashmiris, and branded the Muslim Conference communal.

What happened in 1947 has already been said. By 1953, Sheikh Abdullah, having defended the Indian rule in Kashmir at the UN and endorsing the Maharaja's accession to India, despite deep resentment among Kashmiris, began to feel the heat of his wrong political calculations. On a song, with him now being projected as the tallest leader of not only Muslim Kashmiris, or Kashmiris in general, but of all Indian Muslims, he found that in real terms it amounted to not much. He realised the frailty of his power the day the Indian government dismissed him unceremoniously, and put him prison. In Kashmir, his arrest did not spark any rebellion; in fact, the nominal power passed quite peacefully into the hands of his own trusted colleague, Bakshi Ghulam Ahmed. The empire was not going to respect anyone who came in its way of consolidating the spoils of the British withdrawal.

III

On March 30, 1990, Kashmir was plunged into mourning. Ashfaq Majid Wani, the chief commander of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which pioneered the armed movement against Indian rule in Kashmir, died accidentally in an attack on Indian forces. More than a half million Kashmiris came out in protest and to attend his funeral; it was the largest ever (Bose 2003: 103). The only other large funerals that Kashmiris remembered were those of Sheikh Abdullah in 1982, and of Maulvi Farooq, the Mirwaiz of Kashmir, on May 21, 1990.[21]

Sheikh Abdullah had dominated the discourse on Kashmir for almost five decades. In his years of incarceration, Abdullah's stature had grown as one who stood up to the Indian diktat. Unrest in Kashmir was beginning to grow. India needed a boost of legitimacy for its rule. Unexpectedly, in 1975, Abdullah was released from the prison; he signed an agreement with Indira Gandhi and was immediately appointed the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir. With the implications of his agreement still unclear, he was well received in Kashmir. He was allowed to win an election. Given the fact that no real opposition to National Conference (apart from Congress!) had been allowed to

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[21] Around two hundred thousand people participated in the funeral procession of the assassinated preacher. The procession was fired upon by Indian troops in Gaw Kadal locality of Srinagar, leading to the death of more than a hundred people.

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develop in the past few decades, with most of the Muslim Conference leaders either exiled or harassed, the elections were not a popular endorsement for the Indian rule, as the Indian government made it out to be. In 1982, when Abdullah died, a large number of people attended the funeral. Indian authorities and writers claimed that he represented the ideal of *Kashmiriyat*. Others, like Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan, President of Azad Kashmir, thought he "was a quisling boosted by the power of Indian Congress Party" (Schofield 1996: 223). In any case, under Abdullah (1947-1953) and (1977-1982) Indian authorities had faced relatively more difficulties in pursuing their intrusive interventionist policies than in the years 1953-1977 and 1982-1989 (Bose 2003: 97).

On February 11, 1984, Maqbool Bhat one of the founders of JKLF and ideologue of the pro-independence movement in both parts of Kashmirs, the Jammu and Kashmir and the Azad Kashmir, was hanged to death in a Delhi prison. Bhat's hanging radicalised an entire generation of Kashmiris. Ashfaq Majid Wani and others, including Hamid Sheikh, Yasin Malik and Javid Mir (who formed the famous HAJY group that became the nucleus of the pro-independence armed movement in the early 1990s) were among the first Kashmiris who after the rigged elections of 1987 (Bose 2003: 49; Behera 2007: 47) decided to launch an armed movement. By the early 1990s their movement had grown so popular that at times the entire population of the city of Srinagar and other major towns would come onto the streets on their call; while the legacy of Sheikh Abdullah was so resented that even his grave in Srinagar was provided state protection from the same people he claimed to represent all his life.

Ashfaq Wani was buried next to the empty grave of Maqbool Bhat,[22] and in 1992 his long time comrade Hamid Sheikh came to occupy the grave on the other side. The land around these graves, designated as the Martyrs' Graveyard, soon began to get full with political opponents of Indian rule and the leaders of the Kashmiri insurgency. Numerous such martyrs' graveyards began to dot Kashmir. Ashfaq's death inspired thousands of young Kashmiris to take up arms against India; and what had started almost like an *intifada* became a serious armed movement that shook Indian authority in Kashmir to its core.

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[22] Indian authorities, fearing unrest in Kashmir, refused to hand over Maqbool Bhat's remains to his family; he is still buried in Tihar Jail in Delhi.

A number of high profile killings took place during the early days of militancy. Yusuf Halwai, a notorious legislator, and perceived by insurgents as having actively helped Indian agents rig 1987 elections (Bose 2003: 96), was killed; so was Neel Kanth Ganjoo, a retired judge who had sentenced Maqbool Bhat to death, for an armed robbery by JKLF activists in which one person had been killed. It was widely felt that Bhat's death was rather politically motivated than based on proper procedures of justice, since it was not 'the rarest of the rare cases.'[23] Since Hindu Kashmiris still constituted the top echelon of bureaucracy, and dominated the intelligence structure, they were bound to come under fire. A number of them became targets of insurgent reprisal. Pandit officials, however, were not the only ones killed; in fact, the number of Muslims killed, either from National Conference or those seen as Indian agents, was much larger. A recent Jammu and Kashmir Police report[24] suggests that in 1990 around 109 Hindu Kashmiris had been killed. During the same period thousands of Muslim Kashmiris including armed Kashmiri insurgents had perished (Bose 2003: 128).

Indian Hindu-rightwing organizations, nevertheless, launched an elaborate propaganda campaign that Hindus were being ethnically cleansed from Kashmir. The Indian government, meanwhile, did nothing to prevent such propaganda. As the Indian position weakenened, a known Hindu-rightwing politician, Jagmohan, was appointed as the governor of Kashmir. The new governor launched massive military operations in Kashmir to subdue the rebellion, while facilitating the flight of thousands of Hindus from Kashmir to Jammu (Bose 1997: 76).

The discourse of the insurgency was surely couched in Islamist terms, but its main protagonist, the JKLF, was a professedly secular organization. The *intifada* phase of the insurgency (1990-95), as Bose calls it (2003: 107), was carried through by the pent up energy of the people themselves, yet the armed and logistics support came from Azad Kashmir. Kashmiris continued to use a vocabulary of home and foreign during this struggle. Kashmiris crossing over to Azad Kashmir were said to have gone "*Apoar*", or across, as if to the other room of the house. While India continued to be referred as

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[23] Maqbool Bhat's execution was expedited by Indian authorities in view of the killing of an Indian diplomat, Ravindra Mhatre, in UK by a shadowy group called Kashmir Liberation Army. In Kashmir people felt Bhat was hanged in revenge.

[24] Muzamil Jaleel, "209 Kashmiri Pandits killed since 1989, say J-K cops in first report", *The Indian Express*, May 5, 2008.

Naebar, the foreign. The closeness to *Apaor* and distinctness from *Naebar* could not have been more apparent.

The initial pro-independence armed movement soon had to face not only the immense firepower of the Indian state, but the superior training and weapons of the pro-Pakistan Islamist groups as well. Pro-Pakistan groups in Kashmir, particularly the Jammat-e-Islami, and its front organisation Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) began eliminating JKLF's cadres as well as its influence. Branding them non-serious and boyish, Hizb claimed to represent a more serious and committed insurgency. Ideologically, of course independence from both India and Pakistan was an anathema to them, as they wanted merger of Kashmir with Pakistan. No doubt then Pakistan was providing them superior training and weapons. It was clear Pakistan had stopped arming the JKLF. Pakistani intelligence had in fact all along despised the latter. Memoirs of some of the former JKLF and pro-independence leaders are a testimony to this fact.[25] Pakistan had from the beginning of the insurgency helped create dozens of militant organisations to ward off JKLF's pro-independence influence. Soon HM emerged as the most potent armed force among these groups; it assimilated some of these groups, while eliminated others. By the late 1990s, even HM's influence was breached by some pan-Islamist groups like Lashkar-E-Tayyeba and later the Jaish-e-Mohammed. The secessionist political groups formed a conglomeration, the Hurriyat Conference, which assumed importance in the June 2008 protests against the land transfer to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (see Introduction, p.10).

The contours of militancy may have changed, but an overwhelming number of people continued to express support independence from both India and Pakistan. The Indian Express on August 13, 2007 put it this way:

"*Hardcore strategists in India will no doubt draw some consolation from the fact that Pakistan figures almost nowhere as a first preference for Kashmiris...Yet India is only marginally better placed. Even after allowing for the complexities of the sentiment for Azadi and recognizing the peer pressure that operates more in Srinagar than outside, it is*

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[25] See Mohammad Azam Inquilabi (1993), *Quest for Friends, Not Masters*, Rawalpindi: Jammu & Kashmir Mahaz-e-Azadi Wahdat Institute; Amanullah Khan (1970), *Free Kashmir*, Karachi: Central Printing Press: and Hashim Qureshi (1999), *Kashmir: The Unveiling of Truth*, Lahore: Jeddojuhd Publishers.

hard to dispute the basic finding that people in this part of our country do not display much attachment to the nation-state called India. This finding is very much in line with a much larger and more representative survey (carried out by CSDS and Jammu University) in 2002 that found a similar level of support for 'Azadi' all over the Valley."[26]

Around 87 percent of Kashmiris supported the option of Kashmir as an independent state in the opinion poll.

The uprising of the 1990s was a psychological as well as a discursive break for Kashmiris. A number of common portrayals, both in literature as well as in Indian films, continued the tradition of representing Kashmir without Kashmiris. Kashmir's landscape hogged the narrative space, while its people and their culture and rights got a short-shrift. It helped the Indian nationalist argument, which saw Kashmir as an "inalienable" and an "integral" part of India pointing to an organic imagination. Kashmir in the Hindu Indian imagination was Bharat Mata's crown, and an abode of Hindu deities like Shiva and Parvati as well as Mata Vaishnav Devi. Every year, even during the years of insurgency, Amarnath *yatra* became the centre piece of the Indian governmental efforts in Kashmir. This event was afforded such publicity across India in terms of nationalism that more than a religious pilgrimage, the *yatra* began to be seen as a national duty. The discursive space about Kashmir in India was occupied by stories about Hindu Kashmiris and their travails, and about the safety of temples in Kashmir. While Muslim Kashmiris remained largely invisible, they only emerged as either Islamic fundamentalists, or their victims, with no voice of their own. The fact, that a long drawn insurgency could not have been possible without public support, seemed not to bother such analyses.

At the same time, an institutionalized, ostensibly academic discourse about Kashmir developed in India. Some Indian writers attempted to see Kashmir through the prism of secular-nationalism for the project of nation-building, which inevitably brought in Pakistan's confessional nationalism into the discourse over Kashmir. For instance, Bajpai and Ganguly (1994) suggested that the conflict in Kashmir existed due to both external as well as domestic factors. Externally,

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[26] The poll was designed by the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies, and conducted jointly by The Indian Express, The Dawn, and CNN-IBN.

"(for) the two countries (India and Pakistan), the conflict over Kashmir is less a contest over strategic ground or resources as over competing visions of nationalism and state-building".

Domestically, for them, the situation had became worse because of four factors: Organisational decline of the once-dominant Congress party, politicisation of the civil services, the reliance on the military to restore public order, and increasing centralisation since the 1970's that led to the dismissal and subversion of legally-constituted state-governments, which escalated conflicts between central and 'regional elites.' Cumulatively, they argue, Kashmir has had and will continue to have consequences for secularism, federalism, democracy, and nationalism—the four pillars of India's political structure. They also observe that Kashmir never had ethnic-communal troubles before the insurgency started,

"Instead, a common bond of Kashmiri identity, popularly referred to as Kashmiriyat, prevailed" [Ganguly: 1996].

Prem Shankar Jha, an Indian journalist, went to the extent of saying that the revolt in Kashmir could be traced to middle-class frustrations. He contended that employment opportunities had not kept pace with the growth of an educated middle-class in Kashmir. Consequently, the rebellion represented the expression of collective and growing frustration with the lack of economic opportunity. Furthermore, unlike "Indians from other regions" who sought employment in all parts of India, "Kashmiris were unwilling to relocate" (Cited in Engineer ed.: 1994].

Ashutosh Varshney, on the other hand, argues that at its core the Kashmir problem has *three* nationalisms: Religious (represented by Pakistan), secular (represented by India), and ethnic (which he feels is the same as Kashmiriyat). His categorisation is based on the myth of secular Indian nationalism against which he posits both Pakistan's as well as Kashmiri nationalisms, but he blames Indian policies for the current imbroglio, the policies being almost the same as suggested by Ganguly and Bajpai.

A number of factors given by these commentators are true, but they don't form the complete picture. In fact, what are put forth as causes, are only symptoms of an antagonism in deep foundational ideas. Needless to say too, these analyses are ahistoric and consciously deny Kashmiris their own history and historical experiences. That Kashmiris' sense of their regional entity predates Indian and Pakistani nationalisms by a few hundred years finds no mention. Further more, these Indian writers introduced the communal element into the Kashmir discourse by claiming that Indian Muslims will be threatened if Muslim Kashmiris were to separate (as we have already seen in the chapter 2).

Thus, the theme that emerges in Indian narratives is that of how India's secularism (and of Pakistan's *raison-d'etre*) is precariously hinged on the direction Kashmir takes in future. In India, the rise of Hindutva forces and the consequent threat to India's 100 million Muslims, is argued as a reason Kashmir must continue to remain a symbol of Indian secularism; in Pakistan, after the severing of East Pakistan and the resulting humiliation, Kashmir has been turned into a prized trophy that has to be taken to reclaim Pakistan's lost glory. Within these debates two identities have been thrust upon Kashmiris: that of a Muslim population, with no unique history of its own, which according to the logic of the British India's partition should be part of Pakistan; and the other, a 'secular' community with a tradition of communal harmony, and, thus, it must stay with India, and help reinforce secular defence against a growing majoritarianism. From these, self-serving narratives a conclusion is drawn that Kashmir's continued existence (within India) or its future incorporation (into Pakistan) is important. At the same, time immense value is put on Kashmir to usher in lasting peace in South Asia. The mutually contradictory positions (on Kashmir) of these two sub-continental countries, however, make it almost impossible to imagine how peace could be achieved.

The JKLF which initiated the armed struggle in early 1990s had the express intention to bring the Kashmiri question to the international attention, for they felt there was no scope for a non-violent movement.[27] At the same time, the world order was undergoing significant changes. Older regimes were falling; the fall of Berlin Wall

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[27] See Yasin Malik, 'Fighting for an Independent Kashmir' an interview by Ganesh Lal for the *International Socialist Review* Issue 37, September–October 2004. Also available at http://www.isreview.org/issues/37/yasin_malik.shtml. Last accessed on May 6, 2008.

accelerated the end of the Warsaw pact, while closer home the Afghan resistance provided Soviets with a shock defeat under the weight of which, among other things, the Soviet Empire imploded. The Balkan region was cracking under the pressure of internal contradictions and the resurgence of hitherto silenced national histories. Kashmiris were a nation in the waiting; and the early 1990s looked like time when their aspiration of an independent state in territories historically perceived to be their own could materialize. It was not Kashmiris alone, many other suppressed nationalities in the post-colonial countries like Palestinians,[28] East Timorese, Tamils, Khalistanis and others were also engaged in full-fledged independence movements.

The decolonization process, during and after World War II, created huge states with dominant nationalities and their elites, who steam-rolled histories and struggles of smaller nationalities within these giant states. Under the garb of the rhetoric of territorial unity, the dominant Third World national elites created their own backyard imperialisms. The former colonial powers, meanwhile, reeling under a wave of guilt for colonial atrocities, made no effort to rectify historic wrongs their hasty withdrawal had wrought upon small nationalities, like Kashmir. National narratives of these post-colonial states, as constructed by the national elites, branded any voice of dissent against the dominant national idea, as an imperialist intervention, to be crushed by force. Widespread Indian suspicion about Sheikh Abdullah, which eventually led to his dismissal and arrest in 1953 by the Indian government under a charge that he was contemplating independence (which was true), was also based on arguments that he had had "secret" parleys with the US ambassador Loy Henderson in September, 1950.[29]

Soviets played no little role in strengthening the post-colonial elite and their homogenizing national ideas. Fearing uprisings within their own imperial realm, Soviets branded nationality movements inside Third World countries as Western imperialist conspiracy. So while, in 1948, they had hailed Abdullah as a "progressive and democrat" and termed Indians in Kashmir as "reactionaries", by 1953 they called Kashmir an "internal affair" of India, decrying the alleged "imperialist [American-led] efforts to turn

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[28] Palestinian *intifada* began in late 1988 and continued for another three years. For the first time, the world came to know that Palestinians were distinct from their neighbouring Arabs.
[29] See A. G. Noorani, "Kashmir: Blunders of the Past", *Frontline*, 23(25), December 16-29, 2006. Also available on, http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2325/stories/20061229001008100.htm. Last accessed on May 6, 2008.

the Valley into a strategic bridgehead" (Bose 2003: 65). Since Soviets used its veto continuously in favour of India, disallowing any meaningful debate about Kashmir in the UN, and thus became a major factor in the continued denial of right to self-determination to Kashmiris, it is worth mentioning here Khruschev's statement, when he and Bulganin stopped briefly at Srinagar, in 1955:

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir want to work for the well-being of their beloved country—the Republic of India. The people of Kashmir do not want to become toys in the hands of imperialist powers...That Kashmir is one of the States of the Republic of India has already been decided by the people of Kashmir."

Marshall Bulganin, on his part, claimed that Kashmiris felt "deep joy" at being included in India (Bose 2003: 71). Khruschev's and Bulganin's farcical statements were followed by a much loaded remark by Khruschev to his audience in Srinagar; he said:

"We are so near that if you ever call us from your mountain tops we will appear at your side" (Schofield 1996: 178).

It was clear who needed a 'strategic bridgehead' in the region. The 1979 Soviet invasion and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan should at least have put any remaining doubt to rest. In short, Kashmir had ceased to be a question of the rights of a people with a rich history and culture of their own; in the discourse about Kashmir, India and Pakistan, as well as powers like the USSR, had turned it into an object with no voice.

On March 1, 1990 a million Kashmiris marched in Srinagar, launching a collective voice of protest against the Indian rule in Kashmir. On the same day, dozens of these protestors had been killed in police firings. The movement had still not taken the shape of a full fledged armed uprising. Ashfaq Majid Wani's death a month later inspired thousands of youths to cross the mountains into Azad Kashmir, get trained with the help of Pakistan, and come back with arms. The armed movement, for obvious reasons, couldn't have succeeded in forcing a military solution, but it helped unleash the imagination in Kashmir. As an example, for the first time so many Kashmiris were

getting educated and articulating their aspirations openly. A number of newspapers, especially the English ones, were mushrooming, and were read widely. They became the voice of the uprising. At the same time, this uprising had an element of individual will and heroism attached to it. Armed insurgents acquired legendary status for standing up to the Indian forces, which in turn meant many more youths were inspired to join and sustain the movement from 1990 to the present by providing it with a constant supply of fresh recruits. During these 18 years, Kashmiri public opinion holds, around a hundred thousand people have died;[30] neutral observers suggest the number is definitely more than 80000,[31] while Indian government sources think it is close to fifty thousand. The numbers, however, remain disputed. Hundreds of thousands are wounded, many of them terminally. For a nation of a few million people the costs of the armed uprising have been enormous.

Kashmir is trapped in the Indian nationalist imagination, an imagination that emerges from a Hindu subjectivity and is nationalistically exclusionary and territorially imperialist. The Hindu nature of Indian nationalism has obstructed any movement to grant full citizenship rights to Kashmiris; while at the same time it does not accept the existence of Kashmiris as a distinct nation with its own national rights. In the post-colonial era, continued existence of colonised nationalities has undermined the argument that decolonization is complete. Earlier decolonization helped hegemonic nationalisms and their elite to promote homogeneity and put a gloss over multiple nationalities within the new states/empires that they inherited. These nationalities, with their own aspirations for freedom and independence, had traditions and narratives of independence which preceded the ones constructed by the national elites of the hegemonic states, by centuries. Thus the new states actively tried to efface their histories and distinct identities in a bid to create a seamless narrative of official nationalism. The discourse around decolonization silenced these small nationalities, despite their rights being recognized in the UN Charter. The changing international order in the late 1980s and the early 1990s provided a brief

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[30] In common parlance Kashmiris say "*Luka Lachah moud*"—a lakh people have died. Yasin Malik also makes frequent reference to this number in his public addresses, like during his June 25, 2005, Anantnag meeting.
[31] See Arundhati Roy, "How Deep shall we Dig?" *The Hindu*, April 25, 2004. She states: "*In Kashmir in a situation that almost amounts to war, an estimated 80,000 people have been killed since 1989. Thousands have simply 'disappeared'.*" The full article is available at http://www.thehindu.com/2004/04/25/stories/2004042500041600.htm. Last accessed on May 6, 2008.

window of opportunity for these small nationalities to make a discursive break, in which some countries like those in the Balkans, the East Timorese etc achieved their independence, while some, like the Palestinians, Chechens, and Kashmiris, could not.

Nationalism has an avalanche-like quality; once it rolls nothing can stop it. In Kashmir young people say that the more people get killed for independence, more martyrs' graveyards will come up, providing them with more inspiration to continue the struggle; it will haunt those people even more who give up. During the June 2008 protests, it was teenage boys who were fighting pitched stone-pelting battles with Indian troops. This is a generation that has not seen the early 90s. However, they remember names like Ashfaq Majeed and Maqbool Bhat. They know what they stood for, and what happened to them. I watched with astonishment as a bunch of lads stopped my car in Anantnag to impose a *hartal* (a shutdown). I got out of the car, and argued with them. Two boys came forth, their eyes shining with confidence, and told me that Kashmir was being "sold", and should I not be protesting too. To earn their trust I parked the car on the side and joined them briefly. I also distributed a bag full of apricots to them. Soon I was hearing stories of "great martyrs" like Ashfaq Majeed, Hamid Sheikh, and some other killed leaders of the Kashmiri insurgency. The stories surrounding these men had already afforded a legendary status for them. All the boys wanted to be like them. One of them said, "If we don't fight continuously, we will cease to exist as a people."

Conclusion

The process of decolonization of South Asia left awkward territorial constructions in its trail. Boundaries were drawn through traditional bonds of community, societies were ripped apart, and many communities were thrown into new systems of hierarchy in this melee. India and Pakistan were imposed on a subcontinent full of diverse aspirations for freedom and self-rule. As Jawaharlal Nehru embarked upon realizing the project of unifying diverse territories and nationalities of South Asia he set out in his "The Discovery of India", Jinnah, without thinking much about the geographic and cultural diversity of the Muslims in the subcontinent, grafted the two parts of his 'Land of the Pure' farthest from its most vehement votaries, and also from each other. India chose to write its history in a teleological form of progress and interruptions, one which naturally had to culminate in the formation of present-day India; a point where history itself would stop. Pakistan remained torn in its identity, as in its geography: while it saw its roots in the subcontinent, it kept looking westward to forge a larger Islamic identity. Either way, Pakistan's history only started in 1947. India popularized an organic story of how it was a body, and Kashmir was its head, or rather India was the body of *Bharat Mata*, and Kashmir was her "crown". Pakistan, on the other hand, first put premium on Kashmir's rivers and then its people; it saw Kashmir as its "jugular vein".

Kashmir, a place with more plausible claims to unique historical experiences and more or less a geographical continuity over ages, than both India and Pakistan, did not have to do much to imagine itself as a nation. During the years of anti-monarchical struggle, Muslim Kashmiri leaders attempted to maintain that people of Jammu and Ladakh are part of the broader nation of Kashmiris, but unlike leaders in India, they did not use aggressive power to force a union. Sixty years have passed since India and Pakistan snuffed out the best chances for the realization of an independent democratic Kashmir, which in the words of the late Eqbal Ahmad could have become a bridge of peace instead of a bone of contention.

Kashmir has become an archetypal case of interruption of the modern world of states, which seek to suppress and homogenize pre-modern identities within their realm, with imperial methods. Caught between two modern states, who deny any unique history to Kashmiris, the Kashmir issue brings out into open the basic questions of sovereignty and territoriality in South Asia: who does land belong to, states or people? Is Kashmir's union with India or Pakistan dependent on the popular will of the people who live in Kashmir? Can, three years after the United Nations comes into being with a charter that proclaims the right to self-determination of all nations big and small, a monarch's personal will be even considered binding on his dissenting subjects? These are simple questions with easy answers. In the South Asian context, however, the contesting narratives of nationalism have complicated the picture.

On one hand, we have an Indian nationalism which, despite its institutional secularism, continues to view Kashmir as "integral", "inalienable", *atoot ang* (inseparable body part) of India conceived as a territorial Hindu goddess. On the other hand, Pakistan has sought to impose a single (religious) identity over many others (linguistic or regional) in Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan deny the existence of Kashmir as a nation, even though Kashmir has a much longer history of the sentiment of regional belonging than either of them. It is natural for India and Pakistan to contest any competing nationalism, because of the way nationalist thought was conceived in the struggle against the British Empire. Indian nationalists espoused unity in the struggle against the British Indian Empire, which after British withdrawal from the subcontinent was made into a basis for the territorial unification of the subcontinent.

For Kashmiris the uprising of the early 1990s was a collective recovery of voice, for till then Kashmiris had been systematically erased from any discourse about Kashmir. There, however, had been a tradition of resistance to what was perceived as foreign occupation of Kashmir since the Mughals annexed Kashmir in the 16th century, but it was expressed largely in cultural forms, like poetry, and in chronicles. No sustained armed resistance had taken place. Armed struggle against Indian rule was, thus, the first such attempt, which was not only triggered by reasons internal to the political situation in Kashmir, but was also due to international structural changes that brought a number of new small states into existence. For the last 18 years the armed movement has sustained

amid heavy human losses in Kashmir. Not only has Kashmir lost a significant chunk of its people but India too has been fighting an expensive counter-insurgency war in Kashmir. In terms of India and Pakistan, Kashmir has continued to remain the single biggest point of conflict. In 1998, India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons, and by the next year both countries were fighting a low-intensity war on the border in Kashmir. Kashmir suddenly brought back Cold War memories of the horrors of a nuclear holocaust, with Kashmir being described as a nuclear flashpoint. With September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US the discourse on Kashmir has taken a predictable turn with Kashmir being discussed globally more and more in terms of international Islamist terrorism. In this humdrum Kashmiris have lost their say again. In international discourses about Kashmir, the dispute between India and Pakistan has also become another primary reference point. Kashmiris feel relegated into the background again, on a question that affects their future the most.

A number of interesting solutions have been offered by analysts and experts. It is clear that India and Pakistan oppose the most vociferous, and the most logical, demand of Kashmiris: the independence of Kashmir. Perhaps it is the only point of convergence between India and Pakistan on Kashmir issue. Other solutions propagated have been based either on the logic of sub-continental Partition, that Hindu-majority areas will remain in India, while Muslim-majority regions will become part of Pakistan. Many fear that it could lead to inter-communal violence for there are many places where different religious communities live cheek by jowl.

_ New interesting solutions have been proposed in recent years, which, in fact, go a little beyond the paradigm of nation-state. One such idea has been the notion of shared sovereignty or joint control of Indian-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The contours of this proposal, which was given by President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, have not been clear, but it has found some resonance in both Kashmir as well as in India. If in this proposal Kashmiris get maximum power, while both India and Pakistan can supervise Kashmir's international relations jointly, it could actually be translated into something substantial and meaningful for Kashmiris. Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, is reported to have said that India was ready to consider anything short of independence, "anything under the sky". There seems to be some

convergence between the national elite of India and Pakistan over this idea. The earlier discourse of chauvinistic nationalism in India and Pakistan, however, is so deeply entrenched that it seems improbable any government in Delhi or Islamabad will be ready to do it.

International community must put pressure on both India and Pakistan to reach a solution. The two countries have to understand that the only way forward for them is to give up their control on Kashmir very substantially. Only in return of this can viable peace come to the subcontinent. It could lead to the creation of a south Asian union, which has to great extent remained unimaginable because of the Kashmir dispute. Increased interdependence among the south Asian community thereof will render the idea of nation-states less meaningful. It is important that any agreement on Kashmir between India and Pakistan be protected by international guarantees, and most importantly, it must be popularly endorsed in both Indian-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir under a free and fair referendum. For that to happen, both India and Pakistan need to demilitarize the region and restore basic human rights of Kashmiris first. India and Pakistan can surely be the 'sky' under which power can finally transfer to Kashmiris.

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