(Post)Nation-in-Narration
An Indian Response

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I

The Prelude

It seems to stress the obvious to say that the terrain of the contemporary literary theory is marked by different, and often opposing discourses pertaining to the nation and the post-nation or the global scenario. It is difficult to adequately reconcile the emergence of new nations in the international politics on the one hand and the free-market-driven impulse towards the globalization—a process that seems to blur the signs of the nation—for example, boundaries and culture(s). The contemporary critical weathercock, judging by its recent movements (i.e. proclivities and preferences), portends disaster for (the discourse of) the nation, pointing to the arrival for the post-nation (read the global).[1] I do not intend to tell (the) story of this gradual or sudden shift from the nation to the post-nation. What I suggest in essay is the hitherto untold story of how some of the leading Indian thinkers/activists/writers were writing the (so-called) post-nation while narrating the story of India's making as a nation. What really surprises an alert reader is the imbrication or overlapping of the two seemingly different critical trajectories (i.e. the nation and the post-nation) in their discourses—making them neither patently 'nationalistic' nor 'post-nationalistic' in a rather neat critical category. I will focus on the Indian response to the (post) nation-question from the Vedic (ancient) tradition to the present-day (mainly Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore) thinkers in the third part of the essay. In the ensuing second part of the essay I want to foreground the major positions and propositions in the contemporary critical discourse on the nation and the post-nation.

II

Post-Nation-in-Criticism: a Brief Survey of the Discourse

Without going into the archaeology of the various critical discourses on the post-nation-question in the limited space of this essay, it will, however, be worthwhile to enlist some of the major critical positions on the subject in order to analyse them later in the essay,

(i) The idea of the nation(alism) is a recent one in history—little more than two centuries old. It is a product of the Englightment project which is also coterminus with the project of modernity.[2] Homi K. Bhabha writes that nations, 'are something fairly new in history. Antiquity was unfamiliar with them. Egypt, China and ancient Chaldea were in no way nations.'[3]

(ii) The term, 'the national' etymologically, means 'the people'. But the community of people involves the community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture (Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*).[4] Later on, the people also imagine themselves to be a nation thanks to the influences of the industrial capitalism through various sign-systems-like-print media, newspapers, electronic media, museums, census, constitution, economic and cultural activities. Frantz Fanon, while talking about national consciousness does emphasise the significance of culture to the project of nation-making.[5]

(iii) Nation-making-project also involves violence and exploit-ation—both by the colonial and the post-colonial ruling elites. Aggres-sive nationalism which was/has been the feature of European/and other nationalisms often transforms into imperialism and empire. Its latest incarnates were Nazism and Fascism in recent history that resulted into holocaust and unprecedented massacre of people. Thus, colonial-ism with its chapters of slavery, loot and ruthless violence inflicted on the native people is but a constitutive stage of aggressive nationalism—which was also manifest in the political economy of empire—*laissez faire* or free market. Nationalism, in most of the third world countries, emerged as anti-colonial nationalism—sometimes imitating the epistemology of the colonial powers it was fighting against—resulting into a kind of 'derivative discourse' as Partha Chatterjee aptly puts it.

(iv) After decolonization, the colonial powers (mostly European countries) were compelled to treat the emergent nations (now free and independent) as their equal partners in the comity of nations.

The nation, as an agency of native people's will, culture and governance is felt to be an obstacle to force a neo-colonial hegemony, often dis-guised as internationalism (or globalization or post-nationalism) under the mask of, say, WTO, IMF and even UNO. But the site of the battle is no longer 'national sovereignty'—it is the 'market-space' of the non-West.

(v) It is not surprising that in the 1990s the critical orientation shifted form critiquing the nation to heralding the post-nation in its theories. The phenomenal spread and penetration of the diasporic communities and the dot.com. virtual industry in the West and the rest of the world necessitated the new logic of post-nationalism where nation-states and national identities turn virtual rather than real and the national boundaries and cultures melt into thin air. Hence, the arrival of a new stage in world-history in which nations/nation-states are considered passe—obsolete, outworn appendanges of an unusuable past. I will cite three interesting examples here. In the year 1990 was published Homi K. Bhabha's influential *Nation and Narration*[6] in which two essays, one by Bhabha himself ('Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and The Margins of The Modern Nation', pp. 291-322) and another by Geoffrey Bennington ('Postal Politics and The Institution of the Nation', pp. 121-37) offered a critique of the modern nation which can also be read as a case for the post-nation(al) world. For example, Bhabha deconstructs the national sign thus in his above-mentioned essay:

Such a pluralism of the national sign, where difference returns as the same, is contested by the signifier's 'loss of identity' that inscribes the narrative of the people in the ambivalent 'double writing' of the performative and the pedagogical. The iterative temporality that marks the movement of meaning between the masterful image of the people and the movement of its sign interrupts the succession of plurals that produce the sociological solidity of the national narrative.[7]

The nation, thus, gets disseminated through a cluster of sign-systems orchestrated by the state. It is through this dispersal and dissolution of the signs of the nation that the post-nation or the global enters the space. The nation is then deconstructed as a huge, collective, communal fiction. Geoffrey Bennington, in his essay cited above, does a masterful post-structuralist surgery on the nation and makes a claim for the post-nation thus:

Nation is, then, always opened to its others; or rather, it is

constituted only in that opening, which is, in principle, violent. The status of the individual nation and within it, of the individual citizen, is derived from that primary "global" violence by a process analogous to the "morphogenesis" of catastrophe theory (p. 131). Bennington is obviously influenced by Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* as his reference to morphogenesis of catastrophe theory suggests. To him, the idea of the nation is 'inseparable from its narration; that narration attempts, interminably, to constitute identity against difference, inside against outsideÖ. It allows us to understand "post-structuralism" more as a movement and less as an institutionÖ. And whether the law be formulated as difference or differend, it is also a law of the inter- nation (though not international law), with which to negotiate a survival' (p. 132). The nation, thus, terminates into the inter-nation in the post-structuralist schema as enunciated by Bennington.

Beyond the Nation: Nation/Post-Nation: Two in a Tango

Another interesting instance of the poststructuralist dissolution of the nation into the post-nation comes to us through the remarkable discursive resonance between the two volumes of leading journals published at the same time in Spring 1997—namely: *Critical Quarterly,* vol. 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1997) and, *Modern Fiction Studies,* vol. 43, no. 1, (Spring, 1997). The former was edited by Homi K. Bhabha, who in his editorial introduction, 'Minority Maneuvers and Unsettled Negotia- tions' (pp. 431-59) carefully prepares an unofficial manifests of the post-nation under the rubric 'Front Lines/Border Posts':

It is possible in Beirut, today, where the frontiers of nation and state, private interest and public responsibility, have all but disappeared in a blurred haze of *laissez-faire* legerdemain. BeirutÖ will represent the node of the information- based formal economy (pp. 458-59).

Quite significantly, 'the border posts and front-lines' as the markers of the nation, as Bhabha aptly posits, will or should dissolve into a globalised world (or a post-national phase). The same ideas are echoed by Donald E. Pease in his editorial introduction to *Modern Fiction Studies* (vol. 43, no. 1, Spring, 1997) titled, 'National Narratives, Postnational Narration' (pp. 1-23) with more urgency and directness than Bhabha. For example, in the very beginning of his introduction, Pease announces the death of the nation—heralding the birth of the post-nation:

... in the era of postcolonialism and globalization, the once hegemonic narrative of the nation has been unseated. These assymmetrical but independent socio-economic formations share responsibility for the demolition of the nation-state to the status of a residual unit of economic exchange in the global economy. Once believed crucial for membership in the world system, the nation-state has been recast as a tolerated anachronism in a global economy requiring a border-less world for its effective operation (pp. 1-2).

In both discursivities, we notice the final dispersal and dissolution of the nation into the post-nation-space which is but a synonym of the globilised world. Is it a mere coincidence that both the editors (Homi K. Bhabha and Donald Pease) simultaneously edited the journals with some ideological inputs from the metropolitan academic space that North American Economy provides them with Bhabha, in his another book, makes an important observation on the prefix-post which is relevant to our understanding of the term the post-nation:

If the jargon of our times—postmodernity, postcoloniality, postfeminism—has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the 'post' to indicate sequentiality. . . . These terms . . . insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an ex-centric site of experience and empowerment.[8]

It can, therefore, be inferred that the 'post' in the post-nation refers to a space which lies beyond the nation—full of possibilities of experience, freedom and empowerment. If the nation is an imaginary idea, isn't this utopian vision of the post-nation also equally fantastic? The discourses of the post-nation and most of them come from the Unites States of America—the only economic/military superpower in the unipolar world at present, are deliberately silent on the question of the power-relations in the new global order. In other words, if the nation-state exercised a hegemony over common people by maintain-ing the systems of power, where's the guarantee that in the globalized world, Ethiopia, Israel, South Africa and North America will be counted as equals? Will the power be equally shared among the nations or the USA will continue to act as a global patriarch in the globalised world-family? These are the uncomfortable questions. Hence their deliberate erasure in most of the metropolitan discourses. If you wish to read some more exotic variety of the post-national discourses, you are advised to pore over and into Neil Lazarus's *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999) which has two interesting chapters, viz., 'Hating Tradition Properly'

(pp. 1-15) and 'Disavowing Decolonization' (pp. 68-143). Who is defining for whom is the loaded question here. So long as the old colonial and the new economic powers continue to recycle, the old *laissez faire* wine in the new bottles of globalisation and WTO without a genuine attempt to recognise and establish equality among the nations—the people in the less developed regions of the world will continue to cling to their nation-space.

From the points discussed above, it becomes clear that in the West, the idea of the nation or nation-state was/is grounded in power, injustice, violence, exploitation and hatred. Hence, there is the desire to get rid of this 'damnation' in the utopian 'post-nation-global-space'. It will be analysed in the subsequent part how the nation, as it was constructed in the Indian discourse, not only subsumes the post-nation or the global in its economic aspect, but also relates it holistically to all forms of nature (living or non-living and environment). The local, the national and the global do not exist in Indian traditions as separate and separate entities as it has been the case in the Western discourses.

I do not intend to form a binary opposition as Indian/Western world-views on the subject of the (post)nation—as both are mere constructions of convenience which overlap and meet at various points and are mutually inclusive of each other. But one gets disturbed when two celebrated metropolitan American scholars, while editing *The Dictionary of Global Culture* (London: Penguin, 1999, 1st pub.1996, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., USA), exclude, the N-words-nation and nationalism from their purview. One example of this critical apartheid would suffice to prove my point. Hailing the birth of Jesus Christ as the official dating system in the world (history), they go overboard in interpreting it as the victory of the West over the rest which culminates into the birth of a new global culture:

All the more extraordinary, then, that this story (Christ's birth) should have become the basis of the one dating system that most cultures use. And the way it happened is *part of the story of how the military, economic and cultural expansion of the Christian Europe over the last five hundred years or so has led us into the first period of a truly global human history.* Whatever their intentions, Europeans, and their descendants in North America, a civilization we now call 'the west', began a process that brought the human species into single political, economic and cultural systems—whose details are, of course, the work of people from all around the globe.[9]

How conveniently the editorial duo erases the horrifying memories of

bloodshed, violence and exploitation etched on the minds and hearts of the colonised who were being assimilated by brute force into a Christian global time (history)! In the following part of the essay I have attempted to highlight some of the important features of Indian critical response to the post-nation-question which make it truly inclusive and all-embracing—without the dangers of aggressive nationalism or frenzied globalism.

III

Post-Nation-Politics: an Indian Response

First of all, the Indian equivalent of the term 'nation', i.e. '*rashtra*' or '*desh*' or '*prajā*' is not predicated on the community of race, language, culture, religion, territoŕy, economy and history as it is generally understood in the Western epistemological tradition. It is, therefore, very important to understand that India is not a nation still, nor it ever was one, in the Western empirical, positivistic sense of nationhood. The Indian nation-state, in its independence form, however, came about in 1947, after political decolonization. What, then, India has to offer on the subject of the (post)nationhood to the world? It may amuse some readers to know that the word 'nation' eventually comes from the Indo-European '*gene*' which, in turn, also gives rise to Sanskrit '*ja*' (to give birth to), '*jana*' (people), '*prajā*' ((subjects), '*janapada*' (district) community and '*janani*' (mother) and other related terms.[10] Thus, the nation, even as a term, has the profound Indian connection. It is amazing to see why it (the nation) was not defined in terms of homogeneity of language, religion, culture or race in Indian traditions. Does this mean that the very first response to the nation-question in Indian discourse subsumes the post-national positions—namely, plurality, hybridity and global consciousness?

National Rashtra as the Post-National in Prithvisūkta
(The Earth Mantras: Atharvaveda)

Perhaps, the first sustained discourse in the world history on the (post) nation-question may be found in the first part (*sūkta*) of the *Atharva-veda* (XII.12.1-12.63) which consists of total number of sixty-three verses and is known as *Prithvisūkta (The Earth Mantra)*. Most of these verses

exhibit patriotism (attachment to motherland), global consciousness, pluralism (cultural, religious, linguistic), a heightened environmental awareness, the need to observe righteousness *dharma,* truth *(satya)* and compassion *(karuṇā)* in relation to the other (or the other). For example, the very first verse (12.1) mentions *seven* characteristics of the nation:

Great truth *(satya),* great *dharma* (righteousness), education *(dīksha),* readiness to suffer for others *(tapas),* spiritual power and welfare of people *(lok-kalyāṇa).*

It is this ethical imperative that marks the notion of the nation here, meaning thereby that a community where truth, love, and non-violence don't prevail, it can never be the nation. In the verse number forty-five, multiculturalism or the plurality of cultures, religions and languages has been celebrated—*janam vibhrati bahudha vivachasam nānā-dharmānām prithvi yathoksam (Atharvaveda* XII: 45). Similarly, the verses 35, 36, 42 and 51, ordain compassion not only for the human beings but also for the entire-eco-system flora and fauna, rivers, seas, hills, vegetation, forests, animals and atmosphere. As a compulsory refrain, the composer-sage reiterates the idea 'let us love one another and let no one hate us' (XII:18, 23-5). A person or an individual first belongs to *Prithivi* (The Earth) and then to a nationality. Hence the idea: *māta bhūmi, putra aham prithivya* (My country or land is my mother; I am the son of the earth), *Atharvaveda* (XII: 12). This notion of belonging to the globe (earth) first and then to a nationality and the resolve to follow truth, peace, non-violence and compassion foreclose the possibility of aggressive nationalism and are a sure pointer to a global consciousness. It is surprising, indeed, that the ancient sages related the local (the land) to the global (the earth) in their construction of the post-nationalism. Do we not often hear about the hyphenated and hybrid cultural-national identities in the contemporary critical discourses and post-modern fiction? Perhaps, this hybridity (i.e. a sense of belonging to both the globe and the nation or motherland) is well subsumed in the *Prithvisūkta* of *Atharvaveda.* While it can be argued that there was no nation-state (pan-Indian) in ancient India except for a brief Mauryan interlude, though there is no denying the fact that there were plenty of discourses on statecraft. Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra, Manusmṛti, Mahābhārata's* 'Shānti Parva' (Peace Canto) and other *Smṛtis* (law-books) offer valuable insights on the state and its administration.

Post-Nation Discourse—*Tagore and Gandhi*

In recent history, two important Indian thinkers, namely Rabindranath Tagore and M.K. Gandhi, prepared their own critiques of nationalism while remaining fully engaged in the project of nation-making. It is interesting to observe that their critiques of nationalism may also be read as the discourses of post-nationalism.

Both of these profound thinkers were influenced by the liberal Western tradition: the emancipatory ideas which they used in constructing their criticism of nationalism in order to make a just global society (or *sarvodaya* or universal welfarism in the Gandhian tradition). I would like to quote some lines from Tagore's famous poem, 'The Sunset of The Century' (written in Bengali on the last day of the nineteenth century, i.e. 31 December 1899) as an evidence to show how prophetic were his poetic effusions on the (post)-nation question:

> The last sun of the century sets
> amidst the blood-red clouds of the West
> and the Whirlwind of hatred.
> The naked passion of self-love of Nations,
> in its drunken delirium
> of greed, is dancing to the clash of steel
> and the howling verses of vengeance.
>
> The hungry self of the Nation shall burst,
> in a violence of fury from its own shameless feeding
> For it has made the world its food.
> And licking it,
> crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels.
> It swells and swells.[11]

Before anyone else, even before any social-scientist, could see the nation critically in the West, it was Tagore who saw through the Western (European) nationalism and presaged what dangers would result from it in the coming decades (i.e. the two world wars). A nationalism premised on 'greed', 'hatred', and 'violence' would only spell suffering and destruction in the world. Tagore anticipated it. That's why all his life, he staunchly opposed the idea of nationalism and the nation-state. He rejected 'the self-idolatry of nation-worship' as well as 'the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism' in his series of lectures on nationalism published later on in the book form.[12] Tagore

tells us about the imaginary character of the nation, some seven decades before a Benedict Anderson: 'A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose.'[13] One meaning of 'assume' is 'to pretend' or to 'display falsely' which takes it closer to the imaginary or fictitious character of the nation as Anderson explains it.[14] Tagore cautions the leaders of the world politics, 'when this organisation of politics and commerce, whose other name is the Nation, becomes all powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is an evil day for humanity.'[15] In the same lecture, he calls the nation 'the abstract being' and thereby anticipates the post-national discourses—way ahead of a Bhabha, Said or a Pease! Tagore attacked the organisational form of the nation, i.e. the state as a soulless machine and warned the people about the dangers of nationalism:

We have felt its iron grip at the root of our life, and for the sake of humanity we must stand up and give warning to all, that this nationalism is a cruel epidemic of evil that is sweeping over the human world of the present age, and eating into its moral vitality.[16]

While railing against the nation-state and aggressive nationalism, he envisioned a world full of harmony, peace and truth. But his criticism of the nationalism or nation-state does tally with the notion of the nation or the post-nation as enunciated in the Vedic *Bhūmisūkta* (*Atharvaveda*, XII: 1, 2.63). It is the spiritual emptiness of the nation-state, the absence of the ethical imperative that worried him most. He saw state as an embodiment of brute power bereft of 'spiritual idealism' and 'social cooperation'.[17] If Marx could pronounce religion as the opium of the people, Tagore characterised 'the idea of the Nation' as 'one of the most powerful anaesthetics that man has invented' under the influence of which the powerful countries can 'carry out (their) systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion'.[18] Tagore affirms that India 'has never had a real sense of nationalism' and proclaims that the ideals of humanity are greater than a country.[19] Tagore's novels, particularly *Gora* (1907) and *The Home and the World* (1915) amply illustrate the hollowness of aggressive political nationalism. Through the character of Gora, Tagore exposes the emptiness of religious or cultural nationalism which was also a critique of the contemporary Indian nationalism.In spite of all his attempts to belong to '*Bhārata*

(India)' his self, which he erects on the crutches of purity of caste, religion, race and nation, is totally shattered on learning about his foreign origin. But then, conflict between his 'national self' and 'the post-national or global self' ceases and he becomes 'That which I sought day and night to become. Today I am *Bhāratvarsha*. Within me there is no conflict between communities . . .'[20] At the end of the novel, *Gora* calls Anandmayi his *Bhāratvarsha*— '*Ma* . . . you have no caste, you do not discriminate against people, you do not hate—you are the image of benediction. You are my *Bhāratvarsha*.'[21]

Tagore developed this idea of spiritual (post)nationalism in *The Home and the World* through the characters of Sandeep, the fire brand yet opportunist nationalist and Nikhil, the spiritual humanist. Bimala, as a metaphor of India, is at once taken in by the revolutionary rhetoric of extreme nationalism which Sandeep offers to her leading her to utter destruction. Nikhil, even at the cost of his life, remains a spiritual humanist and persistently resists the orge of aggressive nationalism in India.[22] One example from the novel would suffice here. Nikhil discounts the importance of *Bande-Mātram* as a hypnotic text of patriotism. Sandip worships his nation as God. Nikhil makes an interesting remark here: 'If that is what you really believe, there should be no difference for you between man and man, and so between country and country.'[23] This is Tagore's brand of post-nationalist narration of a supposedly national(ist) narrative.

Tagore and Gandhi both are complimentary to each other in many ways in their critiques of the nation-state and nationalism. Gandhi did affirm, *a la* Tagore, that 'Violent nationalism, otherwise known as imperialism is a curse. Non-violent nationalism is a necessary condition of corporate or civilised life.'[24] Like Tagore, Gandhi also believed in the minimalist nation-state. Hence, his repeated assertions on the non-violent nature of a democratic government: 'Holding the view that without the recognition of non-violence on a national scale, there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government. I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life— individual, social, political, national and international.'[25] Gandhi even prefers an enlightened anarchy to an organised nation-state without moral force:

'An ideally non-violent state will be an ordered anarchy. The state will be the best governed which is governed the least.' (*Harijan*, August 25, 1940). To a great extent, Gandhi and Tagore run parallel to each other in their distrust of the power of the nation-state: 'The

State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.'[26] It is worthwhile to remember that in the Gujarati version of *Hindi Swaraj* (1909), Gandhi refers to *prajā* (as a synonym of the nation or *rāshtra*) 75 times. Gandhi's idea of the nation upsets the agenda of cultural or aggressive nationalism. According to him, India was/is one nation because of its qualities of tolerance, assimilation and plurality—'India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different regions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation: they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country . . . 'If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland."[27]

It is significant to note here that both Gandhi's and Tagore's construction of India's nationness is not embedded in the political discourse, it is grounded in the spirituality of its tradition which is open-ended and pluralistic. The political aspect of India's national-ism—which was critiqued by Gandhi through his discourses of Swaraj (self-rule) and Sarvodya (welfare for all) comes in for rough treatment at the hands of Partha Chatterjee in his two seminal contributions to the post-nation-question.[28] Gandhi hit hard and narrow, exclusivistic nationalism in his speeches and writings. 'It is no nationalsim that is evil; it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil' (*Young India,* June 18, 1925). His criticism of nationalism does include his post-national or global concerns:

'My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism' (*Young India,* Sept. 10, 1925). This is precisely what Tagore was also stressing in his radical criticism of the nation. This is what makes the Indian discourse of the (post)nation so different from the Western theories of the nation. Gandhi laid stress on the 'global or the post-nationalistic' aspect of Indian nationalism—'Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian.' (*Young India,* Oct. 13, 1921). Gandhi anticipates the post-nationalist distrust of the nation in his discourse but does not make his critique of nationalism a pretext for peddling the hidden agenda of neo-colonialism—something which

most of the Western discourses are presently engaged with. Ashis Nandy rightly observes that both Tagore and Gandhi 'recognised the need for a national ideology of India as a means of cultural survival and both recognised that, for the same reason, India would either have to make a break with post-medieval Western concept of nationalism or give the concept a new content. As a result, for Tagore, nationalism itself became gradually illegitimate; for Gandhi nationalism began to include a critique of nationalism. For both, over time, the Indian freedom movement ceased to be an expression of only nationalist consolidation, it came to require a new stature as a symbol of the universal struggle for political justice and cultural dignity.'[29]

Gandhi deconstructed the concept of nationalism to an extent that it could become a basis for the so-called post-nationalism or globalisation. For example, he predicted the global or the post-national unity of the different countries on the humanitarian or spiritual aspect of nationalism.

'It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e. when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man' (*Young India*, June 18, 1925). This is no post-structuralist sleight of hand, yet it pre-empts all the criticism that the present-day purveyors of post-nationalism in their over jargonised discourses, level at the nation-space.

Gandhi and Tagore, if read together, may well remind a modern reader how the Indian response to the (post)-nation-question not only pre-dates the Western articulations of post-nationalism but also rearranges or reconstructs the local, the national and the post-national (or global) not as isolated from and oppositional to one another but as mutually inclusive and interactive entities deriving sustenance not from the logic of multinational capitalism—but from the spiritual values of truth (*satya*), compassion (*karuṇā*), capacity to sacrifice all for the sake of others (*tapas*), welfare of people (*lok kalyāṇa*), non-violence (*ahiṁsā*), spiritual power (*ādhyātma*) and knowledge (*jñāna*).[30]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. One can conveniently catalogue some of the recent critical verdicts contesting the nation—available in superabundance in university libraries. Please see Homi

K. Bhabha "Introduction: Narrating the Nation" (pp. 1-7), Geoffrey Bennington, "Postal Politics and the Institution of the Nation" (pp. 121-27), Homi Bhabha, "Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation" (pp. 291-322) in *Nation and Narration* (ed. Homi K. Bhabha). London: Routledge, 1995 1st pub. in 1990; Homi K. Bhabha, "How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation" (pp. 212-35) in *Location of Culture* (Homi K. Bhabha). London: Routledge, 1994; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 1983; Dipesh Chakravarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?", H. Aram Veeser (ed.), *The New Historical Reader.* London: Routledge, 1994; Bill Ashcraft *et al., The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.* London: Routledge, 1998, 1st pub. 1989; E.G. Hobsbawm; *Nations and Nationalism: Programme, Myth, Reality.* Cambridge: Camb. Uni. Press, 1992, 1st pub 1990; Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* and *The Nation and Its Frangments in the Partha Chatterjee Omnibus.* Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999; Ashis Nandy, "Illegitimacy of Nationalsim: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self" in Nandy, *Return from Exile.* Delhi: OUP, 1998; Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction,* Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999, 1st pub. 1998 (particularly the chapter, "Imagining Community: the question of nationalism", pp. 102-21), Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy, Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialsim.* Delhi: OUP, 1983; Homi K. Bhabha, "Editor's Introduction: Minority Maneuvers and Unsettled Negotiations" (pp. 431-59) in *Critical Quarterly,* vol 23, no. 3, Spring 1997; Donald E. Pease, "National Narratives", "Postnational Narration" (pp. 1-23), *Modern Fiction Studies,* vol. 43, no. 1, Spring, 1997; Christopher Pinney, "The Nation (Un)Pictured? Chromolitho-graphy and 'Popular' Politics in India, 1878-1995" (pp. 834-67); *Critical Inquiry,* Summer 1997; Benedict Anderson, "Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future" (pp. 3-17), *New Left Review,* no. 235, May/June 1999; Jurgen Habermas, "European Nation-State and the Pressures of Globalisation", *New Left Review,* no. 235, May-June 1999, pp. 46-59, and Gayatri C. Spivak, *Outside in The Teaching Machine.* 1993, NY: Routledge, *In Other Worlds,* NY: Routledge, 1988. 1st pub. 1987; *The Post-Colonial Critic.* New York: Routledge, 1990; Edward Said, *Orientalism.* NY: Pantheon, 1978; *The World, The Text and the Critic.* London: Faber, 1984 and *Culture of Imperialism,* London: Chatto & Windus, 1993; Sudhir Chandra, "Defining the Nation" (pp. 117-54); *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India.* Delhi: OUP, 1992; G.N. Devy, "Nation in Narration", *Of Many Heroes: An Indian Essay in Literary Historiography.* Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1998; Ravinder Kumar, "India: A Nation-State or a Civilization State?", *Occasional Papers on Perspectives in Indian Development.* New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1989; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (tr. C. Farrington) 3rd edn., Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990; Gyan Prakash, "Modern Nation's Return in the Archaic" (pp. 536-56), *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 23, no. 3, Spring, 1997, Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* New Delhi: OUP, 1993.

2. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London: Verso, 1983, p. 19.

3. "Introduction", Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge: Camb. Univ. Press, 1990, p. 9.

4. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Programme Myth, Reality.* Cambridge: Camb. Univ. Press, 1990, p. 5.

5. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (tr. C. Farvington), 1985, 1st pub.1961. See "On National Culture" (pp.166-89) and "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (pp. 119-65).

6. Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge, 1995.

7. ——, "Dissemination . . . ", *Nation and Narration,* p. 305.

8. ——, "Introduction" to the *Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994, p. 4.

9. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (eds.), *The Dictionary of Global Culture.* London: Penguin, 1999, (1st pub.1996, Alfred A. Knopf Inc. USA), p. ix; Appiah and H.L. Gates Jr. also edited a speical issue of *Critical Inquiry on Identities* (see, *Critical Inquiry,* 18, Summer, 1992).

10. For a detailed discussion on the subject, see Sudhir Kumar, "Nation versus Nativism" (pp. 113-28) in Makarand Paranjape (ed.), *Nativism: Essays in Criticism.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997.

11. Quoted in Tagore's *Nationalism.* Delhi: Macmillan, 1985, 1st pub. 1917, pp. 80-1, subsequently cited as *Nationalism* with page number in parentheses.

12. "Nationalism in the West", *Nationalism,* p. 2.

13. Ibid., p. 5.

14. See, *OALD,* Oxford: OUP, 1989, p. 61.

15. *Nationalism,* op.cit., p. 7.

16. Ibid., p. 9. For further insights into Tagore's critiques of nationalism, see Ashis Nandy, "The Illegitimacy of Nationalism; Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self", *Return From Exile.* Delhi: OUP, 1998, pp. 1-50.

17. Ibid., p. 12.

18. Ibid., pp. 25-6.

19. Ibid., p. 64.

20. *Gora,* Surjit Mukherjee (tr.). New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997, p. 475.

21. Ibid., p. 477.

22. *The Home and the World,* Surendranath Tagore (tr.). New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999, 1st pub. 1915.

23. Ibid., p. 37.

24. M.K. Gandhi, *Collected Works,* vol 25, p. 369.

25. *Harijan,* Feb. 11, 1939.

26. M.K. Gandhi in *Modern Review,* Oct. 1935, cited in Anand T. Hingorani and Ganga A. Hingorani (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Gandhian Thought.* New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1983, pp. 324-25.

27. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule.* Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1995, 1st pub. 1938, pp. 44-5.

28. See *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (containing *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* and *The Nation and Its Fragments*). New Delhi: OUP, 1999.

29. Ashis Nandy, "The Illegitimacy of Nationalism", in Ashis Nandy, *Return From Exile.* Delhi: OUP, 1998, pp. 2-3.

30. Partha Chatterjee emphasises the significance of the inner domain (the spiritual realm) to properly understand the complexity of Indian nationalism. According to him, the outer or material domain was heavily influenced by the colonial

discourses, the inner domain remained relatively free from colonial encroachments. See his *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories, The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*. New Delhi: OUP, 1999. Interstingly, Renan in his famous essay, "What is a Nation?", Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 8-22, also emphasises the spiritual basis of nationness as re-affirmed by Tagore and Gandhi also. Renan considers the nation as a 'spiritual principle' based on the past 'memories', the present-day 'desire to live together', and the spirit of making 'sacrifice' for each other suffused with a "moral consciousness". It reminds me of the *Prithvisūkta (The Earth Mantra)* of *The Atharvaveda* (canto, XII: 1-63) as alrealdy discussed in my essay. This is no facile 'return in the archaic' as Gyan Prakash (op.cit.) would like us to believe.