

DEMOCRACY AND THE FAILURE OF LIBERALISM?
GLOBALIZATION AND THE REEMERGENCE OF ORIENTALIST
ESSENTIALISM IN HINDUTVA'S CONSTRUCTION OF FUNDAMENTALIST
HINDU IDENTITY

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
KAVITA PILLAI
Dr. Karen Piper, Dissertation Advisor

MAY 2018

© Copyright by Kavita Pillai 2018

All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Karen Piper for all the encouragement and support she has given me in the last 6 years. I cannot imagine having a better mentor and advisor than Dr. Piper. I also want to thank the rest of my committee members for your help and feedback throughout my graduate career at the University of Missouri. Dr. Christopher Okonkwo, Dr. Anand Prahlad, and Dr. Paul Wallace; thank you so much! Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues, peers, and friends for giving me your support and reading my material and believing in me even when I did not.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
List Of Figures	v
Glossary Of Terms And Abbreviations	vi
Chronology Of Events	viii
Abstract	xiii
Prologue	xiv
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Right Wing Fundamentalism And Globalization	1
1.2 Huntington: Criticism And Importance	2
1.3 Huntington’s Politics Of Fear Of The Other	5
2. Origin Of The Aryan Civilization Theory And The Hindu Question	16
2.1 “The Hindu” In European Consciousness	16
2.2 The Hindu Indian Consciousness	30
2.3 Dialectic Of Self And Other	40
3. From Gandhi, Nehru, And Tagore—The Critical Nationalists To Hitler, Modi, And Tagore—The Hindu Nationalist:	50
Rise Of The Hindu Right In India	50
3.1 Gandhi: The Mahatma	53
3.2 Tagore: The Thinker And The Humanist	58
3.3 Nehru: The Pragmatist	64
3.4 The Hindu Right	69
3.5 The RSS And The Hindu Mahasabha	74
4. Misogynistic Conservatism Of Indian Nationalism: Gandhi, Tagore, Rushdie, Seth And The Politics Of Emancipatory Feminist Discourse In 20th Century India	88
4.1 The Poet, The Hunter, And The Crane	88
4.2 Ram, Sita, And Ravana	89
4.3 Women In The Ramayana	91
4.4 The Loss Of Sita	91
4.5 Sita Enters Fire	92
4.6 Sita Enters The Earth	96

4.7 The Goddess Sita	98
4.8 Mother India—The Nation And Women	100
5. Modi’s Ram Rajya: The Answer To Huntington’s Hindu Question.....	130
5.1 The Holy Cow.....	131
5.2 Ram Rajya Or The Rule Of Rama	132
5.3 Anti-Muslim Riots.....	148
5.4 Globalization: Economy First, Nation First?.....	149
6. Conclusion	151
7. Bibilography.....	157
8. Vita	169

LIST OF FIGURES

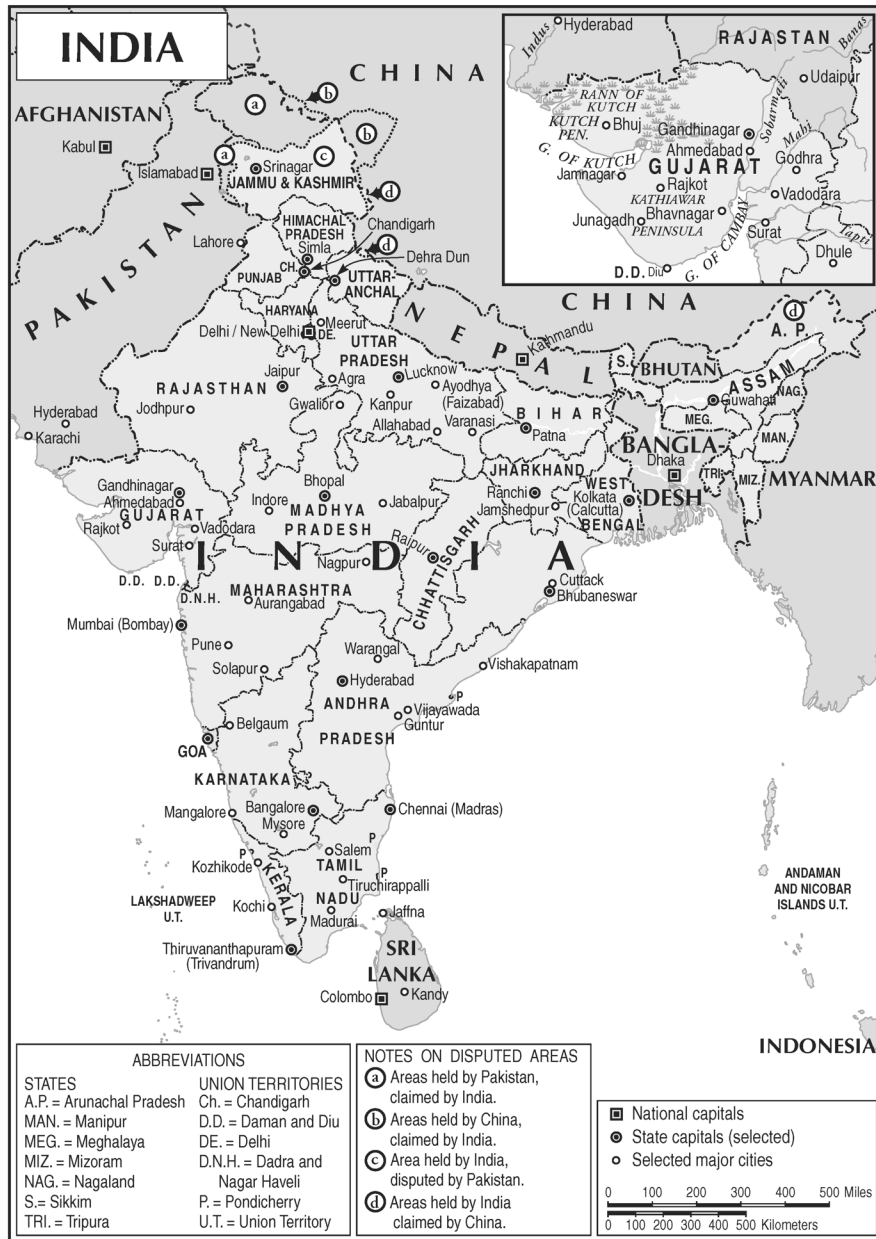


Figure 1: Map of India

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Bajrang Dal “Strong Group,” militant youth wing of the VHP, started in 1984, responsible for a good deal of violence against Muslims and Christians; its website, HinduUnity.org, gives a good picture of its anti-minority attitudes.

BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) “Indian People’s Party” or “Mother-India People’s Party,” the political party founded out of, and still profoundly linked to, the RSS; it held power (in a coalition with smaller parties) from 1998 to 2004. The term *bharat* is a Hindu term for India, in the specific sense of a geographic entity; but the original term is now commonly modified by the addition of the epithet *mata*, “mother,” to form *Bharatmata* or *Bharat Mata*, “Mother India.” So *Bharatiya* means “Indian” in a sense that is freighted with emotional/patriotic overtones, whereas *rashtriya* means “national” in a more neutral sense; *Hindustani* would be “Indian” in an inclusive way that would be congenial to minorities; the BJP conspicuously did not select the name *Hindustani Janata Party*.

Hindutva “Hinduness,” “the essence of being a Hindu,” a term made prominent by Hindu-right writer V. D. Savarkar; it has come to denote the entire ideology of ethnic homogeneity and purity, often including the subordinate status of non-Hindu groups.

HSS (Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh) “Hindu Corps of Volunteers,” the American branch of the Indian RSS, founded in the 1980s.

Kar sevak “Hand-server-for-a-cause,” a volunteer working for the restoration of a Rama temple at Ayodhya.

Panchayats Elected rural village councils whose role was envisaged by Gandhi and which were finally established by the Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth Amendments to the Constitution in 1992; one-third of the seats are reserved for women.

Ram Rajya The “Rule of Rama,” an ideal imagined time of peace and unity under the rule of the Hindu god Rama, an idea invoked in very different ways by Gandhi and the Hindu right.

Rath yatra “Chariot journey,” a term used in eastern India for the annual ritual journal of the Lord Jagannath, an incarnation of Krishna, in an enormous chariot drawn by ropes. In other parts of India, the term would not have these specific religious associations, but it would allude to a victorious chariot journey, such as Rama may have embarked on after defeating Ravana. The BJP uses this term prominently to designate campaign-related pilgrimages undertaken by several BJP politicians at various times, most famously by L.K. Advani in connection with Ayodhya, with heavy symbolic/religious/militant overtones, and in a motor vehicle with painted chariot-like trappings.

RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) “National Corps of Volunteers,” the militant social organization that is the heart of the Hindu right, founded in 1925.

Sangh Parivar “Family of Groups,” the set of organizations comprising the Hindu right, including the RSS, VHP, BJP, and Bajrang Dal.

Satyagraha “Truth-force,” Gandhi’s theory and practice of nonviolent resistance.

Shakha “Branch,” the name given to the boys’ groups established all over India by the RSS.

Swaraj “Self-rule,” a term for political independence, also used by Gandhi to refer to inner psychological self-rule.

VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad) “All-Hindu Council” or “World Hindu Council,” a social organization closely allied to the RSS and BJP, founded in 1964. A U.S. wing with the name VHPA was founded in 1970.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1861** Birth of Rabindranath Tagore (May 7)
- 1869** Birth of Mohandas K. Gandhi (October 2)
- 1872** Birth of Kasturba, later Gandhi's wife
- 1876** Birth of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, father of Pakistan (December 25)
- 1878** Tagore visits England for the first time
- 1883** Gandhi marries Kasturba; birth of V. D. Savarkar, future Hindu nationalist leader
- 1884** Tagore marries Mrinalini; his sister-in-law Kadambari Devi commits suicide
- 1885** Death of Gandhi's father; Indian National Congress founded to provide a forum for the articulation of Indian opinion about governance
- 1887** Gandhi goes to England, studies law at Inner Temple in London
- 1888** Birth of Maulana Azad, Muslim scholar and Indian nationalist leader, promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity, and Congress president in 1923 and 1940–1946
- 1889** Birth of Jawaharlal Nehru (November 14); birth of K. B. Hedgewar, founder of the RSS
- 1891** Birth of B. R. Ambedkar, “untouchable” and leading framer of India's Constitution
- 1892** Jinnah goes to England to study
- 1893** Gandhi goes to South Africa to practice law
- 1896** Gandhi returns to India and takes his family back with him to South Africa
- 1899** Gandhi organizes Indian Ambulance Corps for British in Boer War; birth of Kamala Kaul, later Nehru's wife
- 1901** Tagore founds school at Santiniketan; Gandhi returns to India, attends Indian National Congress meetings
- 1902** Death of Mrinalini, Tagore's wife; Gandhi returns to South Africa
- 1904** Gandhi starts Phoenix Farm, an ideal community modeled on Ruskin's ideas, near Durban, South Africa

1905 Swadeshi (boycott of foreign goods) movement in Bengal; Tagore initially sympathetic, later more critical; death of Tagore's father; Jawaharlal Nehru goes to England to begin education at Harrow, stays in England until 1914

1906 Gandhi takes vow of brahmacharya, abstinence from sexual relations; Muslim League founded in India; birth of M. S. Golwalkar, future RSS leader

1907 Jawaharlal Nehru goes to Trinity College, Cambridge

1909 Gandhi publishes Hind Swaraj (Indian Self-Rule)

1910 Tagore publishes Gora and The Institution of Fixed Beliefs; Gandhi founds second ideal community in South Africa, Tolstoy Farm; Jawaharlal Nehru studies law in London

1912 Nehru returns to India, begins law practice with father; B. R. Ambedkar goes to the United States to study at Columbia University, where he gets a Ph.D.

1913 Tagore wins Nobel Prize for Literature; Gandhi leads mass nonviolent protest against racial discrimination in South Africa; Jinnah joins Muslim League

1914 Tagore publishes "Letter from a Wife" and "Haimanti"

1915 Tagore publishes Ghare Baire (The Home and the World); Gandhi returns to India, establishes Satyagraha Ashram near Ahmedabad, Gujarat; admits an untouchable family

1916 Marriage of Jawaharlal Nehru and Kamala Kaul

1917 Birth of Indira, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and Kamala

1918 Gandhi leads strike of millworkers in Ahmedabad

1919 Rowlatt Act suspends civil liberties in India; Gandhi organizes day of nonviolent protest against it; General Dyer and the British army massacre Indian civilians at Amritsar (April 13); Tagore returns his knighthood; Motilal Nehru named chair of an investigative commission relating to the massacre; Jawaharlal Nehru goes to Amritsar to investigate; Congress is unified under Gandhi's leadership; first nonviolent noncooperation campaign launched

1921 Jawaharlal Nehru's first imprisonment (along with his father)

1923 Savarkar publishes Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?

1924 Birth of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, future prime minister

1925 Gandhi's Autobiography published in Gujarati, in serial form; founding of the RSS under Hedgewar's leadership

- 1926** Nehru and Kamala in Europe for tuberculosis treatment for her
- 1927** Ambedkar leads march to establish rights of untouchables
- 1928** Jinnah breaks with Nehru and Congress
- 1929** Birth of Lal Krishna Advani, future BJP leader
- 1930** Gandhi leads Great Salt March to protest British tax on salt; Tagore delivers the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford, which become The Religion of Man
- 1931** Death of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal's father
- 1932** Gandhi fasts in prison
- 1934** Indira Nehru attends school in Santiniketan
- 1936** Tagore lectures on women's independence and equality; Nehru publishes Autobiography; Kamala dies of tuberculosis at age thirty-six
- 1939** Golwalkar publishes We, or Our Nationhood Defined
- 1940** Jinnah and Muslim League make first demand for "Pakistan"; death of K. B. Hedgewar
- 1941** Death of Rabindranath Tagore (August 7)
- 1942** Congress, led by Nehru and Gandhi, passes "Quit India" resolution; Indira Nehru marries Feroze Gandhi, a Parsi, Congress Party volunteer and aide to Kamala Nehru
- 1944** Nehru writes The Discovery of India between April and September, in prison; death of Gandhi's wife Kasturba while in British detention; birth of Rajiv Gandhi, elder son of Indira (Nehru) Gandhi and Feroze Gandhi
- 1946** Mass violence erupts between Hindus and Muslims; discussions of partition of India and Pakistan continue; Gandhi walks 116 miles in Bengal to stop religious strife; birth of the Sanjay Gandhi, younger son of Indira (Nehru) Gandhi and Feroze Gandhi; birth of Sonia Maino, future wife of Rajiv Gandhi, near Turin, Italy
- 1947** Indian independence officially begins at midnight, August 14–15; Nehru makes "tryst with destiny" speech; Pakistan begins life as a separate nation at the same time, with Jinnah as its leader; massive violence accompanies partition of India and Pakistan; Gandhi fasts for Hindu-Muslim unity in Calcutta
- 1948** Gandhi is assassinated (January 30); Mohammed Ali Jinnah, leader of Muslim League and founder of Pakistan, dies in Karachi, after a long illness; the RSS is banned

1949 Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's assassin, sentenced to death on November 8, hanged November 15; the RSS wins legal status after negotiation with government

1950 Ratification of India's Constitution (January 26); birth of Narendra Modi

1951 Ambedkar resigns Law Ministry over concessions to traditionalists on sex equality

1954 Ambedkar converts to Buddhism

1956 Death of Ambedkar (December 6)

1960 India-China war

1964 Nehru dies (May 26); founding of the VHP as ally of the RSS

1965 War between India and Pakistan

1966 Indira Gandhi becomes prime minister; death of V. D. Savarkar; Golwalkar publishes Bunch of Thoughts

1968 Marriage of Sonia Maino and Rajiv Gandhi

1971 War between India and Pakistan

1973 Death of M. S. Golwalkar, RSS leader; Supreme Court articulates doctrine of the Constitution's "essential features" in Keshavananda Bharati

1975 Indira Gandhi declares state of emergency on June 26, suspending many civil liberties

1977 Mrs. Gandhi defeated in elections; Janata Party coalition takes power

1980 Founding of the BJP with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as leader; Indira Gandhi returns to power as prime minister; death of her son Sanjay in an airplane accident

1984 Assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31 by her Sikh bodyguard; anti-Sikh riots in Delhi; Hindu right revives issue of mosque at Ayodhya; founding of Bajrang Dal, militant youth wing of the VHP

1987–88 Broadcast of Ramayana on Indian television

1990 L. K. Advani mounts rath yatra, a mass campaign journey focused on the issue of Ayodhya

1991 The BJP is major opposition party; assassination of Rajiv Gandhi

1992 Ayodhya situation becomes tense; RSS Founders Day rally calls for demolition of Babri Mosque; mosque pulled down on December 6

1996 The BJP wins a plurality of seats; Vajpayee sworn in as prime minister but resigns after thirteen days; a coalition governs

1998 The BJP wins a plurality, forms a coalition (National Democratic Alliance) with caste-based and regional parties; Vajpayee becomes prime minister

1999 The BJP wins a plurality; National Democratic Alliance coalition governs

2001 Narendra Modi becomes chief minister of Gujarat

2002 February 27, train incident at Godhra; February–March, pogrom in Gujarat; Narendra Modi reelected chief minister of Gujarat in December

2004 BJP defeated in May elections; coalition led by Congress takes power with Manmohan Singh as prime minister

2005 L. K. Advani lays wreath on grave of Jinnah in Karachi, is briefly forced out of party leadership; Narendra Modi is denied a visa to visit the United States

2012 A Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has been appointed by India's Supreme Court, says investigators found no evidence against Modi in the 2002 Gujarat riots case

2013 European Union ambassadors have lunch with Modi at the German ambassador's residence in New Delhi, ending a decade-old informal boycott of the political leader

2014 Modi is chosen to head the BJP's campaign in general elections due in 2014, a position that makes him the candidate for prime minister of India; Modi becomes the 14th Prime Minister of India

2015 Modi government deregulates diesel prices, and it also liberalizes India's foreign direct investment policies, in an attempt to make India more suitable to compete in the global economy

2016 Donald Trump becomes 45th president of the United States of America

ABSTRACT

This dissertation demonstrates the emergent character of nationalism in conjunction with economic liberalism and global capitalism. It demonstrates how globalization and right wing fundamentalist nationalisms are mutually dependent. The cultural aggrandizement and glorification of the nation, an ugly reality in western industrialized countries, can be seen as a way in which states seek to engage productively with the processes of capitalist expansion and global competitiveness. In the post-colonial nation of India, the discourse of cultural unity and chauvinism takes particular forms that trace their lineages to the practices of colonial subordination and anti-colonial resistance. The Indian state's relatively recent open markets and the rise of Hindu Right-Wing movement invites us to reconsider the relationship between globalization and nationalism in more complex terms that takes cognizance of postcolonial agency. It also draws attention to the antidemocratic and illiberal effects of globalization. Across the globe, mainstream conservative parties have adapted to the rise of the far-right by co-opting some of their largest issues like religious fundamentalism, racial hegemony, and fear of the other. So far, that strategy has proven mostly successful, but this dissertation contends that a push for a well-informed and educated citizenry who can partake in nuanced dialogue is the way to the combat the rise of fundamentalisms.

PROLOGUE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a

SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and opportunity

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity

of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do

HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

“Preamble,” The Constitution of India

Spring of 2002 - I was in High school. I woke up and found out from my dad that school was cancelled, because Muslims had burned a train full of Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya, the Hindu pilgrimage sight. The newspaper boy brought the newspaper around 7am, and the front page had an image of a burning train and charred bodies. I started at the newspaper for a while. I didn't know what to make of it. It was outside of my grasp. For about 3 weeks, schools, colleges, and universities were closed, stores were shut down, and the Government of Gujarat (a State in Western India) declared a “bandh,” which is basically the government asking the people to stay off the streets. I grew up in a

Middle Class-Upper Middle-class Hindu neighborhood, in the city of Vadodara, Gujarat, where the minority community, consisting mostly of Muslims, lived in neighborhoods that I never really even visited. Except that I was dating a Muslim boy in High School. (It might not seem like a big deal to most people. High school romance; no one takes it seriously. Except that every year there are a few dozen murders in India because of interreligious romantic relationships.) He called me on the first day that school was cancelled and told me that things were terrible in his neighborhood. His dad owned a private business, and he said that earlier that day, the business was looted and then burnt down by saffron-clad men. I couldn't believe it. I knew he wasn't someone who would exaggerate, but there was nothing on the news about the violence in the city, and my neighborhood was really calm, eerily so, and nothing was really going on around me.

And then another friend of mine called. She was crying hysterically. It took her fifteen minutes to tell me what the matter was. It wasn't very complicated. She had heard that a woman named Fatima, a friend of hers, had been caught by a mob just outside her neighborhood in Vadodara's inner city. Only that her stomach had been ripped open and stuffed with burning rags. Only that after she died, someone carved 'OM' on her forehead. She was worried those people were coming for her and her family.

It's been 16 years since that Spring day in late February. The Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time of the riots (equivalent to the Governor), Narendra Modi, had justified this as part of the retaliation by outraged Hindus against Muslim 'terrorists' who burned alive 58 Hindu passengers on the Train in Godhra. Each of those who died that hideous death was someone's brother, someone's mother, someone's child. Of course, they were.

Modi is the Prime Minister of India now, and still maintains that stance. His narrative on what happened in Spring of 2002 hasn't changed at all. The United States, Britain, and the European Union had banned Modi from entering their countries right after the 2002 riots. In May 2004, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom found Modi to have been complicit in the Gujarat violence. In September 2004, the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report returned to the question of Gujarat, giving a detailed account of the derailment of the rule of law and tracing the violence to the ideology of Hindutva espoused by the BJP. In February 2005, Narendra Modi was invited to Florida to address the Asian-American Hotel Owners Association. This invitation gives a good idea of the surreal mixture of pro-business politics and violence that characterizes the BJP. He accepted. Anticipating that there might be some trouble, he applied for a diplomatic visa, although he already had a tourist visa (Suppes). Meanwhile, resistance mobilized. Concerned academics signed a petition describing Modi's role in the violence and asking the State Department not to grant him a visa.

On March 15th 2005, Congressman John Conyers, a Democrat from Michigan, submitted a House Resolution cosponsored by Congressman Joe Pitts, a Republican from Pennsylvania, condemning the conduct of Modi in inciting religious persecution in Gujarat (Hon. John Conyers). The resolution referred to the condemnation in the U.S. State Department's Religious Freedom Report, to the admonition of Modi by the Indian Supreme Court for "complacency and actions in connection with the attacks on non-Hindu groups," and to the finding by India's National Human Rights Commission that there was "evidence of premeditation in the killings of non-Hindu groups, complicity by

Gujarat State government officials, and police inaction in the midst of attacks on Muslims and Christians” (Concerned Citizens’ Tribunal). Significantly, it also referred more generally to the role of Modi and his government in “promoting the attitudes of racial supremacy, racial hatred, and the legacy of Nazism through his government’s support of textbooks in which Nazism is glorified” and to the finding by the U.S. State Department that under Modi’s supervision high school textbooks were revised to describe Hitler’s “charismatic personality and the achievements of Nazism” (Nussbaum). Independently, Pitts, cosigned by various other, wrote a letter to then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, asking the State Department to deny Modi a visa. To almost everyone’s surprise, on March 19th 2005, the State Department denied Modi a diplomatic visa and revoked his tourist visa (“A Slap in Mr. Modi’s Face”). The BJP reacted sharply, arguing that the denial was an “insult to the entire nation;” Modi himself called the denial an “insult to India and the Constitution” (“Persona Non Grata”). Of course, Modi is now the Prime Minister of India, and there are no restrictions on his travels and little mention of his role in the 2002 Gujarat riots. It’s been forgotten under his capitalist, pro-globalization façade.

The more the Hindus and the Muslims try and call attention to their religious differences by slaughtering each other, the less there is to distinguish them from one another. They worship at the same altar. They're both apostles of the same murderous god, whoever he or she is. In an atmosphere so vitiated, for anybody, and in particular the Prime Minister, to arbitrarily decree exactly where the cycle started is malicious and irresponsible.

Soon after the Gujarat Massacres, in late 2002, at its annual convention, the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), the moral and cultural guild of the political party the BJP (The Bharatiya Janata Party), of which the then Prime Minister, the Home Minister and Chief Minister (current Prime Minister of India) Modi himself were all members, called upon Muslims to earn the 'goodwill' of the majority community.

This was my home state of Gujarat in 2002. This sectarian violence was restricted to Gujarat and a few other states in North India. In 2002, Writer and Activist Arundhati Roy asked in her essay “Is India on a Totalitarian Path?”, “what if BJP does win the general elections?” And in 2014, BJP won by a huge margin. Both in the North and in the South.

Right now, people in India are sipping from a poisoned chalice—a flawed democracy laced with religious fascism.

India has a ruling party that's hemorrhaging. Its rhetoric against Terrorism, the passing of POTA (Indian version of the Patriot Act), the saber-rattling against Pakistan (with the underlying nuclear threat), the massing of almost a million soldiers on the border on hair-trigger alert, and most dangerous of all, the attempt to communalize and falsify school history text-books are all matters of urgent attention and pose huge threat to the idea of a democratic nation. Gujarat, had for some years, been the petri dish in which Hindu fascism has been fomenting an elaborate political experiment.

Going back to 2002, within hours of the Godhra outrage, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the RSS put into motion a meticulously planned pogrom against the Muslim community. Officially the number of dead is 800. Independent reports put the

figure at well over 2,000. As of 2005, more than a hundred and fifty thousand people, essentially Muslims, driven from their homes, had been living in refugee camps. Women were stripped, gang-raped; parents were bludgeoned to death in front of their children. Two hundred and forty dargahs (or Muslim religious sights) and 180 masjids or mosques were destroyed—in Ahmedabad the tomb of Wali Gujarati, the founder of the modern Urdu poetry, was demolished and paved over in the course of a night. The tomb of a very renowned musician Ustad Faiyaz Ali Khan was desecrated and wreathed in burning tires. Arsonists burned and looted shops, homes, hotels, textiles mills, buses and private cars. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs.

The day after the train massacre, a mob surrounded the house of former Congressman of Gujarat Iqbal Ehsan Jaffri. His phone calls to the Director-General of Police, the Police Commissioner, the Chief Secretary, and the Additional Chief Secretary were all ignored. The mobile police vans around his house did not intervene. The mob broke into his house. They stripped his daughters and burned them alive. Then they beheaded the former congressman and dismembered him. Of course, it's only a coincidence that that the former congressman was a trenchant critic of the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi.

Across Gujarat, thousands of people made up the mobs. They were armed with petrol bombs, guns, knives, swords and tridents. Apart from the Hindu right's usual lumpen constituency, Dalits and Adivasi took part in the orgy. Middle-class people also participated in the looting. The leaders of the mob had computer-generated cadastral lists marking out Muslim homes, shops, businesses and even partnerships. They had mobile

phones to coordinate the action. They had trucks loaded with thousands of gas cylinders, hoarded weeks in advance, which they used to blow up Muslim commercial establishments. They had not just police protection and police connivance, but also covering fire.

Notice had been given: Gujarat was just the beginning. Is this the idyllic Hindu state of the Vedas that we have been looking forward to?

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 RIGHT WING FUNDAMENTALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is often described as a process: steadily progressing over time, pervasively spreading over space, and clearly inevitable in its development. We know from experience that revolutions disrupt the traditions and customs of a people. Indeed, they threaten a people's very security, safety, and even identity. The world revolution that is globalization in some measure threatens the security of every people on the globe. Fundamentalism typically has a religious connotation that indicates unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs. However, fundamentalism was eventually applied to certain groups—mainly, though not exclusively, in religion—that are characterized by a markedly strict literalism as it is applied to certain scriptures, dogmas, or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining ingroup and outgroup distinctions. This leads to an emphasis on purity and the desire to return to a previous ideal from which advocates believe members have strayed. This tendency results in the rejection of diversity of opinion as applied to these established “fundamentals” and their accepted interpretation within the group. Fundamentalism has developed all over the world along with the extension of globalization. Globalization is an extension of modernization and post-modernization, and both these movements oppose religious conservatism. The globalization of culture involves the creation of a hyper-differentiated field of value, taste, and style opportunities, accessible by each individual without constraint for purposes either of self-expression or consumption. One could see that the antagonism to modernity finds expression in fundamentalism. This is perhaps the indirect

contribution of globalization to religion and religious ideology. The fear of modernity motivates religious leaders to revitalize their religion, so that it can effectively combat modernity and post-modernity.

Theories so far have propagated the idea that globalization and right-wing religious fundamentalism are reactionary to each other. Theorists such as Samuel Huntington argue that right-wing fundamentalisms, around the world, are a result or effect of globalization. However, I contend that if we closely scrutinize the religious fundamentalist movements around the world, we see that globalization and right wing religious fundamentalism go hand in hand; one needs the other to survive. By charting the rise of the Hindu Right in India, I show the emerging pattern that India shares with most other democratic nations in their failure of liberalism, which results in growing religious fundamentalisms in the age of globalization. Finally, I connect the failure of liberal politics to the attack on public, liberal education, which is the foundation to any democracy.

1.2 HUNTINGTON: CRITICISM AND IMPORTANCE

It is reasonable to ask why I give importance to Samuel Huntington and his Clash of Civilization theory, because Huntington has fallen under the stern critique of various academic writers, who have either empirically, historically, logically, or ideologically challenged his claims (Fox, 2005; Mungiu-Pippidi & Mindruta, 2002; Henderson & Tucker, 2001; Russett, Oneal, & Cox, 2000; Harvey, 2000). In an article explicitly referring to Huntington, scholar Amartya Sen (1999) argues:

...diversity is a feature of most cultures in the world. Western civilization is no exception. The practice of democracy that has won out in the modern West is largely a result of a consensus that has emerged since the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, and particularly in the last century or so. To read in this a historical commitment of the West—over the millennia—to democracy, and then to contrast it with non-Western traditions (treating each as monolithic) would be a great mistake. (Sen)

Edward Said issued a response to Huntington's thesis in his 2001 article, “The Clash of Ignorance.” Said argues that Huntington's categorization of the world's fixed “civilizations” omits the dynamic interdependency and interaction of culture. Longtime critic of the Huntingtonian paradigm and outspoken proponent of Arab issues, Edward Said (2004), argues that the clash of civilizations thesis is an example of “the purest invidious racism, a sort of parody of Hitlerian science directed today against Arabs and Muslims” (293). Noam Chomsky has criticized the concept of the clash of civilizations as just being a new justification for the United States “for any atrocities that they wanted to carry out,” which was required after the Cold War as the Soviet Union was no longer a viable threat (2001). As evidenced, criticisms of Huntington’s theoretical and political credibility are nuanced and pervasive. But in mass media and contemporary politics, Huntington still reigns, and his theories are far from disqualified.

President Trump’s July 2017 speech in Warsaw, in which he urged Europeans and Americans to defend Western civilization against violent extremists and barbarian hordes, inevitably evoked Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” — the notion that

superpower rivalry would give way to battles among Western universalism, Islamic militancy and Chinese assertiveness. In his book, Huntington described civilizations as the broadest and most crucial level of identity, encompassing religion, values, culture and history. Rather than “which side are you on?” he wrote, the overriding question in the post-Cold War world would be “who are you?”. So when the president calls on the nations of the West to “summon the courage and the will to defend our civilization,” when he insists that we accept only migrants who “share our values and love our people,” and when he urges the transatlantic alliance to “never forget who we are” and cling to the “bonds of history, culture and memory,” I imagine Huntington, who passed away in late 2008 after a long career teaching at Harvard University, nodding from beyond. It would be a nod of vindication, perhaps, but mainly one of grim recognition. Trump’s civilizational rhetoric is just one reason Huntington resonates today, and it’s not even the most interesting one. Huntington’s work, spanning the mid-20th century through the early 21st, reads as a long argument over America’s meaning and purpose, one that explains the tensions of the Trump era as well as anything can. Huntington both chronicles and anticipates America’s fights over its founding premises, fights that Trump’s ascent has aggravated. Huntington foresees — and, frankly, stokes — the rise of white nativism in response to Hispanic immigration. He captures the dissonance between working classes and elites, between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, which played out in the 2016 campaign. And he warns how populist demagogues appeal to alienated masses and then break faith with them. This is Trump’s presidency, but even more so, it

is Huntington's America. Trump may believe himself a practical man, exempt from any intellectual influence, but he is the slave of a defunct political scientist.

Huntington blames pliant politicians and intellectual elites who uphold diversity as the new prime American value, largely because of their misguided guilt toward victims of alleged oppression. So, they encourage multiculturalism over a more traditional American identity, he says, and they embrace free trade and porous borders despite the public's protectionist preferences. It is an uncanny preview of the battles of 2016.

Denouncing multiculturalism as "anti-European civilization," Huntington calls for a renewed nationalism devoted to preserving and enhancing "those qualities that have defined America since its founding." This denouncing of multiculturalism and liberalism for narrow-minded fundamentalism and nostalgia for the imaginary golden age from the past is something that is trending throughout the world. Even if it feels odd to write of Trump as a Huntingtonian figure, one is instinctual and anti-intellectual; the other, deliberate and theoretical. Where leaders like Trump and Modi come together in terms of Huntington, I believe, is in their nostalgia and narrow view of uniqueness-whether it is Western uniqueness as with Trump, or Hindu uniqueness when it comes to Modi. And this is why my dissertation primarily focuses on Huntington and the reproduction of his ideas in today's political discourse.

1.3 HUNTINGTON'S POLITICS OF FEAR OF THE OTHER

Huntington believed that while the age of ideology had ended, the world had only reverted to a normal state of affairs characterized by cultural conflict. In his thesis, he argued that the primary axis of conflict in the future will be along cultural lines. As an

extension, he posits that the concept of different civilizations, as the highest rank of cultural identity, will become increasingly useful in analyzing the potential for conflict. He posits, “This is not to advocate the desirability of conflicts between civilizations. It is to set forth descriptive hypothesis as to what the future may be like” (Huntington, Foreign Affairs 2). Furthermore, he makes a very provocative declaration; “Islam has bloody borders” (Huntington, FA 3). In addition, the clash of civilizations, for Huntington, represents a development of history. He shows that in the past, world history was mainly about struggles between monarchs, nations, and ideologies, such as seen within Western civilization. But after the end of the Cold War, he theorizes, world politics moved into a new phase in which non-Western civilizations, no longer the exploited recipients of Western civilization, become additional important actors, joining the West to shape and move world history. Yet his reading implies that the West no longer exploits the Third World, which it does. And, while once allowing their exploitative focus to be restricted by nation state boundaries, the rich agents of capitalism have refocused their dominance to define an exploitable Global South and Global North within every nation.

Russia and India are what Huntington terms “swing civilizations” and may favor either side—the West or the Rest. Huntington also argues that civilizational conflicts are “particularly prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims,” identifying the “bloody borders” between Islamic and non-Islamic civilizations. I theorize the conditions and power relations that gave rise to such conflicts and use the example of India and the rise of Hindu Fundamentalist Nationalism that has plagued the subcontinent as a way to point

out the problems with ahistorical representation of religions and misinformed conceptions of civilizations and race. Imagined singularity in terms of identity has been the source of many wars in the history of humankind.

A remarkable use of imagined singularity can be found in Samuel Huntington's influential 1998 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. The difficulty with Huntington's approach begins with his system of unique categorization, well before the issue of a clash—or not—is even raised. Indeed, the thesis of a civilizational clash is conceptually parasitic on the commanding power of a unique categorization along so-called civilizational lines, which closely follow religious divisions to which singular attention is paid. Huntington contrasts Western civilization with “Islamic civilization,” “Hindu civilization,” “Buddhist civilization,” and so on. The alleged confrontations of religious differences are incorporated into a sharply carpentered vision of hardened divisiveness. In fact, of course, the people of the world can be classified according to many other partitions, each of which has some—often far-reaching—relevance in our lives: nationalities, locations, classes, occupations, social status, languages, politics, and many others. While religious categories have received much airing in recent years, they cannot be presumed to obliterate other distinctions, and even less can they be seen as the only relevant system of classifying people across the globe. In partitioning the population of the world into those belonging to “the Islamic world,” “the Western world,” “the Hindu world,” “the Buddhist world,” the divisive power of classificatory priority is implicitly used to place people firmly inside a unique set of rigid boxes. Other divisions (say, between the rich and the poor, between members

of different classes and occupations, between people of different politics, between distinct nationalities and residential locations, between language groups, etc.) are all submerged by this allegedly primal way of seeing the differences between people.

The difficulty with the clash of civilizations thesis begins with the presumption of the unique relevance of a singular classification. Indeed, the question “Do civilizations clash?” is founded on the presumption that humanity can be pre-eminently classified into distinct and discrete civilizations, and that the relations between different human beings can somehow be seen, without serious loss of understanding, in terms of relations between different civilizations.

This reductionist view is typically combined, I am afraid, with a rather foggy perception of world history that overlooks, first, the extent of internal diversities within these civilizational categories, and second, the reach and influence of interactions—intellectual as well as material—that go right across the regional borders of so-called civilizations. And its power to befuddle can trap not only those who would like to support the thesis of a clash (varying from Western chauvinists to Islamic fundamentalists), but also those who would like to dispute it and yet try to respond within the straitjacket of its pre-specified terms of reference.

The limitations of such civilization-based thinking can prove just as treacherous for programs of “dialogue among civilizations” (much in vogue these days) as they are for theories of a clash of civilizations. The noble and elevating search for amity among people seen as amity between civilizations speedily reduces many-sided human beings to one dimension each and muzzles the variety of involvements that have provided rich and

diverse grounds for cross-border interactions over many centuries, including the arts, literature, science, mathematics, games, trade, politics, and other arenas of shared human interest. Well-meaning attempts at pursuing global peace can have very counterproductive consequences when these attempts are founded on a fundamentally illusory understanding of the world of human beings. Increasing reliance on religion-based classification of the people of the world also tends to make the Western response to global terrorism and conflict peculiarly ham-handed. Respect for “other people” is shown by praising their religious books, rather than by taking note of the many-sided involvements and achievements, in nonreligious as well as religious fields, of different people in a globally interactive world. In confronting what is called “Islamic terrorism” in the muddled vocabulary of contemporary global politics, the intellectual force of Western policy is aimed quite substantially at trying to define—or redefine—Islam.

The alternative to the divisiveness of one pre-eminent categorization is not any unreal claim that we are all much the same. Rather, the main hope of harmony in our troubled world lies in the plurality of our identities, which cut across each other and work against sharp divisions around one single hardened line of vehement division that allegedly cannot be resisted. Our shared humanity gets savagely challenged when our differences are narrowed into one devised system of uniquely powerful categorization.

Perhaps the worst impairment comes from the neglect—and denial—of the roles of reasoning and choice, which follow from the recognition of our plural identities. The illusion of unique identity is much more divisive than the universe of plural and diverse classifications that characterize the world in which we actually live. The descriptive

weakness of choiceless singularity has the effect of momentarily impoverishing the power and reach of our social and political reasoning. The illusion of destiny exacts a remarkably heavy price.

Few arguments about the shape of the post-Cold War international system have been met with as much passion and debate as the one articulated in Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*. His core argument was that future conflicts would be shaped by cultural and civilizational differences rather than ideology. It seemed barbaric and out-of-touch during the 1990s, then all too prescient in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Yet until today, no administration has come close to embracing a Huntingtonian view of the world; both the Bush and Obama administrations rejected it, highlighting repeatedly that America was fighting violent extremists, not Islam itself. Even as he took the oath of office, however, President Donald Trump committed to his campaign promise to explicitly link Islam and terror, using the Republican shibboleth "radical Islamic terrorism" in his inaugural address (Ashford). Many of the new president's advisors appear to endorse a Huntingtonian view of the world, an impression confirmed by the administration's earliest acts, executive orders which seek to reduce Muslim immigration and build a wall on the southern border. Unfortunately, there is a key reason why prior administrations rejected Huntington's worldview: it provides a remarkably poor guide to a complex world. Worse still, the way that Trump's advisors appear to have absorbed Huntington's work – by accepting his worldview, but not his policy recommendations – points to a particularly dangerous direction for U.S. foreign policy in the next four years.

And Trump has a partner in India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose Hindutva ideology conveniently fits into the Islamophobic, clash of civilizations politics.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I am charting the rise of Hindu fundamentalism in India from pre-colonial times to today's Post-colonial nation-state of India, and its extremist Hindu nationalism in an increasingly globalized world. Debates about the problems and perils of globalization are the topics of contemporary discourse around postcolonial states. Globalization theorists either contend that globalization represents historical continuity with modernization or that it is a radical discontinuity from the past. Whatever side one purports, there is a common consensus that globalization is significantly transforming the relations between the economy, the state and civic society (Giddens, Castell, Hirst & Thompson, Kamat). The nature of these changes is sharply contested, and the debate remains polarized in terms of the relevance of the nation state (more relevant versus irrelevant), the power of capital (more dispersed versus more centralized), and the universalization of culture (more universal versus more particular).

The work of Giddens (1991) and Robertson (1992) has been important in moving the debate beyond these binaries to highlight the immanent contradictoriness of globalization. They point to the simultaneous emergence of a 'global culture' and a more intensified level of 'identity politics' as characteristic of the contradictory nature of globalization. These theoretical overtures are suggestive in terms of the persistent difficulty in predicting the consequences of globalization in any definitive manner. Globalization seems like an amorphous and unpredictable phenomenon. Writings on

globalization in the Third World point to the influence of global reforms by the World Bank and the IMF, implemented as part of their Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) (Carnoy (2000), Morrow & Torres (2000), Stromquist & Monkman (2000), Tikly (2001)). The stated purpose of structural adjustment policies is to restructure the economic and social sectors of Third World countries toward a market-oriented and less state-centered system. Although formulated and implemented in consultation and coordination with national governments, the reforms are stunningly uniform across countries and continents and appear once again to signal the 'end of history', the universalization of social and economic systems and the power of international institutions to exceed those of the nation state. The structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the IMF follow the general trend of neoliberal policies that mark the end of the Cold War and the launch of the global capitalist market as the only viable economic model for all countries (Hulme & Edwards).

My analysis suggests that nationalisms cannot be interpreted simplistically as a reaction against economic globalization. Nationalism, far from being a dying sentiment or an anomaly, represents a central tendency of globalization. I want to look at how the cultural nationalisms of today are different from the anti-colonial nationalisms in postcolonial states. For this purpose, I will look at the case of India in particular, and then move outward to chart the rise of right wing nationalisms in the world today. Theoretically, I want to explain the rise of cultural nationalism in postcolonial societies as imbued within the logic of globalization—explain how it is not a resistance to globalization or even a reaction to it, as some critics suggest, but works in tandem with it.

These seemingly opposing ideologies, globalization and fundamentalism, breed together—one fueling the other, infuriating the other, enabling the other. The references to national unity are in response to economic liberalization, privatization and globalization, but are not antagonistic to these new policies. Instead, the development of common core values, teamwork and a national spirit are presented as important correlates to globalization. Neoliberal reforms of privatization, deregulation and marketization have led to a widening gap between the poor and middle classes and a greater struggle among the rural population to secure basic needs such as water, food and electricity. The tropes of common culture, patriotic spirit and team work can be read as necessary accommodations by the postcolonial state faced with increased poverty and unrest among the people at the same time that it is required to present a work force that is eager, hardworking and disciplined to attract multinational investment. In this sense, globalization does not represent the triumphant journey of the sovereign nation state, but a traumatic ordeal for the postcolonial nation. In my dissertation, I demonstrate the emergent character of nationalism in the post-colony in conjunction with economic liberalism and global capitalism. Furthermore, I show how globalization and right wing fundamentalist nationalisms are mutually dependent. The cultural aggrandizement and glorification of the nation, an ugly reality in western industrialized countries as well, can be seen as a way in which the state seeks to engage productively with the processes of capitalist expansion and global competitiveness. In the post-colonial nation, the discourse of cultural unity and chauvinism takes particular forms that trace their lineages to the practices of colonial subordination and anti-colonial resistance. In this manner, the post-

colony attempts to define itself in relation to globalization both as an actor and an object, dominant and also subordinate. The Indian state's contradictory position in the global economy, in particular, invites us to reconsider the relationship between globalization and nationalism in more complex terms that takes cognizance of postcolonial agency. It also draws attention to the anti-democratic and illiberal effects of globalization. The question then remains—how do we understand the rise of religious nationalisms in the context of an increasingly globalized and interconnected world? For instance, while on the one hand, the Indian State is liberalizing its economic and social sectors to compete in the global economy, in a paradoxical move, it has also moved further right and resorted to sectarian politics and communal segregation, playing up the religious tensions in a hugely bigoted society.

Chapter 2 looks at how the idea of civilization and race came into being as a result of unproven hypothesis and racial politics purported during early colonial period. I show how the idea of civilization is an ever-changing, non-essential, non-stationary with no foundation in absolute science as we are led to believe. Furthermore, using Indian-Hindu civilization as a case study, I argue that the Hindu nationalist discourse is part of India's postcolonial history that finds new meaning and purpose in the current phase of globalization.

Chapter 3 extends the genesis of fundamentalist Hinduism into the post-colonial construction of the nation-state of India and the marginalization of Hindu hardliners. I tell the story of independent India through its Founding Fathers Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore, and their vision for a secular India, free of caste

discrimination and interreligious hostility. The primary aim of this chapter is to locate strengths and weaknesses in the ideas of each of the three founders of the Indian Nation state, and by locating faults in their conception of the secular state of India or the failure of future leaders to carry out their visions, explain the rise of the Hindu right.

Chapter 4 looks at the misogynistic tendencies of Indian Nationalism and the vision of the Hindu Right for the establishing Ram-Rajya (Lord Rama's time), the mythical time period in the Hindu text of *Ramayana* known as being the golden age for the Aryan Hindus. In order to establish how closely misogyny is tied to Hinduism in its fundamentalist reading, I close-read excerpts from the Hindu Epic, *Ramayana*, and show how these essentialist readings paved the way for the state of women in post-colonial India. Writers have tried to address the complicated position women occupy in the Hindu imaginary. With the help of the works of writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Vikram Seth, and Salman Rushdie, I highlight this dilemma that women face in every aspect of their life—the tug of war between modernity and tradition or what passes for tradition.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I consider the relevance of the history and mythology of Hindu fundamentalism to the current political rhetoric that the Hindu Right employs. With this, I hope to demonstrate how alive the past is in present-day India, how contemporary events rebound off the wall of the past. Additionally, I tie the Hindu Question and my study to the larger question of contemporary world politics and to the idea of the clash of civilizations in a globalized world.

2. ORIGIN OF THE ARYAN CIVILIZATION THEORY AND THE HINDU QUESTION

“India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of mature mind, understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all human beings.”

“India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe’s languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-governance and democracy.”

-Will Durant, *The Case for India* (1931)

“God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual authority and temporal authority, have been a prevailing dualism in Western culture. Only in Hindu civilization were religion and politics also so distinctly separated. In Islam, God is Caesar; in China and Japan, Caesar is God; in Orthodoxy, God is Caesar’s junior partner.”

-Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*

2.1 “THE HINDU” IN EUROPEAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Origins of civilizations, language, race, and religious ideologies are intricately tied to India, especially to the Hindus in India. It took centuries of systematic promotion and erasure of particular sets of ideas, along with incestuous collaborations between scholars in all different fields of history, social sciences, natural sciences, and anthropology, among others that has lead us to our beliefs on race, civilizations, cultures, social norms, etc. India and Hinduism came into European consciousness in the 15th century; however early travelers to the region were interested in more than just trade

relations with India. Sir William Jones was an Anglo-Welsh philologist, a judge on the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, and a scholar of ancient India. He was one of the proponents of the idea of the existence of a relationship between European and Indian languages, which later came to be known as the Indo-European languages. Jones was entranced by Indian culture, and he founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784, with the intention of studying the Sanskrit language and the Vedas and its connection to European culture and peoples. Over the next ten years, he produced a ton of works on India, thereby launching the modern study of the subcontinent. In his attempt to understand India, he studied local laws, literature, botany, and geography, and translated several works of Indian literature. Today, Jones is also known for crafting and propagating the idea of a genetic relations between the Indo-European languages. He suggested that Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin languages had a common root (Garland).

Although his name is closely associated with the theory of a linguistic connection between India and Europe, he wasn't the first to make this observation. In the 16th century, European visitors to India noted the similarities between Indian and European languages (Aurox). Van Boxborn, a Dutch scholar in mid-17th century, had published a proposal for the existence of an ancient language that was the origin of the Germanic, Romance, Greek, Baltic, Slavic, Celtic, and Iranian languages (Blench). Finally, a French Jesuit, Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux, who spent all his life in India, sent a memoir to the French Academy of Sciences in 1767, in which he specifically demonstrated the analogy between Sanskrit and European languages (Blench).

However, Jones' famed "philologist" passage is the one often cited as the beginning of Comparative Linguistics and Indo-European Studies. He declared, The *Sanskrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothic* and the *Celtic*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanskrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family. (Jones)

Much of the early enthusiasm for Indian culture can be traced to the influence of Jones. Jones was only the second known Englishman to master Sanskrit. His insight that the grammar and vocabulary of Sanskrit bore a resemblance to Greek and Latin marked the discovery of the Indo-European family of languages. Jones translated into English one of India's earliest and most renowned Sanskrit poet Kalidasa's seven-act play *Abhigyanashakuntalam* or *The Recognition of Shakuntala* in 1799. The Calcutta edition was an immediate success and two London editions followed within three years. *Abhigyanashakuntalam* was written between 4th century BC and 1st century BC. It is based on the story of King *Dushyanta* and *Shakuntala*, foster daughter of sage *Kanva*, from the epic *Mahabharata*, which in Indian tradition is sometimes called the fifth Veda (Johnson)

ix. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, German poet, dramatist, biologist, theoretical physicist and polymath expressed his admiration in 1792 for Shakuntala as:

Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,

Willst du, was reizt und entzückt, willst du was sättigt und nährt,

Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit Einem Namen begreifen;

Nenn' ich, Sakuntala, Dich, and so ist Alles gesagt. (Goethe)

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline

And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,

Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combine?

I name thee, O Sakuntala! and all at once is said. (trans. By E.B. Eastwick)

Goethe's words of high praise mean: If you wish to see the young flowers of Spring and the ready to pluck fruits of Summer at once; or if you wish to see that object which pleases, hypnotizes, delights and quenches you at once; or if you wish to see the earth and heaven in one look; I invoke the name of *Shakuntala* and all quests are answered at once.

Friedrich Schlegel wrote in a letter to Tieck that India was the source of "all languages, thoughts, and poems," and that "everything came from India (Briefe). In the 18th century, Voltaire wrote:

I am convinced that everything has come down to us from the banks of the

Ganges,--astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc...It is very important to note

that some 2500 years ago at the least Pythagoras went from Samos to the Ganges

to learn geometry...But he would certainly not have undertaken such a strange

journey had the reputation of the Brahmins' science not been long established in Europe. (Bailey 4)

Already in 1771, Voltaire was mesmerized by the Vedas and was trumpeting the wonders of the Indian doctrine. His conviction that India is the world's oldest civilization did not budge even when Jean Sylvain Bailly challenged it in a series of letters. They were published in 1777, one year before Voltaire's death in Bailly's *Letters on the origin of the sciences and of the peoples of Asia*. Whatever arguments Bailly pressed upon him, Voltaire politely but firmly clung to his idea and declined to change his view of India as the cradle of civilization (Bailey 9-14). It was this opinion of his, hammered into public consciousness through a ream of books and pamphlets, played a seminal role in turning European public's gaze toward India and its religious literature, thus bringing the Aryan race theory into the forefront of political and racial dialogue. With this started not just the literary and linguistic superiority discourse, but it also gave way to race theories and idea of a master race. Jones was the first to propose a racial division of India involving an Aryan invasion but at that time there was insufficient evidence to support it. Hence began the slow and steady influx of race and civilization into every aspect of academic and then eventually of popular consciousness.

European colonization of much of the world, the hegemony of western ideology and way of life, the discourse on primitive vs. advanced cultures and/or nations, Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler's essentialist ideas of the pure Aryan race are the examples of racism and the power dynamics of the modern world that are seldom up when discussing race and civilization. Several scholars have worked for decades trying to establish a

connection between Hitler's concepts of race and racial supremacy and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. So, for example, the historian Richard Weikart, in his book *From Darwin to Hitler* (2004), maintains: "No matter how crooked the road was from Darwin to Hitler, clearly Darwinism and eugenics smoothed the path for Nazi ideology, especially for the Nazi stress on expansion, war, racial struggle, and racial extermination" (Weikart). In a subsequent book, *Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress* (2009), Weikart argues that Darwin's "evolutionary ethics drove him [Hitler] to engage in behavior that the rest of us consider abominable" (2-3). Other critics have also attempted to forge a strong link between Darwin's theory and Hitler's biological notions. Hannah Arendt, one of the most prominent political philosophers of the 20th century, also appears to have endorsed the connection when she declared: "Underlying the Nazi's belief in race laws as the expression of the law of nature in man, is Darwin's idea of man as the product of a natural development which does not necessarily stop with the present species of human being" (Arendt). Put "Darwin" and "Hitler" in a search engine and several million hits will be returned. I think, it is mistakenly believed that the Aryan superiority complex and white supremacist viewpoints originated in Nazi Germany with Hitler. Academics and historians have claimed that Hitler was inspired by Charles Darwin, whose ideas supposedly came from the ideas of Darwin's German disciple and friend, Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). But, as Robert Richards points out, in the larger scheme of things, neither Haeckel nor Darwin can be accused of anti-Semitism, "certainly not the kind that fueled Hitler's animus and stoked the fires of the Holocaust"(Richards *Was Hitler a Darwinian?*). The belief in a racial hierarchy, assumed

by both Darwin and Haeckel, needs to be put in a larger historical context. The common presumption of higher and lower races antedates Darwin's work by many generations and cannot be uniquely attributed to Darwinian theory. The problem with this ahistorical analysis of racial discourse is that it creates a false understanding of the process by which deeply problematic notions of race, civilization, culture, nation, etc., manifest themselves into public consciousness and political discourse. Without a more nuanced understanding of the origin of such thoughts, and the cultural and intellectual circumstances that led to the propagation of these ideas, we risk coming up with notions of "West vs. Rest" and "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington).

While in the humanities and social sciences, there was a search for linguistic purity and origins of "civilized" language, theories about race were already circulating among the European scientific communities. The pre-evolutionary naturalists Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), and Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869)—all of whose works directed subsequent thought about the distinction of human races—ranked those races in a hierarchy. Each of them puts Europeans, not surprisingly, in the top position. More detailed discussions on these scientists' works and other hierarchical schemes about race, civilization, and human evolution can be found in Robert J. Richards's "Race" (Richards "Race"). For example, Linnaeus placed the genus *Homo* within the order Primates (which included monkeys, bats, and sloths) and distinguished two species: *Homo sapiens* and *Homo troglodytes* (anthropoid apes). He divided *Homo sapiens* (wise man) into four varieties: American (copper-colored, choleric, regulated by custom), Asiatic (sooty,

melancholic, and governed by opinions), African (black, phlegmatic, and governed by caprice), and European (fair, sanguine, and governed by laws). Linnaeus conceived such differences as expressive of divine intent. Carl Gustav Carus affirmed a comparable hierarchy, though he declared that the races of mankind could not be classified with animals as had Linnaeus. Because of their mental character, humans formed a kingdom of their own with four distinct races, each endowed with different abilities: “the people of the day” (Europeans, Caucasians, Hindus), “the people of the night” (Aethiopians—South Africans, Papuans, Australians), “the people of the eastern twilight” (Asians—Mongols and Malays), and “the people of the western twilight” (North and South American Indians) (Richards "Race"). Carus takes us back even further in charting the map of racial discourse. He essentially reproduced the categories of Blumenbach’s *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* written in 1776.

German physiologist Johann Blumenbach is sometimes called the father of physical anthropology. He proposed one of the earliest classifications of the races of mankind. Blumenbach created the term Caucasian to describe members of the white race, basing the choice of his term upon “the race residing in Georgia on the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountains, who at the time enjoyed a remarkable reputation for beauty” (Bendyshe 99). To Blumenbach, Caucasian was coined for aesthetic not biological reasons because the Caucasus region of Asia Minor he said produced “the most beautiful race of men” (Bendyshe). These racial categories of leading naturalists were mutually reinforcing the common prejudices of the 18th and 19th centuries. The popular assumptions of racial hierarchy, ubiquitous in the nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries, were commonplaces in scientific literature since at least the late 17th and early to mid-18th century. These theoretical postulations of race were largely circulating among various academic disciplines, until the French aristocrat, Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, helped legitimize racism for a wider audience by the use of scientific racism, the pseudoscientific belief that empirical evidence exists to support racial superiority. He is best known for developing the theory of the Aryan master race. Gobineau wrote a 4-volume book, *The Inequality of the Human Races*, in which he claimed that race created culture, and then declared the superiority of the white, Aryan race. The term Aryan was derived from Sanskrit word *arya* meaning noble and represented a people who lived in northern India. As I laid out earlier, 18th and 19th century linguists traced all European languages to an Indo-European origin. Gobineau declared the Aryan race, the pinnacle of civilization, and asserted that this race of people was responsible for everything and anything valuable ever created. Therefore, they had to preserve their special racial character by preventing intermixture with inferior races.

Gobineau took the term Aryan, which in Sanskrit meant “the Noble one” from Hindu legend and mythology, which described how the Indian subcontinent was conquered at some time in the distant past by the Aryans. The ancient Hindu scriptures with their tales of Aryan heroes were of major interest to linguistic scholars in Europe attempting to trace the origins of the Indo-European languages. This is where the unfortunate mingling of the search for linguistic origins of languages and theories of racial hierarchy combined to form the Aryan racial supremacy theory, which has been a foundation of most race discourse in the 20th and 21st centuries. Gobineau wrote:

“Languages, being unequal among themselves, are completely linked to the relative merit of race” (Gobineau). As such, Gobineau argued, on the basis of the Hindu scriptures, which stated that the highest castes are the descendants of the Aryans, that the Hindu caste system reflected an admirable determination of the Aryans to attempt to preserve their superior blood from being intermixed with the racially inferior, conquered peoples. Gobineau believed that the white race had originated somewhere in Siberia, the Asians in the Americas and the blacks in Africa. Gobineau thought that the numerical superiority of the Asians had forced the whites into making a vast migration that led them into Europe, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent and that both the Bible and Hindu legends about the conquering Aryan heroes reflected “folk memories of this migration” (Gobineau). In turn, the whites had broken into three sub-races, namely the “Hamitic, Semitic and Japhetic peoples—the latter were the Aryans of Hindu legend and were the best and greatest of all the whites” (Gobineau). Gobineau’s writings gained widespread attention among white supremacists, and Gobineau’s influence can be seen on prominent anti-Semites, including leaders of the Nazi Party, who later edited and republished his work.

At the turn of the 19th century, British-born Germanophile Houston Chamberlain advanced anti-Semitic theories in his book *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. He argued that Germans saved Western civilization from Semitic domination. For Chamberlain, the concept of an Aryan race was not simply defined by ethno-linguistic origins. It was also an abstract ideal of a racial elite. According to him, “The Aryan or “noble” race was always changing as superior peoples supplanted inferior ones in

evolutionary struggles for survival” (Chamberlain). Building somewhat on the theories of Gobineau, Chamberlain developed a relatively complex theory relating racial origins, physical features and cultural traits. According to Chamberlain, the modern Jew mixes some of the features of the Hittites [an ancient Anatolian people] – notably the “Jewish nose,” retreating chin, great cunning and fondness for usury – and of the true Semite [the Bedouin Arab, a phrase used to group nomadic Arab peoples of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and the Levant] in particular the dolichocephalic [long and narrow] skull, the thick-set body, and a tendency to be anti-intellectual and destructive (Chamberlain).

The *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* sold extensively: eight editions and 60,000 copies within ten years, 100,000 copies by the outbreak of World War I and 24 editions and more than a quarter of a million copies by 1938 (Shirer). The 1911 translation received positive reviews in most of the British press. It was praised in *The Spectator* as “a monument of erudition;” the *Birmingham Post* said that it was “glowing with life, packed with fresh and vigorous thought;” the *Glasgow Herald* thought that it would be difficult to “over-estimate the stimulating qualities of the book.” In the *Times Literary Supplement*, it was declared to be “one of the books that really mattered.” In the left-wing *Fabian News*, George Bernard Shaw called the book a “historical masterpiece.” Those who failed to read it, he continued, would be unable to talk intelligently about contemporary sociological and political problems (Shirer). In the U.S., Theodore Roosevelt, altogether more cautious, highlighted the extreme bias of the author, a judgement that seems to have escaped other contemporary readers, but said that

Chamberlain “represents an influence to be reckoned with and seriously to be taken into account” (Roosevelt). The book became the “spiritual” foundation of the Third Reich. Chamberlain's ideas on race were greatly influential to Hitler, who readily adapted them into his Nazi ideology; Chamberlain himself joined the Nazi party, and Hitler even visited Chamberlain while he was on his deathbed.

Chamberlain, like other racial theorists of the time, became fascinated with Hindu mythology and studied Sanskrit in order to read the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* in their original form. In these stories about ancient Aryan heroes conquering the Indian subcontinent, Chamberlain found a very appealing world governed by a rigid caste system with social inferiors firmly locked into their place; full of larger-than-life Aryan gods and aristocratic heroes and a world that focused on the spiritual at the expense of the material (Field). Since by this time, historians, archaeologists and linguists had all accepted that the Aryans ("light ones") of Hindu legend were an Indo-European people, Chamberlain had little trouble arguing that these Aryans were in fact Germanic peoples, and modern Germans had much to learn from Hinduism, stating “in the night of the inner life...the Indian...finds his way in the dark more surely than anyone” (Field). For Chamberlain, the Hindu texts offered a body of pure Aryan thought that allowed the Aryan peoples to find true happiness in a world being destroyed by soulless materialism. The popularity of the Hindu texts with racial purists in Germany explains why the swastika, an ancient Hindu symbol, became the symbol of racial supremacy. This above discussion sheds light on the complicated and often uncertain views of the Hindu peoples.

Even in the United States, where Caucasian race equates to whiteness or white people, the question of whiteness and Caucasian people has evolved over time. White is one of most commonly used racial categories to describe some Americans. Skin color is often conflated with racial identity, exemplifying how the concept of race is a social construction. But the history of the peoples that have been deemed as belonging to the “White race” has changed over time. Numerous terms such as Anglo Saxon, Aryan, Teutonic, Nordic, Caucasian, European, some of the more prominent ones, have been used to describe or identify the white race. In every instance, whiteness amounts to superiority. These terms are not identical, emphasizing other characteristics such as language, descent, geography, etc. The differences are revealing showing how Americans chose to define their racial identity at different times in American history. Like Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, White Americans have continually redefined their racial identity for both political and cultural reasons. For example, the term White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (W.A.S.P.) was frequently used through the 1950s. As an identity, it rejected demands for inclusion by Jewish Americans and Catholics regardless of skin color. "Anglo Saxon" as a term implied that Irish (presumably Celts) and Latin (French, Spanish, Italian, etc.) were also not members of the racial community. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Blumenbach proposed one of the earliest classifications of the races of mankind. He created the term Caucasian to describe members of the white race, basing the choice of his term upon the race residing in Georgia on the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountains, who at the time enjoyed a remarkable reputation for beauty. To Blumenbach, Caucasian was coined for aesthetic not biological reasons

because the Caucasus region of Asia Minor he said produced “the most beautiful race of men” (Bendyshe). Hence, race was enshrined as science during the enlightenment by European scientists committed to categorizing human beings into types. While Americans like to think of racial labels as having to do with descent, no one believes that the origins of White Americans is from the Caucus mountains (Bendyshe). The immodest declaration of Aryans as being the pinnacle of civilization, the race Gobineau explained was responsible for everything and anything valuable ever created, had been widely accepted among the racial origins theorists and social scientists across Europe by the early 20th century. It is an established fact that Aryan served as a rally cry for German unity in Europe, defining Jews, Gypsies and others as inferior non-Aryans (Richards *Was Hitler a Darwinian?*). As Adolph Hitler explained: "In the final analysis, the Jew is actually an Asiatic, not a European" (Richards). On the other hand, because these same people argued for a Northern Indian origin of all European culture, the Hindus were racially hard to categorize. In the US, this ambiguity allowed a handful of Punjabi immigrants to be declared Caucasian which in America meant white around WWI, where between 1880 and WWI, when the United States experienced large waves of European immigration, these “new immigrants” however did not come from northern Europe and represented a frightening diversity to many. The difference perceived in these immigrants was frequently described as a racial difference in which Europeans were represented as, not one, but many races identified by region (Alpine, Mediterranean, Slavic and Nordic) or by alleged “headshape: roundheads, slopeheads” (Grant). Hitler had written a letter to Grant, thanking him for his work and calling the book his Bible (Kühl). Hence, the

“Hindu question” (Huntington) has always been a rather sticky one, as questions about civilizational identity politics tend to be.

2.2 THE HINDU INDIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

“A Hindu...is he who looks upon the land that extends from Sindhu to Sindhu...[as] his fatherland (Pitribhu), who inherits the blood of that race whose first discernible source could be traced to the Vedic Saptasindhus...who has inherited and claims as his own the culture of that race as expressed chiefly in their common classical language Sanskrit and represented by a common history, a common literature, art and architecture, law and jurisprudence, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, fairs and festivals; and who above all, addresses this land, this Sindhusthan, as his Holyland (Punjabhu), as the land of his prophets and seers, of his godmen and gurus, the land of piety and pilgrimage. These are the essentials of Hindutva—a common nation (Rashtra), a common race (Jati) and a common civilization (Sanskrit).”

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923)

Huntington argues that to the question “who are we?,” people define themselves in terms of “ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs and institutions” (Huntington 21). Thus, one could argue that Savarkar has his own version of Huntington’s civilizational theory, which views the uniqueness of the Hindu self in terms of its civilizational essence. Savarkar argues, “the story of the civilization of a nation is the story of its thoughts, its actions and its achievements. Literature and art tell us of its thoughts; history and social institutions of its actions and achievements” (34). Thus, he sets forth a universal criterion for the Hindu self.

The term 'Hindu' originally derived from the name Indus, was used successively by the Achaemeids or the people belonging to the first Persian Empire c. 550-330 BC, the Greeks, and the Muslims to denote the population living beyond that river (Frykenberg) 30. There is enough textual evidence and historical references to establish that 'Hindu' was a term used to identify the people that lived in the northern Indian subcontinent at least as far back at 550 BC. Hence, 'Hindu' was a religiously affiliated term, but more of a geographically convenient way of referring the population that lived in the Indus Valley. The term wasn't appropriated by the people who themselves bore this designation nor did they use it themselves until the medieval period (O'Connell). As my work is pertaining to racial and civilizational identity politics and nationalism, prominent Historian of India, Romila Thapar's keen observation is foundational to my study: this "first step towards the crystallization of what we today call Hinduism was born in the consciousness of being the amorphous, undefined, subordinate, other" (Thapar 17). According to Christophe Jaffrelot, this development has to be seen in conjunction with the penetration of the subcontinent by Muslim invaders, "who were the first to put up a sustained resistance to the capacity of the indigenous culture for assimilation" (4). He provides us with a compelling example of the rise of Hindu consciousness: Muslim leaders, to be integrated into the Kshatriya Varna, warrior class—which is hierarchically second of the four castes in Hindu religion, would have been obliged to recognize the natural superiority of the Brahmins, highest of the four castes. Furthermore, "they [Brahmins] refused to give up the practices required by Islam and indeed were prepared in certain circumstances to clash with the Hindus, as over cow slaughter. Such

antagonism was to contribute to the emergence of a ‘Hindu’ consciousness” (Jaffrelot 5). In fact, as Christopher Bayly emphasizes, it is almost impossible to detect the presence of any communal Hindu identity before 1860 (187).

The absence of an essential collective Hindu tradition until the 19th century is an important thing to consider when understanding the causes that give rise to fundamentalisms of any kind. The more there is a threat of the outside other, the more the need to look for an essential self that is different from that unknown other. In fact, early modern encounters between Europeans and non-Christian or non-Muslim Indians present a very interesting fact: When the Christian travelers denounce the traditions that were indigenous to the people of the Indian subcontinent, the Indians reacted with incomprehension. “They failed to grasp how one religion could be true and others false, and how different religions could be considered as rivals. Before the late eighteenth century, Hindus did not defend their traditions in terms of doctrinal truths or texts: the tendency to provide a foundation for ancestral practices in ‘true’ scriptures was largely absent” (Ziegenbalg).

After the East India Company came into power in Bengal in 1793, it was decided by the British that the “laws of the Koran [holy book of the Muslims] and the ‘Shaster’ [sic] [the “text” consisting of a vast corpus of oral and written materials used by a lot of Hindus] would be preserved in civil and religious usages” (Rao and Roover 6). If Pundits and Hindu scholars deemed a practice as founded in the scriptures, the British allowed it. Raja Rammohun Roy, who is considered the father of the Indian Renaissance by many, took crucial conceptual steps towards the emergence of Hindu fundamentalism. He was

the one who introduced the word Hinduism into the English language in 1816. While the liberal colonial state had initiated the genesis of Hindu fundamentalism among its pundits, “a thinker like Roy disseminated it among the public” (The Dark Hour of Secularism 9). In 1830, the group The Orthodox Hindu Community of Calcutta appealed to the “orthodox Hindus” about the necessity of establishing a Dharma Sabha, which would “devise means for protecting the Hindu religion and its “excellent” customs and usages (The Dark Hour of Secularism 10). Indian subjects quickly learned that they needed to give evidence of scriptural foundations to continue practicing their traditions under colonial rule. This is how Hindu fundamentalism first manifested itself: as a child born from the liberal policies of the colonial state. The moment of transformation occurred because the colonial state operated within a theological transformation that “approached *all traditions as variations on the biblical model of religion*” (TDHS 14).

This colonial intervention triggered the rise of Hindu reform movements, which were the first manifestations of collective Hindu identity and consciousness. This was because these movements provoked traditional Hindus to organize themselves and defend a conservative interpretation of the teachings of the Vedas and other religious texts and endorse them under a single religious package called Hinduism, which sanctioned existing practices that the Hindu Right or proponents of Hindutva fights to uphold today. Orthodox Hindu associations opposed the reform movement, but they accepted its model of religion and doctrinal rivalry. This fueled the growing conviction in India that Hinduism, Islam and Christianity were rival religions with competing truth claims. Both reform movements and orthodox associations intended to defend Hinduism against

assaults of Christian missionaries. “They were also hostile to Indian Muslims, who were seen as representatives of an aggressive religion that had earlier attempted to destroy their traditions” (TDHS 15). The chief agency of reform in the nineteenth century was the Arya Samaj. In his autobiography, its founder Swami Dayanand Saraswati recounts how he came to the conviction that Hindu traditions were in need of reform. Dayanand composed the foundational text of the Arya Samaj, the *Sathyarth Prakash* or *Light of Truth* (1875), which followed the form of Protestant catechisms. It claimed to contain the one correct interpretation of Vedas and Shastras, while all *puranas* and other traditional Indian stories were denounced as “forged books” (Dayanand 32). The true confession of faith followed:

We believe that the *Vedas* alone are the supreme authority in the ascertainment of true religion—the *true conduct of life*. Whatever is enjoined by the *Vedas* we hold to be right; whilst whatever is condemned by them we believe to be wrong...All men, especially the Aryas (Aryans), should believe in the *Vedas* and thereby cultivate unity in religion. (Dayanand 68)

The Arya Samaj mimicked Protestant fundamentalism in yet other ways. Dayanand accepted “the characterization of Brahmins as sectarian and selfish ‘popes’,” who fabricated false teachings and kept true revelation from the laity. He “imagined a history of religious degeneration, which mirrored the Protestant historiography of medieval Church” (Dayanand 16). This reproduced the colonial version of Indian religious history. Like certain strands within the Reformation, this historiography invented a primitive and true Hindu religion, corrupted by human additions over time.

Now all one had to do was to return to the pure and primitive core. Thus, this reform movement spread different elements of the colonial framework in Indian society. In his excellent work on the Arya Samaj in nineteenth-century Punjab, Kenneth Jones describes its impact on society. The Arya Samaj, according to Jones, began to reform all traditions ‘in strict accordance to Vedic principles’” (Jones 102).

Such moves also gave rise to opposition from traditional Hindus, but again the latter adopted the new framework. They invoked scriptural foundations to claim the opposite of Arya Samaj doctrines. The tenets of “Unity in Diversity” and “the Truth is only One,” but “different persons call it by different names” were formulated as Hindu religious teachings. Along with this message of Hindu tolerance, they stressed “the national pride and unity of Aryan Hindus” (TDHS 18). From this moment of dissemination grew a generation of intellectuals and politicians in India. “All of them would play significant roles in the further development of Hindu nationalism” (TDHS 18). The idea that medieval Muslim rulers wreaked havoc on Indian culture and society - deliberately and due to religious bigotry – is a ubiquitous notion in 21st century India. Few people seem to realize that the historical basis for such claims is shaky to non-existent. From political propagandas, by the British first and the Hindu right later, and popular culture, to religious leaders and political theorists, everyone has had a role in promoting the pernicious myth of India’s medieval Muslim villains.

Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal Emperor (1658-1707), is perhaps the most despised of India’s medieval Muslim ruler in the History textbooks in India. These textbooks cite various alleged facts about Aurangzeb’s reign to support their contemporary

condemnation, few of which are true. One of India's most prominent historians of international renown, Romila Thapar, whose primary area of study is ancient India has written extensively about India's non-monolithic history and the Hindu Right's entirely unfounded theory of indigenous Hinduism (Thapar 80). Regarding Aurangzeb, she said, contrary to widespread belief, Aurangzeb did not "destroy thousands of Hindu temples. He did not perpetrate anything approximating a genocide of Hindus. He did not instigate a large-scale conversion program that offered millions of Hindus the choice of Islam or the sword," something widely taught as a History fact in schools all over India (115). In short, Aurangzeb was not the Hindu-hating, Islamist tyrant that many today imagine him to have been. And yet the myth of malevolent Aurangzeb is seemingly irresistible and has captured politicians, everyday people, and even scholars in its net. The damage that this idea has done is significant. It is time to break this mythologized caricature of the past wide open and lay bare the modern biases, politics, and interests that have fueled such a misguided interpretation of India's Islamic history.

India's current culture minister, Mahesh Sharma, appointed under Prime Minister Modi cited a series of inflammatory claims about Indo-Muslim kings destroying pre-modern India's Hindu culture and population, in his attempt to validate the appointment of a "Committee of Scholars." In his interview to Reuters, he claimed that the aim of this committee is to "use evidence such as archaeological finds and DNA to prove that today's Hindus are directly descended from the land's first inhabitants many thousands of years ago, and make the case that ancient Hindu scriptures are fact not myth" (Lesseter). Sharma posits that pre-colonial India was populated by "religious chauvinists," like

Aurangzeb, who perpetrated religiously-motivated violence and thus, instigated “historical injustices” to which Hindus can rightly object today. Although, most Historians have criticized maligning specific rulers as the antithesis of proper history, which is based on facts and analysis rather than unfounded assumptions about the endemic, unchanging nature of a society, history is being rewritten to shape the national identity to match the Hindu fundamentalists’ religious views, that India is a nation of and for Hindus.

In the case of Indian Muslim history, a core notion that is seldom forgotten in a world where religious identity is becoming the most important determining factor of one’s allegiances to good or evil, right or wrong is this: It was not all about religion. Aurangzeb, for instance, acted in ways that are rarely adequately explained by religious bigotry. He ordered the destruction of select Hindu temples (perhaps a few dozen, at most, over his 49-year reign) but not because he despised Hindus. Rather, Aurangzeb generally “ordered temples demolished in the aftermath of political rebellions or to forestall future uprisings” (Thapar 291). Highlighting this causality does not serve to vindicate Aurangzeb or justify his actions but rather to explain why he targeted select temples while leaving most untouched. Moreover, Aurangzeb also issued “numerous orders protecting Hindu temples and communities from harassment, and he incorporated more Hindus into his imperial administration than any Mughal ruler before him by a fair margin” (Thapar 292). These actions collectively make sense if we understand Aurangzeb’s actions within the context of state interests, rather than by ascribing increasingly fundamentalist religious biases to him. Regardless of the historical

motivations for events such as pre-modern temple destructions, a certain percentage of modern Indians nonetheless feel wronged by their Islamic past. What is problematic, they ask, about recognizing historical injustices enacted by Muslim figures? In this regard, the contemporaneity of debates over Indian history is crucial to understanding why the Indo-Islamic past is singled out.

For many people, condemnations of Aurangzeb and other medieval Indian rulers stem not from a serious assessment of the past but rather from anxieties over India's present and future, especially vis-à-vis its Muslim minority population. After all, one might ask: If we are recognizing injustices in Indian history, why are we not also talking about Hindu rulers? When judged according to modern standards, medieval rulers measure up poorly, and Hindu kings are no exception. Medieval Hindu political leaders destroyed mosques periodically, for instance, including in Aurangzeb's India. Going back more than a millennium earlier, Hindu rulers were the first to come up with the idea of sacking one another's temples, before Muslims even entered the Indian subcontinent. Hindu kings desecrated temples of their rivals because of the close link between the deities they worshipped and their own political authority. As Richard Davis, writes in his essay, "Indian Art Objects as Loot," the dominant trend in the pre-Islamic period was of Hindu kings looting temples and whisking away images, but there are also instances of demolition of temples and idols (92). In the early 10th century, the Rashtrakuta king Indra III destroyed the temple of Kalapriya, which their arch enemy, the Pratiharas, patronised. Then again, when the Kashmiri ruler Lalitaditya treacherously killed the king of Gauda (Bengal), his attendants sought to seek revenge. They clandestinely entered

Lalituditya's capital and made their way to the temple of Vishnu Parihasakesava, the principal deity of the Kashmiri kingdom. However, they mistook a silver image of another deity for Parihasakesava and took to grounding it to dust even as Kashmiri soldiers fell upon them. Though the Gaudas failed to achieve the desired result, their act of retribution does illustrate the symbolism inherent in destroying the image the ruler worshipped. "There is no question that medieval Hindu kings frequently destroyed religious images as part of more general rampages," notes Davis.

The above account shows that the iconoclasm of Muslim invaders from the 11th century onwards was already an established political behavior in large parts of India. The destruction of temples by Muslim rulers couldn't have been consequently traumatic, as the proponents of Hindutva argue. Its scale, some might argue, was the reason for the supposed trauma, insisting that Muslim rulers desecrated as many as 60,000 temples. However, Richard Eaton, in his essay, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States," argues that evidence supports a very conservative estimate of 80 temples over centuries of Muslim rule. He further argues that temples were not targeted indiscriminately. Muslim rulers primarily focused only on those their opponents patronized, thereby undermining their legitimacy, much in the manner the contesting Hindu kings had done in earlier centuries. But one hears little about these "historical wrongs" for one reason: They were perpetrated by Hindus rather than Muslims. Religious bigotry may not have been an overarching problem in India's ancient and medieval past, but it is a crucial dynamic in India's present.

2.3 DIALECTIC OF SELF AND OTHER

“It is a simple fact that contemporary Hinduism as a living practice would not be what it is if it were not for the devotional practices initiated under Mughal rule.”

– Amitav Ghosh (1955—)

Same goes for Hinduism and the changes it went through under the British rule. The fear of extinction and threat of the other makes humans turn to fundamentalist ideas of the self and other. Hinduisms of various kinds flourished under the Mughals. The production and preservation of a large number of digests, as well as literary and religious texts, during this period suggest that this was another of those periods when the presence of foreign cultures in India led many Hindu intellectuals to take pains to preserve their cultural heritage. “Some Hindus retreated into more conservative practices lest someone mistake them for Muslims in the dark of cultural fusion” (Doniger) 551. This is also the reason why globalization is fueling fundamentalism. In the words of Charles Taylor, “one is a self only among other selves” and that a self can never be described without reference to the “others” around it, thus it is always situated within “webs of interlocution” (Taylor). What did Savarkar have to say about the dialectic between the Hindu self and the other? He writes:

Self is known to itself immutable and without a name or even without a form. But when it comes in contact or conflict with a non-self then alone it stands in need of a name...added to the circumstances which brought us first into contact and then into a fierce conflict with the world at large, soon enabled the epithet Hindu to assert itself once more and so vigorously as to push into the background even the

well-beloved name of Bharatakhanda itself. Nothing makes self-conscious of itself so much as a conflict with non-self. Nothing can weld peoples into a nation and nations into a state as the pressure of a common foe. Hatred separates as well as unites. (Savarkar 19)

For anti-colonial nationalists like Savarkar, the persistence of “colonialism of the mind” could only be overcome by challenging the hierarchies of knowledge and values that position the West as superior to the East. However, as scholar Leela Gandhi points out in her critical review of post-colonial theory, the reversal of the hierarchy that constitutes an important reaction against aggressive capitalism and territorialism of the modern West leads anti-colonialists to revert to Orientalist stereotypes of India as “inherently spiritual, consensual and corporate” (Fox, 1992, cited in Gandhi, 1998, 78). This is the quintessential post-colonial paradox: the effort to define an authentic cultural identity in opposition to western civilization leads to a nostalgic and uncritical return to a “pre-colonial” past, a past that was invented by the Empire itself (Gandhi, 1998). In this way, the anti-colonial critique of the West animates the nativism and orientalist utopia of present day Hindu nationalists. R.S. Sharma was foremost among the Indian intellectuals who wanted “historians to realize that the discipline of history was not just about what happened in the past but what its lessons were for imaginatively and intelligently responding to the challenges of the present.” In his writings Sharma has focused on early Indian social structure, material and economic life, state formation and political ideas and the social context of religious ideologies and has sought to underline the historical processes which shaped Indian culture and civilization.

The thing to not forget is that the advent of the Aryans is an exciting time-honored problem, which continues to be a subject of everlasting debate. At present it is energized by an intellectual effervescence due to the ideologues the Hindutva movement. There is a denial of any Aryan invasion, for the “Hindu Arya” has to be indigenous. The involvement of ethnic identity counters the logic that the Aryans are aliens. Claim of biological descent from the people of early times is on the face of it absurd if not illogical. Hindutva perspective gives “Hindu Arya” an ancestry within Indian boundaries - an area forming part of the nation-state of Bharat. The perspective attempts to make the Vedic corpus, the foundation of Indian civilization, perhaps aims thereby to provide an unbroken lineal ancestry. In the present work, R.S. Sharma pleads for “testing aspects of Aryan Culture, and an analysis in a wider horizon not confined to Indian perspective”, adds, “more importantly we have to ask whether cultural traits known from textual lexical and linguistic data fit the archaeological reality” (Sharma 10).

The thorniest, most fought-over question in Indian history is slowly but surely getting answered: did Indo-European language speakers, who called themselves Aryans, stream into India sometime around 2,000 BC – 1,500 BC when the Indus Valley civilization came to an end, bringing with them Sanskrit and a distinctive set of cultural practices? Genetic research based on an avalanche of new DNA evidence is making scientists around the world converge on an unambiguous answer: yes, they did.

This may come as a surprise to many — and a shock to some — because the dominant narrative in recent years has been that genetic research had thoroughly disproved the Aryan migration theory. This interpretation was always a bit of a stretch as

anyone who read the nuanced scientific papers in the original knew. But now it has broken apart altogether under a flood of new data on Y-chromosomes (or chromosomes that are transmitted through the male parental line, from father to son). Until recently, only data on mtDNA (or matrilineal DNA, transmitted only from mother to daughter) were available and that seemed to suggest there was little external infusion into the Indian gene pool over the last 12,500 years or so. New Y-DNA data has turned that conclusion upside down, with strong evidence of external infusion of genes into the Indian male lineage during the period in question.

The paper that put all of the recent discoveries together into a tight and coherent history of migrations into India was published in 2017 in *BMC Evolutionary Biology*. In that paper, titled “A Genetic Chronology for the Indian Subcontinent Points to Heavily Sex-biased Dispersals”, 16 scientists led by Prof. Martin P. Richards of the University of Huddersfield, U.K., concluded: “Genetic influx from Central Asia in the Bronze Age was strongly male-driven, consistent with the patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal social structure attributed to the inferred pastoralist early Indo-European society. This was part of a much wider process of Indo-European expansion, with an ultimate source in the Pontic-Caspian region, which carried closely related Y-chromosome lineages...across a vast swathe of Eurasia between 5,000 and 3,500 years ago” (Martin P. Richards).

Now that we know that there was indeed a significant inflow of genes from Central Asia into India in the Bronze Age, can we get a better fix on the timing, especially the splintering of Z93 into its own sub-lineages? Yes, we can; the research paper that answers this question was published in April 2016, titled: “Punctuated bursts in

human male demography inferred from 1,244 worldwide Y-chromosome sequences.”

This paper, which looked at major expansions of Y-DNA haplogroups within five continental populations, was lead-authored by David Poznik of the Stanford University, with Dr. Underhill as one of the 42 co-authors. The study found “the most striking expansions within Z93 occurring approximately 4,000 to 4,500 years ago” (Poznik). This is remarkable, because roughly 4,000 years ago is when the Indus Valley civilization began falling apart. (There is no evidence so far, archaeologically or otherwise, to suggest that one caused the other; it is quite possible that the two events happened to coincide.)

The avalanche of new data has been so overwhelming that many scientists who were either skeptical or neutral about significant Bronze Age migrations into India have changed their opinions. Dr. Underhill himself is one of them. In a 2010 paper, for example, he had written that there was evidence “against substantial patrilineal gene flow from East Europe to Asia, including to India” in the last five or six millennia. Today, Dr. Underhill says there is no comparison between the kind of data available in 2010 and now. “Then, it was like looking into a darkened room from the outside through a keyhole with a little torch in hand; you could see some corners but not all, and not the whole picture. With whole genome sequencing, we can now see nearly the entire room, in clearer light.” Dr. Underhill is not the only one whose older work has been used to argue against Bronze Age migrations by Indo-European language speakers into India. David Reich, geneticist and professor in the Department of Genetics at the Harvard Medical School, is another one, even though he was very cautious in his older papers. The best example is a study lead-authored by Reich in 2009, titled “Reconstructing Indian

Population History” and published in *Nature*. This study used the theoretical construct of “Ancestral North Indians” (ANI) and “Ancestral South Indians” (ASI) to discover the genetic substructure of the Indian population. The study proved that ANI are “genetically close to Middle Easterners, Central Asians, and Europeans”, while the ASI were unique to India. The study also proved that most groups in India today can be approximated as a mixture of these two populations, with the ANI ancestry higher in traditionally upper caste and Indo-European speakers. By itself, the study didn’t disprove the arrival of Indo-European language speakers; if anything, it suggested the opposite, by pointing to the genetic linkage of ANI to Central Asians.

However, this theoretical structure was stretched beyond reason and was used to argue that these two groups came to India tens of thousands of years ago, long before the migration of Indo-European language speakers that is supposed to have happened only about 4,000 to 3,500 years ago. In fact, the study had included a strong caveat that suggested the opposite: “We caution that ‘models’ in population genetics should be treated with caution. While they provide an important framework for testing historical hypothesis, they are oversimplifications. For example, the true ancestral populations were probably not homogenous as we assume in our model but instead were likely to have been formed by clusters of related groups that mixed at different times.” In other words, ANI is likely to have resulted from multiple migrations, possibly including the migration of Indo-European language speakers.

But how was this research covered in the media? “Aryan-Dravidian divide a myth: Study,” screamed a newspaper headline on September 25, 2009. The article quoted

Lalji Singh, a co-author of the study and a former director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, as saying: “This paper rewrites history... there is no north-south divide.” The report also carried statements such as: “The initial settlement took place 65,000 years ago in the Andaman Islands and in ancient south India around the same time, which led to population growth in this part. At a later stage, 40,000 years ago, the ancient north Indians emerged which in turn led to rise in numbers there. But at some point in time, the ancient north and the ancient south mixed, giving birth to a different set of population. And that is the population which exists now and there is a genetic relationship between the population within India.” The study, however, makes no such statements whatsoever — in fact, even the figures 65,000 and 40,000 do not figure it in it.

In an interview with Edge in February 2017, David Reich, while talking about the thesis that Indo-European languages originated in the Steppes and then spread to both Europe and South Asia, he said: “The genetics is tending to support the Steppe hypothesis because in the last year, we have identified a very strong pattern that this ancient North Eurasian ancestry that you see in Europe today, we now know when it arrived in Europe. It arrived 4500 years ago from the East from the Steppe...” About India, he said: “In India, you can see, for example, that there is this profound population mixture event that happens between 2000 to 4000 years ago. It corresponds to the time of the composition of the Rigveda, the oldest Hindu religious text, one of the oldest pieces of literature in the world, which describes a mixed society...” (Brockman). In essence according to Reich, in broadly the same time frame, we see Indo-European language

speakers spreading out both to Europe and to South Asia, causing major population upheavals. The dating of the “profound population mixture event” that Reich refers to was arrived at in a paper that was published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics* in 2013 and was lead authored by Priya Moorjani of the Harvard Medical School, and co-authored, among others, by Reich and Lalji Singh. This paper too has been pushed into serving the case against migrations of Indo-European language speakers into India, but the paper itself says no such thing, once again.

Here’s what it says in one place: “The dates we report have significant implications for Indian history in the sense that they document a period of demographic and cultural change in which mixture between highly differentiated populations became pervasive before it eventually became uncommon. The period of around 1,900–4,200 years before present was a time of profound change in India, characterized by the de-urbanization of the Indus civilization, increasing population density in the central and downstream portions of the Gangetic system, shifts in burial practices, and the likely first appearance of Indo-European languages and Vedic religion in the subcontinent” (Priya Moorjani). The study’s aim was not to prove the migration of Indo-European language speakers as it had a different focus: finding the dates for the population mixture. But it is clear that the authors think its findings fit in well with the traditional reading of the dates for this migration. In fact, the paper goes on to correlate the ending of population mixing with the shifting attitudes towards mixing of the races in ancient texts. It says: “The shift from widespread mixture to strict endogamy that we document is mirrored in ancient Indian texts.” So irrespective of the use to which Priya Moorjani et al’s 2013 study is put,

what is clear is that the authors themselves admit their study is fully compatible with, and perhaps even strongly suggests, Bronze Age migration of Indo-European language speakers. In an email to this writer, Moorjani said as much. In answer to a question about the conclusions of the recent paper of Prof. Richards et. al., that there were strong, male-driven genetic inflows from Central Asia about 4,000 years ago, she said she found their results “to be broadly consistent with our model”. She also said the authors of the new study had access to ancient West Eurasian samples “that were not available when we published in 2013”, and that these samples had provided them additional information about the sources of ANI ancestry in South Asia. One by one, therefore, every single one of the genetic arguments that were earlier put forward to make the case against Bronze Age migrations of Indo-European language speakers have been disproved.

The vast majority of Indians owe their ancestry mostly to people from other migrations, starting with the original Out of Africa migrations of around 55,000 to 65,000 years ago, or the farming-related migrations from West Asia that probably occurred in multiple waves after 10,000 B.C., or the migrations of Austro-Asiatic speakers such as the Munda from East Asia the dating of which is yet to be determined, and the migrations of Tibeto-Burman speakers such as the Garo again from east Asia, the dating of which is also yet to be determined. What is abundantly clear is that we are a multi-source civilization, not a single-source one, drawing its cultural impulses, its tradition and practices from a variety of lineages and migration histories. The Out of Africa immigrants, the pioneering, fearless explorers who discovered this land originally and settled in it and whose lineages still form the bedrock of our population; those who

arrived later with a package of farming techniques and built the Indus Valley civilization whose cultural ideas and practices perhaps enrich much of our traditions today; those who arrived from East Asia, probably bringing with them the practice of rice cultivation and all that goes with it; those who came later with a language called Sanskrit and its associated beliefs and practices and reshaped our society in fundamental ways; and those who came even later for trade or for conquest and chose to stay, all have mingled and contributed to this civilization we call Indian.

However, this ever-changing, non-essential, non-stationary idea of civilization does not suit fundamentalist, nationalist rhetoric that is promoted by the Hindu nationalist party BJP or the civilizational policies promoted by Samuel Huntington in his “Clash of Civilizations” theory. Hindu fundamentalists are against Aryan invasion theory because they believe Hinduism to be essential to India. For them, it is imperative to show that India is a Hindu nation, and Hinduism is essential to ancient India, and other religions and peoples are outsiders. In the meantime, there is an erasure of history taking place, where money is being pumped into proving Hindu mythological texts are factual historical documents. Any new studies proving any sort of external influence on Hinduism or India is posited as foreign fabrication to dismiss India’s and therefore, Hinduism’s rightly owned place in the world. Conveniently, the Aryan invasion theory is labeled as attempts by the West to take credit away from the real Aryans, Indians.

3. FROM GANDHI, NEHRU, AND TAGORE—THE CRITICAL NATIONALISTS TO
HITLER, MODI, AND TAGORE—THE HINDU NATIONALIST:

RISE OF THE HINDU RIGHT IN INDIA

“Tagore, the aristocratic artist, turned democrat with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural traditions of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going through it with song and dance. Gandhi, more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of the Indian peasant, represented the other ancient tradition of India, that of renunciation and asceticism.”

-Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*

Indian politics had always evoked the heroic nature of Gandhi’s resilience and his nonviolent resistance to the British. India was equated to Gandhi. But today, there is a shift in the way India is perceived in the imagination of the more militant right-wing Hindu fundamentalists. From revering Gandhi, the Indian political juggernaut has shifted to focusing on the more fundamentalist heroes of the Indian nationalist struggles from the Independence period. The focus is shifting from Gandhi to Bose and even to Hitler.

Indians often tell their nation’s story through the stories of three great men: Tagore, Gandhi, and Nehru. All were champions of independence from Britain; all played a major role in crafting a self-sufficient democracy. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) took little part in the politics of the independence struggle, but as an artist and public intellectual of worldwide fame (the first Indian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1913) he was a cultural and ethical leader, voicing moral opposition to

British violence and creating what we might call the public poetry of the new nation, including its national anthem. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), religious moralist and supremely creative man of action, inaugurated and led the strategy of nonviolent resistance to British rule that eventually won India the sympathy and respect of the world and made Britain's domination unsustainable. The acknowledged leader of the independence movement, he saw the new nation's birth in 1947 but, shortly thereafter, was assassinated by a young Hindu fanatic with association to the right-wing Hindu nationalist group the RSS and also the Hindu Mahasabha, who objected to Gandhi's indulgence toward Muslims. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), also a key leader of the independence movement, who spent much of his youth in British prisons, became the chief architect of independent India, whose government he led for seventeen years. He worked closely with Gandhi, though not without friction; he also knew and greatly admired Tagore, sending his daughter, Indira Gandhi, India's only female Prime Minister to date, to Tagore's progressive school in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

All three men sought a united India free from caste discrimination and interreligious hostility. All criticized many age-old hierarchical traditions and their allegedly religious basis. All, though in quite different ways, pursued the empowerment of women and supported their full political equality. And all held views utterly opposed to many of those held by the Hindu right, both in that time and in our own. All supported a state neutral in religious matters and rejected the idea of defining India as a Hindu nation. They also sought the inclusion of Muslims as full citizens in the new nation and would have reacted to the events in Gujarat in 2002 with the deepest alarm and moral

condemnation. All three, then, are in their own ways fathers of the kind of democratic pluralism that is in jeopardy in today's India. The Hindu right today typically pays respectful lip service to Gandhi—without utterly disowning his assassin, who is praised on many Hindu-right websites, and without squaring their piety toward Gandhi with their founders' intense opposition at the time of the independence struggle; they typically repudiate Nehru and either ignore Tagore or promote him as a Hindu Nationalist writer.

The primary aim of this chapter is to locate strengths and weaknesses in the ideas of each of the three founders of the Indian Nation state, and by locating faults in their conception of the secular state of India, explain the rise of the Hindu right: Gandhi's repudiation of modernity led to no constructive economic program, and his asceticism led to a vision of gender relations that was not helpful in forging an inclusive democracy. The gender issue is something that I address in Chapter 4, but I will address Gandhi's push for a secular India in this chapter. Nehru's economic policies often come in for criticism, and some of this criticism is justified. A deeper fault, however, has less frequently been discussed. His disdain for religion, together with his idea of a modernity based upon scientific rather than humanistic values, led to what was perhaps the most serious defect in the new nation: the failure to create a liberal-pluralistic public rhetorical and imaginative culture whose ideas could have worked at the grassroots level to oppose those of the Hindu right. Tagore's educational experiments, so crucial for a budding democracy, failed to spread outside Bengal, in part because of his own unwillingness to delegate leadership to others. Add more about Tagore's anti-nationalism which can be interpreted as Hindu nationalism.

3.1 GANDHI: THE MAHATMA

Mohandas K. Gandhi, more popularly revered as the Mahatma (Sanskrit for “Great Soul”) has been the subject of such vast discussion and such widespread veneration that even readers with little knowledge of Indian history are likely to have a reasonably accurate picture of him. Gandhi’s autobiography is widely read in Europe and the United States; it ranks as one of the classics of the genre. Because he held that morality was unitary and religious distinctions superficial, Gandhi’s invocations of Hinduism may be regarded as strategic and instrumental, powerful and sincere though they clearly were. He repeatedly attacked the idea that Hinduism and Islam were fundamentally at odds on any moral issue (*Gandhi The Story of My Experiments with Truth*). “Religions,” he wrote, “are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal” (*Gandhi Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*)? He also repeatedly insisted that Hindu scriptures should not be understood as divinely inspired when they taught what was contrary to moral truth, particularly where caste and the role of women in society were concerned. On the caste system, for instance, his position was, “Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth” (*Gandhi, The Collected Works* 153). When his critics argued that caste practices were quite explicitly sanctioned by the Shastras, his emphatic reply was: “Nothing in the Shastras which is manifestly contrary to universal truths and morals can stand” (*Gandhi The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*).

Gandhi repeatedly advocated a liberal constitution that would guarantee fundamental rights, including the freedoms of speech, press, and association; nondiscrimination on grounds of religion, caste, or sex; free primary education; and religious neutrality. Although Gandhi characteristically stressed the Hindu roots of the values he invoked, he made it clear that the state must be neutral among the religions. And although he favored making Hindi India's national language, he insisted that both the Hindi script and the Urdu script should be used side by side (Gandhi, *Collected Works* 102-3). Most importantly, he deplored the rise of a militant Hinduism that was unwilling to accord full equality to Muslims.

Both Gandhi and Nehru saw the future nation as multi-religious and viewed with deep alarm both the rise of Hindu-right politics in the form of the Hindu Mahasabha and the rise of Muslim separatism in the form of the Muslim League. But the British, who regarded monotheistic Islam as more "civilized" than polytheistic Hinduism, fostered the cause of Muslim separatism, initially against the wishes of a vast majority of Muslims, and supported Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the elite. According to Nehru, "Jinnah did not fit in with Congress because of his elitist outlook; [Jinnah] once suggested that only people with university degrees should be Congress members" (Nehru *An Autobiography: Toward Freedom*). Jinnah was a highly Westernized Muslim who by then had assumed leadership of the Muslim League and demanded a Muslim state. The result was Partition and the creation of Pakistan, which occasioned horrible bloodshed on both sides.

Faced with the rise of religious tension and the catastrophic violence surrounding the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, Gandhi tried once again to use fasting to bring

people to together. Ending his fast on January 25, 1948, he said, “In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly” (Jack). Taking a solemn vow of friendship among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in India and of a similar friendship toward Pakistan, he urged his followers to join him. On January 20, a bomb went off near his compound. On Friday, January 30, 1948, as he was walking to his early morning prayers, he was approached by Nathuram Godse, a well-known member of the Hindu-right organization Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS and editor of a newspaper called *Hindu Rashtra* (Hindu Nation). Godse shot Gandhi at point-blank range, firing three times. Gandhi died almost immediately. Nehru spoke extemporaneously on All-India Radio:

Friends and comrades, the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere...Our beloved leader Bapu as we called him, the father of the nation, is no more...A madman has put an end to his life, for I can only call him mad who did it, and yet there has been enough of poison spread in this country during the past years and months and this poison has had an effect on people's minds. We must face this poison, we must root out this poison and we must face all the perils that encompass us and face them not madly or badly but rather in the way that our beloved teacher taught us to face them... remembering always that if, as I believe, his spirit looks upon us and sees us, nothing would displease his soul so much as to see that we have indulged in any small behavior or any violence.

(Jack, *The Gandhi Reader*, 488-89)

Godse was arrested, tried, and convicted. He admitted and defended his action, arguing that Gandhi had been too favorable to the Muslims and had adopted a policy of “appeasement.” At his sentencing on November 8, 1949, Godse read a long, book-length, statement of self-explanation, justifying his assassination for posterity (Elst). Although the statement was not permitted publication at the time, it gradually leaked out. Translations into Indian languages began appearing, and in 1977, the English original was published by Godse’s brother under the polite title, *May It Please Your Honour*. A new edition, with a long epilogue by Gopal Godse, was published in 1993 under the more precise title *Why I Assassinated Mahatma Gandhi* (Elst 5-6). Today the statement is also widely available on the Internet, where Godse is something of a hero on Hindu-right websites, revered on one website entirely devoted to his career as “The True Patriot and the True Indian.” This website also contains the text of a recent Marathi-language play glorifying Godse that has been banned in India as well as all the letters to the editors he published in various Indian newspapers between 1945 and 1948, pushing for “Aryavarta,” Aryan Nation or Hindu Nation for “Aryavansh,” Aryan people or Hindu people (Godse).

Nathuram Godse’s final statement in court argued that Gandhi had bent over backwards to appease Muslims in India and had to be stopped. Godse claimed, “By 1919, Gandhiji had become desperate in his endeavors to get the Muslims to trust him and went from one absurd promise to another. The accumulating provocation of 32 years, culminating in his last pro-Muslim fast, at last goaded me to the conclusion that the existence of Gandhiji should be brought to an end immediately.” Godse also blamed

Gandhi for every act of Muslim-on-Hindu violence in the country, as well as for the partitioning of India itself (even though Gandhi had opposed the Partition). Godse wrote, “India was vivisected and one-third of the Indian territory became foreign land to us This is what Gandhiji had achieved after 30 years of undisputed dictatorship, and this is what Congress party calls freedom” (Elst). Though Godse blames Gandhi for the violence surrounding the Partition, it was, in reality, only Gandhi’s personal presence or his decision to fast until the violence ended that proved effective against the forces of religious hatred fueled by British policies and by Hindu and Muslim extremists.

Finally, in keeping with RSS ideology, Godse framed himself as a martyr for the cause of Hindu nationalism, arguing that, without the spell of what he calls Gandhi’s “perceived infallibility,” India would be “practical” and “powerful with armed forces” in the future. Through his act, Godse attempted to take Gandhi’s place as the new “Father of the Nation,” which in turn has led to the far right taking him up as the hero of its alternate history (Elst 200). In fact, Godse ends his lengthy statement by leaving it to future historians to right the wrongs done by Gandhi and honor his own memory instead. He states:

Gandhi is being referred to as the Father of the Nation. But if that is so, he had failed his paternal duty inasmuch as he has acted very treacherously to the nation by his consenting to the partitioning of it. The people of this country were eager and vehement in their opposition to Pakistan. But Gandhiji played false with the people...No doubt, my own future would be totally ruined, but the nation would be saved from the inroads of Pakistan...I do not desire any mercy to be shown to

me...I did not make any attempt to run away; in fact, I never entertained any idea of running away. I did not try to shoot myself, for it was my ardent desire to give vent to my thoughts in an open court. My confidence about the moral side of my action has not been shaken even by the criticism leveled against it on all sides. I have no doubt [that] honest writers of history will weigh my act and find the true value thereof some day in future. (Godse)

Today, there are countless Hindu fundamentalist websites that are devoted to him and his “heroic” deed. His complete statement is also widely available on the Internet, where Godse is something of a hero on Hindu-right websites, revered particularly on one website entirely devoted to his career as “The True Patriot and the True Indian.” This website, menathuramgodse.com, also contains the text of a Marathi-language play, *Hey Ram Nathuram*, glorifying Godse. The play was recently shown on the Banaras Hindu University’s (BHU) in Uttar Pradesh, India, in a three day cultural festival, “Sanskrit 2018” organized by BHU’s Faculty of Arts (Ramachandran).

3.2 TAGORE: THE THINKER AND THE HUMANIST

By the time of Gandhi’s death, Tagore had been dead for seven years. For most of Gandhi’s life, however, the two men enjoyed a close and mutually admiring relationship. They were in some ways complementary figures. Both worked for an India that was pluralistic and tolerant; both supported equal education and equal political opportunities for women. Both iconoclasts, they saw India’s development as closely linked to each individual’s own mental awakening and to the criticism of much that had constituted traditional Hindu culture. Both were resolute enemies of caste. Both men were “religious

universalists” who thought that “all religions could equally lead to truth” and that all religion worthy of the name called us to “love of all our fellow human beings.” Both saw the core of religion as “moral” (Nussbaum). But Gandhi’s understanding of the universal religion was very different from Tagore’s. Tagore’s *The Religion of Man* focused on human beings’ quest for freedom—from all kinds of domination and limitation. Giving a positive interpretation to the story of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Tagore associated freedom with progress, including scientific progress through which we better our living conditions, but also including progress toward individual self-realization through the imagination and the arts. Tagore thought of the progress of civilization in terms of the progressive liberation of human beings from the tyranny of both want and custom, so that each could realize his or her own creative possibilities (Tagore). Gandhi, of course, rejected the idea of progress and frowned on technological advancement and the raising of living standards.

The largest public disagreement between the two men concerned the nature of patriotic politics. C. F. Andrews described to Romain Rolland a conversation between them on the topic:

The first subject of discussion was idols; Gandhi defended them, believing the masses incapable of raising themselves immediately to abstract ideas. Tagore cannot bear to see the people eternally treated as a child. Gandhi quoted the great things achieved in Europe by the flag as an idol; Tagore found it easy to object, but Gandhi held his ground, contrasting European flags bearing eagles, etc., with his own, on which he has put a spinning wheel. The second point of discussion

was nationalism, which Gandhi defended. He said that one must go through nationalism to reach internationalism, in the same way that one must go through war to reach peace. (Jack, *The Gandhi Reader* 12-13)

This exchange should not be oversimplified. Tagore was no enemy of emotion in politics; indeed, he understood how to link emotions to constructive political values, as can be evidenced in his India's national anthem, "Jan Gan Man," composed by him. Nor was he an enemy of independence. What is of concern here is something subtler, something about idolatry and freedom. In a public interchange with Gandhi in 1921, Tagore criticized the element of submission and lack of critical thinking in Gandhi's version of freedom and noncooperation movement. "What I heard on every side was, that reason, and culture as well, must be closed. It was only necessary to cling to an unquestioning obedience... So easy it is to overpower, in the name of outside freedom, the inside freedom of man" (Jack, 222-23). Tagore did not object to emotion; what he couldn't fathom was blind devotion. For him, "Nationalism itself," if it was to be compatible with human freedom, "must preserve critical freedom" (Tagore 207).

Tagore's idea of freedom included emotional and imaginative, as well as scientific and rational, self-development. His ideal was not "Faustian self-assertion in the midst of emptiness, but the freedom of the disciplined dancer" (Nussbaum 89). He believed that this idea of the free person—"critical, self-critical, sympathetic, physically and mentally alive" (Chakravarty)—was important not only for the personal life but also, and especially, for citizenship. True self-rule requires citizens who can "think for themselves, who can imagine the situation of others, and who are continually challenging

themselves by seeking examples from other cultures and other ways of life” (Tagore, “Nationalism” in Chakravarty 200)

Tagore connected this freedom of mind very closely with an eventual end to ethnic and religious animosity:

I have tried to save children from the vicious methods which alienate their minds, and from other prejudices which are fostered through histories, geographies, and lessons full of national prejudices . . . It will be a great future, when base passions are no longer stimulated within us, when human races come closer to one another, and when through their meeting new truths are revealed. (Tagore, “To Teachers” in Chakravarty 217)

These ideals led Tagore to his famous critique of patriotism, concerning which he and Gandhi had sharp exchanges. Tagore was both an individualist and a humanist. Although he disliked the idea of a world of uniform culture and values, he also saw moral ideals as fully universal, transcending ethnic, religious, and national differences. In a letter in 1908 he wrote: “Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live” (Sen). In a 1916 lecture on nationalism he rejected both the “colorless vagueness of cosmopolitanism” and the “fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship,” in favor of a politics of sensitive dynamic internationalism and internal pluralism (Tagore, “Nationalism” in Chakravarty 200). Witnessing the rise of Hindu nationalism in his own time, he linked a “respectful pluralism with the repudiation of nation-worship, especially worship built on ideas of blood and soil” (Nussbaum 90). He

remarked that India had “made grave errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races . . . often she has crippled her children’s minds and narrowed their lives.” For centuries, however, he continued, pluralism had been on the rise, and now it was time to give it political form. India was like a hostess who had to make all her guests comfortable, however varied they were. Success in this task depended “not merely upon tactfulness but [upon] sympathy and true realization of the unity of man” (Tagore, “Nationalism” in Chakravarty 199). Humanism might lead to colorless cosmopolitanism; but if it respected the individual it would move instead in the direction of tactful and sympathetic pluralism.

These themes receive their fullest development in Tagore’s 1915 Bengali novel *The Home and the World* (*Ghare Baire*, (Datta)). Set during the 1905 movement for the rejection of foreign goods, the novel is told in succession by its three primary figures: Nikhil, a wealthy liberal landowner; Bimala, his wife; and Sandip, a nationalist friend of Nikhil’s. Nikhil is a humanist and also something of a cosmopolitan in Tagore’s pejorative sense. He believes that the repudiation of ethnic hatred and sectarian ideology requires the repudiation of all appeals to the imagination and emotions in politics, and so his ideal is rather colorless and rootless. As the only sober son of a family whose men have ruined themselves and dissipated the family fortune by drinking and sexual excess, Nikhil has gone to the opposite extreme, drinking not a drop and having what appears to be a distant and fearful attitude to sexual relations. Thus, although he does express some views that Tagore himself held, he is clearly not a surrogate for the author.

Sandip, by contrast, is an ardent nationalist who believes that people can never be moved toward political goals except by images and idols. He is fundamentally a self-promoter, and something of a pseudo-Nietzschean who thinks of power over others as a display of his own strength. At the same time, he is aware that his real underlying personality is rather weak and merciful, not oriented to violence or domination. He views this as a fault in himself, and he connects this fault to his Hindu Indian heritage, to a traditional style of masculinity that is sensuous and unaggressive. He compares the weakness he abhors in himself to Indian music, the crushing violence he seeks to an English “military band,” and he concludes, “I want the western military style to prevail, not the Indian.” (Tagore in Datta 81).

The two men have opposing conceptions of the Indian nation. Sandip wholeheartedly embraces the stirring warlike song “Bande Mataram” as the sign of his politics: he and his followers love to sing the Chatterjee anthem (This is something that the Hindu right is promoting today—changing the National Anthem of India from Tagore’s “Jan Gan Man” to Chatterjee’s “Bande Mataram”). He believes that the Indian nation is a Hindu nation, held together by a constructed bodily image of the nation as mother of those who share her blood. For Nikhil, by contrast, a country is something to serve, not something to worship: “my worship I reserve for Right, which is far greater than my country. To worship my country as a god is to bring a curse upon it” (Tagore in Datta 85). He believes that true self-government is impossible so long as people are moved by the unthinking “hypnotic stimulus” (Tagore in Datta 85) of Sandip’s appeals to emotion. Particularly odious to Nikhil are Sandip’s appeals to ethnic division, which he

calls the “cheap consolations of hatred” (Datta 85). The extent of true freedom in a country can be measured by the extent and nature of people’s fear: a country whose people experience fear only when they are harming others is a free country; but where the appeal to fear, especially fear of a group, motivates the core of political life, there is no longer genuine freedom. He is especially “emphatic about repudiating appeals to fear of Muslims” (Nussbaum 92).

Where should we place Tagore in this debate? Clearly, Nikhil is meant to have the better of the argument. Nikhil assumes, however, that any politics that appeals to emotion must be a form of idolatry. Tagore plainly did not believe this; he believed that the emotions, rightly cultivated, were crucial to the joy and dynamism of a democracy and to citizens’ ability to understand the situation of another.

3.3 NEHRU: THE PRAGMATIST

After Gandhi’s death, Nehru devoted himself to providing constitutional and institutional protections to vulnerable minorities, in line with Gandhi’s vision. Jawaharlal Nehru’s seventy-four years spanned the tumultuous period of resistance against British rule, the founding of the new nation, and its first sixteen years (Gopal). In all these events, Nehru played a leading role, interacting with figures who were as complex and historically significant as he (including Gandhi, the Muslim leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and his own daughter Indira, who succeeded him in power). His life and achievement are at the same time a history of the nation and a history that he himself described in memorable works. An all-too-common oversimplification of Nehru is to portray him as “Westernized” and as out of touch with “Indian traditions.” Such contrasts

are likely to derive from a Western denigration of Indian culture as primitive, mystical, and antirational, very common in the time of empire. Gandhi, of course, exploited such contrasts in his own free-wheeling way, constructing a “Western culture” that was the repository of everything he wanted to repudiate in modernity and “Indian values” that just happened to correspond to the values that Gandhi himself had constructed. Nehru did not treat reason and science as Western phenomena. In *The Discovery of India*, he rightly emphasized the richness and prominence of the rationalist traditions in Indian religion and philosophy (44).

Nehru and Gandhi had a complex and troubled relationship. Nehru, ever the pragmatist, saw nonviolence as strategic and objected to a politics of unbending moral idealism. He also objected from the beginning to Gandhi’s romantic glorification of pre-industrial society, holding that India’s future well-being required scientific, industrial, and technological development. During the Second World War, he and Gandhi had a serious quarrel over India’s stance toward the Axis powers. Nehru hated fascism from the first. He saw it up close on visits to Europe in the 1930s, where he made a point of purchasing Jewish products. “Amazed and disgusted” by Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement, he called it “the difficult and intricate game of how to betray your friend and the cause you are supposed to stand for on the highest moral grounds . . . the utter collapse, in the moment of crisis, of all the so-called advanced people and groups” (Nehru, *Autobiography* 605). Summoned to a meeting with Mussolini while in Italy in 1936, he refused, despite his curiosity, unwilling to let himself be used for fascist propaganda. Gandhi’s much more equivocal stance included, for a time, a willingness to

support Japan if doing so would hurt the British, and a real sympathy with the renegade Indian National Army led by Subhas Chandra Bose, which actively fought the British in Burma. Nehru found this position horrifying. Nonetheless the two remained deep friends and uneasy allies until Gandhi's assassination in 1948. Gandhi understood that "Nehru was a practical politician of moral courage and superb practical perception;" Nehru understood that "Gandhi had an unparalleled capacity to inspire people for good ends, and he was deeply moved by the man even when disagreeing with him" (Nussbaum 113).

Both Gandhi and Nehru saw the future nation as multi-religious and viewed with deep alarm both the rise of Hindu-right politics in the form of the Hindu Mahasabha and the rise of Muslim separatism in the form of the Muslim League. At midnight on August 14–15, 1947, India became an independent nation. Nehru's speech marking the event became as well known among Indians as the Gettysburg Address is among Americans. In the speech Nehru linked Indian democracy closely to values of work, equality, the eradication of desperate poverty, and humanistic internationalism:

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom . . . It is fitting that at this solemn moment, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity. . .

. . . Before the birth of freedom, we have endured all the pains of labour [sic] and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains

continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means, the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and to work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace is said to be indivisible, so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell. (Nehru "A Tryst with Destiny")

After independence Nehru worked tirelessly to build democratic institutions and to forge a policy whose key features were secularism (meaning not separation of church

and state, since four major religions were given substantial roles in lawmaking, but equal respect among the religions), a foreign policy of nonalignment and internationalism, and a socialist economic policy. In matters of religion, Nehru, like Gandhi, saw India as a tolerant pluralist nation, according all citizens and all religions equal respect before the law. Nehru thought that science was the way of thinking for the future; he found religion a “terrible burden” that India had to get rid of if it was to “breathe freely or do anything useful” (Tharoor). Nehru’s feeling that religion was an embarrassment led him to devote too little attention to molding the aspects of human life that he associated with religion—“emotion, rhetoric, the imaginative undergirding of a pluralistic civic culture—in such a way that civic culture could become a grassroots force for pluralism and respect rather than for fear and hatred” (Nussbaum 118). Thus, the Hindu right encountered no opposition as it worked at the grassroots level, creating a masterful program of indoctrination that has spread the gospel of anti-Muslim fear to every region. He did not see, in short, what Tagore and Gandhi saw very clearly: that each human being of every caste, creed, and class, is a separate person, with fear and longing and hope and the need to come to terms with death, the end of love, and the limitations of desire. If he had understood this, he would perhaps have understood, too, that the people of India, each and every one, needed what he needed, poetry and music and mourning and love, whether in a religious or nonreligious form—and also what he tried hard not to need, a group of like-minded friends with whom to share poetry and music and mourning and love. The Hindu right understands this very well.

Hence, despite the founders' committed opposition to religious violence, they proved unable to remove tensions that would generate violence in the future. At Partition, only Gandhi's personal presence or his decision to fast until the violence ended proved effective against the forces of religious hatred fueled by British policies and by Hindu and Muslim extremists. After his death Nehru devoted himself to providing constitutional and institutional protections for vulnerable minorities. But "Nehru's blind spot concerning the psychology of "the masses" prevented him from shaping a political culture able to withstand and transcend onslaughts by forces of intolerance" (Nussbaum 121). He ignored the nation's need for the legacy of Tagore—for a public education that would nourish critical freedom, and for a public poetry of humanity that would use art, emotion, and the humanities to craft a pluralistic public culture. In place of this legacy, the Hindu right went to work at the grassroots level, crafting a public culture of exclusion and hate.

3.4 THE HINDU RIGHT

"To remain weak is the most heinous sin in this world."

-M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*

In Chapter 2, I highlighted and discussed the absence of an essential Hindu tradition in India until the 19th century. Before the late eighteenth century, Hindus did not defend their traditions in terms of doctrinal truths or texts: the tendency to provide a foundation for ancestral practices in 'true' scriptures was largely absent" (Ziegenbalg). Hindu fundamentalism first manifested itself as a child born from the liberal policies of the colonial state. In the Western imagination, the region was pictured as essentially

religious and stagnant. The British colonial state controversially ruled India in a way that hardened religious boundaries and encouraged its subjects to see themselves and others in this light. This colonial intervention triggered the rise of Hindu reform movements, which were the first manifestations of collective Hindu identity and consciousness. This contributed to the activism of Hindu groups such as the Arya Samaj and the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas, whose members turned to debating how Hindu society could be best reorganized and revived. One of the key issues they debated related to Hindu unity—particularly as the Western conception of Hinduism, imposed on many Indians by British colonial rule, was actually alien to many of those who now fell under this classification. The existence of diverse caste histories and traditions also seemed to fracture any idea of a single Hindu community. But how did this need for a Hindu identity and a growing anti-colonial nationalism and independence struggle turn into Hindu fundamentalist nationalism?

During the early decades of the 20th century, activists associated with Arya Samaj, such as Shradhanand, argued for a reorganized, “meritocratic” caste system as a way to reunite Hindus. But historians such as John Zavos have how this approach to reorganize the caste system was rejected as divisive during the 1920s. Hindu unity was subsequently built instead on a more conservative, symbolic level, by activists, which explicitly drew boundaries between Hindus on the one hand, and Muslims and Christians on the other. According to Zavos, Hindu nationalism is defined as an ideology with internal resources that “seeks to imagine or construct a nation on the basis of a common culture—a culture configured by a particular notion of Hinduism” (10). The role of the

middle class is decisive in the formulation of Hindu nationalism as an ideology. It is not, therefore, strange that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) emerged and became gradually strong in Nagpur which had a strong and predominantly high-caste middle class. As prime movers in the public space, the Nagpur middle classes were usually the first “to engage actively with occurrences and issues across British India and beyond, through petitions and memorials, discussion in recognized organizations, literary comment, and particularly of course, through newspapers” (Zavos 13). The RSS is just one step, probably a significant one, in the consolidation of Hindu nationalism. The Hindu Mahasabha is another, which through the Sangathan (Hindu organization) movement of the 1920s and later through Seva (service) campaigns provided an ideological impetus for the development and extension of an exclusive domain for the Hindu nationalist claim. In the entire process, the role of the colonial state was no less insignificant. By encouraging a particular type of organization as an appropriate platform for addressing the state on issues of what were increasingly declared to be public interests, the colonial state sought to create an alternative space for articulation of demands other than those that were political in nature.

The final rift between Hindu nationalists and Congress came soon after. Zavos argues that the merger of the Non-Cooperation Movement with the Khilafat cause in the early 1920s is a watershed in the development of Hindu nationalism in the sense that Congress’ decision to espouse an essentially Muslim cause alienated a large number of its supporters and activists who felt betrayed. Khilafat was not an Indian nationalist concern. It was, however, a pan-Islamic, political protest campaign launched by Muslims of India

to influence the British government not to abolish the Ottoman Caliphate. And the mobilization of Muslims over Khilafat and later anti-Hindu riots led to the construction of the Muslim community by the Hindu nationalists as a threatening 'other' that emerged as a prominent feature of the Hindu identity. The characterization of the Muslims as an organic community as contrasted with the chronically divided Hindus was further confirmed in the "1921 Moplah rebellion which broke out as a protest against mass forced conversion of local Hindus" (Zavos 145). Such an interpretation may not be historically authentic—recent research has underlined the class character and shown how this upsurge was primarily a revolt against the oppression of the local (Hindu) landlords. Nonetheless, it immediately created an environment in which the Hindu organizations flourished by simultaneously highlighting the relative strength of the Muslim Other and loss of strength of Hindus, caused by lack of unity (Zavos 146-49).

The other issue which had a significant bearing on the growth of Hindu nationalism was music before mosques, particularly during prayer times. According to the Hindus, "restriction of music in Hindu processions which passed mosques was an affront to Hinduism since music was integrally connected with Hindu festivals" (Zavos 152). By raising these issues, an attempt was made to organize the Hindus as a well-knit community (like the Muslims) as the only way of saving, to quote a contemporary expression, "the dying race" (Zavos 152). This argument in defense of increasing the strength of the Hindus as a block draws upon the constructed perception of Muslims as a threatening entity. The other interesting dimension which this argument clearly brings out concerns the internal weaknesses of the Hindus that never matched the Muslims simply

because of its failure to emerge as an organic community. So, by raising these issues, Hindu organizations attempted a self-critique: constructing a hegemonic Hindu identity based on anti-Muslim sentiments.

Two major proponents of Hindu nationalism were the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. While the Mahasabha was, by the mid-1920s, a fairly high-profile organization on the national scene, the RSS, formed in 1925, was a small organization struggling to establish itself in the Central Provinces and across Maharashtra. In the growth and consolidation of the Mahasabha, V.D. Savarkar, had played a significant role. His seminal work *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* is probably the first endeavor in articulating the idea of a Hindu nation (Savarkar). Rejecting the stigma of hierarchical oppression, endorsed by the prevalent caste system, Savarkar sought to redefine caste as a form of horizontal organization binding together Hindus under one platform (Zavos 183). Unlike the Mahasabha, the RSS was a localized and volunteer-based structure that resorted to the path of sangathan to revitalize the Hindu nation through an awakening of consciousness. Drawing heavily upon Hindu values and tradition, the RSS's conceptualization of nation was directed against the Congress which strove to inculcate the spirit of nationhood by bringing together Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other religious communities. What accounted for the failure of the RSS to emerge as a viable alternative to the National Congress was its narrow support base which was confined to the middle class; "its leadership, right down the clerk level, remained a high caste, middle class preserve" (Zavos 196). The RSS therefore remained anachronistic, presumably because of its

inability to comprehend the paradigmatic ideological shift in the anti-colonial struggle in India following the emergence of the Gandhi.

3.5 THE RSS AND THE HINDU MAHASABHA

The RSS was founded in 1925 under the leadership of Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a man whom the movement still treats with enormous reverence. In search of a social force that could unify the emerging nation under Hindu identity, Hedgewar decided to focus on boys, more malleable than adults. He chose for the organization the name Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, “National Corps of Volunteers.” He rejected the name “Hindu Corps of Volunteers” on the grounds that this name would “suggest that the Hindus were only one part of a larger national identity” (Nussbaum 155).

From the beginning, the RSS has embraced some political values and shunned others. Hedgewar was emphatic in his rejection of Gandhi’s politics of nonviolence and Gandhi’s willingness to cooperate with Muslims in the anti-British struggle. Nonviolence seemed to RSS leaders a useless philosophy that only reinforced tendencies to subservience, disunity, and weakness that had hobbled Hindus throughout history. And cooperation with Muslims would prove fatal to the project of reestablishing Hindu pride: “Only Hindus would free Hindustan and they alone could save Hindu culture. Only Hindu strength could save the country” (Hedgewar’s views summarized in an official RSS publication quoted in Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags* 15). Nehru’s pluralist modernism was even more unacceptable. The RSS therefore stood aloof in the struggle for independence, playing no role in many of its central efforts.

Hedgewar, a great organizer, inspired people through selflessness, devotion, and the simplicity of lifestyle. But he left no extensive body of writings. We know RSS ideology, and the arguments behind it, primarily through the writings of his reverend successor, M.S. Golwalkar, the second overall RSS leader, who wrote two influential books: *We, or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939) and *Bunch of Thoughts* (a collection of essays and speeches, 1966). An earlier work that profoundly influenced RSS ideas, and on which Golwalkar clearly drew, is Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Savarkar was not an RSS member, and he was actively involved in the independence struggle. He became a leading figure in the Hindu Mahasabha, where he was famous for the view that India could become strong only by military might. Although his involvement with the RSS was indirect, his views and personality made him a revered hero of the movement.

Both Savarkar and Golwalkar admired European nationalism, and particularly the way in which nations such as Germany managed to become unified despite an initial diversity. They thought of India as weak, insofar as she lacked a unified sense of her identity. Their project was to forge the requisite conception by importing it from Europe, as a preparation for practices of nationalism and strength. Savarkar was not a religious man; for him traditional religious belief and practice did not lie at the heart of Hindutva. He did, however, consider the religion's cultural traditions to be key markers of Hindutva, along with geographic attachment to the motherland and a sense of oneself as part of "a race determined by a common origin, possessing a common blood" (Savarkar 85). His compressed formulation, which caught on and is uttered countless times by those who follow his lead, was that a Hindu was someone who considered India to be at one

and the same time his motherland and his holy land, “that is, the cradle land of his religion” (Savarkar 85). (Savarkar alternated between “Fatherland” and “Motherland,” using the latter particularly when he was rapturously describing the beauty of the land.) In Savarkar’s view, this dual bond to the land created a very precious type of “perfect solidarity and cohesion” (Savarkar 136), whereas religions like Islam and Christianity, by teaching that the holy land lay elsewhere, promoted weakness and divided loyalty:

For though Hindustan to them is Fatherland as to any other Hindu yet it is not to them a Holyland [sic] too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil.

Consequently their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin. Their love is divided. (Savarkar 113)

In the modern world, Savarkar argued that a nation’s strength depended on this type of national unity. India was well placed to achieve it, since “her territory was so geographically distinct and her traditions so deep and embracing” (Savarkar 114). The future of India, then, was, “bound up in the last resort with Hindu strength” (Savarkar 139). The goal was a future when India, thus united, “can dictate...terms to the whole world. A day will come when mankind will have to face the force” (Savarkar 141).

The other founding text of the Hindu right is M.S. Golwalkar’s *We, Or Our Nationhood Defined* first published in 1939. Writing during the independence struggle, Golwalkar saw his task as describing the unity of the new nation. He announced that most Indians’ ideas about nationhood were mistaken. “They are not in conformity with those of the Western Political Scientists...It is but proper, therefore, at this stage to understand

what the Western Scholars [sic] state as the Universal Nation-idea and correct ourselves. With this end in view, we shall now proceed with stating and analyzing the World's accepted Nation-concept" (Golwalkar 21). It is noteworthy to notice the deference to European scholarship as what "the World" thinks. Golwalkar then turned to English dictionaries and to British and German political science. "The five elements that he found repeated as hallmarks of national unity were geography, race, religion, culture, and language" (Nussbaum 160). Golwalkar examined each of these in turn and then analyzed several nations to see to what extent they embodied the desired unities. Germany impressed him especially for the way in which it had managed to bring "under one sway the whole of the territory" that had been originally held by "*Germani* but had been parceled out under different regimes" (Golwalkar 42). Turning to race, he observed:

German race pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by. (Golwalkar 43)

In the end, Golwalkar's vision of national unity was not exactly that of Nazi Germany. He was not very concerned with purity of blood, and far more concerned with a group's desire to merge into the dominant whole. Groups who fell outside the fivefold definition of nationhood, he concluded, could "have no place in national life...unless they abandon their differences, and completely merge themselves in the National Race. So

long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and culture differences, they cannot but be only foreigners, who may be either friendly or inimical to the Nation” (Golwalkar 53). Unlike Hitler, Golwalkar would probably have been happy with the conduct of the many German Jews who converted to Christianity and assimilated their lifestyle to the dominant German one. Here is how Golwalkar applied his ruminations about the “old nations” to the case of India:

There are only two courses open to the foreign elements: either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at the sweet will of the national race. That is the only logical and correct solution. That alone keeps the national life healthy and undisturbed. That alone keeps the Nation safe from the danger of a cancer developing into its body politics [*sic*] of the creation of a state within the state. From this standpoint, sanctioned by the experiences of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead—in one world they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen’s rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. (Golwalkar 55-56)

This was not Hitler's program; Golwalkar seemingly had little interest in testing people's blood—not surprisingly, since both he and Savarkar acknowledged that the large majority of Indian Muslims were converts. His ideas are more closely linked to those of an older European anti-Semitism, before the advent of biological race-science. In the eighteenth century, in both Germany and France, the question about the Jews was Golwalkar's question: whether they would give up their distinctiveness and agree to live in a way that embraced the religion and lifestyle of the majority. Jews were feared and denigrated not on grounds of blood, but on grounds of their determined separateness from others and their recognition of sources of spiritual authority different from those of the majority. The suggestion of many proponents of the civil disenfranchisement of Jews was that they might be given civil rights if they would assimilate. In many cases, this meant religious conversion, and large numbers of Jews in Germany did convert; in some cases it meant only the adoption of an assimilated lifestyle. That is the general direction of Golwalkar's vague proposal for Muslims and Christians in India: they must give up their distinctive culture and any big outward manifestations of religious difference, acknowledging the ways of the Hindu majority as their own ways, its traditions as their own traditions; if they refused to assimilate, they were to be denied civil rights and to have the legal and political status of resident aliens.

Thus, in his book, Golwalkar rejects the notions of Indian nationhood, India as a Nation in the making. He rejects the idea that all the citizens will be equal. He goes on to harp the notions of nationhood borrowed from Hitler's Nazi movement. He rejects that India is a secular nation and posits that it is a Hindu Rashtra. He rejects the territorial-

political concept of nationhood and puts forward the concept of cultural nationalism, which was the foundation of Nazi ideology. His admiration of Hitler's ideology and politics is the running thread of the book and he takes inspiration from the massive holocaust, which decimated millions of people in Germany. He uses this as a shield to propagate his political ideology. It is this ideology that formed the base of communal common sense amongst a section of the population.

In the Sangh circles this book is regarded as their Gita. The implications for Indian minorities are presented here in a forthright manner. Golwalkar goes on to assert, From the standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd nations, the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of Hindu nation i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude towards this land and its age long traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, for less any preferential treatment, not even the citizen's rights. (Golwalkar 52)

Today's Hindu right follows Golwalkar. Its members have no interest in race-science; what bothers them is what they think of as a dual loyalty: to the land with its Hindu traditions, and to their own religion with its culture and its own resources of ethical and spiritual authority. Golwalkar's conception of national unity is still widespread, and in some way, with the rise of the BJP, this viewpoint is becoming more

and more mainstream. But this acceptance of RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha into mainstream political ideology was a slow and gradual process.

After Gandhi was shot at point-blank range by Nathuram Godse, a letter written by Godse to Savarkar in 1938 and submitted to the trial court showed that the two had a long standing close relationship, and Godse revered Savarkar. “Since the time you were released from internment at Ratnagiri,” he wrote, “a divine fire has kindled in the minds of those groups who profess that Hindustan is for the Hindus” (Quoted in Rajesh Ramachandran, “The Mastermind?” *Outlook Magazine*, September 6, 2004). He spoke of the Hindu Mahasabha (of which Savarkar was then president) to build a National Volunteer Army, drawing on the resources of the RSS, where Godse was then a leading local organizer. Savarkar’s picture was on the masthead of Godse’s newspaper, and the two cooperated increasingly closely, especially after Godse left the RSS for the Hindu Mahasabha. (For Godse, the RSS was not political enough; the Mahasabha, a political party, was more congenial). Savarkar appears to have known about the existence of a plot to assassinate Gandhi, and some believe that he was the mastermind behind at least the unsuccessful attack on January 20; testimony from a witness included the information that he said to the conspirators, “Be successful and return” (Ramachandran). Savarkar was ultimately acquitted of conspiracy because of insufficient evidence. Godse asserted, “he himself planned the later, successful attempt alone” (Nussbaum165).

Toward the end of Godse’s statement that he read in court appears a passage that heads the Hindu-right website devoted to his memory:

If devotion to one's 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 [tens of thousands] of Hindus. (Godse)

Godse's statement made a deep impact, according to one of his judges, apparently not a sympathizer with the Hindu right: "The audience was visibly and audibly moved. There was a deep silence when he ceased speaking. Many women were in tears and men were coughing and searching for their handkerchiefs...I have...no doubt that had the audience that day been constituted into a jury and entrusted with the task of deciding Godse's appeal, they would have brought in a verdict of 'not guilty' by an overwhelming majority" (Elst, *Gandhi and Godse* 6, citing Justice G.D. Khosla's memoir, *Murder of the Mahatma*).

Nehru believed that the murder of Gandhi was part of a "fairly widespread conspiracy" on the part of the Hindu right to seize power (Letter to ministers, February 5, 1948, quoted in Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalist Movement* 87); he saw the situation as "analogous to that in Europe on the eve of the fascist takeovers" (Nussbaum 167). And he believed that the RSS was the power behind this conspiracy. In December 1947 he had already written to the provincial governors:

We have a great deal of evidence to show that the RSS is an organization which is in the nature of a private army and which is definitely proceeding on the strictest Nazi lines, even following the technique of organization...I have some knowledge of the way the Nazi movement developed in Germany. It attracted by its superficial trappings and strict discipline considerable numbers of lower middle class young men and women who are normally not too intelligent and for whom life appears to offer little to attract them. (Letter to ministers, February 5, 1948, quoted in Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalist Movement*, 87)

We see here Nehru's unfortunate tendency to condescend the average citizen, which gave a great advantage to RSS organizers, who were very careful to be inclusive of Hindus from all factions of society, especially the ones that felt left behind by the seemingly elitist nationalist leaders like Nehru. After Gandhi's murder, therefore, the RSS was banned, and some 20,000 of its leaders, including Golwalkar, were arrested. On his release from prison, Golwalkar tried to convince Nehru to lift the ban, arguing that the RSS was a valuable ally against Communism. Eventually, "after prolonged negotiation and the adoption of a written constitution describing its purposes, the RSS won legal status in 1949" (Nussbaum 168).

During the 1950s, Nehru's staunch insistence on state secularism and his watchfulness about the danger from the Hindu right, together with the lack of any issue favoring their rise, gave the organizations of the Hindu right a weak political presence. The Hindu Mahasabha "adopted radical positions, proposing a constitutional amendment disenfranchising Muslims and the annulment of Partition, by force if necessary" (Jaffrelot

108). It combined these positions, however, with conservative positions favoring landowners, thus suggesting to many that it was an elitist group out of touch with popular sentiment. The party appeared to have no coherent agenda and exercised little influence. Meanwhile the RSS worked away, at some remove from politics, organizing as a mass social movement.

In the 1960s a new political party, the Jana Sangh (or “People’s Family”), came to be closely identified with the RSS. It adopted goals, such as a ban on cow slaughter, that had considerable traditional resonance and that began to garner some popularity. The RSS understood its role as that of an ongoing source of energy behind these political developments—in Golwalkar’s words, “the radiating center of all the age-old cherished ideals of our society—just as the indescribable power which radiates through the sun” (Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, 103). The India-China war of 1962 gave Hindu nationalism an agenda against the dominant Congress Party—“it had been too “soft” toward China—and the 1965 war between India and Pakistan helped the RSS to whip up fear and suspicion against Indian Muslims” (Nussbaum 168).

The RSS had always understood itself as the center of a family of affiliated organizations. By encouraging the formation of distinct entities with similar ideologies, it could encourage the idea that this ideology was that of the nation as a whole, or of Hindu people as a whole. The most important such organization was the VHP, Vishva Hindu Parishad (All-Hindu Council), founded in 1964 with considerable help from trained RSS leaders. The VHP portrays itself as a cultural organization. It is less concerned than the RSS with youth mobilization, although it later gave birth to a youth wing, the Bajrang

Dal, a quite militant and often violent organization. In official ideology, there are few differences between the VHP and its parent organization. That state of affairs is indeed deliberate, so that the ideology, stemming from a plurality of sources, should increasingly come to seem ubiquitous and natural. In style, the VHP has evolved as a more openly confrontational organization, given to mass organizing and not averse to violence; it is less focused on asceticism and strict discipline. One of its tactics is to call on many diverse and even contradictory sources of inspiration, including (a highly selective use of) Gandhi, Tagore, and many others, so that it does seem to be a universal ideology. “No great Hindu figure has been left out (53),” write the authors of *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags*. “Rather than composing a distinct, defined lineage for itself, the attempt is to establish a complex, constantly proliferating and sprawling kinship network which stops only at the Muslim, the Christian and the ‘secular’” (Jaffrelot 317). This was the beginning of the Sangh Parivar, the family of Hindu organizations that work together.

As long as Congress continued its triumphal string of electoral victories, however, there was little room for the RSS–VHP–Jana Sangh to emerge as a national political force. Indeed, the vast parliamentary majorities of Congress helped to create a fertile field for the emergence of a rival, since the failure of Congress to encourage true multiparty democracy based on ideas and policies left a void into which the politics of religion and community could easily flow, once Congress made a false step and alienated significant numbers of voters. The first large step of alienation was the Emergency. The RSS was one of the organizations against which Indira Gandhi exerted most pressure, imprisoning many of its leaders, old and young. This treatment gave the imprisoned RSS leaders an

aura of courageous resistance to autocracy, linking them with many other dissident forces that seemed, all together, to be defending democracy. In the election that ended Indira Gandhi's power, the Janata Party (which absorbed the RSS-affiliated Jana Sangh, though with a much broader and less communalist agenda) made large strides, and RSS members, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani, became ministers in the coalition that emerged.

In 1980 the BJP, Bharatiya Janata Party (National People's Party) the longtime political affiliate of the RSS and VHP, was founded as a successor to the Janata Party (*Khakhi Shorts* 38). Its first leader was Vajpayee. From the beginning there was uncertainty about how close the relationship of the new party to the RSS should be. Vajpayee saw that the Jana Sangh had been marginalized by its very evident RSS connection; he insisted on a broader base, welcoming Janata Party leaders who had no connection to Hindu nationalism. The party focused on economic issues such as inflation and corruption and paid lip service to pluralism with statements such as "Unity in diversity has been the hallmark of Indian culture, which is a unique, multi-hued synthesis of the cultural contributions made over the centuries by different peoples and religions" (Jaffrelot 317). At first the new party fared dismally, winning only two seats in the 1984 election. Meanwhile, however, RSS organizing continued to flourish: from 8,500 shakhas in 1975, the number rose to 20,000 in 1982 (Jaffrelot 317).

BJP leaders have typically had strong and long-term RSS connections, as do both Vajpayee and Advani. Particularly pronounced is the RSS background of Narendra Modi,

who was a full-time RSS worker for many years, until the RSS delegated him to play a role in the BJP, shortly before the party made him chief minister of Gujarat.

4. MISOGYNISTIC CONSERVATISM OF INDIAN NATIONALISM: GANDHI, TAGORE, RUSHDIE, SETH AND THE POLITICS OF EMANCIPATORY FEMINIST DISCOURSE IN 20TH CENTURY INDIA

4.1 THE POET, THE HUNTER, AND THE CRANE

After the poet Valmiki learned the story of Rama, he went to bathe in a river. By the river a pair of mating cranes were sweetly singing. A Nishada hunter, hostile and plotting evil, shot down the male of the couple. When the hen saw her mate writhing on the ground, his limbs covered in blood, she cried out words of compassion. And when Valmiki saw that the Nishada had brought down the male crane, he was overcome with compassion, and out of his feeling of compassion he thought, “This was not dharma, to kill a sweetly singing crane for no reason.” When he heard the female crane crying, he said, “Nishada, you will never find peace, since you killed the male of this pair of cranes at the height of his desire.” Then Valmiki realized that he had instinctively spoken in verse, in a meter that he called the *shloka*, because it uttered in sorrow (*shoka*).

-*Ramayana* (400 BCE to 200 CE) (1.2.81.1-17)

This vignette that the *Ramayana* tells us about itself, weaves together the themes of dangerous sexuality, the violation of dharma, compassion toward animals, attitudes toward tribal peoples, and the transmutation of animal passions into human culture. This chapter particularly concerns with sexuality and women in Hindu religious texts and in the Nationalist movement of India's Independence. In the *Ramayana*, the story of Rama and Sita raises questions about deities who become human and women and are accused of

being unchaste. Valmiki's Sanskrit *Ramayana*, the oldest surviving version of the tale, a text of some twenty thousand verses, established the basic plot:

4.2 RAM, SITA, AND RAVANA

Ravana, the ogre (Rakshasa) king of Lanka, was a Brahmin and devotee of Shiva. He had obtained, from Brahma, a boon that he could not be killed by gods or antigods or ogres or any other creatures—though he neglected to mention human beings, as beneath contempt. The god Vishnu therefore became incarnate as a human being, the prince Rama, in order to kill Ravana. Sita, who had been born from a furrow of the earth, became Rama's wife. When Rama's father, Dasharatha, put Rama's younger brother Bharata on the throne instead of Rama, Rama went into exile in the jungle with Sita and another brother, Lakshmana. Ravana stole Sita and kept her captive on the island of Lanka for many years. With the help of an army of monkeys and bears, in particular the monkey Hanuman, who leaped across to Lanka and then built a causeway for the armies to cross over, Rama killed Ravana and brought Sita back home with him. But when he began to worry about talk that her reputation, if not her chastity, had been sullied by her long sojourn in the house of another man, he forced her to submit to an ordeal by fire. Later he banished her, but she bore him twin sons, who came to him when they were grown. Sita too returned briefly but then disappeared forever back into the earth. Rama ruled for many years, a time of peace and justice. (Doniger)

The *Ramayana*, composed at a time when kingdoms were becoming powerful, legitimates the monarchy through the vision of the golden age of Ram Rajya, Rama's Rule. This vision occurs twice in the *Ramayana*, once at the end of the sixth book, when

Rama and Sita are united after her fire ordeal (Vol. VI, 130)—“There were no widows in distress, nor any danger from snakes or disease; people lived for a thousand years”—and then again at the end of the last book, when Sita has departed forever:

As the glorious and noble Rama ruled, striving for dharma, a long time passed. The bears and monkeys and ogres remained under Rama’s control, and he conciliated kings every day. The god of storms rained at the proper time, so that there was abundant food; the skies were clear. Happy, healthy people filled the city and country. No one died at the wrong time; no living creatures got sick; there was no violation of dharma at all, when Rama ruled his kingdom. (Vol. VII, 89)

This time of peace and prosperity has become the template for a kind of theocracy that haunts Indian politics even today

The *Ramayana* may have begun as a story as early as 750 BCE (Foreword, Pollock), but it did not reach its present form until between 200 BCE and 200 CE (Doniger 218). Its world therefore begins in the North Indian world of the Upanishads and continues through the world of the shastras (c. 200 CE). The *Ramayana* marks the transition from the corpus of texts known as “*shruti*, the unalterable Vedic canon,” to those known as “*smriti*, the human tradition” (Doniger 218). *Ramayana* is a religious text, which ends with the “fruits of hearing” them (Doniger 218). Hindus, from the time of the composition of the poem to the present moment, know the characters in the text just as Euro-Americans, even if they are not religious, know Adam and Eve and Noah’s Ark.

4.3 WOMEN IN THE RAMAYANA

Being human, Rama is vulnerable. Despite his divine reserves, he is tripped up again and again by women—his stepmother Kaikeyi, Ravana’s sister, the ogress Shurpanakha, and ultimately, his wife, Sita

Sita is not only the ultimate male fantasy of the perfect woman but has as her foil a group of women and ogresses who are as “Bad as Sita is Good” (Doniger 223). When Rama, the eldest son of the oldest queen, Kausalya, is about to ascend the throne, the youngest queen, Kaikeyi, uses sexual blackmail, among other things, to force Dasharatha to put her son, Bharata, on the throne and send Rama into exile. She locks herself into her “anger room,” puts on filthy clothes, lies down on the ground, and refuses to look at the king or speak to him, and the besotted Dasharatha is powerless to resist her beauty (Vol 2, 16-9). Kaikeyi is the evil shadow of the good queen, Kausalya. But Kaikeyi herself is absolved of her evil by having it displaced onto the old hunchback woman who “corrupts Kaikeyi and forces her, against her better judgement, to act as she does” (Doniger 224). For bringing about the sufferings that will overwhelm Kausalya, Sita curses not Kaikeyi but the hunchback, whose deformation is itself, in the Hindu view, evidence that she must already have committed some egregious sin in a previous life.

4.4 THE LOSS OF SITA

Sita never dies, but she vanishes four times. First, she vanishes when Ravana carries her off, and Rama gets her back. Then she parts from Rama three times, into three natural elements—a fire, the forest, and the earth—as a direct result of that first estrangement: Rama keeps throwing her out now because Ravana abducted her years ago.

First, right after the defeat of Ravana, Rama summons Sita to the public assembly. Then:

4.5 SITA ENTERS FIRE

Rama said to her: “Doubts have arisen about your behavior. Go, then, wherever you wish. I can have nothing to do with you. What man of good family could take back, simply because his mind was so tortured by longing for her, a woman who had lived in the house of another man? How can I take you back when you have been degraded upon the lap of Ravana? Set your heart on Lakshmana or Bharata, or on Sugriva [the king of the monkeys], or [Ravana’s brother] Vibhishana, or whoever will make you happy, Sita. For when Ravana saw your gorgeous body, he would not have held back for long when you were living in his own house.” Sita replied to Rama, “You distrust the whole sex because of the way some women behave. If anyone touched my body, it was by force.” Then, to Lakshmana: “Build a pyre for me; that is the medicine for this calamity. I cannot go on living, ruined by false accusations.” As the fire blazed, she stood before it and said, “As my heart never wavered from Rama, so may the fire, the witness of all people, protect me.” And she entered the blaze. As the gods reminded Rama who he was, Fire rose up with Sita in his lap and placed her in the lap of Rama, saying, “Here is your Sita; there is no evil in her. Though she was tempted and threatened in various ways, she never gave a thought to Ravana. She must never be struck; this I command you.” Rama said, “Sita had to enter the purifying fire in front of everyone, because she had lived so long in Ravana’s bedrooms. Had I not purified her, good people would have said of me, ‘That Rama, Dasharatha’s son, is certainly lustful and childish.’ But I knew that she was always true to me.” Then Rama was united with his beloved and experienced the happiness that

he deserved (Vol VI, 103-6). “Dasharatha’s son is certainly lustful” is a key phrase. Rama knows all too well what people said about Dasharatha; when Lakshmana learns that Rama has been exiled, he says, “The king is perverse, old, and addicted to sex, driven by lust” (Vol II, 18). Rama says as much himself: “He’s an old man, and with me away he is so besotted by Kaikeyi that he is completely in her power, and capable of doing anything. The king has lost his mind. I think sex (*kama*) is much more potent than either *artha* or dharma. For what man, even an idiot like father, would give up a good son like me for the sake of a pretty woman? (Vol II, 47).” Thus, Rama invokes the traditional ranking of dharma over sex and politics (*kama* and *artha*) and accuses his father of valuing them in the wrong way, of being addicted to sex. He then takes pains to show that where Dasharatha made a political and religious mistake because he desired his wife too much (*kama* over *artha* and dharma), he, Rama, cares for Sita only as a political pawn and an unassailably chaste wife (*artha* and dharma over *kama*). Rama thinks that sex is putting him in political danger (keeping his allegedly unchaste wife will make the people revolt), but in fact he has it backward: Politics is driving Rama to make a sexual and religious mistake; public concerns make him banish the wife he loves. Rama banishes Sita as Dasharatha has banished Rama. Significantly, the moment when Rama kicks Sita out for the second time comes directly after a long passage in which Rama makes love to Sita passionately, drinking wine with her, for many days on end; the banishment comes as a direct reaction against the sensual indulgence (VOL VII, 41). Rama’s wife is above suspicion, but Rama suspects her. His ambivalence, as well as hers, is expressed in the conflicts between the assertions, made repeatedly by both of them, that Ravana never

touched her, that he did but it was against her will, and that physical contact is irrelevant, since she remained true to him in her mind.

When Rama publicly doubts Sita and seems unconcerned about her suffering, the gods ask how he can do this, adding, “Can you not know that you are the best of all the gods? You are mistreating Sita as if you were a common man.” Rama, uncomprehending, says, “I think of myself as a man, as Rama the son of King Dasharatha. Tell me who I really am, and who my father is, and where I come from” (VOL VI, 105). Rama is not thinking straight; the gods have to reveal his avatar to him and use it as an argument to catapult him out of his trivial and blind attitude to Sita. Later still, when Rama has renounced Sita, and Brahma has again reminded him that he is Vishnu, Shiva gives Rama and Sita a vision of the dead Dasharatha, who says to Sita, “My daughter, don’t be angry because Rama threw you out. He did this in your own interest, to demonstrate your purity. The difficult test of your chastity that you underwent today will make you famous above all other women. My daughter, you need no instructions about your duty to your husband, but I must tell you that he is the supreme god” (VOL VI, 107). And when Sita has vanished again into the earth, this time for good, and Rama is raging out of control, Brahma comes with all the gods and says to him, “Rama, Rama, you should not grieve. Remember your previous existence and your secret plan. Remember that you were born from Vishnu” (VOL VII, 88).

Sita walks into fire determined either to kill herself or to win back the right to go on living with the very much alive Rama. The ordeal is not, however, a suicide, though she says she “cannot go on living” (VOL VI, 106); on the contrary, it is an anti-sati, in

which she enters the fire when her husband is very much alive, not to join him in heaven (as *satis* usually do) but as a kind of threat either to leave him or to win back the right to go on living with him here on earth. As a threat it works: Rama takes her back, and they plan to live happily ever after, a fairy-tale ending. But we may see a touch of irony in the closing statement that he “got the happiness that he deserved” (VOL VI, 110), for it does not last; the rumors return, and Rama banishes Sita, though she is pregnant; she goes to Valmiki’s hermitage and gives birth to twin sons. That is the second time Sita leaves him after her return from Lanka.

Perhaps Valmiki thought there was something unsatisfactory about this banishment that inspired him to add on another, more final and more noble departure for Sita. It begins years later, when the twins, now grown up, come to Rama’s horse sacrifice and recite the *Ramayana*, as Valmiki has taught it to them. The *Ramayana* lays great emphasis on the paternity of Rama’s twin sons, on their stunning resemblance to Rama; the crowds of sages and princes at Rama’s court “waxed ecstatic as they seemed to drink in with their eyes the king and the two singers. All of them said the same thing to one another: ‘The two of them look just like Rama, like two reflections of the same thing. If they did not have matted hair and wear bark garments, we would have no way of distinguishing between the two singers and Rama’” (VOL VII, 85). Yet Rama pointedly recognizes them as “Sita’s sons” but not necessarily his own (VOL VII, 86). This is an essential episode, for male identity and female fidelity are the defining desiderata for each human gender in these texts; no one is interested in female identity or male fidelity. These concerns play an important role in the treatment of Sita. This is the moment when

Rama summons Sita again, for the last time, and she herself brings about the final separation:

4.6 SITA ENTERS THE EARTH

Rama sent messengers to Valmiki to say, "If she is irreproachable in her conduct and without sin, then let her prove her good faith." Valmiki then came with Sita and swore by *his* unbroken word of truth that the two boys were Rama's children and that he had seen Sita's innocence in a vision. Rama replied, "I agree entirely; Sita herself assured me before, and I believed her and reinstated her in my house. But there was such public condemnation that I had to send her away. I was absolutely convinced of her innocence, but because I feared the people, I cast her off. I acknowledge these boys to be my sons. I wish to make my peace with the chaste Sita in the middle of the assembly." Then Sita swore, "If, even in thought, I have never dwelt on anyone but Rama, let the goddess Earth receive me." As she was still speaking, a miracle occurred: From the earth there rose a celestial throne supported on the heads of Cobra People [Nagas]; the goddess Earth took Sita in her arms, sat her on that throne, and as the gods watched, Sita descended into the earth. His eyes streaming with tears, head down, heartsick, Rama sat there, thoroughly miserable. He cried for a long time, shedding a steady stream of tears, and then, filled with sorrow and anger, he said, "Once upon a time, she vanished into Lanka, on the far shore of the great ocean; but I brought her back even from there; so surely I will be all the more able to bring her back from the surface of the earth" (VOL VII, 86-90). But he cannot bring her back. When Sita enters the earth, she leaves the king alone, without his queen. She abandons and implicitly blames him when she leaves him, turning this second

ordeal (again she asks for a miraculous act to prove her complete fidelity to Rama) into a sacrifice as well as, this time, a permanent exit.

Sita's two ordeals prove her purity, but they are also a supreme, defiant form of protest. Sita is no doormat. She does not hesitate to bully her husband when she thinks that he has made a serious mistake. When Rama tries to prevent her from coming to the forest with him, she says: "What could my father have had in mind when he married me to you, Rama, a woman in the body of a man? What are you afraid of? Don't you believe that I am faithful to you? If you take me with you, I wouldn't dream of looking at any man but you—I'm not like some women who do that sort of thing. But you're like a procurer, Rama, handing me over to other people, though I came to you a virgin and have been faithful to you all this long time." Rama then insists that he had said she couldn't come with him only in order to test her (VOL II, 26). Yeah, sure; she will hear that "testing" line again. Her assertion that Rama is confusing her with other, less faithful women is also one that we will hear again, for she repeats it years later, when Rama accuses her of having been intimate with Ravana.

When they first enter the forest, Sita asks Rama why he carries weapons in this peaceful place, especially when he has adopted the attire (and, presumably, the lifestyle and dharma) of an ascetic. Rama claims that he needs the weapons to protect her and all the other defenseless creatures in the forest. In an impassioned discourse against violence, Sita tells Rama that she fears he is by nature inclined to violence and that simply carrying the weapons will put wicked thoughts in his mind (VOL III, 1-29). Indeed, he kills many creatures in the forest, both ogres that deserve it and monkeys that do not. Even the

ogress Shurpanakha echoes Sita's concerns by querying Rama's apparent commitment to the conflicting dharmas of asceticism and married life (VOL III, 16).

4.7 THE GODDESS SITA

Sita is not, however, just a woman; she is very much a goddess, though never as explicitly as Rama is a god. In contrast with Rama, whose divinity increases in the centuries after the Valmiki text, Sita was a goddess before Valmiki composed her story. Sita in the *Ramayana* is an ex-goddess, a human with traces of her former divinity that the story does not erase but largely ignores, whereas Rama is a god in the making, whose moral imperfections leave traces that future generations will scurry to erase. The two meet in passing, like people standing on adjacent escalators, Rama on the way up, Sita on the way down. But Sita's story more closely follows the pattern of equine Vedic goddesses like Saranyu and Urvashi: She comes from another world to a mortal king, bears him children (twins, like Saranyu's), is mistreated by him, and leaves him forever, with only the twin children to console him. She can be set free from her life sentence on earth, her contract with a mortal man (Rama), only if he violates the contract by mistreating her.

Male succession is the whole point of the old myth of the equine goddess who comes down to earth to have human children, and female chastity is essential to that succession, another reason for the trials of Sita. Rama's mistreatment of Sita creates a problem—the justification of Rama—that inspires later *Ramayanas* to contrive ingenious solutions. Sita walks out on Rama in the end (as Urvashi does in the Veda), an extraordinary move for a Hindu wife. Moreover, unlike the paradigmatic good Hindu

wife, Sita very definitely is *not* reunited with her husband in heaven. For while she goes down into the earth, returning to her mother, he goes (back) up to heaven when he dies years later, returning to Vishnu. Both of them “revert to their divine status, but in opposite places” (Doniger 231). When Brahma is chastising Rama for doubting Sita, he reassures Rama that Sita is an incarnation of the goddess Lakshmi and will be reunited with him in heaven (VOL VI, 105), but we never see that happen. Rama’s return to heaven as Vishnu is described in great detail, and the monkeys revert to their divine form, and everyone you’ve ever heard of is there to welcome him in heaven (including the ogres), but not Sita (VOL VII, 100).

When Sita defends herself against accusations that she has broken her marriage vows, and earlier, when she scolds Rama in the forest, she explicitly contrasts herself with “some women” who behave badly, “unnamed shadows who may include not only Kaikeyi and the hunchback woman but also, perhaps, the lascivious ogre women as well as mythological women like Ahalya, the archetypal adulteress, whose story the *Ramayana* tells not once but twice” (Doniger 233). The polarized images of women in the *Ramayana* led to another major split in Hinduism, for though the Brahmin imaginary made Sita the role model for Hindu women from this time forward, other Sanskrit texts as well as many vernacular versions of the *Ramayana* picked up on the shadow aspect of Sita, the passionate, sexual Sita, an aspect that is also embedded in this first text, only partially displaced onto other, explicitly demonic women. Yet the later Brahmin imaginary greatly played down Sita’s dark, deadly aspect and edited out her weaknesses to make her the perfect wife, totally subservient to her husband. How different the lives

of actual women in India would have been had Sita as she is actually portrayed in Valmiki's *Ramayana* (and in some other retellings) been their official role model. The Valmiki *Ramayana* thus sowed the seeds both for the oppression of women in the dharma-shastric tradition and for the resistance against that oppression in other Hindu traditions.

The world of the *Ramayana* that Valmiki created is very real indeed to the many Hindus who have heard it or read it, and Sita and Rama continue to shape attitudes to women and to political conflict in India to this day. However, today's Sita in popular imagination is much more tempered down. She is shy, demure, compassionate, and fatalist, one who lacks all agency outside her husband's. Writers have tried to address the complicated position women occupy in the Hindu imaginary. Novelists like Tagore, Seth, and Rushdie, among many others have tried to highlight this dilemma that women face in every aspect of their life—the tug of war between modernity and tradition or what passes for tradition. The time when women's role in Indian society first became an issue prime importance was during India's nation building effort.

4.8 MOTHER INDIA—THE NATION AND WOMEN

There was a strong sense of India's shortcomings in becoming a democratic nation among the British colonizers. One of the concerns was the plight of the minorities in India and that inevitably included women and their "barbaric" treatment, as perceived by the West. Spivak's words—"White men are saving brown women from brown men"—serves to justify colonial interventions if white men are taken as saviors and brown men are scapegoated as oppressors (of brown women). The British found an

excuse to intervene and 'save' the women in India from oppressive Indian men.

According to Rosalind Morris, "The 'masculine-imperialist' ideology can be said to produce the need for a masculine-imperialist rescue mission" (Introduction 3). The rescue mission served as a façade for colonial presence. Focusing on widow-sacrifice (*sati*) in colonial India, "the British move to abolish the practice" was justified on the basis of the British "civilizing mission" in India (Ilan Kapoor 1). Sympathy for the *sati* victims manifests itself as protectionist discourse. Spivak contrasts this position with the then dominant Hindu one, which excused the practice by arguing that the widows "wanted to die" (Kapoor 1). Spivak indicates how each representation legitimizes the other: one purports to be a social mission, saving Hindu women from their own men, the other a reward, allowing the women to commit a 'pure' and 'courageous' act. But all the while, the widow's own voice is ignored. "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears...There is no space from which [she] can speak' (Spivak 306-307). This protection of women became for the British a signifier for the establishment of a good society. According to the native men, the women voluntarily wanted the practice as an ascription of a free will, and the men alone couldn't bring about a change, as were just the agents of a traditional culture and had no choice. Spivak notes however that neither version could represent the voice and will of the woman. This leads to an important phenomenon: 1) the disappearance of the postcolonial woman from discourses that are of pertinence to them and 2) the hijacking of their free will by nationalist leaders. I argue that the women's rights movement in India stemmed not from a genuine effort to promote equality of gender but from a reactionary mode of

defense against critiques of the inefficiency of Indian leaders' to make India a safe place for all its people, especially women and minorities and the masculine ego of the men who were sympathetic to women but at the same time felt powerless to defend them against the regime of oppressive hierarchical customs.

Even just a few decades ago, English-language writing from the Indian subcontinent was primarily the province of Western journalists and travel writers. Of course, there were many fine Indian writers—R.K. Narayan, Nirad Chadhuri, and Khushwant Singh, among other—but they remained largely undiscovered in the West. It took a couple of pioneers, in the form of Vikram Seth and Salman Rushdie, to open the India to the Western reading public. Seth and Rushdie's work showed Western publishing world that Indian writing could sell. Equally important, they gave birth to more cosmopolitan Indian writers who started writing for a global audience following the successes of Seth and Rushdie. Also, both Seth and Rushdie were well respected authors around the world long before the meteoric rise of Arundhati Roy, whose phenomenal 1997 success with *The God of Small Things* sparked an unprecedented interest in Indian literature for readers world-wide. I am using Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* for my discussion in this chapter, because both novels focus on the time period leading up to India's Independence from the British in 1947 and follow the challenges of the new nation of India. I use the novels *to* show how the restrictive rhetoric of imperialism, colonialism and nationalism work as a subjugating force instead of being an emancipating impetus, and in the end, do more harm than good for the subordinate class, i.e. women in this case. Both these novels showcase the ideals

of nationhood and nation-building at the time. My reading of the novels focuses on the questions of women's rights and women's role in the new Indian democratic nation-state. Sati (the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband) was one of the biggest critiques of India, something used by the British, time and again, to show the ineffectiveness of the Indian man to be able to protect his woman. The British were the ones responsible for banning Sati and declaring it inhumane. But the effect of the abolition of Sati in the end was, that "[g]roups rendered psychologically marginal by the exposure to Western impact...had come under pressure to demonstrate to others as well as to themselves, their ritual purity and allegiance to traditional high culture" (Spivak 1988: 298). Both Rushdie's and Seth's novels show how this pressure to perform and to please the west put pressure on the men in India to create a certain mold for their women to fit, so as to be able to portray their own competence in matters of governance, and this in turn put a sort of twofold pressure on the women in India: to pretend to be modern and free of oppression, but at the same time, not too modern and/or western. The women were still expected to adhere to the qualities of real "Indianness," moral purity and traditional culture, but with an exhibition of liberation and modernity. The men and women in the novels are caricatures of these roles and help to confirm the hypocrisy that left women in a position of passive subservience. As a result, the nationalist discourse of postcolonialism sidelined women for the sake of nationalist agenda that favored men and left women in charge of domestic matters, with no voice in the newly formed nation-state.

Hence, when nationalism became the pre-eminent cause during India's struggle for independence from the British, claiming Indian superiority became the tool of cultural revivalism, resulting in an essentializing model of Indian womanhood. Consequently, women's parity was not just a question of women's rights but one of the ways for the upcoming nationalist leaders to demonstrate the nation's aptitude in forming a just democracy. Unlike the Western feminist movement, India's feminist movement was initiated by men and later joined by women—men who wanted to show “the Raj” that they treated their women well, and hence, by doing so, contributed to bringing about the wave of “involuntary feminism.” The new woman could safely venture outside as long as she displayed the signs of modesty and femininity in her dress, religiosity and demeanor, “which demonstrated that she had internalized the norms of the ‘new patriarchy’, which was ‘reformed, reconstructed, fortified against charges of barbarism and irrationality’” (Partha Chatterjee 127-30).

Consequently, the nationalist discourse as set by men dictated women's liberation movements, and in order to show the western critics a “modern” India free of barbaric prejudices, the nation's feminist movement was born. However, this idea of feminism was one that was fashioned by men, and they expected women to stage themselves as liberated women but at the same time not let go of the religious and traditional roles that were an essential element of the “ideal Indian” woman, daughter and wife. Fundamentally, the women's ostensible freedoms were essentially still controlled by the men who sought to show their own resourcefulness in running a nation. According to Spivak, “between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation,

the figure of the woman disappear[ed], not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (1988: 301). Women became the bearers of the nationalist discourse's honor and the face of modern India as presented by men and were more or less not given a real option to choose their freedoms separate from the interests of these patriarchal idealists. As Simone de Beauvoir illustrates in *The Second Sex*, women were forced to relinquish their claims to transcendence and authentic subjectivity by a progressively more stringent acceptance of the "passive" and "alienated" role to man's "active" and "subjective" demands (Norton 1266-67). "They remained trapped inside themselves thereby perpetuating the passive role determined for them by the male" (Helene Cixous, Norton 1953).

I explore the theme of violation as liberation in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*. *Midnight's Children* not favorably but rather sardonically portrays the ill-fittedness of a patriarchal society through its creation of the hypocritical character of Saleem, whereas *A Suitable Boy*'s stringent separation of men and women's roles in society espouses the importance of the patriarchal Indian society. This analysis enables an investigation of what conditions obtrude to mute the speech of third world woman, to render her speech and her acts illegible to those who occupy the space produced by patriarchal complicity, whether of imperialism or nationalism, forcing us to go back, to "unlearn" with Spivak the normative ideals of piety and excess with which the third world woman has come to be associated in the interlaced ideological formations of both West and East. As Spivak argued in *Can the Subaltern Speak*,

“historical circumstances and ideological structures” conspire to efface the possibility of being heard (something related to but not identical to silence) for those who are variously “located as the others of imperial masculinity” (Spivak 1988: 297).

Saleem Sinai, the narrator of *Midnight's Children*, opens the novel by explaining that he was born on midnight, August 15, 1947, at the exact moment India gained its independence from the British. Now nearing his thirty-first birthday, Saleem believes that his body is beginning to crack and fall apart. Fearing that his death is imminent, he grows anxious to tell his life story. Padma, his loyal and loving companion, serves as his patient, often skeptical audience. Saleem later discovers that all children born in India between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m. on that date are imbued with special powers. Using his telepathic powers, Saleem assembles a Midnight Children's Conference, reflective of the issues India faced in its early statehood concerning the cultural, linguistic, religious, and political differences faced by a vastly diverse nation. Saleem acts as a telepathic conduit, bringing hundreds of geographically disparate children into contact with each other, while also attempting to discover the meaning of their gifts; children born closest to the stroke of midnight wield more powerful gifts than the others. Saleem later becomes involved with the Emergency declared by India's Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. For a time Saleem is held as a political prisoner; these passages contain scathing criticisms of Indira Gandhi's overreach during the Emergency as well as a personal lust for power bordering on godhood. The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the Midnight's Children, and there is little left for Saleem to do but pick up the few pieces of his life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his still-

young nation; a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history.

The second novel that I investigate, *A Suitable Boy*, is set in post-independence, post-partition India. Seth's novel follows the story of four families over a period of 18 months as a mother searches for a suitable boy for her daughter. The 1349-page novel alternatively offers satirical and earnest examinations of national political issues in the period leading up to the first post-Independence national election of 1952, including inter-sectarian animosity, the status of lower caste peoples, land reforms and the eclipse of the feudal princes and landlords, property rights, women's empowerment movements, academic affairs, inter- and intra-family relations, and a range of issues in post-colonial India. *A Suitable Boy* centers on Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to arrange the marriage of her younger daughter, Lata, with a "suitable boy". At the heart of the novel it is a love story, set in a young, newly independent India.

Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* reflects upon "the connections between domesticity and colonial patriarchy, and the continuance of these connections in nationalist ideology," a reflection that resonates with discussions of Indian feminism, most notably Gayatri Spivak's famous comments on the silencing of Indian women by "colonial, nationalist, and intellectual representations of them" (Sara Upstone). These representations restrict their roles as primarily positioned "in the domestic domain"—the realm ordained for the middle-class wife, where she worked for the good of the nation by educating her children well and managing a clean, hygienic, and efficient household (Bannerji 1991: 51). This domestic domain is the only world made available to the

women in Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy*. This explains the exclusion of women in any political debate in *A Suitable Boy*, and it also helps the reader to understand their depiction as vain, gossiping housewives forever concerned with day-to-day household errands and having no desire for partaking in national matters of higher caliber. The character of Malati, the only outspoken woman in the novel points this out, saying, "One pleasant side of election fever is the rediscovery of women... [to restore her to the] status she occupied in ancient India." She is quick to point out that this position was that of complete dependence on men, as they were perceived as conniving creatures full of "wrath, sensuality, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct" (Seth 1257). Malati understands the double standard that goes with the so-called election fever. Also, Padma's inaction in *Midnight's Children* is not an oversight. Padma's role as the outsider is the constant reminder of the impossibility of women's inclusion in either of Saleem's tales of the nation (Heffernan). Padma, to whom Saleem tells his tale, remains on the periphery of Saleem's story of the nation. Her comments and suggestions are available to the reader but are never incorporated into Saleem's narrative. Yet, although this is clearly a hierarchical relationship, Saleem is also entirely and utterly dependent as she "sits at his feet and holds him together; when she leaves, his cracks widen and he cannot write" (Rushdie149). Padma's peripheral status reflects the position of women in nationalist struggles, where they are at once absolutely crucial and yet silent, especially on matters of gender. She is wanted for emotional and moral support and to play the part of a supporting, motherly/wifely figure but, at the same time, irrelevant in changing the course of events. Spivak, in "Can the Subaltern speak?", discusses the problems that

colonial and “native” representations of third world women pose for the women themselves and how their voices get lost in stories of their representation.

This role-playing that Aadam reminds Naseem of— “[s]tart thinking about being a modern Indian woman” (Rushdie 34)—points to the same nationalist discourse that required women to act a certain way. Further, when Aadam tries to insist that his wife abandon purdah, she protests, “they will see my deepest shame!” Aadam is not really concerned with the wishes of his wife. His act of liberation is also an act of violation as he “drags all his wife's purdah-veils from her suitcase ... and sets fire to them” (Rushdie 34). Naseem's “deepest shame” is thus the double violation by colonialism and patriarchy that leaves her literally without a place, “for all her presence and bulk ... adrift in the universe” (Heffernan 13). Aadam, half enamored with Western narratives of citizenship, liberates Naseem only to insist that she be “modern” and submit to the sexual/social contract that guarantees the European model of nationalism: “move a little, I mean, like a woman” (Rushdie 34), Aadam demands of his newly “liberated” bride.

In *Midnight's Children*, after Independence, women's roles seem to reverse as these “liberated women” start to have power over men in general and Saleem in particular. Throughout the novel, Saleem's relationships with women are rather troublesome. In fact, he unmistakably claims: “Women have made me; and also unmade...I have been at the mercy of the so-called (erroneously, in my opinion!) gentler sex” (Rushdie 483). Indeed, from the virginal nurse Mary Pereira, to his sister The Brass Monkey (later Jamila Singer), to his wife Parvati, Saleem's situations with women are far from functional...the troubles stem primarily from once cause: Saleem's vision of female

sexuality—possessed entirely of fear and loathing. Apparently for him, “there is no good woman but a desexed woman, and this is seen through many episodes, ending with the actual castrating of him via Indira Gandhi” (Ashok Rajamani 8). Saleem’s fearful loathing of women suggests the threat felt by the patriarchs concerning the growing power/masculinity of women. Indeed, Saleem’s main sexual encounter is with a five-hundred-and twelve years old whore—“the oldest whore in the world” (Rushdie 381). Female sexuality finally arrives, but only out of a cracked wrinkled leather-ancient body. Women are radically desexualized to such an extent that even the whore – the only acceptable sexualized woman -- is in reality, a monstrous, skeletal witch. This chaotic image of desexualization of women means to serve as a premonition to the horrifying effects of a matriarchal society where gender roles would be reversed.

This matriarchal society in the novel that is so horrendously scary is presented in the form of Indira Gandhi’s declaration of emergency in India. This widow is portrayed as an antagonist to the desirable woman that the nationalist discourse imagined and “makes a mockery of men,” according to Saleem. Residing in a magician’s ghetto in Delhi, Saleem along with other midnight’s children, is “taken to the Widow’s Hostel, a ‘home for bereaved women,’ where they are imprisoned and forcibly sterilized. A ‘testectomy,’ to be precise” (Rushdie 437). This part pertaining to the emergency episode renders an inevitably aberrant quality to woman power—women power is equaled to desexing of women. Ashok Rajamani discusses this:

What can be read merely as an indictment on Indira politics takes on a heightened level after witnessing the previous representations of female sexuality. In other

words, Indira Gandhi is not to be loathed for her laws, but for being a woman in power: “An Avenging Goddess” who wreaks pain because she is a Widow, a Widow who has nevertheless subverted her sexuality into political tyranny...she proves this by doing the exact thing that Saleem has probably been fearing – and possibly desiring: she takes away his manhood. (Rajamani 12)

Female power is more or less established as stripping away male dignity and bringing an end to their manhood. This demonization of female power and liberation works in tandem with the lack of feminist initiative in Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*, where most women are sexually desirable and upholders of male control including Lata as evidenced by her choice of a suitable husband—someone who would be not her equal but would fit in as the patriarch of the family—a provider.

Partha Chatterjee argues that nationalist discourse made a distinction between an inner, spiritual domain of the nation and an outer, material domain. In the material sphere, the West was superior, but in the spiritual sphere, the East far suppressed the West—division of the home and the world. Whereas the world was the domain of the men who had to imitate the scientific and technological advance of the West and its rational and “modern methods of statecraft”, the home was the truly Indian domain where women preserved the “self-identity of national culture” (Chatterjee 1993:120). This model of society’s hierarchical structure is strictly endorsed in *A Suitable Boy*. All women, with the exception of Begum Abida Khan, are restricted to the role of homemakers. Although they are educated and smart, their main objective is to keep the family life running smoothly for the men in their lives, adequately fulfilling their roles

laid out by the nationalist discourse. This nationalist discourse's creative construct was the model of the 'new woman' who was modern but in an Indian rather than a "Western memsahib-aping way" (Chatterjee 127). According to the testament of this new woman guidelines, Lata is the ideal and not Meenakshi. Meenakshi is too "westernized" and far too liberal to be a good Indian woman. Education was crucial for the new woman so that she could become a better home-maker, an able educator of her children and her husband's fit partner in modernity. This is indubitably seen with everyone from Mrs. Rupa Mehra to Lata to Savita; they are educated and then expected to be good role models for their families and children and also a support system to their husbands. Their lives are considered incomplete and useless if they are not educated and "worldly" as in the case of Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor and Saeeda Begum by the same men who in practice only want them to be concerned with their lives on the homefront without bothering about the national scene or career ambitions. Example of Mr. Mahesh Kapoor would be apt here as he is always criticizing his own wife as being "stupid and ignorant and superstitious" for being uneducated and stuck in the old ways of a vain life but is not supportive of his daughter-in-law's ambitions to pursue a career in law. He is portrayed as this progressive politician who is all for women's rights and their education and fair treatment but believes there are boundaries that are in place for a reason and once women do get their rights and the purported equality with men, their ultimate goal is to be of use at home and not interfere with things like building of the nation. His dual standards, which are seen here, portray the general outlook about women's role in society. Even Mahatma Gandhi, who is endearingly called "Father of the Nation," had his own

prejudices when it came to women. His idea of women's liberation was linked to deep-seated malaise.

Gandhi, at the age of thirteen (having already been betrothed several times), was married; his wife, Kasturba, was ten. This event, which he reported having enjoyed in a childish way at the time, left a deep mark on the man in later life. He suggested that it invited him to enter a life of sexual license, which, as time went on, became connected to a desire to dominate his wife, both using her as the object of his lust and making her into an ideal wife. In his insightful *Gandhi's Truth*, psychoanalyst Erikson comments that there remained throughout Gandhi's marriage a deep ambivalence toward the woman who inspired passions that he came to repudiate, an element of vengeful aggression that emerged, for example, in his unilateral decision that a vow of chastity was good for the marriage, and also in his frequent condescending allusions to his wife's lack of education (Erikson). Even as a boy Gandhi clearly had unusual moral sensitivity. Although for a time he took up eating meat in secret, under pressure from a friend who told him that meat was what made the British stronger than the Indians, he eventually stopped, feeling that it was intolerable to deceive his parents (Gandhi *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*). When he once committed a small theft (a bit of gold out of his brother's armlet), he confessed it later in writing to his father, whose grief and nonvengeful love gave him an example of nonviolence that he said helped forge his later strategy (Gandhi 23-24). This beloved father died when Gandhi was in his teens. The boy nursed him faithfully during his illness, but one night he let his uncle relieve him and went to make love with his wife. Just at that moment, his father died (Gandhi 26). The guilt he reported

retrospectively has been much analyzed. Whether this incident shaped his attitude to sexual passion is difficult to know; certainly “he told the story in a way that dramatizes the conflict between desire and love and used it to indicate that desire must always be a source of moral blindness and lack of control” (Nussbaum 97).

In 1906, without consulting his wife, he took a vow of brahmacharya, or sexual renunciation, which he apparently never broke. This decision, he recorded, was profoundly liberating, freeing him for the service of others (Gandhi, *Collected Works* 9). Gandhi held that self-rule, and nonviolent resistance itself, were impossible without a bodily discipline involving renunciation: abstention from alcohol was a firm requirement of his movement, and sexual abstinence was held out as a highly desirable ideal. According to Gandhi, “Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort” (Gandhi *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*). Gandhi linked the future of India to a suppression of bodily desire; Gandhi thought that respect for women required an end to unnecessary sex, which he saw as a male imposition on women; he opposed contraception as a way of perpetuating the reign of desire and urged women simply to say no to their husbands. What Gandhi failed to realize that he was setting a standard of female chastity on women in India that they won’t be able to shake for decades to come. Indian women, especially Hindu middle-class women got stuck in between the caricatures of Sita and Mother India and finally, came to be known for their

demureness, their non-threatening, non-aggressive sexuality, and their subservient nature, and their need to be protected by patriotic, Hindu men.

This remolding of middle-class women was a contradictory, ambivalent and heterogeneous project as “women had simultaneously to be defined against lower class women and lower caste women, “Westernised” women and uneducated middle-class women while preserving the essence of tradition, virtue and Indianness” (Chatterjee 1993: 127). There are no real portrayals of lower class women or lower caste women in *A Suitable Boy*; Meenakshi can be seen as a more “Westernised” woman, and she is not depicted in a positive light and instead is making a cuckold of a loving husband. Moreover, the uneducated woman as in the case of Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is constantly belittled by her husband and shown in a pitiful state. All the other women in *A Suitable Boy* fit inside the mold of traditional Indianness expected of them. The implication seems to be that when the women are restricted to the liberation standards set by men and do not overstep their boundaries or resist the change, they are considered modern but not overly monstrous as evidenced in *Midnight's Children*, where women are showcased as over ambitious and manly and castrating men. Both novels point towards the harmony that is required in men-women relationships and how the patriarchal nature of Indian society helps balance this harmony. Women’s education was a central aspect of the nineteenth-century reform movement and crucial for women’s entry into middle class respectability and wifely companionship. “Naseem (in *Midnight's Children* as well as Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor in *A Suitable Boy* are) aware of (their) lack of education in comparison to their husband(s) and resent the position of inferiority in which it places (them)” (Thiara 61).

Women's education and modernization are verified to be significant as long as they are also in the dictated form of men's expectations of them and attributes that would assist the men in showing off their credibility to form the "civilized" nation that is "their" burden. It is after all of most importance for the men to look modern and civilized first in order to be taken seriously by their western critics.

This new woman pictured by the men could safely venture outside as long as she displayed the "signs of her femininity" in her dress, religiosity and demeanor, which demonstrated that she had internalized the norms of the "new patriarchy", which was "reformed, reconstructed, fortified against charges of barbarism and irrationality". (Chatterjee 1993: 127-30).

Rushdie's treatment of Indian women's coming out of purdah has to negotiate this contested site of conflicting interpretations and evaluations of what women's 'liberation' entails. *Midnight's Children* begins with a scenario in which women want to be in purdah. The fact that coming out of the purdah is not described as liberation can be read as an attempt not to feed the imperialist discourse of native women suffering from oppressive despotic customs. In *Midnight's Children*, it is a native woman who first initiates the exit from purdah but she does not perceive this as an act of emancipation. (Thiara 59-60)

Coming out of the Purdah in this scenario stands more for patriarchal pressure, hypocrisy and deception than women's liberation. "From the very beginning, *Midnight's Children's* depiction of women in purdah resists simplifying this complex issue in which women's wishes may not correspond to narratives of liberation scripted by benevolent

men” (Thiara 60). This also depicts how men and women saw liberation differently. For women, it is the freedom to “choose” what they want to do and how they want to live, but for men, it is the image that “their women” projected to the foreigner, which is of primary concern. Mann in *A Suitable Boy* contemplates—“It’s as if he didn’t exist, as if he’s in purdah...like the women...I suppose they exist. Or perhaps they don’t” (Seth 667). Mann’s thoughts about the purdah reflect the thoughts of the foreigner about the purdah, which became the symbol of women’s suppression. It is this image that the nationalist discourse wanted to discard of and this is why Naseem is also forced out of her purdah—in order to meet the expectations of the new woman.

In Naseem’s eventual emergence from purdah, *Midnight’s Children* directly refers to a central strand of the nationalist woman’s question, namely the fashioning of the middle-class wife into a modern, companionate partner (Sangari and Vaid 1990: 19-20). Later, *Midnight’s Children*’s wives are shown as overstepping the boundaries set for them and hence, are uncompassionate as wives or mothers. In *A Suitable Boy*, Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is not the ideal companion (as per her husband) because of her stupid beliefs and her not so modern ways. Both of these types of women are not shown as the ideal “new woman” who is supposed to be Indian but modern at the same time. Aadam Aziz demands that Naseem “Forget about being a good Kashmiri girl. Start thinking about being a modern Indian woman.” (Rushdie 33-4). “He thus forces his wife out of the purdah without leaving any room for her to have a say” (Thiara 60). The text’s portrayal of Naseem serves the purpose of resisting a neat resolution of an individual woman’s

entry into the national role, which was constructed and propagated by nationalist discourse (Thiara 61). Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor too struggles to fit into this mold.

Another important aspect of the nationalist discourse was the elevation of women as mothers in order to glorify women's role according to the nationalist ideal (Amin 1996: 91-3). *A Suitable Boy* revolves around womanhood, motherhood, relationship between women and their household duties. In *Midnight's Children*, however, "motherhood is rarely discussed as such, and women's roles as wives and sexual partners are foregrounded (Thiara 62). As discussed earlier, "The domestic domain was the realm ordained for the middle-class wife, where she worked for the good of the nation by educating her children well and managing a clean, hygienic and efficient household" (Bannerji 1991: 51). Most of the women in *A Suitable Boy* fit this expectation very well and life is caricatured as running like "normal." On the other hand, in *Midnight's Children* this expectation is not met as the women's "appropriation of the domestic realm is a distortion of the nationalist agenda as they use this space to into powerful, ruthless matriarchs instead of long-suffering, self-sacrificing good Indian wives which nationalist discourse envisaged" (Thiara 62). In fact, it is the husbands and the children who suffer under her dominating and implacable regime. *A Suitable Boy's* women are religious and homely and concerned about their kin at all times. This does not contradict "the nationalist script for middle-class wives as they are ordained with the role of religion, tradition, factors which epitomized India's superiority towards the West" (Thiara 64). The traditional and the modern are inextricably intertwined in the Indian middle-class project of modernity. It is estimated that "Indian men can go on the mission of mimicking

Western ways in the knowledge that their women will look after the culture and keep their children Indianised” (Thiara 66). An ideal wife is one who is educated and modern to the permissible level but is rooted in the Indian tradition when it comes to the role of a homemaker. Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor’s favorite tree is the harsinger—“a modest, unhandsome [unpretentious] tree by day, glorious at night, full of a delicate fragrance, surrounded by enchanted insects. The tree flowers but keeps nothing to itself” (Seth 1135). This depiction of the tree would also be very desirable in a woman for its abnegating virtuosity.

On the other hand, a “suitable” husband is one who is authoritative and someone ‘with character...like your father. Someone you cannot push around’ (Seth 1466), according to Malati’s mother. Lata’s choice in *A Suitable Boy* vouches for this view of patriarchal society that is the accepted norm. Malati points out rather sarcastically that the “one pleasant side of election fever” is the rediscovery of women—‘The time has come when woman must be restored to the status she occupied in ancient India: we must combine the best of the past and the present, of the West and the East...’—the rhetoric of nationalist discourse. Poignantly she reminds what this ancient India thinks of women:

Day and night, women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families. In childhood, a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and in old age to her son, a woman must never be independent because she is innately as impure as falsehood...The Lord created woman as one who is full of sensuality, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct. (Seth 1257)

Saleem's fear and condemnation of women in power, running the nation to ground and destroying the masculinity that is so desirable for a successful governing of a peaceful regime reaffirms Malati's conviction. When things do not go according to this model, society gets chaotic and the nation's men are rendered impotent because of the "witches" as illustrated in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Rushdie is critiquing this fear of emasculation that men face when faced with the question of women's equality.

The exceptional chastity of Indian women has been perceived to be an essential part of India's ancient tradition as exemplified by the later renditions/revisions of Sita from the *Ramayana*. However, the women who undermine the guiding principle of the nationalist discourse are portrayed as going "astray and choosing sexual partners who are not their husbands" (Thiara 69). Unfaithful wives are a recurrent motif in *Midnight's Children*: Amina, Vanita, Pia, Lila and Shiva's partners have adulterous relationships. Also, one of the more disliked women in *A Suitable Boy*, Meenakshi, is also making a cuckold of her husband. Hence, these women are clearly stepping their boundaries when it comes to following the model of the desirable, Indian woman.

Women and power are represented as being incompatible as the women in the novels "cannot be portrayed as powerful without at the same time carrying the potential for the monstrous" (Thiara 71). Saleem in *Midnight's Children* seems to be declaring that too much affirmation of women's rights threatens the masculinity of men, which is dangerous to the national well-being, and the normality of national panorama, with men governing the nation and women taking care of the home front in *A Suitable Boy*, reaffirms this patriarchal structure. *Midnight's Children* not approvingly but rather

satirically portrays the ill-fittedness of a matriarchal society through its creation of the hypocritical character of Saleem, whereas *A Suitable Boy*'s strict separation of men and women's roles in society upholds the importance of the patriarchal Indian society. Mr. Mahesh Kapoor of *A Suitable Boy* can be compared to Saleem Sinai in his attitudes towards his wife and his family and the women around him whom he perceives as rather futile and unproductive and a threat to his "secular image" with their "chanting and hypocrisy" (Seth 355). And in Seth's novel, Kapoor is one of the front-runners in the "women's rights movement" in India, belonging to a major political party. Lata in *A Suitable Boy* claims challengingly to her mother, "I know all your prejudices and I share none of them" (Seth 607). It seems Rushdie is saying this to his men in *Midnight's Children* and bringing their hypocrisy to light with the character of Saleem Sinai. Men in both novels "have done nothing aside from creat[ing] a faulty impression [of what women want and what they are capable of, if left to their own devices]: an impression women [are forced] to believe without question" (Helene Cixous). The phallogocentric structures of imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, and patriarchy repress women, keep them trapped inside themselves thereby perpetuating the passive role determined for them by the men, and keep them from transcending these boundaries to gain a more equal status in society.

Rabindranath Tagore saw this question of women's freedom and agency coming up in the nation's struggle for independence, and he tried to lay out a pathway to ensure that women had their voices heard. When Tagore's literary career slowly began to prosper with successes in both poetry and drama. A visit to England in 1878–1880

impressed him with the intellectual life and human generosity of the British. Used to meeting young women there without constraint, he felt saddened by his own arranged marriage with an uneducated eight-year-old girl whom he had never got to know and with whom he probably never had much in common. In a letter to his wife, Mrinalini, in 1900, he wrote: "If you and I could be comrades in all our work and in all our thoughts it would be splendid, but we cannot attain all that we desire" (Dutta). Tagore's later preoccupation with the critique of marriage, and especially child marriage, "clearly stemmed in part from his own unhappiness at the damage done to two young people by a denial of freedom and choice" (Nussbaum 85).

Both before and after his Nobel Prize in 1913, Tagore's literary career went from strength to strength, with the publication of important short stories and novels. (He always wrote fiction and poetry in Bengali; good translations are gradually becoming available). These works often addressed social themes: the situation of women, the dangers of idolatrous nationalism. The story "Letter from a Wife" (1914) is narrated by a well-off woman (the use of a female first-person narrator was itself a radical move), married in childhood, who has decided to leave her husband and become a wandering artist in order to seek personal expression and freedom. "I found myself beautiful as a free human mind," she tells him (Bardhan). "Haimanti" (1914) depicts the slow surrender of a progressive husband to the forces of convention; while he laments the suffering of his wife (married when she was eighteen and therefore educated) under a regime of oppressive hierarchical custom, he feels powerless to challenge his family and defend her.

The interest in freeing women remained central to Tagore until the end of his life. In a 1936 lecture he said: “All over the world women today are coming out of the confines of their households into the open arena of the world . . . Let us hope for a new age in the building of civilization.” He ended the lecture with an appeal to women to “open their hearts, cultivate their intellect, pursue knowledge with determination. They have to remember that unexamined blind conservatism is opposed to creativity” (Datta). His understanding of this goal was unusually deep, in that he realized that accomplishing it required using the arts to forge conceptions of both masculinity and femininity, in which the playfulness of the body would be seen a key source of generous reciprocity (Datta 27-28). These images of gender, based on older Hindu traditions, remain powerful countervailing forces to the images of manly aggression purveyed by the Hindu right. His special interest in the situation of women was closely connected to his perception that women have typically been denied the conditions of free self-development; but he knew that men, too, often prefer to abnegate their own freedom, telling themselves (as does the young husband in “Haimanti”) that they are just the agents of a traditional culture and have no choice.

In Chapter 3, I discussed Tagore’s novel *The Home and the World* in terms of the opposing ideologies that were present during the birth of the nation of India, and the novel does indeed raise very important questions about types of Nationalisms, and what is it that a nation and its citizens should persevere for, but the novel is centrally a love story, and its politics is a sexual politics. Bimala, Nikhil’s young wife, is happy because she is treated well by her husband (as other women in that family were not by their

drunken and adulterous husbands), but it is also clear that there is little sexual warmth between the two. Nikhil has an unfortunate “lack of expressiveness”; for that reason, he can “only receive” and not “impart movement” (Tagore in Datta 85). Because of this, his decision that his wife should leave the traditional purdah and enter the outer world contains the seeds of disaster. Knowing little of life and less of passion, Bimala is an easy mark for Sandip’s cheap but rhetorically effective blandishments. She falls for him, though the extent of their physical involvement is left rather vague. Nikhil’s offer of freedom and reciprocity seems to Bimala too cold. Sandip, by contrast, offers to cast her as the goddess of the new nationalist movement. She does not understand until much later that to be a goddess is to be less, not more, than a human being: her own individuality is utterly submerged, and Sandip shows no concern for her as a real person. Tagore knew that there was an alternative to both Sandip and Nikhil: the politics of Santiniketan, a politics of pluralism and internationalism fueled by joy and sympathy.

The novel is particularly insightful for the way in which it associates Hindu nationalism with a particular mode of sexual self-assertion and with specific types of sexual failure. Sandip is an Indian male who sees Indian masculinity as weak and shameful. He would prefer to be an English male, which he imagines as something tough and aggressive, able to take without compunction. The sexuality of idolatrous nationalism is an “English” sexuality of male force and female submission, which does not acknowledge the personhood or individuality of the woman at all: Bimala functions as merely an abstract symbol. Nikhil’s cosmopolitanism is also associated with a kind of sexual failure, namely with at least metaphorical impotence, the renunciation of all

sources of magic and joy within oneself. The sexuality of “vague cosmopolitanism,” while it offers good principles, reciprocity and respect, and at least does no harm to Bimala, proves devoid of activity and life. Bimala’s tragedy is that she rightly longs both for recognition as a person and for passion, and her world offers her no choice that combines the two. Only at the novel’s end does Bimala realize that her husband was nobler than Sandip. Shot in the head, Nikhil is carried home, apparently dying. Bimala attempts to worship him, showing that she has learned little about equality in love. As he (apparently) dies (the novel’s ending is unclear), Bimala becomes one more childless widow in her in-laws’ house, joining the sister-in-law whose abusive husband died of drink.

Tagore died before India became an independent nation, and by the time of Gandhi’s death, Tagore had been dead for seven years. For most of Gandhi’s life, however, the two men enjoyed a close and mutually admiring relationship. They were in some ways complementary figures. Both worked for an India that was pluralistic and tolerant; both supported equal education and equal political opportunities for women. Both iconoclasts, they saw India’s development as closely linked to each individual’s own mental awakening and to the criticism of much that had constituted traditional Hindu culture. Both were resolute enemies of caste. But how different in spirit the two men were. As their common friend C. F. Andrews wrote, there was between them a “difference of temperament so wide that it was extremely difficult to arrive at a common intellectual understanding, though the moral ties of friendship remained entirely unbroken” (Jack). Gandhi linked the future of India to a suppression of bodily desire;

Tagore linked it to an embrace of the sensuous delight of the body—not to undisciplined sensuality, but to the ordered sensuousness of dance. Gandhi thought that respect for women required an end to unnecessary sex, which he saw as a male imposition on women; he opposed contraception as a way of perpetuating the reign of desire and urged women simply to say no to their husbands. Margaret Sanger, the famous birth control advocate, hearing Gandhi’s reasoning on these issues, said, “Gandhi maintained that he knew women and was in sympathetic accord with them. Personally, after listening to him for a while, I did not believe that he had the faintest glimmering of the inner workings of a woman’s heart or mind” (Extract from Sanger’s *Autobiography* in Jack 307). He criticized child marriage for its connection to luxury and sensuous indulgence. Tagore thought that respect for women required allowing them to become sexual, as well as political, agents; he saw sexual puritanism as closely linked to male domination. In a poem written for Amita Sen on her marriage, Tagore described her as,

a dancing torrent

Meeting quiet waters, immersing your playful steps
In the deep, taking on the
universe, unafraid. (“Bandhu” (The Bride))

Gandhi would surely have characterized a young woman’s entry into sexual life in more pejorative terms; indeed, he would not have encouraged Amita Sen to develop her considerable talent as a dancer. One cannot imagine Tagore opposing contraception, “he would have viewed it as an enhancement of freedom for both men and women” (Nussbaum 103). And when Tagore opposed child marriage, he did so because of its denial of women’s agency and freedom.

What is paradoxical was the asceticism that lay at the heart of Gandhi's quarrel with Tagore. Seen in one way, Gandhi's vow of celibacy and his lifelong obsession with diet were shrewd devices to prompt thought about what masculinity really is and how it might be pruned loose from ideas of domination. But one cannot read the *Autobiography* without feeling that Gandhi's lifelong commitment to the denial of the body was itself bound up with a certain sort of violence. In *Gandhi's Truth*, Erikson argues that even Gandhi's childlike playfulness depended on his campaign against desire: it was as if he had to rescue playfulness and intimacy in himself by cutting them off from a sexuality that offended him (122). Erikson addresses the dead leader directly: "you should stop terrorizing yourself and approach your own body with nonviolence" (248). Only when we can look at our own sexuality without the violence of moralistic denial, argues Erikson, will we be able to surmount the tendencies in every society toward violent domination of others (244, 251). Erikson's proposal lies close to the ideal proposed by Tagore: a cultivation of both critical freedom and a joyful yet disciplined life of desire.

One must understand that there is, of course, the acknowledgement in the Indian Media and politics that many women suffer violence and oppression in India, as they do in many other countries, but what I claim is that the Indian nation-state is fundamentally inclined towards the oppression of women. And why is the Indian nation-state so inimical to women? That is because, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, Indian nationalism was born out of a patriarchal and conservative reflex among upper caste Hindus. Tanika Sarkar, writes in her book *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation* that, as India fell under the colonial sway, upper caste Hindus valorized their distinctive domesticity and conjugality (marital

norms), since British colonialism could not touch these private aspects of Hindu existence. Further, the Hindu woman was assigned a special role in this domestic and conjugal space since her body “was still pure and unmarked [by colonialism], loyal to the rule of the shastras” (Sarkar). It was not the case with the Hindu male as he had to operate in the outside world to earn a living. In this imagination now, in her words, “the household was the embryonic nation” and “the woman was the true patriotic subject” (Sarkar 43). The strict conjugal monogamy of the Hindu wife was celebrated, she suggests, for it made the essence of Hindu domesticity in upper caste view and signified the Hindus’ cultural superiority to the colonizing British. Thus, a set of conservative, patriarchal, upper caste ideas—that tied Hindu women to oppressive domesticity and monogamy—formed the core of the emerging Indian nationalism in the nineteenth century.

In his book, *The Nation and its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee makes claims that closely approximate Prof. Sarkar’s. According to Chatterjee, during the days of British rule, early Indian nationalist thought divided the world into two realms – the material and the spiritual, or the outer and the inner. In this dichotomy, colonialism was seen to have subjugated the outer, material world, but the inner, spiritual domain of Indian existence was still free. Women were now viewed as its peculiar embodiments, since they were the custodians and nurturers of households. In this capacity, they were also the preservers of the inner, spiritual domain of Indian life, as the household was its manifestation. Thus, Prof. Chatterjee censoriously points out, nationalist thought came to expect of Indian women a slew of things – the virtues of “orderliness, cleanliness, and a personal sense of

responsibility, the practical skills of accounting, hygiene, and the ability to run the household according to the new physical and economic conditions set by the outside world” (130)—and increased the domestic burdens upon them. Consequently, the emerging Indian nationalism inflicted on Indian women a “new patriarchy” along with a “new, and yet entirely legitimate subordination” (130). Thus, both Sarkar and Chatterjee agree that Indian nationalism suffers from a misogynistic conservatism.

Right Wing Hindu Nationalists argue that the early nationalist thought the two etch was operating within the ancient Dharmic ethos of India, which view women as the spiritual and cultural nurturers of nations and peoples. Hence, this thought assigned women a crucial nationalist agency within the domestic realm not out of misogyny but due to the peculiar sanctity that Indic belief accords to femininity. But from my reading of Indian religious texts I have proven that this is a more recent phenomenon, not an ancient Dharmic or Vedic one. Hence, patriarchy is fundamental to the Indian nation-state, and globalization is bringing forth forces that are the patriarchal powers find threatening, and hence, they are moving further right.

5. MODI'S RAM RAJYA: THE ANSWER TO HUNTINGTON'S HINDU QUESTION

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I examined the global ambiguity around “the Hindu Civilization,” the beginnings of an essential Hindu consciousness, the historical background of the Hindu national identity, and the role of women in Hindu nationalism. In this final chapter, I consider the relevance of that history to the current political rhetoric that the Hindu Right employs in order to get the masses all riled up. With this, I hope to demonstrate how alive the past is in present-day India, how contemporary events rebound off the wall of the past. Wendy Doniger, one of the foremost scholars of Hinduism, who studied and analyzed Hindu textual tradition for decades said it best. She said, “the diversity of Hinduism extends also to the diversity of the ways in which the past is used in the present” (Wendy Doniger 654). In the chapter where I got this quote, she is talking about the diversity in traditions that the Hindu religion promotes, and how according to the various textual traditions that surround Hinduism, there can't be a fundamentalist Hindu religion. But she is quick to point out that this diversity is also used in the present for the purposes of political mobilization.

There is no consistent direction in which events from the ancient past exert their intense influence on the present moment. In some cases, there is transformation; the ancient myth or ritual takes on entirely new meaning or even new forms in the present. In other cases, the past clings to its ancient, sometimes now incomprehensible or clearly irrelevant form and resists any change. Women and Dalits gain new powers but are still in many cases shackled to ancient, repressive forms, just as Hinduism in the contemporary period simultaneously reaches out to a new inclusiveness and new

possibilities of equality for those who were oppressed in the past, while Hindu nationalists grow in their power to oppose that very inclusiveness. “Hence, the new myths of women, Dalits or Muslims may be unearthings or reworkings of ancient tales that were never preserved or entirely new creations, born of the events of the current time” (Doniger 655). It can be argued here that politics become the change agent using scripture & theology for its purposes. In some cases, this works to bolster Right wing fundamentalism, and other times, it can lead to reform or revolution.

5.1 THE HOLY COW

An example of this kind of reworking of ancient myths and tales can be seen in the following dispute: The cow is a central issue for the Hindutva movement, whose influence upon all branches of Indian life is sometimes called Saffronization (on the model of Sanskritization), a term with strong echoes of the renunciant branch of Hinduism, whose members wear saffron-colored robes. In recent years, some members of the Hindu right have argued, in contradiction of abundant historical evidence to the contrary, that the ancient Indians never ate beef until the Muslims brought this custom to India; they have persecuted Hindus who have defended the historical record on this point, and they have attempted to “use the alleged sanctity of the cow to disenfranchise Muslims,” some of whom eat beef and others of whom slaughter cows, both for the Muslim ritual of Bakr-Id and for the many Hindus who do eat beef. (Doniger 657)

Also, ancient Hindu religious texts/tales are brought up as scientific evidence for a core Hindu identity of India. Placing the Hindu Epic *Ramayana* in its historical context demonstrates that it is a work of fiction, created by human authors who lived at various

times, and it shows how the human imagination transformed the actual circumstance of the historical period into something far more beautiful, terrible, challenging, and elevating than the circumstances themselves. Texts reveal histories, but we need to find out about those histories and ground them in solid evidence to read against, not into, the texts' narratives. "Reconstructing the ways in which human authors constructed the fictional works, in reaction to earlier texts as well as to historical circumstances, reveals their texts as works of art rather than records of actual events" (Doniger 162-63).

5.2 RAM RAJYA OR THE RULE OF RAMA

The god-hero Rama has always been important in RSS iconography. Hedgewar deliberately inaugurated the organization on the day when Rama is supposed to have defeated Ravana in the epic conflict between good and evil. Especially with the rise to popularity of the media-savvy VHP, images of Rama began to function as symbols of the whole family of organizations, and the image of an ideal time when Rama's rule in the world would be restored (*Ram Rajya*) soon became a handy emblem for the BJP. One 1991 election slogan, for example, was "Let's go toward Ram Rajya, let's move with the BJP" (Basu). Rama appears in the symbolism of the organization family under a variety of aspects: "a pure baby, an angry warrior fighting in a hostile universe, a king presiding over an ideal era of prosperity and morality" (Doniger 165).

In the process of appropriating Rama as party/organization symbol, the organizations transformed the traditional iconography of Rama in various ways. First, they turned him into the central god in the entirety of the Hindu religion for

the entire nation. This had not been the case formerly; Rama was little known in the south, and in some regions, he was not even an admired figure. Through this process of transformation, the RSS and the other groups were in effect making Hinduism more monotheistic— “semiticizing it” (Nussbaum 174), as this development is some- times described. There were good reasons for a movement bent on national unity to try to rein in the chaotic and colorful many-sidedness of traditional Hinduism, in which, as in ancient Greek religion, worship is highly polymorphous, local, and syncretistic. Just as the British had to invent a fiction of Hindu law to codify civil law for all Hindus in a uniform way, so too the right had to invent a fictional Hinduism, very different from its roots. The second change that the RSS and its affiliates introduced was a change in the moral/physical representation of Rama (Jaffrelot 390). In traditional depictions Rama, although he is the lord of the universe, is not especially warlike; he has a bow, but is not shown using it; his loyal monkey companion, Hanuman, provides him with the force he needs. In the late 1980s, however, the figure of Ram was represented differently in political posters, often connected to the Ayodhya temple issue. As Anuradha Kapur points out:

This Ram, the adult male, resembles the figure from a Hollywood “epic.” And thus Ram becomes a warrior, not easily distinguished from other warriors: Ben Hur, El Cid, or to take Indian examples, an Arjun or a Bhima. Like them he fights for possession, control, status . . . The sort of musculature, strength, and sportive manliness that have been the usual attributes of Hanuman have

now been transferred to this Ram. (Kapur, “Deity to Crusader,” in Jaffrelot 391)

In effect, Ram becomes the god of the angry Hindu: angry at Pakistan, at the internal Muslim threat, above all at centuries of subordination and humiliation.

Finally, a gradual change came about in the interpretation of Rama’s enemy. In the traditional epic, Ravana is a mythical representative of evil. The new iconography of the Hindu right, particularly in connection with the campaign to rebuild Ram’s temple at Ayodhya, increasingly links Rama’s opposition with the Moghul empire and Muslim rule. By portraying the presence of the mosque at Ayodhya, itself a relic of Muslim rule, as the chief obstacle to the restoration of Rama Rajya, the right has made Muslims a permanent subtext in all references to Rama. As Tapan Basu and his coauthors remark, “The new historical myths have achieved this vital substitution of associative feeling so silently and effectively that in the icons and festivals, the Muslim need not be introduced at all...Ram’s face and his life story are enough to release a chain of associations that has detached itself from all known epic narratives and brought in the invented medieval history of India” (Basu 63).

The effort to position Rama in the center of Hindus’ consciousness got a tremendous boost from a famous televised serial of the *Ramayana*, broadcast in 1987–88 in seventy-eight weekly episodes. The serials were so popular that daily life virtually came to a stop during the broadcasts, which apparently reached

approximately 90 percent of homes with television. Many viewers treated the broadcasts as a religious event, performing devotions in front of the TV set (Jaffrelot 389). In this way, writes Arvind Rajagopal, “The Ramayan serial was able to create a collectively observed weekly ritual, one that was extraordinary to witness.” He notes that a film director, seeking space to shoot a scene in Benares on the banks of the Ganges, a spot usually crowded with pilgrims, priests, and bathers, was told to choose the hour of the *Ramayana* broadcast, and sure enough, the place was empty then (Arvind Rajagopal 93).

There are many versions of the *Ramayana* in many Indian languages. Often, they contain different versions of events and even contradict one another (Paula Richman 261-97). The television network chose just one version to follow, and suggested that this version was universal, thus standardizing the sense of what the epic stood for in the public mind (Romila Thapar 74). As Lloyd Rudolph has written, the broadcast (and the subsequent broadcast of the *Mahabharata*) played a “leading role in creating a national Hindu identity, a form of group consciousness that had not hitherto existed” (L. I. Rudolph 92). The success of this enterprise was made possible by the lack of attention to religion in the public culture fostered by Congress: the alternative vision of a pluralistic and tolerant Hinduism, stressed by Nehru in his books, was never made emotionally vivid through public symbols and celebrations. In addition to suggesting that Hindus share a single set of beliefs and traditions centering around Rama as the most important god, the serial emphasized other values that closely paralleled those stressed in RSS shakhas:” loyalty, self-sacrifice,

discipline, unity against the aggressor, the importance of sexual purity” (Nussbaum 180). Most important, much was made of Rama’s birth at Ayodhya, as a key religious event. The production thus fueled the growing concern with the Ram birthplace, or Ram Janmabhoomi, an issue to which we must now turn.

Ram is said in ancient texts to have been born at a place called Ayodhya. It is most unclear whether this is at all the same place as the modern town of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh in northern India (K. N. Pannikar 24). But many Hindus believe that it is the same, and that, from ancient times, a Hindu temple commemorating the birth of Rama stood on the sacred location of his birth. In 1528 the Moghul ruler Babur erected a mosque, called the Babri Masjid, on the spot where the Hindu temple is supposed to have existed. It is alleged that Babur destroyed this temple. There is clearly something underneath the mosque, as we know from excavations after the mosque’s destruction. Indeed, there appear to be pillar bases from a number of different dates, suggesting a plurality of previous structures. An archaeological report commissioned and closely managed by the BJP when it was in power maintained that the remains are a Hindu temple, although the evidence they put forward seemed very unconvincing, and the BJP never permitted neutral archaeologists to examine the site (Nussbaum 182). A conflict concerning the site had already erupted in the 1850s, when Hindu ascetics attacked the mosque. A compromise was found, according to which Hindus might offer prayer on a platform outside the mosque. Hindu priests began to make pilgrimages to the site; in 1883 a pandit (religious scholar) demanded

that a temple be built adjacent to the mosque, a demand refused by British authorities (Nussbaum 185).

The issue was dormant for many years. Then in 1949 some Hindus broke into the mosque and placed idols of baby Ram there—an action that Hindus regarded as a miracle and Muslims as a desecration (Jaffrelot 92-3). There were indications that the Hindu Mahasabha was involved in the event. Nehru asked for a return to the status quo ante, and the governor of Uttar Pradesh ordered the district magistrate to remove the idols. He refused and was removed from his post. Nehru remained firm, however, and even arrested several leading members of the Hindu right in the region. Eventually the idols were removed and the whole situation calmed down.

In 1984 the Hindu right revived the issue, publicly demanding the “liberation” of the site at Ayodhya. At this time the VHP founded a militant youth wing known as the Bajrang Dal (Bajrang means “strong”), associated with the monkey-god Hanuman, whose friendliness and loyalty were downplayed and whose aggressive properties were emphasized. This organization grew especially rapidly in Uttar Pradesh, where it apparently recruited 100,000 members. These young men were not given the careful RSS training of the *shakhas*; they were mainly encouraged to be “bold.” In July 1984 a religious procession of diverse sects marching from Bihar to Ayodhya demanded the “liberation” of the temple and presented a petition to that effect to the state government.

The assassination of Indira Gandhi changed the political picture in several ways. First, it gave the nation a leader, Rajiv Gandhi, whom the Hindu right

perceived as weaker than his mother and more likely to make concessions. Instead of staunch secularism, Rajiv (who, after all, had failed to intervene immediately to stop the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi) practiced a politics of what we might call “soft communalism,” making deals with religious groups when it seemed convenient. One notable example was his deal making with Muslims over the Shah Bano case, which angered many Hindus, who saw the government as according special favor to minorities. The BJP exploited this issue, campaigning for “nondiscrimination.”

Second, at this time there was an upsurge in proselytization and conversion, both to Islam and to Christianity; this trend caused acute anxiety to Hindus in many regions. Third, the state- planned economy was clearly doing badly, and although eventually Rajiv began the process of reform, he remained vulnerable on the economic front. In this changed atmosphere, the Hindu right began to exploit the issue of Ayodhya for political gain. During the 1989 election campaign, the BJP played heavily on the theme of Ram, achieving increasing success. From only 2 parliamentary seats in 1984, the BJP shot up to 85 seats in 1989 (with 11.4 percent of the total vote) and became one partner in a weak and short-lived multiparty governing coalition; in 1991 its share rose to 119 seats (with 20.1 percent of the vote) (Jaffrelot 554). Although Congress regained its majority in 1991, thanks in part to sympathy after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the BJP was clearly on the way to national power. It was the nation’s second-largest party, and it had control of state government in the crucial state of Uttar Pradesh.

During the 1991 election campaign, the BJP's second in command and Hindu-right hard-liner, Lal Krishna Advani, mounted a famous campaign tour focused on the issue of Ayodhya. In a symbolic and highly emotional journey known as the Rath Yatra, Advani traveled some 10,000 kilometers in a "vehicle designed to represent an epic chariot and decorated with the electoral symbols of the BJP (a lotus) and the Hindu sacred syllable Om. He was accompanied by activists clad in saffron or dressed to resemble the monkey's head of Hanuman, and loud-speakers were used to relay his speeches and militant religious songs" (Jaffrelot 416). Advani kept insisting that he was not a religious figure and that the Rath Yatra was not a religious crusade. "Don't be under the misconception that I have become religious," he said in a speech in Delhi. "I am a politician. Nowadays people tend to misunderstand me." And again, "This [Rath Yatra] is a crusade against pseudo secularism and minorityism [sic] which I regard as a political issue" (Rajagopal 224). People certainly treated him as a religious figure, however, offering him jars of their own blood and performing religious dances before him (Jaffrelot 416-17). And they were encouraged to do so: BJP campaign videos showed Advani posing with a discus like Krishna, and with a bow and arrow like Ram; he and another minister were photographed conducting a sacred ceremony. In rural areas Advani tended to stress the devotional nature of his campaign; in Parliament and in urban discussions, the political themes. The Congress Party, rather than repudiating the politics of Hindu supremacy, rode the wave of religious feeling, simply offering a softer version of the Hindu-first message. Where Advani traveled, violence tended to erupt. Laloo Prasad

Yadav, chief minister of Bihar, arrested him in October 1990 for fomenting violence in his state. In late 1990 anti-Muslim riots broke out in several states, including Gujarat, where about 100 deaths were recorded (Jaffrelot 420).

On October 30, 1990, a mass pilgrimage to Ayodhya organized by the VHP succeeded in forcing open the gate of the mosque; a saffron flag was placed on one of the its domes. Police used tear gas and clubs; several people were killed. The VHP claimed that fifty-nine victims were identified, while official data support a figure of between six and fifteen. The feeling of Hindu vulnerability was greatly magnified by these deaths and the VHP propaganda about them: now some Hindus began to believe that if the law was against them, they might as well be against the law (Nussbaum 185).

After the elections of May–June 1991, ensconced as the nation’s major opposition party, the BJP faced a dilemma. In its bid for national power, it might be wise to focus more on economic than on religious issues, which were not equally resonant in all areas of the country. Nor did the party want to be identified with disorder and rioting. On the other hand, the movement behind the party, to which it owed its entire existence and continued life, strongly demanded such a focus, pressing the Ayodhya issue in particular. It is this conflict to which Arun Shourie alluded in his 1992 RSS Founders Day speech, when he said that the BJP had attempted to “cut the umbilical cord” that tied it to the RSS. He urged that the RSS demand the loyalty its efforts had earned and seize control once again of the BJP agenda. The VHP, too, kept the pressure on, organizing Ram processions in many regions. At a joint RSS-VHP rally on October 29, 1991,

some speakers threatened that “if the BJP dragged its feet over the construction of the temple, its government in the state would be pulled down” (Ashish Nandy). On October 31, young activists climbed onto the domes of the mosque, hoisting a saffron flag and damaging the building’s outer wall. By July 1992, RSS cadres were building a concrete platform on the site, defying an order by the Supreme Court that “no permanent structure” be erected (Nussbaum 186).

Late in November the Supreme Court issued an order that the government of Uttar Pradesh provide assurances that the demonstrations would not continue. Nonetheless, pilgrims continued to flock to the site. By December 5, around 100,000 people were there. Leaders of the BJP, somewhat taken by surprise, asked the RSS and its affiliated organizations to stop pilgrims from coming. While a compromise was sought (for example, giving the VHP title to a small plot of land adjacent to the mosque), the party sent Advani and Hindu-right hard-liner M. M. Joshi to Uttar Pradesh. Their speeches encouraged the pilgrims and expressed determination to have a temple built on the disputed site (Jaffrelot 454).

On December 6, 1992, as people gathered to listen to speeches, some pilgrims breached the cordon, entered the disputed area, and began stoning the mosque and the police who guarded it (Jaffrelot 455). They climbed up on the mosque and began to pull down the domes, using iron rods. Police failed to intervene; most left the scene. By late afternoon, all three domes of the mosque had been pulled down, as the police stood by and watched, leaders of the BJP whipped a crowd of two hundred thousand into a frenzy. Shouting, “Death to the Muslims!” the

mob attacked Babur's Mosque with sledgehammers. As the historian William Dalrymple put it, "One after another, as if they were symbols of India's traditions of tolerance, democracy, and secularism, the three domes were smashed to rubble." (Dalrymple, *India: The War Over History* 109). In the riots that followed, more than a thousand people lost their lives, and many more died in reactive riots that broke out elsewhere in India, first in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the mosque, then intermittently, and then very seriously again in 2002.

There is still no agreement about the extent to which the demolition was planned. Advani is said to have shown signs of surprise and distress; he resigned his post as leader of the opposition (Jaffrelot 456). Vajpayee, who was not present, stated that the demolition was the "worst miscalculation ever made by his party" (Jaffrelot 457). Meanwhile the government, under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, vacillated, failing to take strong action against the Hindu nationalist perpetrators. Seeing that the demolition was not receiving strong criticism, leading members of the BJP denied that there was a salient distinction between "moderates" and "hard-liners" in the party. Vajpayee delivered a speech saying that the Babri Masjid "was a symbol of shame and has been erased" (Bidwai and Vanaik).

In 1993 thirteen bombs exploded in Mumbai, killing 257 people and injuring many more. It is widely believed that the bombings were carried out by a Mumbai gangland underworld (with both Muslim and Hindu members), some of whose leaders appeared to have links to Pakistan, and that the bombings were some sort of

retaliation for Ayodhya; but there is little evidence to back up these beliefs. Many hundreds of people, predominantly Muslim, have been arrested and remain in detention today, but no convictions have resulted, and only minor offenses have even been charged.

If in some respects the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya helped the BJP by showing that it was capable of removing a powerful symbol of humiliation, in another way it deprived it of a focus for future planning. As historian Christophe Jaffrelot says, “it was easier to mobilize Hindus *against* the Babri Masjid than *for* anything else.” The events also showed that the undisciplined forces of the VHP and Bajrang Dal played a large role in the political mix: the BJP was revealed as relying on grassroots activists from the Sangh Parivar. A subsequent series of riots, most instigated by such young Hindu activists in various cities, caused further difficulty for the BJP, which wanted to be regarded as a party of law and order. The party therefore moved gradually toward a broad-based approach, focusing not only on ethnic-religious issues but also on a range of economic and efficiency issues. In this effort the allegedly moderate leader Vajpayee took an increasingly central role. These shifts were probably more strategic than ideological; the idea that there really is a split in the party over religious mobilization should be regarded with skepticism. As Jaffrelot says, “there clearly is a division of labor, with different politicians speaking in ways that appeal to different groups. A division of labor is not, however, a true division of policy” (475).

In 1996 the BJP won 161 seats, the most of any single party. Sworn in as prime minister, Vajpayee was forced to resign after thirteen days because he could not form a coalition with the requisite majority. A third-party coalition governed until 1998, when new elections led to a BJP victory. This time, and also after the elections of 1999, Vajpayee was able to form an ongoing coalition, called the National Democratic Alliance, or NDA, with a group of regional and caste-based parties. The BJP had 194 seats in 1998 and 182 in 1999, while Congress slipped from 141 in 1998 to 112 in 1999. Most of the regional and caste-based parties increased their share of power between the 1998 and 1999 elections (Jaffrelot 475).

In government, the BJP attempted to establish itself as more than a single-issue party, particularly by portraying itself as the party of economic reform and globalization, of efficiency and an end to corruption, and of nuclear muscle combined with stabilization of the relationship with Pakistan. On matters of foreign policy, the BJP more or less delivered what it had promised: India's nuclear program, matching that of Pakistan, was extremely popular, restoring a sense of national security and pride. In 2002 the Muslim scientist who had been the architect of this program, Abdul Kalam, became president, a canny step to woo the right while reassuring Muslim voters. Although individuals could be found on the left to criticize the entire nuclear arms race (Bidwai and Vanaik), no major political party denounced it, and the BJP had clearly scored a public relations coup. Meanwhile the spectacle of leading politicians visiting Pakistan, while opposed by some, was deeply reassuring to many voters. The gradual reopening of the border (punctuated

by several crises) led to a normalization of relations unprecedented in recent history (Nussbaum 190).

In religious matters, the BJP attempted to distance itself from violence while remaining close to its “base.” This policy proved difficult to sustain, and, in the case of Gujarat, impossible, as the “base” demanded support for Narendra Modi and his lawless activities. The RSS and its allied organizations represent a staggering organizational success. In a country of more than a billion inhabitants, with enormous regional and cultural diversity, they have managed to organize at a grassroots level virtually everywhere, certainly everywhere in the north and west, capturing the hearts of millions and turning them to their cherished causes. The capacity of RSS leaders for selfless discipline and their relatively ascetic lifestyle, in a nation where corruption is rampant, are surely among the factors that have led to its success. There are also its members’ sincere values of character-building, spirituality, unselfishness, loyalty, and charitable service, in a context in which the left and center offer no alternative programs at the grass- roots level to express similar virtues. It is now widely evident that Nehru and Congress, by neglecting the cultivation of liberal religion and the emotional bases of a respectful pluralistic society, left a space, empty since the death of Gandhi, within which the right could easily mobilize. The long failure of Congress to solve the problem of rural poverty has also strengthened the hand of the RSS, since its many valuable relief and charitable programs supply basic needs, drawing people in.

Today, moreover, the advance of the global market and its associated values of self-interest and adaptability, while it puts pressure on the (ostensibly) traditional and

backward-looking cultural values of the RSS, also in many ways strengthens its hand, since it can increasingly be seen (both in India and in the United States) as a bastion of morality and tradition against the encroachments of a rootless amoral globalism. This is one of the prime reason why globalization and right-wing fundamentalism work in tandem with each other, one needing the other to survive.

Finally, the RSS profits greatly from the unimaginative and routinized quality of state-run education: little boys long for an education that is imaginative and fun, and the RSS cannily supplies this need. Above all, however, mobilization thrives on fear and shame. Despite being a majority of more than 80 percent in a thriving democracy, Hindus in India clearly feel both insecure and wounded. Muslim aggression is feared, despite Muslims' small numbers and general poverty, because Muslims are seen (with help from RSS training) as a powerful aggressive force that dominated India for centuries and that seeks to do so again. Indian Hindus still identify with their long-ago situation of subordination and humiliation at the hands of Muslims; they love the plucky rebel Sivaji, who stood up to the dominating Muslim hordes, and their identification with the underdog, mysterious as it is in terms of contemporary political reality, has deep force. Christophe Jaffrelot says that the relationship of the Hindu right to Muslims is one of both stigmatization and emulation: while portraying Muslims as bad because they are aggressive and dominating, the RSS seeks to instill in its members just those traits (*passim*). Jaffrelot's assessment is correct, but it omits the underlying experience of humiliation that is the starting point for both the stigmatization and the emulation. The greatest strength of the RSS lies in its clever exploitation of insecurities that all human

beings feel, but that some feel far more keenly in a rapidly changing world, after a long experience of domination.

On a wide range of issues, the BJP must constantly play a double rhetorical game: speaking moderately to appeal to the center and win votes but sending a message of intense ideological commitment to its base. (Much the same problem besets the Republican Party in the United States today.) Most people believe that the RSS is really calling the tune all the while, behind the scenes, setting the BJP's policy agenda (Nussbaum 184). The biggest critics of the BJP had significant doubts about BJP rise after their 2006 losses: the loss of the leader with the closest ties to the business world spelled further trouble for the BJP, if it wished to unite a pro-business agenda with an ethnoreligious agenda. Mahajan was no moderate; like most BJP leaders, he had been an RSS member since boyhood and had a long history of RSS leadership at both state and national levels. He was, however, somewhat "presentable" to an ideologically diverse group of voters, and his loss further complicates the project of rallying diverse groups behind the BJP banner. Even Nussbaum, in 2006, made an emphatic statement: "Clearly, the time when the BJP will evolve into the "New [American] South" is not yet at hand (Nussbaum 185).

However, instead of trying to take a more centrist stage, the party returned to a hard line on Hindutva and to its RSS roots, with Narendra Modi as its valiant warrior. As a young boy, Narendra Damodardas Modi helped his dad serve tea in Gujarat's Vadnagar railway station. At the age of 63, and as leader of India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, he has become the prime minister of the world's largest democracy. Born on

September 17, 1950, into a low-caste family running a small business, his interest in politics was sparked at an early age: At eight, Modi associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or the RSS, a powerful Hindu nationalist group which rejected secularism and wanted Hinduism enshrined in the Indian Constitution. This policy, Hindutva, remains at the core of the BJP. It was a logical step when Modi joined the BJP in 1985, as the party licked its wounds after winning just two seats in a disastrous showing in 1984 the Lok Sabha elections. He rose steadily through the ranks and was inducted into the national executive in 1991 after aiding Murli Manohar Joshi, a party senior, in his Ekta Yatra (unity journey) to bolster support (Marino). Four years later, and now a stalwart, Modi worked hard behind the scenes to secure the party victory in Gujarat elections. Despite his association with Joshi, it was LK Advani, the BJP's most revered leader, who became his chief political mentor. "It was Advani who mentored Modi when he virtually handpicked him into his team of state apparatchiks after recommendations from a few trusted peers in the late 1980s," writes Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay in Modi's biography, *Narendra Modi: The man*, the Times.

5.3 ANTI-MUSLIM RIOTS

Modi was appointed chief minister of Gujarat, an industrial heartland, in October 2001. But within months, the state was in crisis: more than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in a series of anti-Muslim riots. Modi was accused of doing little to prevent the violence, and was questioned by police amid claims of complicity, but was never charged. Nevertheless, the international response was sharp: a prolonged international boycott, with the US denying the Hindu nationalist a visa. In his 2008

interview with *The Hindu*, Modi said that the judiciary had been “vibrant” in dealing with riot cases. However, a study by Stanford Law School has criticized the low conviction rate in those cases. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the former prime minister of India, wanted to sack Modi after the riots, but he held on after the party stood behind him (Correspondent). Indeed, the religious polarization that followed the 2002 riots actually boosted his electoral prospects. And it was with the downfall of his mentor, Advani, that Modi took his next step to power. Their friendship soured in 2005 when Advani described the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, as “secular” and an “ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.” The Jinnah comment alienated the RSS and forced Advani to resign as the BJP’s president—events which eventually created the space that Modi required (Hindustan Times).

5.4 GLOBALIZATION: ECONOMY FIRST, NATION FIRST?

Modi continued to build his reputation in Gujarat on economic growth, building an efficient business administration and selling the state to the world: in 2009, the Gujarat government hired the US lobbying and public relations firm, APCO Worldwide, to advertise his state as an investment destination (Bhattacharya). Since Modi took control, Gujarat has led the nation in GDP growth and accounts for 16 percent of industrial output, despite having five percent of its population. The western state boasts of uninterrupted power supply and the finest road infrastructure in the country. However, he was criticized for exaggerating the growth, with his policies benefitting the wealthy more than the poor, and favoring a select few corporations (Ghatak and Roy). Nevertheless, his stock within the BJP continued to grow as he projected himself as a man of development,

and a staunch advocate of Hindutva ideology. Modi's biographer, Mukhopadhyay, describes him as charismatic, an "extremely hard-working person, a good administrator but extremely polarizing which is in his [Modi's] political genealogy" (161).

His rise to the top of the BJP was confirmed last year when he became the party's nominee for prime minister - despite the protests of several senior party veterans. And so, it was with the double whammy of Hindu nationalism and promises of economic nirvana, that the BJP leader mounted his assault on the national elections and won the elections for BJP. Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014, and all his involvements in Hindu extremism were forgotten by the Western nations in the name of open markets and terrorists. He is now one of the champions of the "Fight against Terror" along with Donald Trump and other Nationalist Leaders of the world. He is Samuel Huntington's answer to the "Hindu Question."

6. CONCLUSION

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free,
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments,
by narrow domestic walls,
Where words come out from the depth of truth,
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection,
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way,
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit,
Where the mind is led forward by thee,
Into ever-widening thought and action,
Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake.

-Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (1912)

The extent of true freedom in a country can be measured by the extent and nature of people's fear: a country whose people experience fear only when they are harming others is a free country; but where the appeal to fear, especially fear of a group, motivates the core of political life, there is no longer genuine freedom. In 1912 Tagore published *Gitanjali*, an English translation of some of his poems, which captured the attention of Western readers and led to his winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913--the first non-European to do so. One of the three founding fathers of India, Tagore emphasized the need for a liberal education for a well-informed, rational citizen. Founding fathers elsewhere in the world also stressed on the need for an educated citizenry for true

democratic process in a country. For example, Founding Father Thomas Jefferson believed in an educated “elite” — people broadly informed with general knowledge enabling them to govern and be governed.

The ideal would be that all of the world population possess a Tagorian or Jeffersonian, well-rounded education. Instead, we emphasize “training” to equip people with specific job skills. A byproduct of this approach, however, is that they are not exposed to critical analyses. And what we stand to lose are segments of our educational and cultural heritage in the process.

Remember the 2002 Hindu-Muslim riot that I recounted in the beginning of the prologue? Litigation over the site continues. On the site today, nothing but vandalized ruins remain, yet there is intense security (and there have been several attacks to justify the security). Visitors to the site find, in a dark corner of the large, empty space, a small shrine, like a prayer alter at home, with a couple of oleograph pictures of Rama, where a Hindu priest performs a perfunctory prayer. Nearby, in a BJP tent, is a model of the new temple they intend to build. Whether or not there ever was a Hindu temple there before, there is a temple, however makeshift, there now. The 2010 high court verdict was rather ambiguous. While the three-judge bench was not unanimous that the disputed Mosque that was torn down was constructed after demolition of a temple, it did agree that a temple or a temple structure predated the mosque at the same site. The Ayodhya issue has become a touchstone for the BJP in terms of their rhetoric of “Taking our country back.”

Also, The *Ramayana*, “which has been constantly retold in literature and performance throughout India, is to this day performed in Varanasi (the holy city for

Hindus) during a festival that lasts for several weeks each winter. Repressive tellings of the myth use the mythological moment of Ram-raj (Rama's reign), as an imagined India that is free of Muslims and Christians and any other Others, in the hope of "restoring India to the Edenic moment of the *Ramayana*. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, India witnessed an unprecedented rise in militant Hinduism. This phenomenon is a challenging one for social scientists in so far as the essential characteristics of Hinduism scarcely lend themselves to a closed and monolithic radicalism of the type associated with Muslim, Jewish or Christian 'fundamentalisms'. In fact, "Hinduism is distinguished by a socio-cultural differentiation and a capacity for integration which hardly seem compatible with the expression of a militant collective consciousness" (Christopher Jaffrelot 1). Social scientists are confused because this phenomenon, the one that led to the riots of 2002, the one that has led to countless killings and murders in the Indian state, is not a myth. Myths are used to turn people into militants and killers, into mobs that spare no one and brutally destroy lives, and believe that they are sons and daughters of Mother India, working for a common cause. But if we look at how nationalisms are sustained and what mobilizes the masses, then the rise of the right makes sense.

In his classic statement "What is a nation?", originally delivered as a lecture in 1882, French Historian Ernest Renan provides the following definition of the nation:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Only two things, actually, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past; the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage

which all hold in common...To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, to wish to do so again, that is the essential condition for being a nation.

What, you may ask, is the problem with the idea of a nation? Well, nation is a fairly modern concept, but it calls for a nostalgia for the past that sometimes never was. India didn't exist as a nation before 1947. The question of an essential Indian identity didn't come into public consciousness until the late 19th century. The notion of a fundamental Hindu identity also didn't exist until the 20th century. And what better way to imagine an essential idyllic past than to look for outside forces that supposedly disrupted that past, whether those forces are British or Christians or Muslims.

There is a lot of talk about us living in a post nation state; a lot of contemporary critics talk about this, but I think that is a fallacy. Yes, globalization (both in terms of economy and culture) and the Internet and social media make it seem like nation state boundaries don't matter, but they have in fact become even more important. Global capitalist expansions have created huge income disparities throughout the world, and as the poor are getting poorer, contemporary politics needs demagogic figures like Modi and Trump or movements based on Religious Fundamentalism that appeal to people's deepest prejudices, so that the masses can be led to take action.

To win and keep a wide audience, demagogues, they have to hurl out bold ideas, make big generalizations, and speak colorfully. While they are expected to pepper their arguments with facts and information, they know that their audiences will not—and usually cannot—judge them on their detailed knowledge of the subject at hand and will,

instead, judge them on their ability to appear knowledgeable and be charismatic. This means that the leaders who thrive the most are those who cater to their voters' existing prejudices, rather than those who upend their easy assumptions about the world and challenge them to see the world from a new angle. Religious or Racial fundamentalism is reassuring in its simplicity, definitiveness, and self-approval. It appeals to fallen human nature's worst traits: pride, belittling others, self-justification, self-exaltation, and laziness. Plus, they offer severe oversimplification. And in any area of human knowledge, oversimplification distorts the truth. Oversimplification allows fundamentalist movements to seem to understand the entire religion. This appeals to insecure persons, who are uncomfortable with unresolved theological controversies and differing views among members of the same religious group.

The assertion of the 'dominant particular' is not an entirely new phenomenon and is part of that older history of globalization that we know of as imperialism. For instance, in his study of British culture, Stuart Hall (1997) points out that a distinct cultural identity of 'Englishness' was constituted during the height of imperialism, the intensification of world rivalries in which Britain competed for leadership in a world economy defined by colonial conquest. It produced an aggressive form of racism at home that helped fuel its colonial expansionist projects abroad. In the contemporary context of global capitalism, competition between nation states has only become more acute as poorer countries vie with one another to ensure a favorable investment climate for capital that is coercive and volatile. Within the subcontinent, the Indian state is attempting to position itself somewhere close to the 'leading edge' in the new surge of international trade and markets

and is on the brink of political and economic upheaval that perhaps compares in recent times to the period that marked the end of colonial rule. The emergent transformation is accompanied by an anxiety over making one's place within a highly unstable and unregulated environment. Across the globe, mainstream conservative parties have adapted to the rise of the far-right by co-opting some of their largest issues like religious fundamentalism, racial hegemony, and fear of the other. So far, that strategy has proven mostly successful, but a push for a well-informed, educated citizenry who can partake in nuanced dialogue is the way to combat the rise of fundamentalisms.

7. BIBILOGRAPHY

"Persona Non Grata." *The Times of India*, March 19, 2005.

"Report of Concerned Citizens' Tribunal." *Sabrang.com*.

"A Slap in Mr. Modi's Face." *The Hindu*, March 19, 2005.

When Justice Becomes the Victim: The Quest for Justice after the 2002 Violence in Gujarat. International Human Rights And Conflict Resolution Clinic At Stanford Law School, 2014.

Ahmad, Aijaz. *Lineages of the Present Ideologies and Politics of Contemporary South Asia*. Verso, 2000.

Amin, Sonia. *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939*. The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1996.

Arendt, Hanna. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Schocken, 1951.

Ashford, Emma. "What We Get Wrong About the Clash of Civilizations." *Cato-Unbound*, 2017.

Auroux, Sylvain. *History of the Language Sciences*. Walter de Gruyter, 2000.

Bailey, Jean Sylvain. *Letters on the Origin of the Sciences and of the Peoples of Asia*. (*Lettres Sur L'origine Des Sciences Et Sur Celle Des Peuples De L'asie: Addressées À M. De Voltaire Par M. Bailey*). 1777.

Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2000.

Bardhan, Trans. Kalpana, editor. *Of Women, Outcastes, Peasants, and Rebels*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

- Basu, Tapan, et al. *Khakhi Shorts, Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*. Orient Longman, 1993.
- Bayly, C.A. "The Pre-History of "Communalism"? Religious Conflict in India 1700-1800." *MAS* 19(2): 1985.
- Bendyshe, T, editor. *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*. Anthropological Society, 1865.
- Berlin, Isaiah. "Rabindranath Tagore and the Consciousness of Nationality." *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
- Bhattacharya, P. "Us Ad Firm Hardsells Narendra Modi's Image." *India Today*, 2012.
- Blench, Roger. "Archeology and Language: Methoda and Issues." *A Companion to Archeology*, edited by J. Bintliff, Basil Blackwell, 2004, pp. 52-74.
- Briefe. *Ludwig Tieck Und Die Brüder Schlegel* 1930. Lüdecke.
- Brockman, John. "The Genomic Ancient DNA Revolution: A New Way to Investigate the Past: A Conversation with David Reich." *EDGE*, 2016.
- Carnoy, M. "Globalization and Education Reform." *Globalization and Education: Integration and Contestation across Cultures*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.
- Castells, M. *The Rise of the Network Society*. London: Blackwell, 1996.
- Chakravarty, Amiya. *A Tagore Reader*. Beacon, 1961.
- Chamberlain, Houston S. *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. Translated by John Lees. John Lane, 1899.

- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- . *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*. London: Zed Books, 1986.
- . "Secularism and Toleration." *The Economic and Political Weekly of India*, vol. 29, no. 28, 1994, pp. 1768-1777.
- Chomsky, Noam. "Militarism, Democracy, and People's Right to Information." India Seminar, 2001, India.
- Correspondent, HT. "Vajpayee Wanted to Sack Modi Post-Riots." *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 2012.
- Datta, P.K., editor. *Rabindranath Tagore's the Home and the World: A Critical Companion*. Permanent Black, 2003.
- Doniger, Wendy. *The Hindus: An Alternate History*. Penguin Books, 2009.
- Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K. J. Park, Damodar SarDesai, editor. *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*. Lordson Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2004.
- Dumont, Louis. "On the Antagonism between Hindus and Muslims in Terms of Conflicting Value-Systems." *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implication*, 1st edition, University of Chicago Press, 1981, *Nature of Human Society*.
- Dutta, Krishna and Andrew Robinson. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- . *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Elst, Koenraad. *Gandhi and Godse: A Review and a Critique*. Voice of India, 2001.
- Erikson, Erik. *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1969.
- Field, Geoffrey G. *Evangelist of Race: The Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain*. First edition, California University Press, 1981.
- Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India*. New York: Harcourt Inc., 1924.
- Fox, J. "Paradigm Lost: Huntington's Unfulfilled Clash of Civilizations Prediction into the 21st Century." *International Politics*, vol. 42, 2005, pp. 428-457.
- Frykenberg, R.E. "The Emergence of Modern Hinduism as a Concept and as an Institution: A Reappraisal with Special Reference to South India." *Hinduism Reconsidered*, edited by H. Kulke G.D. Sontheimer, Manohar, 1989, p. 30.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford, 1998.
- Gandhi, Mohandas K. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Publications Division, 1958.
- . *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. South Asia Books, 1998.
- . *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Beacon Press, 1993.
- Garland, Cannon H., editor. *The Letters of Sir William Jones*. Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Ghatak, Maitreesh and Sanchira Roy. "Modinomics: Do Narendra Modi's Economic Claims Add Up?" *The Guardian*, London: Guardian News and Media Ltd., 2014.
- Giddens, A. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Polity Press, 1991.

- Gobineau, Arthur, comte de. *The Inequality of Human Races. Translated by Adrian Collins.* William Heinemann, 1853.
- Godse, Nana. "Menathuramgodse.Com."
- Goldman, Robert and Sheldon Pollock. *The Ramayana of Valmiki: An Epic of Ancient India.* vol. I-VII, Princeton Library of Asian Translation, 2016. Translation by Sheldon I. Pollock.
- Golwalkar, M.S. *Bunch of Thoughts.* Jagarana Prakashan, 1966.
- . *We, or Our Nationhood Defined.* P.V. Betalkar, 1947.
- Gopal, S. *Jawaharlal Nehru: Vol. 1, 2, and 3.* Jonathan Cape, 1973-84.
- Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race.* 1st edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.
- Hall, Stuart. *Culture, Globalization, and the World System.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope.* Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- Heffernan, Teresa. "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children.*" *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 46, no. 4, 2000, pp. 470-491.
- Henderson, E.A. and Tucker, R. . "Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 45, 2001, pp. 317-338.
- Hirst, P. and G. Thompson. *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and Possibilities of Governance.* London: Polity Press, 1996.

- Hon. John Conyers, Jr. "Legislation Condemning Religious Persecution and Intolerance in India." edited by The House of Representatives, vol. Volume 151, 2005, p. 5082.
- Hulme, D. & M. Edwards. *Ngos, States, and Doners: Too Close for Comfort?* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Huntington, S. P. "The Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, 1993, pp. 22-49.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Penguin Books India, 1997.
- Jack, Homer A., editor. *The Gandhi Reader*. 1956.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *The Hindu Natioanlist Movement in India*. Columbia University Press, 1996.
- . *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Johnson, W.J. *The Sauptikaparavan of the Mahabharata: The Massacre at Night*. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Jones, Sir William. "Discources Delivered before the Asiatic Society: And Miscellaneous Paper, on the Religion, Poetry, Literature, Etc., of the Nation of India." C.S. Arnold, 1824.
- Joseph, Tony. "How Genetics Is Settling the Aryan Migration Debate." *The Hindu*, June 16, 2017 2017.

- Kamat, Sangeeta. "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India." *Comparative Education*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2004, pp. 267-287.
- Kapoor, Ilan. "Hyper-Self-Reflexive Development? Spivak on Representing the Third World 'Other'." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2013, pp. 627-647.
- Kühl, Stefan. *Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Lesseter, Rupan Jain and Tom. "By Rewriting History, Hindu's Nationalists Aim to Assert Their Dominance over India." *Reuters*, Special Report, March, 6, 2018 2018.
- Marchignoli, Saverio. "Canonizing an Indian Text? A.W. Schlegel, W. Von Humboldt, Hegel, and the *Bhagavadgita*." *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*, edited by Douglas T. McGetchin, Park, Peter K. J., SarDesai, Damodar, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2004, pp. 245-270.
- Marino, Andy. *Narendra Modi: A Political Biography*. Harper Collins, 2014.
- Martin P. Richards, et. al. "A Genetic Chronology for the Indian Subcontinent Points to Heavily Sex-Biased Dispersals." *BMC Evolutionary Biology*, 2017.
- Morris, Rosalind C. *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. New York: Columbia UP, 2010.
- Morrow, R. & C. Torres. *The State, Globalization and Education Policy: Globalization and Education*. Routledge, 2000.

- Mukhopadhyay, Nilanjan. *Narendra Modi: The Man. The Times*. Westland, 2014.
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A., and Mindruta, D. "Was Huntington Right? Testing Cultural Legacies and the Civilization Border. ." *International Politics*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2002, pp. 193-213.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography: Toward Freedom*. The Bodley Head, 1936.
- . *The Discovery of India*. Penguin India, 2008.
- . "A Tryst with Destiny." Guardian News and Media LTD.
<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2007/may/01/greatspeeches>. Accessed March 21 2018.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future*. Harvard University Press, 2007.
- O'Connell, J.T. "The Word "Hindu" in Gaudiya Vaishnava Texts." *Journal of American Oriental Society*, vol. 93, no. 3, 1973, pp. 340-344.
- Poznik, David. "Punctuated Bursts in Human Male Demography Inferred from 1,244 Worldwide Y-Chromosome Sequences." *Nature Genetics*, vol. 48, 2016, pp. 593-599.
- Priya Moorjani, David Reich, et. al. "Genetic Evidence for Recent Population Mixture in India." *American Journal of Human Genetics*, vol. 93, no. 3, 2013, pp. 422-438.
- Rajamani, Ashok. "The Damned Mother and the Unnamed Other: Uncovering the Unconscious in Midnight's Children and Funny Boy." *South Asian Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2005.

- Ramachandran, Deepika. "Play "Glorifying" Nathuram Godse Staged on Bhu Campus: Students File Complaints." *Oneindia.com*, 2018.
- Ramachandran, Rajesh. "The Mastermind?" *Outlook Magazine*, 2004.
- Richards, Robert J. "Race." *Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*, edited by John Heilbron, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . *Was Hitler a Darwinian?* University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Robertson, R. *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. *History as Literature*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- Roover, Balagangadhara Rao and Jacob D. "The Dark Hour of Secularism: Hindu Fundamentalism and Colonial Liberalism in India." *Making Sense of the Secular: Critical Perspectives from Europe to Asia*, edited by Ranjan Ghosh, Routledge, 2013.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. New York: Random House, 1980.
- Russett, B. M., Oneal, J. R., Cox, M. "Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 37, 2000, pp. 583-608.
- Said, Edward. "The Clash of Ignorance." *The Nation*, 2001.
- . *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map*. Pantheon, 2004.
- . *Orientalism*. Pantheon, 1928.
- Sarkar, Tanika. *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community Religion and Cultural Nationalism*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

- Savarkar, V.D. "Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?" 1923.
- Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar. *Who Is a Hindu?* Pandit Bakhle, 1923.
- Sen, Amartya. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1999, pp. 3-17.
- . *Tagore and His India*. Routledge, 1982.
- Seth, Vikram. *A Suitable Boy*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993.
- Sharma, Ram Sharan. *Advent of the Aryans in India*. Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1999.
- Shirer. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. 1959.
- Spivak, G. C. "Nationalism and the Imagination." *Lectora: Revista de Dones i Textualitat, Vol 0, Iss 15, Pp 75-98 (2009)*, no. 15, 2009, p. 75.
- . "Nationalism and the Imagination." *Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community*, edited by J. Sabadell Nieto et al., vol. 37, 2014, pp. 31-55.
- . "Why Study the Past?" *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-12.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, Basinstoke, 1988, pp. 271-318.
- . *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999.
- Stromquist, N. & K. Monkman. "Defining Globalization and Assessing Its Implications on Knowledge and Education." *Globalization and Education: Integration and Contestation across Cultures*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

- Subramaniam, B. "Archaic Modernities: Science, Secularism, and Religion in Modern India." *Social Text*, vol. 64, no. 18, 2000, pp. 67-86.
- Suppes, Shreeya Sinha and Mark. "Timeline of the Riots in Modi's Gujarat." *The New York Times*, The NYTimes Company, August 19, 2015.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *The Religion of Man*. Martino Fine Books, 2013.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Thapar, Romila. "The Ramayana Syndrome." *Seminar* 353, 1989.
- . *Syndicated Moksha*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Tharoor, Shashi. *Nehru: The Invention of India*. Arcade, 2003.
- Thiara, Nicole Weickgenannt. *Salman Rushdie and Indian Historiography: Writing the Nation into Being*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Tikly, L. "Globalization and Education in the Postcolonial World: Towards a Conceptual Framework." *Comparative Education*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2001, pp. 151-171.
- Upstone, Sara. "Domesticity in Magical-Realist Postcolonial Fiction." *Frontiers: A Journal Of Women Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2007, pp. 260-284.
- Vaid, Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh. *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Weikart, Richard. *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*. Palgrave, 2004.
- Zavos, John. *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Ziegenbalg, Bartholomaeus. *A German Exploration of Indian Society : Ziegenbalg's "Malabarian Heathenism" : An Annotated English Translation with an Introduction and a Glossary*. Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006.

Ziegenbalg, Bartholomeus. *Thirty Four Conferences between the Danish Missionaries and the Malabarian Bramans...in the East Indies, Concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*. 1719.

8. VITA

Kavita Pillai's research focuses on the rise of religious and racial fundamentalisms around the world in the age of globalization. Through her research, she demonstrates the rise of Hindu nationalism in India as complementary to globalization, arguing that an economic critique of globalization tends to leave out a cultural critique. Her study concludes that the rise of right wing Hinduism in India has corresponding trends in the U.S. and Europe. Kavita will start her Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Asian Studies Department at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill in Fall 2018.