

Nationalism, Genuine and Spurious

A VERY LATE OBITUARY OF TWO EARLY POSTNATIONALIST STRAINS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism is not patriotism. Nationalism is an ideology and is configured in human personality the way other ideologies are. It rode piggyback into the Afro-Asian world in colonial times as an adjunct of the concept of nation-state. Patriotism is a nonspecific sentiment centering on a form of territoriality that humans share with a number of other species. This unacknowledged difference is central to the spirited critique of conventional nationalism by Mohandas Gandhi, India's Father of the Nation, and the total rejection of nationalism by Rabindranath Tagore, India's national poet.

INDIANS, VINAY LAL TELLS US, ARE INVETERATE RECORD SEEKERS.¹ From no other country does the *Guinness Book of Records* receive so many applications for recognition—at least one-tenth of all applications to the *Guinness Book* emanate from India—and some of them do get into the book: from the silent holy man who stayed on the same spot on a roadside in a village for twenty-two years to someone who wrote 1,314 characters on a single

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¹ Vinay Lal, *Of Cricket, Guinness and Gandhi: Essays on Indian History and Culture* (Calcutta: Seagull, 2003), 1–22, esp. 2, 4–5.



grain of rice to set a record in microwriting.² Strangely, the record that the Indians have *not* claimed is a unique one; it involves an achievement that has not been equaled in the three-hundred-fifty-year-long history of nation-states and is unlikely to be broken while the nation-state system survives. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), by common consent India’s national poet, who wrote and scored India’s national anthem, was also the writer and composer of the national anthem of Bangladesh. In recent years, anti-India feelings have grown in Bangladesh, and there is also a budding fundamentalist movement in the country, hostile to everything Indian or Hindu. Yet not one voice has been raised, to the best of my knowledge, against the national anthem written by Tagore. That is not all. Tagore also scored Sri Lanka’s national anthem, though he did not write the lyrics. Sri Lankans, too, may not always live happily with the Indian state, but they seem to live happily with India’s national poet.

Tagore’s example does not stand alone; there are other less dramatic instances of the same kind. The song “Sare Jahan se Accha,” by Mohammad Iqbal, the national poet and one of the founding fathers of Pakistan, is the main marching song of the Indian army, even when it marches to fight the Pakistani army. Obviously, the concepts of territoriality and “national culture” work a trifle differently in South Asia.

After he won the Nobel Prize in 1913, Tagore became a pan-Asian hero. He was the first Asian to win a Nobel Prize in any field, and he did so in the high noon of colonialism. That mattered. In 1916, when World War I was raging in Europe, Tagore went to Japan for the first time on a lecture tour. When he arrived at Kobe, the Japanese welcomed him very warmly. At some places, he was treated like a monarch on a state visit, and his movements were reported on the front pages of some Japanese newspapers. Unfortunately, some of the lectures Tagore delivered were on nationalism. Today, they may not seem disturbingly radical; some of the arguments are now familiar, though others look remarkably fresh and provocative.³ But none of them is likely to set the Bay of Tokyo on fire. However, at the time the Japanese were in the throes of a rather delirious version of nationalism, and they found Tagore’s critique of nationalism terribly disconcerting. The lectures included not only a severe indictment of militarism and imperialism inspired by nationalism but also snide comments on Japan’s newly forged political self-centering on the idea of European-style nationalism. What was dangerous for Japan, Tagore insisted, was “not the imitation of the outer features of the West, but acceptance of the motive force of the Western nationalism as her own.”⁴ Embarrassed and angry, most Japanese newspapers and intellectuals explained away the contents of the lectures as the ramblings of a poet from a defeated civilization (as some Chinese were to do, for a different set of reasons, when Tagore visited China in 1924). Basking in Japan’s newfound imperial glory and its success as a new global power, they found Tagore to be a pain in the neck. When Tagore had arrived at Tokyo railway station, thousands came to welcome him. When he left Japan, it is said that only one person came to see him off—his host.⁵

² Ibid.

³ Rabindranath Tagore, *On Nationalism* (1917; Madras: Macmillan, 1930).

⁴ Ibid., 77–78.

⁵ For a detailed, useful introduction to criticisms of Tagore in Japan, China, and India, see Stephen Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and His Critics in Japan, China, and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); see also Sisir Kumar Das, “The Controversial Guest: Tagore in China,” in *Across the Himalayan*

Nationalism was not in short supply in colonial India either. Many Indians also found Tagore's behavior strange, though not inexplicable or unexpected. Their response to the poet was in many ways compatible with the response to him in Japan and China.⁶ He had already antagonized hard-boiled Indian nationalists by rejecting the idea of nationalist violence; they were prepared to expect the worst from him. Three of his novels—*Gora* (1909), *Ghare Baire* (1916), and *Char Adhyay* (1934)—were seen as direct attacks on hard-edged, masculine nationalism. They offended the sentiments of many who had to tolerate them for reasons of political correctness, for paradoxically, Tagore was already India's unofficial national poet. Not only had he written hundreds of patriotic songs, but these songs were also an inspiration to many participants in India's freedom struggle—from Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to humble volunteers and protesters facing police batons and bullets. Even in jail, many freedom fighters kept up their spirits by singing Tagore's songs.



We have two clues that should enable us to resolve this seeming inconsistency. First, in Tagore's Bengali writings, he used about fifteen expressions to denote one's love for one's country—ranging from *deshabbiman* and *swadeshprem* to *deshbhakti* and *Swadeshchetana*. But he used none of them as a synonym or translation of the word “nationalism.” When he meant nationalism he used the English words “nation” and “nationalism” in Bengali script to distinguish that concept from the one denoted by the first set of words. Tagore was a patriot but not a nationalist. He thought there was nothing in common between the territoriality associated with the various vernacular concepts of patriotism and the new idea of territoriality grounded in the idea of the nation-state and the ideology of nationalism. I suspect that he thought the former to be tied to the idea of home and the latter to be an artificial construct that looked instrumentally at the former and, indeed, was often built on the ruins of the former since nationalism was partly a reaction to a sense of being uprooted or rendered homeless.

Tagore's understanding of nationalism—that is, its genuine European version that took its final shape in the nineteenth century as an inseparable adjunct of the modern nation-state and the idea of nationality—is made explicit in a number of essays and letters, but the most moving and disturbing exploration of the social and ethical ramifications of the idea can be found in his three political novels: *Gora*, *Ghare Baire*, and *Char Adhyay*. Each of the novels is built around a significant political formulation, though it is doubtful whether the poet did so deliberately. In *Gora*, Tagore gives a powerful psychological definition of nationalism in which that ideology becomes a defense against recognizing the permeability of the boundaries of one's self, a porousness that the cultures in his part of the world sanction. He in effect argues that the idea of nationalism is intrinsically non-Indian or anti-Indian, an offense against Indian civilization and its principles of religious and cultural plurality. *Ghare Baire* is a story of how nationalism dismantles community life and releases the demon of ethnoreligious violence. It destroys the

Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China, ed. Tan Chung (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, 1998), http://ignca.nic.in/ks_41037.htm.

⁶ Private correspondence between the novelist Saratchandra Chattopadhyay and writer-musician Dilip Kumar Roy reveals that many of the young revolutionaries of Bengal, serving long jail sentences for their participation in the freedom struggle, eagerly waited for publication of the national poet's *Char Adhyay* and were deeply hurt and felt betrayed by Tagore's stance on nationalism, particularly its violent version.

“home” by tinkering with the moral basis of social and cultural reciprocity and hospitality in the Indic civilization. *Char Adhyay* is an early, perhaps the first, exploration of the roots of industrialized, assembly-line violence as a particular feature of the modern age; hence, it anticipates the works of Hannah Arendt, Robert J. Lifton, and Zygmunt Bauman on the changing nature of organized mass violence and its links with nationalism.⁷

All three novels can also be read as a charged, almost obsessive conversation with his close friend Brahmabandhav Upadhyay (1861–1907), the Catholic theologian and Vedantist who arguably and paradoxically was India’s first modern, Hindu-nationalist activist-scholar and the first to articulate a theory of aggressive Hindu nationalism—though arguments with Swami Vivekananda, Nivedita, and perhaps even Rudyard Kipling can also be found in the novels. Tagore scatters his and Upadhyay’s fears, anxieties, hopes, and visions and other aspects of themselves in the personalities of the heroes and the antiheroes of the novels.⁸

The second clue to Tagore’s perspective on the issue of nationalism versus patriotism comes from his understanding of the cultural unity of India. Unlike many others in his and our times, Tagore believed that although the canonical texts of India—the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita—might be at the center of India’s classical culture, they do not constitute the heart of Indian unity or provide the basis for it. Here he differed radically from the likes of Ramohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and an array of eminent nineteenth-century thinkers who believed that the canonical texts of Hinduism defined the basis of Indianness. Indian unity, Tagore insisted, is built on the thoughts and the practices of the medieval mystics, the poets, and the religious and spiritual figures.⁹ In such a country, importing the Western concept of nationalism amounted to something like Switzerland trying to build a navy.¹⁰

This must have been a terribly painful position for Tagore to take. He was a Brahmo and belonged to a family that had been at the forefront of the nineteenth-century reform movements within Hinduism. The Brahmos made it a point to deploy the so-called uncontaminated, canonical, sacred texts of India like the Vedas and Upanishads to fight for social reform among Hindus—to oppose sati, fight untouchability, promote widow remarriage, and battle child marriage. Tagore’s stance negated a part of his own inheritance and self. It also opposed the entrenched belief of a large proportion of India’s modern elite, who were influenced by the three major nineteenth-century reform movements in Hinduism (Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission), that the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita enshrined a more rational strand in Indian tradition and could be the main means of fighting the deformities of Hinduism, which seemingly were sanctioned by the less canonical strands of traditions.

On the other hand, Tagore’s position opened up the possibility of viewing India as a relatively fluid, less rigidly bordered cultural entity defined by a number of mystics and saints, the boundaries of whose religious identities were never exactly clear. Like Kabir, Na-

⁷ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Viking, 1963); Robert J. Lifton, *Nazi Doctors: Medical Killings and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁸ On the complex relationship between Tagore and Upadhyay, both as persons and as theorists of nationalism, see Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁹ Tagore, *On Nationalism*, 64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

nak, Bulleh Shah, and Lalan, they could simultaneously belong to more than one religious tradition. Also, this way of defining India's oneness partly dissociated Indianness from the state and allowed some degree of skepticism toward the ideology of a national state, an ideology toward which modern India was already showing a certain fondness.¹¹ Tagore was seeking to clearly separate patriotism from nationalism so as to create an intellectual and psychosocial base that would allow the "natural" territoriality of a political community to avoid metastasizing into European-style nationalism. He knew the record of nationalism within Europe and in the Southern Hemisphere, and he foresaw the devastation toward which European nationalism was pushing its homeland and the world.

Even though they sometimes differed radically on public issues, Tagore was a friend and admirer of Gandhi. He was the first person to call Gandhi a mahatma and invited Gandhi to take care of his alternative university at Shantiniketan after his death. He made Gandhi a trustee of Shantiniketan. Gandhi reciprocated these sentiments and was the first person to call Tagore *gurudev*, a "teacher-god." He also shared Tagore's belief that Indian unity was primarily a product of medieval, not classical, India. His dismissive comments on iconic nineteenth-century religious reformers like Rammohun Roy and their religious reform movements, all of which advocated a return to the canonical texts, reflect that agreement. It is not surprising that though he started from an entirely different intellectual vantage point, Gandhi's concept of nationalism at one point converged with that of Tagore. Those who have read or even skimmed the hundred-volume *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* know that references to nationalism in them are sparse.¹² Most of these mentions are critical and seek to differentiate it from its European namesake. Gandhi was always keen to define his nationalism as a part of his universal struggle for justice and equality, and he made it clear that the other name for armed nationalism was imperialism, which he considered a curse.¹³ Gandhi may be the official Father of the Indian Nation, but he was hardly a genuine nationalist. He was mainly an uncompromising anti-imperialist. His much maligned, ultranationalist assassin, Nathuram Godse, understood this part of the story much better than many Gandhians did and acted upon it.



I am treading on dangerous ground. Not only have I drawn attention to the eccentric hostility of our national poet to the idea of nationalism, but I have diagnosed the nationalism of the father of the nation as fraudulent. Worse, I have read his assassin's nationalism as the genuine stuff, grounded in dominant contemporary ideas of sanity and rationality. Please note, however, that I have not accused these two most eminent figures of contemporary India of being unpatriotic. For those who think that nationalism and patriotism are the same, I consider it my responsibility to spell out here, even at the cost of simplification, the differ-

¹¹ Partha Chatterjee is uncomfortable with this formulation. Tagore was not against the idea of the state, he suggests. "Ravindrik Nation Ki," Sunil Kumar Sen Memorial Lecture, Baromas, Annual Puja No., 2003, 7–25. Maybe Tagore was not, but if we do not conflate the idea of the state with that of the nation-state, Tagore obviously could not be particularly fond of the idea of the nation-state, given that such a state cannot be dissociated from nationalism, which is expected to act as its binding cement.

¹² M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 100 vols. (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1960–94).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25:369.

ences between nationalism and what, in the absence of a better term, I have called patriotism.¹⁴

To talk of the obvious first, patriotism is an emotional state, bonding, or investment; it is a sentiment. Nonspecific, nonideological territoriality—of the kind seen in many species of nonhuman mammals and in some species of birds and insects—is the basis of patriotism. Such feelings of territoriality are seen as natural to human beings, both by those who share the feelings and by those who claim that they do not.

Nationalism is an ideology—not in the sense in which Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim defined the term “ideology” but in the sense in which psychologists use the term: as an identifiable pattern of attitudes, beliefs, values, and needs in human personality. Even those who use the term “nationalism” without caring about its ideological contents end up imbibing some of the contents. This is because they have to constantly interact with those who carry the ideological baggage of nationalism and are affected by such consensual validation. Nationalism, thus, is a more specific, ideologically tinged, ardent form of “love of one’s own kind” that is essentially ego-defensive and overlies some degree of fearful dislike or positive hostility to “outsiders.” It is ego-defensive because it is often a reaction to the inner, unacknowledged fears of atomization or psychological homelessness induced by the weakening or dissolution of primordial ties and the subsequent growing individuation, by alienating work, and by the death of vocations, which are in turn brought about by technocratic capitalism, urbanization, and industrialization. Often such nationalism is honed by the uprooting—and the consequent sense of loss—that urbanization and development bring about.

On this plane, nationalism is a compensatory mechanism. It supplies, in the form of a nation, a pseudocommunity, as Hannah Arendt once named it, or an imaginary community, as Benedict Anderson has described it at greater length. Patriotism, on the other hand, presumes the existence of communities other than the country and gives them due recognition, sometimes even priority. It is at least vaguely aware that there can be contradictions between the demands of the nation and those of these communities. Unlike nationalism, patriotism does not claim that the ideal relationship between the individual and the state is an unmediated one.

Second, nationalism is also partly a response to the awareness that the world is dominated by and organized around nation-states and that the rules of international diplomacy and power play have been framed with nation-states in mind. Survival in such a world demands knowledge of these rules, skill in handling them, and some ease with the culture of nation-states. A degree of statism is, thus, an unavoidable adjunct of nationalism.¹⁵

¹⁴ I am aware that in countries like the United States of America and France the borderline between nationalism and patriotism has been traditionally blurry, so that the terms are often used interchangeably. To some extent, this is true of much of South Asia, too. At one time, this did not matter. I am trying to draw a clear line between the two because, with the quickening pace of modernization and integration into a global system, we are getting the purer, copybook instance of nationalism and have begun to pay the consequences. Political theory demands that we make this analytic distinction at this point in time.

¹⁵ When contemporary India’s best-known theorist of Hindu nationalism, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883–1966)—scholar, poet, revolutionary, and the real inspirer of Gandhi’s assassination—accused Gandhi of being “unscientific” and “unscholarly,” it was not merely because of Brahmanic contempt for what to Savarkar looked like amateurish political thought but also because of the widely shared fear among India’s modernizing elite that Gandhi was flouting the canons of modern political theory and statecraft. See Ashis Nandy, “The Demonic and the Seductive in Religious Nationalism: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and the Rites of Exorcism in Secularizing South Asia,” in *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics* (Virtual Jaspers Centre, University of Heidelberg,

Patriotism makes no such presumption or demand. Being a sentiment it does not have to be organized around the concept of a national state. Even when the state becomes central in some situations, as, for instance, when a country faces attack and patriotic feelings are roused, that centrality is transient and has a clear instrumental touch.

Also, unlike nationalism, which demands a uniform allegiance or loyalty to the state, patriotism can live with different levels of loyalty, affiliation, and allegiance to the state. The relationship between the state and patriotism is open to bargaining. Some may show allegiance by paying a substantial or a nominal tribute, others by contributing to or serving in the state's army, still others by granting certain one-sided privileges to those controlling the state.¹⁶ This also means that patriotism can probably bring together people for a particular cause only when there is something close to a consensus in the society. And that consensus is usually issue specific. For instance, the anti-imperialism that patriotism breeds is not automatically driven by dreams of homogenized nation-states that would mimic the imperial states in all respects, except that the rulers of these future states would come from among the former colonial subjects.

In sum, the crucial premise of nationalism is that the state is central to public life, if not to life itself. In postcolonial societies, nationalism usually works with a popular, lowbrow version of the Hegelian idea of the state, picked up from the global culture of common sense. Patriotism may or may not be statist, but it is usually less uncomfortable with civil society. The state enters the picture as a distant player in day-to-day life.

Third, nationalism insists on the primacy of national identity over identities built on subnational allegiances—religions, castes, sects, linguistic affiliations, and ethnicities. It promotes decontextualized formulas or slogans like “We are Indians first, then Hindus, Tamils, or Dalits,” for nationalism expects all identities to be subservient to the interests of the national state. As a general rule, nationalism fears other identities as potential rivals and subversive presences. Patriotism does not automatically demand such primacy; on the whole, the state is expected to serve the needs of a society and a culture, not the other way round.

Fourth, it follows from the earlier three propositions that nationalism presumes some degree of modernity. Patriotism does not and, as we all know, has flourished in premodern times and in nonmodern societies. To that extent, it is more open to a postnationalist, postmodern world. One suspects that the survival of communities and a modicum of popular suspicion toward unbridled individualism are essential for nonnationalist forms of patriotism to prosper. As a form of territoriality, patriotism works with a concept of “home” that could be a country but could also be a region, city, or village.

2009), www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/news/new-publication-by-professor-ashis-nandy-the-demonic-and-the-seductive-in-religious-nationalism; and Ashis Nandy, “The Lure of ‘Normal’ Politics: Gandhi and the Battle for Popular Culture of Politics in India,” *South Asian Popular Culture* 5, no. 2 (October 2007): 167–78.

¹⁶ The Mughal and Ottoman Empires were reasonably good examples of what I have in mind. It is by following the conventions of the Mughal Empire that the British-Indian Empire, too, allowed some degree of differentiation in alliance to the empire. It can be argued that the Cabinet of India mission plan envisaged a similar arrangement for independent India. So did, many have now begun to suspect, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, as opposed to the more “progressive” statist in the Indian National Congress, who sought a powerful, highly centralized, unitary state in tune with then-fashionable socialist dogmas. That the Indian state gradually came to resemble what Arend Lijphart was to later call a “consociational state” is a different story. See, e.g., Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); and Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

However, to complete the picture one must add that, beyond a point, modernity and individuation begin to blunt the edge of nationalism, when the middle classes theoretically love nationalism but also begin to see it as a needless constraint on the pursuit of individual self-interest and—this is probably a relatively new development—on socially sanctioned hedonism. It is not surprising that China and India are today two of the most nationalistic countries in the world despite the frequent laments of their rulers that their citizens are not nationalistic enough. Probably the threshold of modernization and individuation, after which nationalism looks a bit like a liability, has not been crossed in these societies.

Fifth, nationalism, since it is an ideology, has a positive content, to which the nationalist must conform. That content may sometimes be loosely defined and also may sometimes allow some leeway, but it is always there. Hence, there is ample scope in nationalism for identifying deviants and traitors and for witch hunts. Patriotism is relatively content free; it does not clearly benchmark the features of a patriot. It involves a fluid form of territoriality. Hence, it is nationalism and not patriotism that can more easily be the last resort of a scoundrel.¹⁷

This also means that in South Asia, nationalism as an ideology has a thin presence in most citizens. Not only are the religions alive and kicking in this part of the world, but so are many aspects of the traditional cosmologies aligned or associated with religions. You can draw your gods and saints, your demons and witches, from these cosmologies and do not have to adore or hunt them according to the fiats of nationalism or, for that matter, any ideology. Nationalism at this level is a viable ideological entity mainly among the small minority of urban, educated, modern citizens in whom the principles of the older way of life have become shaky. This probably explains the spectacular oscillations in the public life of the region between short periods of ardent, maniacal nationalism and equally ardent defiance or neglect of the core tenets of nationalism.

Sixth, nationalism, being an ideology, has to have not merely an identifiable content but also a theoretical frame, however coarse and repetitive. That frame includes a set of ends and means; a series of propositions on national culture and national community, their origins and differentiae; and an idea of national interest that supersedes the interests of aggregates larger and smaller than the nation. These are seen as the building blocks of an existing or potential nation-state. In the Southern Hemisphere, particularly among the modern elite, certain magical qualities are imputed to this frame and these are seen as crucial clues to the West's power and success. The culture of common sense in the global middle class does not go that far, but it does see nationalism as an inescapable part of a modern nation-state. Even the critics of nationalism, including many who see it as an unmitigated evil, usually believe it to be an unavoidable stage in a country's political life.

This theoretical frame of nationalism strengthens its homogenizing role in society and turns it into a housebroken version of patriotism in a modern state. In this respect the career of nationalism in our times runs parallel to that of the ideology of secularism. The role of the

¹⁷ This is not an attempt to give an unqualified endorsement of patriotic sentiments. I am trying to spell out the distinct organizational principles of a state of mind called nationalism. To do so, one must disentangle the two concepts and be aware that when they talk of patriotism, many have in mind nationalism and vice versa. Everyone knows the bloody record of patriotism in premodern times and nonmodern societies. Few seem alert to the way anxieties and fears associated with territoriality have been given a particular slant in contemporary times under the global nation-state system, the way a natural human instinct like aggression is given an unnatural form in wars and genocides.

ideology of secularism, too, is to produce docile, manageable versions of religions with which the modern state can easily establish a quid pro quo.

Finally and most importantly, nationalism follows the iron law associated with all ideologies, Marxism to developmentalism and feminism to Hindutva: nationalism has at its core, at best discomfort or ambivalence, and at worst contempt, for its targeted beneficiaries. From the left-Hegelian discomfort with the masses who seem insufficiently revolutionary to Hindutva's contempt for the Hindus who seem inadequately masculine, martial, and organized, it is the same story. Nationalists are always nervous that the nation is not nationalistic enough, that it is gullible about its own interests and security needs, insensitive to humiliation, and ever unwilling to actualize its full potentialities. Hence, the more the nationalists come to love the abstract entity called the nation, the more they dislike the real-life persons and communities that constitute the nation.¹⁸ The frequent witch hunts that the ultranationalists mount are a direct outcome of this ambivalence.



Let me end the story by reaffirming that two of the most prominent figures in twentieth-century India, Tagore and Gandhi, looked forward to a postcolonial India that would also simultaneously be a postnationalist one. They might not have worded their critiques this way, but that is because the political vocabulary available to them was narrower. While it is true that some of their writings allow a casual reader to classify them as nationalists—official India has already done so and gotten away with it—they both were at least imperfect or bad nationalists. To call them nationalists is to vend a local, vernacular version of territoriality, a patently ersatz nationalism.

One issue has remained unresolved. If patriotism is a preideological state of mind, closer to our biological selves, and nationalism is an ideology, nationalism should be more space bound and time bound. Yet the content of nationalism has shown very little variation over cultural and geographical borders. Probably this has something to do with Europe's triumphant presence in the Southern Hemisphere during the high noon of nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. For all we know, nationalism outside Europe might have taken a different shape if it had not been seen in the South as a universal, modern technology—by many as a European magic—that had to be mastered to beat Europe at its own game. Early in its life, nationalism became part of the social-evolutionist baggage exported to and internalized by the defeated civilizations.

Fortunately for the Indian nationalists, secular or otherwise, the evil influence of the two maverick thinkers I have discussed is now waning. We are now proudly moving toward the genuine thing—the real, textbook version of nationalism, about which Ernest Gellner once said that you do not have to examine its contents in different parts of the world, for they are always the same.¹⁹ That is, paradoxically, nationalist thought is never nationally distinctive; it

¹⁸ Perhaps the most extreme example of this split is Adolf Hitler's last testament, where he insisted that the German people did not deserve to survive because they had proven themselves weaker than the people of the East. One finds shades of such attitudes in a number of Hindu nationalist texts, notably in V. D. Savarkar, who believed that only Europeanized Hindus operating as proper textbook examples of a nationality could fulfill their destiny.

¹⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

is globalized by definition. And it was so decades before globalization became a buzz word. A recent survey in forty-four countries shows the Indians to be the most nationalistic in the world. India is now more nationalistic than Pakistan, the United States, and the United Kingdom.²⁰ Both Tagore and Gandhi, if they were alive, might have felt this to be a prescription for disaster but, fortunately, they are dead. Indeed, to spite them, the clones of Professors A. Q. Khan and Raja Ramanna are swarming all over South Asia. Who cares about two effete, wishy-washy, woolly-headed dreamers driven by cultural nostalgia and a foolishly uncritical, romanticized view of India's past as a resource for its future? A

²⁰ Prमित Pal Chaudhuri, "Poll Shows Indians Are Most Nationalistic," *Hindustan Times*, June 8, 2003. The column is based on the results of the Pew Global Attitudes Project, which collected data from forty-four countries, including Pakistan, the United States, Bangladesh, and the United Kingdom. For more details, see Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Views of a Changing World": June 2003, <http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:CR8IDQJl2AoJ:peoplepress.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf+pew+global+attitudes+project+india%2Bnationalism&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=4&client=firefox-a>.