

ABSTRACT

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Terrorism has a predilection with nations and nationalism and it plays on the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and violence. But “forgetting” this violence and bloodshed was crucial to the perpetuation of the myth of civilized nations. While Postcolonial Studies has offered incisive justifications for anti-imperialist movements and the creation of new nations within the colonizer/colonized paradigm, there is now a need to critically examine terrorism with its demands for new nations with its narratives of violence.

This dissertation, *Mapping Terrorism: Amorphous Nations, Transient Loyalties* is a comparative study of the narratives of terrorism in specific texts that invoke the re-imagining of the narratives of the nation and the re-configuration of

national subjectivities. Furthermore, since globalization has extended the national imaginary beyond borders, it has forced us to engage with the implications of diasporic populations that have sometimes attributed to the formation of transnational communities of violence (both real and imagined). Through my analysis of fictional representations of terrorists, terrorism and terrorist acts in cinema and fiction and using the rubric of Postcolonial Studies, I locate these narratives within a discursive space framed by the interstices of dominant discourses, where nation and state do not collide. For my larger overarching argument in theorizing terrorism, I introduce a new category of **(anti)nationalisms** that includes all forms of variant nationalisms like sub-nationalisms, ethnonationalisms, counter-nationalisms, fundamentalisms, extremism, secessionism etc., each of which is uniquely different but all of which define themselves using the discourse of Nationalism as its oppositional 'Other'. Using this overarching category of (anti)nationalisms offers us a new space – an in-between space, to talk about variant nationalisms that are not necessarily congruent with terrorism. Doing so, offers us the opportunity to address each of these variant nationalisms in depth without having to engage with issues of ethical implications of these imaginings. It is my assertion that (anti)nationalisms are the geneses of all terrorist activities and conversely, terrorism can be argued as constituting the performative aspect of the political agenda of (anti)nationalisms. My dissertation thus addresses a broader need for theorizing terrorism through cultural representations within the framework of Postcolonial Studies.

MAPPING TERRORISM: AMORPHOUS NATIONS,
TRANSIENT LOYALTIES

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Terrorism has a predilection with nations and nationalism and it plays on the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and violence. Violence has always been inherent in the birth of new nations. In 1882, Ernst Renan, in his seminal essay, “What is a Nation?” declared, “Historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origins of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial. Unity is always affected by means of brutality...”(11). But “forgetting” this violence and bloodshed was crucial to the perpetuation of the myth of civilized nations. Similarly, even as this symbiotic relationship between nationalism and violence was echoed in the anti-colonial resistance against imperialism and the birth of new nations in the postcolonial era, it was the collective forgetting of violence in the exuberance of the immediate postcolonial moment that was crucial to the myth of nation building. Although this violence and trauma was initially suppressed in collective public memory, its displacement into the discursive public sphere came when it eventually emerged in fictional narratives, biographical accounts or stories transcribed from oral lore to be subsequently examined with academic rigor.

But several decades later, newer narratives of violence in the form of terrorism have emerged and their intersections with the discourses of nationalism raise crucial questions about the legitimacy as well as the ethical implications of such

imaginings. While Postcolonial Studies has offered incisive and powerful justifications for anti-imperialist movements and the creation of new nations within the colonizer/colonized paradigm, how do we begin to critically examine terrorism with its demands for new nations and its narratives of violence within the framework of Postcolonial Studies? When Nationalism is invoked through fictional representation of terrorist narratives in fiction and popular film, how do these texts negotiate the thin line between legitimate desires for nationhood and those that hijack nationalism as a discourse to feed the fanatic frenzies of a community based on violence?

Let me use a much misused analogy of color – black, white and shades of grey to illustrate what it is that I endeavor to achieve through my dissertation. Nationalism, as we shall show in the following chapter, is a well developed discourse, albeit it is still being interrogated and reworked. It can be represented in my analogy as being painted white, sanitized by the ‘forgetting’ of violence inherent in the creation of the nation and the annual ritualistic celebration that marks this moment. Terrorism, as we know it today, is a reality we all have to contend with but despite its significant spread, it remains an undefined entity. In the minds of the public and the media blitz that surrounds it and which terrorism feeds on, as well as, in the corridors of the governments of all nation-states, terrorism has taken on a life of its own. But terrorism as a construct has no clearly defined discursive space because of the ethical implications involved because one nation’s terrorism is another nation’s nationalism

and because in today's world, the role of the nation-state has again come under scholarly scrutiny. Since terrorism has been associated with death, destruction and the forces of evil, let us paint it black. The problem I am trying to articulate, here, is what language do we need to talk about all those shades of grey in between? Who speaks for those transitional movements that lurk somewhere in that space of in-betweenness, not yet recognized as legitimate nationalisms and yet not marked by the macabre violence of terrorism? If the role of the nation-state itself is being re-examined, what identity can we ascribe to these movements? My category of **(anti)nationalisms** is an umbrella term that incorporates all these variant forms of nationalism, that use nationalism as their oppositional 'other' and have arisen out of the fissures and disjunctures in the nation, where the nation and the nation-state do not overlap. My analogy of color takes on far more symbolism than I initially intended, loaded with the signification attributed to these color codes but I must confess, inspired by the color coding that the Homeland Security uses to earmark stages of preparedness in the face of terror attacks in the US. But to reiterate, this identification of a key term - (anti)nationalisms is my critical intervention in debates surrounding nationalism and terrorism.

My dissertation, *Mapping Terrorism: Amorphous Nations, Transient Loyalties* is a comparative study of the narratives of terrorism in specific texts (film and fiction from the Indian subcontinent in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English as well as from the US) and how these fictional representations invoke the re-imagining of the narratives

of the nation, and the re-configuration of national subjectivities. Furthermore, I argue, that the effects of globalization in the recent past extend these narratives of the nation beyond borders, forcing us to engage with the implications of diasporic populations that have sometimes attributed to the formation of trans-national communities of violence (both real and imagined). Through my analysis of fictional representations of terrorists, terrorism and terrorist acts in Cinema and Fiction, I use the rubric of postcolonial studies to locate these narratives within a discursive space framed by the interstices of dominant discourses, where nation and state do not collide, and what Gayatri Spivak appropriately calls the “loosened hyphen between the nation and state” (364).

For my larger overarching argument in theorizing terrorism through this use of counter-narratives of nationalism, I use my category of **(anti)nationalisms** that includes all forms of variant nationalisms like sub-nationalisms, ethnonationalisms, counter-nationalisms, fundamentalisms, extremism, secessionism etc., each of which is uniquely different but all of which define themselves using the discourse of Nationalism as its oppositional ‘Other’. Using this category of (anti)nationalisms, I argue enables my analysis of these films to show the perpetuation and projection of a national imaginary through narratives of terror in popular cinema.

My choice of texts locate this analysis, in the convergence and divergence of the forces of nationalism with terrorism(s) mediated through the (anti)nationalisms that arise out of certain local and regional territories of the Indian subcontinent,

specifically the Indian border states of Punjab, Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Assam. In my analysis, these texts, serve to interrogate the genesis of terrorism in the secessionist movements like the demand for Khalistan and Bodoland (*Maachis* and *Dil Se*); counter-nationalisms like the long festering Kashmir issue (*Roja, Mission Kashmir*); ethnonationalism like the LTTE's demand for a Tamil homeland (*The Terrorist*); and religious fundamentalisms like those invoked in the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947 (*Tamas*) and the recent resurgent Hindu fundamentalism that seeks to promote a new national identity rooted in militant Hindutva (*Riot, Bombay*). The rise of religious fundamentalisms (Hindu, Sikh and Islamic) in these states can be attributed to a wide range of causes that resonate within these texts - from economic disparities to divisive issues of class and gender. The ethnonationalism in these texts derives from linguistic chauvinism to well-established ethnic identities. The introduction of material and ethical valences further complicates the formulation of national identity through the underlining regional and cultural differences, essential to this study of terrorism as a trope in fiction and film.

In my dissertation, my chapter on fiction anchors my argument in the history of nationalism in the Indian subcontinent. It covers a temporal span of several decades, from the 1930s colonial India to contemporary India. The incipient nationalism in *Tamas* is inflected by the colonizing mission, the echoes of which we see in the postcolonial nationalism of *Riot* which contribute to my reading of collective violence or riots as manifestations of religious fundamentalisms.

The relationship between cinema and nation is a vexed one. For my dissertation in my analysis of both Bollywood and Hollywood popular cinema, I move away from using the category of national cinema, which to me is not only problematic but also inadequate in many ways. It brings to mind government controlled cinema, limited in its scope and that does not allow for the several kinds of cinema that emerge from within the same nation-state. For example, can American national cinema be seen as synonymous with Hollywood cinema? The answer is obvious. For the purposes of my dissertation, I steer clear of the category of national cinema, using more popular categories like Hollywood and the derivative “Bollywood cinema” to classify the films in this study.

Bollywood cinema is distinctly different from Hollywood cinema despite the derivative name which I see as merely a tongue in cheek reference to Hollywood. One of the problems with working with Bollywood Cinema has been the limited body of scholarly work that surrounds it. The distinct differences in film making styles vis-à-vis Hollywood makes it impossible to directly import film theory about classical Hollywood towards the reading of Bollywood films. Theorizing Bollywood is still a process in the initial stages although several critics have attempted to compile a narrative style that is unique to Bollywood and defines Bollywood films. Lalitha Gopalan, in a nod towards this reality, suggests, “Instead of putting forward a separate theoretical paradigm for reading Indian cinema, I suggest calibrating film theory through a reading of *interruptions* in Indian films, thus rupturing the

provincialism surrounding film theory, and in the process, rejuvenating it” (24). A reading of interruptions would thus include the foregrounding of differences and highlighting of the points of contact between the two different styles of filmmaking. Though I draw attention to the lack of a single comprehensive indigenous film theory about the style of Bollywood filmmaking, I do draw on the work of several Indian film scholars in my readings of Bollywood cinema. Using a similar structure of borrowing and adapting Western film theory, I incorporate terms from Western film theory like genre classifications (melodrama, trauma films) even as I talk about the disruption in linear continuity through the use of stills, song and dance sequence, flashbacks etc. as cinematic conventions that I attribute and develop as a Bollywood genre of trauma films.

Independent and documentary films used in this dissertation are clearly indicated as being separate from the above not just in terms of their funding and production but also in terms of their limited distribution and reception. I will clarify this in more detail in Chapter 4.

The latter part of my dissertation moves beyond the borders of the Subcontinent, wherein the influences of globalization link these local and regional terrorism(s) to other communities of violence. Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie in their “Introduction” to *Cinema and Nation* point out that there is a need to re-think the link between cinema and nation even as the notion of nations is being primarily eroded in the face of globalization. They cite Benjamin Barber’s claim that

globalization and nationalism in many cases are two sides of the same coin, to suggest that “film scholars should be intent not so much on avoiding concepts of nationhood and nationality, but on refining them and clearly identifying their continued, although changing pertinence for film studies” (2). Their assertion that any such study currently draws on a rather limited existing corpus of theoretical texts is undeniable. It underlines the need for new studies that link cinema and nation and not just in the sense of nation-building clearly associated with the birthing of nascent nations in the 20th century. My dissertation takes a fresh look at the symbiotic link between nations and cinema by primarily focusing on communities of violence that shape and re-shape nations through the cultural prism of cinema and tangentially, fiction and the global media. The sudden spurt in the number of Hollywood films that tackle the subject of terrorism is an obvious indication that the fear of fragmented nations is no longer exclusively the preoccupation of the developing world but has firmly taken root in the western world as well. There are several examples to draw from and this would only be a cursory list of films that deal with the subject: *Passenger 57* (1992), *Under Siege* (1992), *Executive Decision* (1996), *The Siege* (1998) *The Devil's Own* (1997) *Arlington Road* (1999).

With Globalization as a prominent and imperative reality of the latter half of the twentieth century and the global subsuming the local, terrorism has also metamorphosed into a global phenomenon. We are now forced to think globally, to reconfigure our ways of thinking about fragile and ruptured notions of national

borders that further evokes a crucial debate of the politics of citizenship in re-defined nations with large and shifting diasporic communities. The support of these (anti)nationalisms discussed in the earlier part of my dissertation thus extends beyond financing (an integral part of the financing for the Khalistani movement came from diasporic Sikh populations in Canada, UK and USA) to a more involved and active collusion that connects the Kashmir issue with Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harakat-Al-Mujahadeen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, terror organizations based in Pakistan to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, to the Hamas group in Palestine. I use two Hollywood films, *The Siege*, *The Three Kings*, both released in the late 1990s to bridge the transition from the local to global. These two films bring it all full circle by linking the Gulf War to the terrorism in the United States. Finally, I use these films as a point of entry into the larger discourse of global terrorism to explore and accentuate the incumbent economic and capitalism oriented goals of terrorist organizations which are tied together by an agenda of religious fundamentalism and function either as loosely put together ‘coalitions of convenience’ or are backed by a structured and systematic form of state-sponsored terrorism.

A crucial consequence of transnational terrorism is the problems associated with combating terrorism. If Osama Bin Laden declared war in a *fatwa*¹ on the United States in and September 11th, 2001 was a consequence of this, it obfuscates all previously held distinctions of nation-state and enemy states, it undercuts the principles of International Law, it undermines the system of governance that dictates

the actions of states and it makes a mockery of established political alliances. To explain, Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States and yet Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi citizen has declared war on the US and it was 17 Saudi men who flew the planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that fateful day in September. Is terrorism then a problem of law and order (a popular strategy used by the colonists to contain any violence as well as discredit any burgeoning forms of nationalism)? Or has the declaration of war on terror by the United States on a global network of loosely organized sympathizers of a religious cause, in response to September 11th, in direct contradiction of the International laws the world has lived with since 1945, just shifted the parameters of terrorism as legitimate warfare? I deal with this problem at length both in the context of the Indian subcontinent and then later in the context of Hollywood films.

Dissertation Organization

Chapter I: Nationalisms and (Anti)nationalisms

As a key discourse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Nationalism was instrumental in informing and shaping our collective political subjectivities as it helped establish civil society in fledgling democracies. The last decade, however, has seen several prominent postcolonial scholars take issue with its androcentric biases, its exclusive and elitist constituencies and the derivative nature of such national imaginings. And the fragmentation or Balkanization of several nation states has

introduced another dynamic into this equation, challenging this current state-centric political system of governance. Terrorism, another monolithic category nurtured in these fragmentations of nation-states is seemingly a consequence of failed nationalistic politics. I introduce my category of **(anti)nationalisms** as an umbrella term to cover all the variant nationalisms that use nationalism as their oppositional 'other'. These (anti)nationalisms and there are many, need to be analyzed individually for their differences in orientation, politics and constituency. I then go on to build on my category of (anti)nationalisms to frame the paradigms to contend with terrorism as a discourse as I negotiate the discursive space I identify in this chapter by engaging individually with each of the existing discourses of Nationalism, Postcolonialism, Trans-nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism and Globalization.

Chapter II: Religious Fundamentalisms

This chapter examines the religious underpinnings of Hindu and Islamic fundamentalisms in India in two novels: Bhisham Sahani's Hindi novel *Tamas* (1974) set in the Partition of 1947, Shashi Tharoor's novel *Riot* (2001) set in the Ayodhya aftermath by examining local narratives of resistance and their impact on the larger collective memory that shapes a national consciousness. I define the first kind of (anti)nationalisms in this chapter as deriving from Islamic and Hindu religious fundamentalisms and their manifestation as collective violence or rioting. Spatiality, I reckon plays a very important role in understanding this collective violence and I develop an analysis based on my theory of the four kinds of spaces riots occupy –

temporal space, social space, symbolic space and sacred space. Modernity, I argue has refashioned nationalism in the Indian subcontinent, setting up a hierarchical structure in society through the discourse on secularism. The modernizing mission that guided the secular nationalism of postcolonial India, I argue has been appropriated by various groups for the promotion of their own political ends. This manipulation of “modernity” in the context of terror is also analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter III: Re-affirming the Nation

The relationship between cinema and nationhood in India is a complex one. So even as Hindi national cinema with its pan-Indian aesthetic contributed to the nation-building enterprise albeit a homogenizing one that erased regional, cultural and linguistic differences, regional films in languages other than Hindi contributed to a different aesthetic, one that privileged the regional or the local over the national, that gave voice to oppositional discourses and that directly or indirectly challenged the homogenous national discourse. This chapter examines Ratnam’s Tamil film *Roja* (1992) and *Bombay* (1995), Chopra’s *Mission Kashmir* (2000) and Mohammed’s *Fiza* (2000) and how these films use terrorism as a narrative strategy to inflect and reflect the larger unifying and legitimizing narrative of the nation. I examine terrorism as a trope in these films and the (anti)nationalisms that give birth to these terror networks. I also analyze the fragility of the Indian nation threatened from within by a variety of (anti)nationalisms despite the aggressive economic and political stance the nation-state has taken on the world stage.

Chapter IV: The Theater of Terrorism

Drawing on the shift in Bollywood Cinema that signals a clear transition to a more global perspective on terrorism, the last chapter will focus on how the face of terrorism has changed unequivocally in the last decade by analyzing two films Zwick's *The Siege* (1998) and Russell's *Three Kings* (1999). This chapter focuses on a formalist analysis of the performative aspect of terrorism in film. Since terrorism lends itself to performance - a horrific spectacle that demands spectators to induce fear, this chapter examines the strategies that filmmakers employ in transferring this visual and graphic event onto the cinematic screen. Spatiality plays a critical role in my analysis of (anti)nationalisms or the asymmetrically developed 'other' nationalisms in these films. I argue that the spaces occupied by the 'others' on screen have serious ramifications off-screen in terms of containment at the political level as well. Hence the representation of these (anti)nationalisms plays into the larger discourse on terrorism as fashioned by the notions of a global empire.

Conclusion

My dissertation re-examines the formation of national subjectivities for nations in crisis through a close study of (anti)nationalisms, which are several unique kinds of variant nationalisms that despite their subjective differences share an affinity for Nationalism as their oppositional 'other'. My research based on the comparative analysis of specific Indian and American texts, fiction and film, posits that terrorism through cultural representations has become the antithetical 'other' for Nationalisms

and is crucial to the formation of national subjectivities and ideologies today. Terrorism has introduced a challenging vector into national imaginings within the last decade and my dissertation establishes a broader need for newer ways of theorizing terrorism within the framework of Postcolonial studies.

Given the vastness of the scope of terrorism, I felt the need to draw on theoretical premises from various other disciplines like Sociology, History, Political Science and Anthropology to corroborate my conclusions. My dissertation being a comparative study uses texts in languages other than English, including Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. I have tried to retain quotations in the original language in my analysis which I italicize in the body text and if I could not embed the translation in my analysis, I used translations in parentheses where required so as to not disrupt the flow of the argument. I have deliberately chosen to use commonly accepted spellings for Hindi and Urdu words and refrain from the use of diacritical marks which I find cumbersome and confusing to the reader.

This inter-disciplinary study derives and benefits from my training in Postcolonial theory, Cinema Studies, South Asian Fiction and Comparative Literature even as current events provide exigency for my doctoral research. The contemporary nature of my research has been very rewarding but a little intimidating in terms of the endless new material that came my way. My conclusion deals with a Bollywood film, *Rang De Basanti* that was released on DVD only on March 26, 2006 but that I chose to include because it spoke to me in myriad ways.

Chapter 2: (Anti)Nationalisms And Terrorism

Nationalism as a discourse has been on center stage for a long time. It has been celebrated, interrogated, dissected and even deconstructed by several critics who have engaged with its parameters of framing, its origins and its androcentric biases. Some scholars have argued that nationalism has been through several phases of existence and that the world is now perhaps seeing a third phase of nationalism, where the first phase emanated from Western Europe, the second from the decolonized nations and the third phase in which we are currently immersed. The third phase of nationalism, it has been suggested arises out of its conflicts with globalization.

My dissertation is about nationalisms at crossroads, where I address the need to identify other categories that challenge the centeredness of nationalism as a discourse. Terrorism, I argue is one of these categories, a monolithic and heterogeneous one that defies theorizing in many ways but challenges these notions of nationalism. Terrorism has not yet been adequately developed as a discursive construct for reasons that are somewhat obvious, even as it exists in various configurations in the imagination of the public, informs political policies, takes on a new life in the media blitz that surrounds it and inspires fictional forms that focus on narratives of violence. Further, the recently declared 'War on Terror' by the United States anoints its political status in many more complicated ways. Terrorism with all its local and global inflections still defies definition.

It is my assertion that the third phase of nationalism we are immersed in is not a result of the direct conflict with the forces of globalization but it is instead the variant, can I say deviant forms of nationalism that now jostle onstage with the forces of nationalism, demanding attention and more importantly scholarly critical intervention. Ethno-nationalisms, counter-nationalisms, sub-nationalisms, secessionism – the list goes on but all of which are crucial variables that come into play with this reconfiguration of power.

Theorizing (Anti)Nationalisms

My intervention in this larger politico-cultural debate is through my identification of a key term, **(anti)nationalisms** to talk about these counter narratives of nationalism that I see as an umbrella term to include all forms of variant nationalisms like sub-nationalisms, counter-nationalisms, fundamentalisms, extremism, separatism, secessionism, each of which, let me clarify, I regard and treat as *uniquely different* – as I make evident in the next few chapters². The question that follows from this framing is how do these (anti)nationalisms tie in with terror movements that have shattered nationalist innocence across the world? Using this overarching category of (anti)nationalisms offers us a new space – an in-between space, to talk about variant nationalisms that are set up in opposition to nationalisms but are not congruent with terrorism. Doing so, offers us the opportunity to address each of these variant nationalisms in depth without having to engage with issues of ethical implications of

these imaginings even while accounting for the political positioning of certain nation-states that assumes moral superiority.

Terrorism, I argue is not a homogenized monolithic entity that can be theorized in its entirety. It is unique, nuanced and has to be studied in its complex microforms at the grass-root levels to be effectively understood and combated. In order to better understand the genesis of all terrorism (and there are several kinds) I see the need to first develop a discursive space to address its origins, articulate its paradigms and enunciate its limitations vis-à-vis legitimate political rebellions. It is a discursive space of in-betweenness that I flesh out at the interstices of well known discourses in this chapter, which once located can be then critically negotiated through the use of my category of (anti)nationalisms to enter the debate that surrounds theorizing terrorism. It is important to point out at the outset that I *do not* equate sub-nationalisms, counter-nationalisms and fundamentalism etc. with terrorism, where *terrorism is the violent employment of terror tactics by resistance groups, not recognized as nation-states by the global community and that result in indiscriminate killing through unconventional means in order to achieve the political agenda of (anti)nationalisms*. In my perception, these groups may not necessarily be defined by the geo-political space they occupy and can be widely dispersed in the nature of diasporic communities in this age of transnationalism. Keeping the ethno-political, social, historical and economic ramifications of specific kinds of (anti)nationalisms in mind as they surface in textual artefacts (both in fiction and

cinema) within both the local and the global context, as I do in my dissertation, I conclude that (anti)nationalisms are the geneses of all terrorist activities. Conversely, terrorisms can be argued as constituting the performative aspect of the political agenda of (anti)nationalisms. In other words, it is through a performance of terror that some of these (anti)nationalisms surface as terrorism. Let me clarify however, that I do mean not mean to imply that all (anti)nationalisms lead to terrorism. It is the recognition of the heterogeneous nature of terrorisms and the urgent need for interrogation of the role of the nation-state in these imaginings that I argue, demands this examination.

There is no established or official history of terrorism. Some critics trace the origins of terrorism to the eleventh century Islamic sect of Nizari Ismailites whose members, “Hashshashin,” (the source word for Assassin) were known for murdering their enemies as a religious duty. Others see it as a descendant of Anarchism, still others see it, as a byproduct of imperialism. Tracing the trajectory of terrorism we see it surface in the spaces where the nation and the state do not collide, where the boundaries of the state and nation no longer overlap, where the nation cannot be directly mapped onto the state. A meaningful study of terrorism in this age of globalization would therefore have to enter into dialogue specifically with discourses of postcolonialism, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and theories of globalization.

Henry Schwarz concludes his essay “Mission Impossible,” with some very critical questions raised by Bruce Robbins who articulates the need for new directions

in postcolonial studies. It forces us to first confront European notions of universality and then to re-imagine humanism since, he says,

If postcolonial theory has offered powerful justifications for colonized states to separate from their oppressors, what can it tell us today of the widespread demands for ethnic and other homelands? How should international organizations such as the UN, not to mention powerful superstates like the US, respond to demands for autonomy such as those in Kosovo, Palestine, or Kashmir? What is the status of the nation today and who decides who gets one, who lives there and who is to be excluded? (Schwarz & Ray, 19)

I do not attempt to answer all the questions raised by Robbins, but I hope to be able to open up newer ways of entering into a critical engagement with these issues using terrorism as a central material and theoretical rubric.

Gayatri Spivak in her book, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, addresses some of the vectors that come into play in this rather complex algorithm of fundamentalist nationalism and its origins. She says:

Fundamentalist nationalism arises in the loosened hyphen between nation and state as the latter is mortgaged further and further by the forces of financialization, although the determinations are never made clear. The first items in the following couples are fuzzy, the second abstract: nation-state, subject-agency (institutionally validated action), identity-citizenship.

Much manipulation, maneuvering, and mobilization can take place in the interest of the latter in the name of its fuzzy partner. Experience gained in the interim suggested another way of conjuring with nationalism, in the name not of the globe but of a global girdling (364).

In mapping terrorism, this chapter shall interrogate the interstices within rhetorical strategies of dominant discourses from within which arise counter-narratives of nationalism - the “loosened hyphen” between nation and state. To use the analogy of textile that Spivak uses elsewhere in her argument, the manipulation of one in the name of the other, renders the tearing and rupturing of the “national” fabric so deftly woven in the ‘immediate postcolonial moment’ of resistance against imperialism. The crucial question to ask then is: are narratives of the nation being re-worked and re-written?

In this chapter, I shall first offer a historical overview on scholarship and theories of nationalism in an attempt to identify any intersections or disjunctions where I can locate a space to talk about my category of (anti)nationalisms as they surface in various forms like sub-nationalisms, counter-nationalisms, secessionism, separatism and fundamentalisms. Defining (anti)nationalisms and subsequently identifying them allows me to build on these fledgling possibilities to theorize terrorism later on this chapter.

The second section of my chapter will address issues of gender, class, and ethics in theorizing terrorism through (anti)nationalisms. While traditional theories of

nationalism had till the very recent past ignored 'women', current scholarship trends in postcolonial studies have forced the women question into the foreground. Terrorism is *not* "masculinized violence" as Robin Morgan would have us believe, in fact, absolving women of any accountability in terrorism as we know it today, is to silence the role of women in any resistance movement. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to factor in the role of gender studies in analyzing terrorism. The ethical question also comes into play in this rubric, where, to use Spivak's term, we have to be "auto-critical" as we grapple with moral questions in an amoral academic framework. Finally any study of resistance movements would be reductive if one did not take into account class issues in the construction of subjective identity. Nationalist movements have been cast as a derivative discourse pertaining only to an elite population. The question to ask then is: is terrorism, as we know it today an elitist pre-occupation as well? Perhaps cosmopolitanism serves to bridge these dialectical opportunities to engage with class issues and hybridity at the global level.

The third section of my chapter discusses globalization with its implications of global financialization and my focus here is much more on the transnationalism that this brought about. Is terrorism truly transnational? Using Masao Miyoshi's model of Transnational Corporations and Multinational Corporations we shall reckon with the shift in terror tactics and terrorist agendas that signal a move away from a search for a homeland in the name of an ethnic group towards a desire to unify nations through a common religious and political agenda. In this final section, I shall

also briefly summarize all my contributions towards ways of theorizing terrorism through textual analysis in the following chapters. The conclusion will then look forward to newer ways of accommodating this growing phenomenon within the larger rubric of postcolonial studies.

Contextualizing the Discourses of Nationalism

Given terrorism's predilection with nations, it is appropriate and imperative to use nationalism as a point of entry into this study so as to engage with the key discourses of nationalism. In 1882, Ernst Renan in his essay, "What is a Nation?" says:

Forgetting, I would go even so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for (the principle of) nationality. Indeed historical enquiry brings to light *deeds of violence which took place at the origins of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial. Unity is always effected by means of brutality...*

(11) [emphasis mine]

While there are several problems with Renan's argument, it is in the interest of exigency that I choose to focus only on that part of his argument that is critical to my study – recognition of the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and violence. The selective appropriation of history as well as a specific degree of collective amnesia propels this notion of civilized nations and obscures the true origins of the

birth of these nations. Within the colonizer/colonized paradigm, the “forgetting” was crucial to the process of containment of violence in the periphery and imperative for the continued perpetuation of the myth of civilized nations³.

Exactly a hundred years later, Benedict Anderson in his seminal text *Imagined Communities*, commenting on the changing political climate, observes, “And many ‘old nations’ once thoughtfully consolidated, find themselves challenged by ‘sub’-nationalisms within their borders – nationalisms which, naturally dream of shedding their ‘sub’ness one happy day ... Indeed nation-ness is the most politically universal legitimate value in the political life in our time”(3). Anderson’s argument stems from a basic premise that nations are imagined communities that are at once both inherently limited and sovereign. Nations are *imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never meet or know all their fellow members; they are *communities* because they are conceived of as “a deep horizontal comradeship”; they are *limited* because even the largest nation has finite albeit elastic boundaries outside of which lie other nations; and they are *sovereign* because they have their genesis in a time when divinely ordained dynastical rule was being challenged.

To clarify, in my engagement with nationalism as a discourse I do not privilege Anderson’s theorization of nationalism which I know is now dated. I use Anderson’s theory as a point of departure, acknowledging his contribution as one of the first comprehensive theories to ground this discourse but I anchor my argument in the more recent critical debate that surrounds theories of nationalism today. Hence, I

choose to introduce and address all the critical interventions and refutations that surround this theorization today as they intersect with the development of my argument.

Towards that end, let me continue. Anderson therefore posits that all nations arise out of and replace dynastic rule and religious communities. The two questions that instantly pop into my mind then are: if one were to conceive this process of nation formation in a contiguous time-space continuum, can one thus argue that terrorist movements that originate in monarchical realms like Saudi Arabia are legitimate bodies of people still in the process of imagining a nation? And secondly using Anderson's argument, can we read resistance movements like the one that replaced the Shah of Iran, as legitimate imaginings of a nation in crisis?

Umut Özkirimli points out the inadequacy of Anderson's argument concerning the relationship between nationalism and religion by examining the religious aspect of nationalisms. J. G Kellas refutes Anderson's claim that religion is not always replaced by nationalism and uses the examples of Ireland, Poland, Armenia, Israel and Iran where he says religious institutions have reinforced nationalisms. Therefore, he undermines Anderson's contention that nationalism was fostered by the decline of religious institutions. Greenfeld, on the other hand argues that contrary to Anderson's argument nationalism arose at a time when religious sentiment was on the rise – at the time of the Reformation. Like Kellas, he suggests that nationalism was aided by religious sentiment and it became a part of the national

consciousness. Anthony D. Smith relates this relationship, what he calls “the superimposition (or uneasy coexistence) of mass religion on nationalism” to modern day crises faced by India, some parts of Europe and the former Soviet Union. He says that this is hardly surprising given that a significant part of the popular myths, symbols and memories on which modern day nations rest, are drawn from world religions (Özkirimli, 153).

Anderson theorizes the concept of time by differentiating between time in the past and in the present. For time in the past, he uses Auerbach’s notion of “simultaneity” that elides with Walter Benjamin’s concept of “Messianic time’,” which suggests the “simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present” (24). Anderson then goes on to talk about “homogenous, empty time” in the present context of calendars and clocks. Homi Bhabha, in his brilliant essay, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” takes issue with this notion of single, empty, homogenous (western) time through his theorization of “double” or “split” time that he argues cannot be represented in unmediated contemplation. Acknowledging Bhabha’s argument about the inherent and constant tensions between the pedagogical and performative in the ambivalent temporalities of the nation space, it could still be argued that Anderson’s concept of *simultaneity* has been co-opted by the ideologues of fundamentalist movements. For example, in India, the Hindu Right (Bharatiya Janata Party, Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad etc.) selectively chooses to re-present history by emphasizing certain historical events from

the past. This re-written history is then used to construct ‘a pure, unadulterated, untouched Hindu identity’ which can consequently be mapped onto the nation’s framework, to help imagine a Hindu nation. The past and the present therefore co-exist in this critical moment of imagining.

The advent of print capitalism, according to Anderson, served as a focal point for the burgeoning nationalisms in the nineteenth century. Extending this argument, I read the confluence of the electronic media and the Internet as having similar contributions towards the possible imaginings of an Islamic nation or what is popularly referred to as the “Arab street.” Hence the establishing of Al Jazeera TV as an alternate broadcasting source (as opposed to western media) with viewers across the world forces us to reckon with globalization at an unprecedented level where the center and the margins are being redrawn and not necessarily along national borders.

Anderson uses the term “unisonance,” to explain the rituals that establish nationalist behavior such as the singing of the national anthem at specific times. It marks a “special kind of contemporaneous community” and there is in this singing, an “experience of simultaneity” (145). Homi Bhabha’s theorization on the ambivalence surrounding the temporality of the nation subverts this concept of unisonance to suggest that this is not a simultaneity but a spatial disjunction that in the language of doubleness constitutes a split between “the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” (297). I argue that it is the repetitive and recursive strategy of the performative that brings

together and mobilizes religious groups through traditional bonding rituals that tie a religious community together. In establishing an Islamic nation, for example, one can talk of certain specific rituals that are designed towards constructing a nation along religious lines like the *azaan*, the reading of the Koran at five specific times a day, etc. or in the case of the Hindu revivalist movement, the conducting of *jagrans*⁴ – the ceremonial chanting of spiritual hymns. The term “ethno-symbolism” (used by scholars who question the inventedness and constructed nature of nations) I find, is useful to explain these persistent symbols, myths and memories that are an integral part of a nation’s collective memory – “the symbolic legacy of the pre-modern ethnic identities of today’s nations” (Özkirimli, 168).

Further, the fact that the Koran was not translated from its original Arabic until recently validates this argument along linguistic lines. So a Muslim from Indonesia, India, Pakistan or France with different linguistic backgrounds would still read/recite from the Koran in Arabic. Similarly, the Sanskritization of Hindi, the attempt to “cleanse” Hindi of any possible adulteration with Urdu, and the need to use terms from Sanskrit (a dead language for all practical purposes) to fulfill the vacuum created in the language (Hindi) by technological advances, is a paradoxical example of this desire to close linguistic borders⁵. Can this be interpreted as another example of the past being revoked to harness the future?

Several critics have taken exception to Anderson’s assertion of the nation as an imagined community that is limited in nature. Andrew Higson in his essay, “Limiting

Imagination of national Cinema,” argues against the ‘limited’ nature of nations as imagined communities in this age of transnationalism. He contends that all nations in some sense are diasporic, “forged in the tension between unity and disunity, between home and homelessness” (Higson, 65). He elaborates on this conflict between rootedness and dispersal, pointing out,

The public sphere of the nation and the discourses of patriotism are thus bound up in a constant struggle to transform the facts of dispersal, variegation and homelessness into the experience of the rooted community. At times, the experience of an organic, coherent national community, a meaningful national collectivity, will be overwhelming. At other times, the experience of diaspora, dislocation and de-centredness will prevail. It is times such as these that other allegiances, other sense of belonging, besides the national will be more strongly felt (65).

Since my focus on the formation of national subjectivity derives largely from a study of cultural experiences, I concur with Higson’s argument that not only allows for the possibility of belonging to two or more nations simultaneously but also accounts for shifting and divided loyalties in terms of cultural allegiances. His example of three different media experiences in terms of their reception by British audiences illustrates the diversity of responses translated through individual cultural frames of reference. One can conclude that unlike the community forged through print capitalism at the turn of the century, the community forged through cultural mass media experiences

creates a national collectivity that on the one hand, is not limited and on the other is not fixed and is largely unstable. This also serves to substantiate my assertion that diasporic communities may or may not respond to the same national imperatives at every given point in history. And that this tug of war in allegiances towards the nation becomes vital in any study of the reception and perception of representations of terrorism in cinema.

A final point that I would like to draw from Anderson's argument is his assertion that "nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love" and that the cultural products of nationalism – anthems, poetry, music, arts etc., are articulations of this love. So in other words, a nation can be defined by the willingness of its citizens (and I use that word hesitatingly) to die for their country. "Dying for one's country, which normally one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labor Party, the American Medical Association or perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will" (144). Hence the grandeur stems from the illusion of purity, of something fundamentally pure. Andrew Parker in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*⁶ focuses on nationalism as a love for the country – "an eroticized nationalism" (1). What then, is the seductive power of this love? As I write this, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed three Israeli teenagers in yet another suicide attack in Tel Aviv, a strategy that seems to have become an integral part of the Middle East turmoil. Eroticized love and martyrdom are perhaps two sides of the same coin. For in the act

of dying for the nation, we commemorate heroes, we create martyrs, we celebrate the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The ritual is clearly pre-meditated, for in these deaths, the nation lives on. Robin Morgan in her book, *Demon Lover*, asserts, “Without the propaganda of the hero myth, murder is a sordid business. *With* the hero myth, any act of violence is not only made possible but inevitable: the rapist is transformed into a seducer, the tyrant rules by divine right, the terrorist reconstitutes the hero” (56).

But the terrorist retains a liminal identity till she or he is re-instated into the nationalist discourse as a martyr or a freedom fighter. I would, therefore, argue that given the terrorists’ pre-occupation with borders, their liminal identity is ironically marked by their lurking on the margins. At once the insider and outsider, in many ways they occupy a space outside of the narrativizing discourses – the loosened hyphen between nation and state. I take this up for further discussion in Chapter 4 in my analysis of the hero-protagonists of several Bollywood films whose lives shadow this liminal existence between belonging and not-belonging. I contend that it is this desire to be rooted and whole that is signified by their eventual capitulation to born-again patriotism, and although not all of them die martyrs, it paves their re-entry into civil society.

Nationalism in the Postcolonial Context

The critical framework of this analysis however needs to be extended to the postcolonial so that nationalist discourse is contextualized in its Western paradigms.

Masao Miyoshi, like Benedict Anderson and several other theorists argue that the myth of the modern nation-state had its origins in the 1800s in the West as a function of colonialism. Hence the myth of the nation-state was complemented by the “myth of the mission civilisatrice” whereby the voyager’s racial and social superiority was established over the heathen savage barbarians. In other words, Miyoshi states, “In the very idea of the nation state the colonialists found a politico-economical as well as moral-mythical foundation on which to build their policy and apology” (732). The change in agenda of colonialism from trade to the annexation of colonies was correspondingly complemented by the formation of nation-states in the western world, and national identity, which was constituted by the dual process of affirmation of the ‘Self’ and the deconstruction of the ‘Other’.

Frederic Jameson talking about “Third World Literature,” based on the problematic premise of the Three Worlds theory, states, “all third world texts are necessarily ... to be read as ... national allegories” (Ahmad, 78). Aijaz Ahmad in his critique of Jameson’s argument questions the categorization of Third World Literature constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge, and furthermore, it’s being exclusively defined in terms of the experience of colonialism and imperialism. In addition, Jameson’s thesis privileges nationalism as a valorized ideology because of its exclusive emphasis on the political unit that is the nation. It is a slippery slope argument since that leads us right back to the initial assertion that all Third World Literatures *are necessarily* “national allegories”. My interest in Ahmad’s

argument is in his delineation of nationalisms in Asia and Africa as either progressive nationalisms or not-so progressive nationalisms. He posits, “Whether or not a nationalism will produce a progressive cultural practice depends, to put it in Gramscian terms, upon the political character of the power bloc which takes hold of it and utilizes it, as a material force, in the process of constituting its own hegemony”. (79) Ahmad’s position therefore allows for both progressive and not-so-progressive nationalisms by introducing ethical and material valence to the nationalisms.

Craig Calhoun in his theorizing about nationalisms posits three dimensions: nationalism as *discourse*, nationalism as *project* and nationalism as *evaluation*. Nationalism as a discourse is the production of a cultural understanding and the rhetoric to frame the aspirations of a people in terms of the idea of the nation and national identity. Nationalism as a project is social movements and state policies by which people advance the interest of the collectivities that are nations - in historical progression - through increased participation of citizens in an existing state, their demands for independence and self-determination, or through the amalgamation of territories. It is the final dimension of nationalism as evaluation that allows us to interpret the nation as a site for dissension, wherein

political and cultural ideologies ... claim superiority for a particular nation; these are often associated with movements or state policies, but need not be. In this third sense, nationalism is often given the status of an *ethical imperative* ... It is through some of the actions that follow from these

ethical imperatives that nationalism came to be associated with excesses of loyalty to one's nation – as in *ethnic cleansing, ideologies of national purification, and hostility to foreigners* (6). [emphasis mine]

However, Calhoun like several other scholars sees the nation as a discursive formation, and he foregrounds Partha Chatterjee's argument warning us of the implications of assuming that all later nationalisms are derivative discourses since specific nationalist ideologies are rooted in local conditions and experiences. Chatterjee's rejection of Anderson's modular form of nationalisms was based on the premise that nationalist imagination is not predicated upon identity but on a *difference* with the modular form of nationalisms that were founded in the West. He introduced a whole new dimension to studies of nationalism as a discourse. In Chatterjee's now very famous words:

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do we have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized (216).

Gender, Class and Ethical Questions

It is through the process of the erasure of differences in nationalistic discourse that gender, class as well as the regional (local) are obliterated and subjugated so that ideologies of homogenization among citizens help to foster, maintain and institutionalize hegemonic patterns of domination and suppression. It is as a critique of nationalism, as an ideology that builds an army of homogenized citizenry, that nationalism emerges as a discursive discourse, cognizant of the erasure of differences. Eve Sedgwick, laments the inadequacy of the term 'nation' and piling difference upon difference, she argues for the relativism of the definition whereby there is no 'normative' nation.

The "other" of the nation in a given political or historical setting maybe the pre-national monarchy, the local ethnicity, the diaspora, the trans-national corporate, ideological, religious or ethnic unit, the sub-national locale or the ex-colonial, often contiguous unit; the colony may become national vis-à-vis the homeland, or the homeland become national vis-à-vis the nationalism of its colonies; the nationalism of the homeland may be co-extensive with or oppositional to its imperialism; so forth (5).

Or simply put, the nation is ineluctably shaped by its various definitional 'other'. Several scholars like Gayatri Spivak, Jenny Sharpe, Anne McClintock and Sangeeta Ray (amongst others) have challenged the very androcentric bias of imagining

nations, engendering the nation as it were and interrogating the trope of nation-as-a woman. Thus, in the historical experience of particular feminisms in the context of national liberation movements, “the imaginings are regularly predicated upon construction of women’s bodies” (13). Their bodies become ciphers in the imaginings of male resistance fighters, as Valerie Moghadam points out using the example of how the Taliban used the *pardah* or the veil as a rallying point for mobilizing resistance against the modernizing regime in Afghanistan. In doing a comparative study (focusing on women’s rights) between the Iranian Revolution (a cross-class populist Islamic movement against modernity) and the peasant and tribal based rebellion against communism in Afghanistan, Moghadam foregrounds some critical insights about Islamic fundamentalisms. The discontinuities and disruptions in writing the narrative of Islamic nationalisms become profoundly clear. She writes, “Islamist ideologues reject national boundaries created by colonialism/imperialism which eventuated the dispersion and fragmentation of the Ummah Islam, the “imagined community” of believers. Rebuilding the Ummah is mandated by Iran’s Islamic Constitution of 1979. And yet, concrete Islamist movements – influenced as they are by twentieth century discourses and social structures – are also nationalist”.

(425)

In the same anthology, Mary Layoun talking about women’s voices in Palestinian national narratives, suggests that in order to accommodate women’s articulations of alternate or counter narratives, we have to focus on the performative

aspects of literary narratives – “who speaks these stories, their constructions of time and space, and the postulations of narrative telos” (43). It is through this narrative performance that Palestinian women engender in their own particular ways the narrative of Palestinian nationalisms.

Robin Morgan’s book *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism*, part theory, part poetry, is one of the few studies that attempts to link women’s issues to terrorism via sexualism. Although she does address the gender question and its role in terrorism, Angela Gilliam critiques Robin Morgan for not taking into account “the systemic or structural properties of the domination of women and men” and for defining womanhood as “almost supranational and above culture” and her treatise thus becomes an analysis that is “simultaneously separatist and relativist” (231). Also, note my earlier criticism of Morgan’s definition of terrorism as masculinized violence, where the terrorist is primarily male. A terrorist according to Morgan, is “the logical incarnation of patriarchal politics in a technological world” (33). Morgan’s women are the mothers, the daughters, the sisters and the wives of terrorists, since for her, “the majority of terrorists – and those against whom they are rebelling – are men” (24).

Calhoun points out that nationalisms are overwhelmingly male ideologies that affirm masculinist practices as rooted in traditional cultures. However, his argument parts ways with Morgan’s in that he critiques these androcentric leanings. In developing the argument of the significance of the trope of rape in national

imaginings, he distinguishes between the representation of men and women in “the way national strength is defined so often as international potency and military power; men are treated as potential martyrs while women are mainly the mothers. It is in content – militarism and the appropriation of patriarchal traditional culture for the most part – that nationalisms are especially sexist” (114). He goes on to argue that in form, nationalist agendas for individual rights have provided/and can provide a space for women to claim their rights as citizens, an argument that I do not find completely convincing.

The other interesting argument that he develops is about contemporary Islamic nationalism, and how despite its traditional and fundamentalist content, it shares, to a large extent, the discursive nature of western nationalisms (an argument similar to Moghadam’s). However, he makes the claim that this categorical identity (nationalism as a discursive discourse) bridges the gap between the individual Muslim within the specific Islamic nation and the *Ummah Islam*. Calhoun writes, “This is part of what makes fundamentalist Islam so threatening to various formally more traditional governments like the monarchies of the Gulf States. These Arab states are precisely *not* nationalist and not organized around modern ideas of citizenship” (114). So although Iran and Iraq are nation-states based on the premise of universal citizenship for men, in monarchies like Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia this connection is at the most ambiguous.

It is my contention that the dangerous mix of religion and politics acts as a catalyst, precipitating religious fundamentalism along ethnic lines. India, with its nascent Hindu revivalist movement brings the agenda of political violence to the forefront. In discussing the politics and the eruption of Hindu nationalism in India, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak posits that it is not only the political power brokers in the Rightist parties who have in the name of “historically authoritative national identity” aided the forces of fundamentalism but that “there is an isolationist counter-nationalism among the ideologues of the left parties” as well. She says, “some professed anti-nationalists of the diasporic left, taking a passionate stand against religious nationalism in the country of origin, betrayed the power of the reactive nationalism of the ex-patriate” (363).

Sumantra Bose as cited by Sangeeta Ray in *Engendering India* echoes these thoughts. Bose says that positing communalism as the “antithesis of Indian ‘nationalism,’ frequently results in the postcolonial ‘secular state’ and the freedom movement before it, being absolved of most if not all culpability in the rise of ‘communalism’ and specifically of ‘Hindutva’... Yet there has been a widespread reluctance among scholars of contemporary India, and of the growing problems of communalism, to situate the rise of Hindutva within a broader more substantive critique of the modern Indian state” (150). Any meaningful study of fundamentalism has to take into account issues of complicity and accountability of the nation-state.

Analyzing the post-Babri Masjid ethnic violence in India in 1992, Amedeo Maiello, argues that though the current wave of ethnic-religious violence across the world is largely festered by processes of globalization and global transformation, it would be reductive to apply the same paradigm to the Indian situation. It is imperative for us to recognize “the reality of a transnationalist capital order which, although contributing, does not appear to completely or fully determine the development of ethnic confrontation” (100). According to Maiello, the genesis of this violence can be traced back to the initial development policies instituted by the state, which is now exacerbated by the current restructuring policies in the age of globalization. Satish Deshpande similarly identifies two specific kinds of nationalisms in India – one based on religious-communal identity and one that is explicitly based on the modernistic ideology of development (176). While on the one hand, Deshpande suggests that it is the *constant confrontation* of these two co-existing forms of nationalism that has eroded the national fabric, Sumantra Bose on the other hand, suggests that the relationship between communalism and secularism in postcolonial India is *dialectical* as opposed to adversarial. Maiello’s argument is completely different from both Deshpande and Bose in that he sees communal and ethnic confrontations as a *direct result* of the mismanagement of the implementation policies of the modernistic ideology of development.

Hence, Maiello introduces a new vector into this algorithm – skewed economic development, and the ensuing struggles for limited resources that created

an imbalance between regions. The increase in social and economic disparities further coalesced the ethnic conflict and the class conflict. These regional imbalances had another serious repercussion in terms of the migration of large bodies of regional populations that led to the migrant/non-migrant confrontation in the metropolis. In Bombay, the Shiv Sena (the fundamentalist Right wing Hindu party) used this as a rallying point for their demands for preferential treatment in terms of employment and, I may add, to subsequently demand recognition of their indigenous Marathi-Hindu identity. (This historico-political identity has its moorings in the Maratha-Mughal wars, spearheaded by Shivaji in resistance to the Islamic Mughal rule across the subcontinent). Finally, Maiello hypothesizes that while Balkanisation in the Indian context is only a remote possibility, he acknowledges that: “when economic grievances deriving from a lop-sided distribution of development resources ignite strong primordial sentiments, secessionist movements, as is the case in north-east India and Kashmir, take root” (106).

What I find fascinating about the numerous ethnic-religious conflicts in India is the difference in the motivating forces and the political alliances forged in these separatist/fundamentalist/militant/terrorist campaigns. Contrary to Maiello’s argument, is the example of Punjab (with its resilient agrarian economy, it was one of the richest states in India in the post Green Revolution era) where secessionist demands for an autonomous state were not only led by the upper classes but also fueled by a diasporic community of Sikhs largely in the United Kingdom, Canada and

the United States. On the other end of the spectrum is the Naxalite movement in Bengal and to some extent in Bihar that is a mobilization of the lower classes (the subaltern) along with the Muslim community that draws its inspiration and political support from the Leftist political parties in the country. The point I am trying to make is that a comparative analysis of politico-religious fundamentalisms has to be grounded in “difference”.

It might be useful to frame these two kinds of violent political movements in the first case as reflecting the global (with its transnational nature and support from the periphery) and in the second case as the local (rooted in its regional causes of class conflict and denial of resources). Sangeeta Ray references these transnational moorings in the re-imagining of nations by foregrounding the significant co-opting of diasporic Indians with intimate ties to the “homeland” by the Hindutva movement. The persuasive rhetoric of Hindutva “allows them [the Indian diaspora] to seek, understand, and claim a ‘sense of their cultural identity’ and, especially for displaced Hindus, authorizes a ‘mentalscape’ for the ‘enhancement of [their] sense of self-sameness and continuity in time and space” (151). Is this again, another example of the pervasive powers of ‘unisonance’?

As we just pointed out, national imaginings have been cast as elitist preoccupations as opposed to subaltern resistance movements that come from below. It is my contention that in attempting to categorize terrorism, that along with its problematic politics, it is the elitist nature of its constituency that marks its separation

from subaltern resistance movements. This distinction becomes crucial in differentiating between resistance movements, legitimate campaigns for self-determination and autonomous governments that are predicated on violence; and terrorism - which we define as the politics of the last resort.

Several sociologists have studied the profile of terrorists in their efforts to understand this growing phenomenon. While I do cite these studies, I am aware of some inherent problems with this exercise that I choose to state right at the outset. While these studies validate my assertions, I am cognizant of the fact, that they are dated (one of these studies is from groups active during 1966-1976). I will argue that given the obvious shift towards global terrorism and our collective knowledge of the sophistication of terror tactics post-September 11th, the results of these earlier studies can only be further corroborated by our current awareness. The second problem that I identify with using these case studies is the inevitable bias of such profiling only as far as the process of choosing the initial pool of subjects for the study.

Amongst these is a study by Charles A. Russel and Bowden Miller who drew a sociological profile of a terrorist based on the compilation of data about 350 terrorists, spanning terrorist organizations from Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Palestine, Spain, Turkey and Uruguay. Using the differential of the 'modern urban terrorist' and the 'rural guerilla fighter', their findings substantiate that: i) despite some variations, urban terrorism remains a predominantly male phenomenon⁷; ii). the usual urban terrorist was between ages 22- 25; iii) More than

two-thirds came from the middle and upper classes in their respective regions of origins (with the exception of the IRA that has a constituency arising from the lower socio-economic classes); iv) what consequently follows, most of these hailed from families with a professional background; v) two-thirds of these had university education with graduate or post-graduate degrees and with a leaning towards technology, engineering and the sciences – but covering a range from lawyers, engineers, physicians, doctors etc.; vi) Many were bilingual and educated abroad; vii) finally, 75 – 80% were single (Morgan, 63-65).

Some of these findings have been rendered questionable in light of current day events while some as I stated earlier, have been further validated. In another sociological study from a feminist perspective that focused on Islamic fundamentalism, Moroccan theorist, Fatima Mernissi, cites similar findings, that the fundamentalist is “neither uneducated nor uncultured”. Saad Eddin Ibrahim’s study of 34 Egyptian Islamic militants reveals, “that the fundamentalist militant belongs to the middleclass, favors scientific branches of knowledge, and performs exceptionally well, especially in medicine, engineering, technical military science, and pharmacy” (Morgan, 65).

Making the connection between real world terrorism and cinematic representation underscores a similar representation. All of the films discussed in my dissertation, clearly focus on the disavowed middle class in India, Iraq or the US. The terrorist-protagonist in these films is not a subaltern nor is he the romanticized

resistance guerilla with no access to funds and arms. They are like the fundamentalists mentioned above, part of the struggling middleclass, disavowed, disenfranchised for various reasons and predominantly male.

Transnational Terrorism

Globalization has taken on new meanings today with the emergence of transnational corporations, exchange of technology and global markets and increase of capital flow. Collapsing borders add a whole new dimension in today's world as the European Economic Community redefines the traditional notion of the nation-state with free borders and a common currency. The global configuration of power structures has shifted and this re-figuring with its economic and financial repercussions has introduced a whole new dynamic into this equation. In my dissertation, the ongoing conflict between nation and nation-state inflects several of the (anti)nationalisms that I take up for detailed analysis. Arjun Appadurai, in his essay, "Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," reasserts the conflict between nation and state in the global era of cultural politics when he says, "the state and the nation are at each other's throats, and the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture" (304). Some critics of globalization have argued that it is the deterritorialization and the displacement of populations that have weakened the moorings of nationalist discourse and set adrift floating populations with alienated and fragmented subjectivities. Meeuf rightly argues that in this age of globalization,

“the very idea of terrorism, then, allows state violence to don the cloak of legitimacy” (4). By pushing the role of the nation-state to the forefront, Meeuf defines the construct of terrorism as being based on a set of binary oppositions: “legitimate force/illegitimate violence, civilization/barbarism, order/chaos, and good/evil making terrorism the binary opposite of violence by the nation-state” (4).

To restate my earlier point of the sophistication of the terror instruments used in the September 11th attacks, the tools of technology have been used and misused by terrorists to achieve their agenda of violence. Their profiling as seen in the studies shown above re-affirms this. It is my contention that the face of terrorism has changed considerably over the last decade. With the advent of the Internet, satellite communication systems, direct TV and online banking, terrorism translates into *Jihad online*. This metamorphosis also signals a huge shift in the agenda of terrorist campaigns – and marks the advent of global terrorism. Terrorism, in its earlier manifestations, was territorial in its manifesto, closely interlinked with politics of self-determination and rooted in the local cultures, ethnicities and religions. These campaigns fueled by the politics of expediency and short-term gains were restricted to certain regional areas and ethnic communities. However, the global village with its financialization brought about economic repercussions and the growing disparity of power structures, aligned certain disempowered groups with a common agenda. The politics of globalization as “westernization” in so many ways feeds into the overwhelming fear that capitalistic and economic hegemonies as well as

homogenized cultural formations will replace any local cultural and economic structures. It is this fear, and this rationale that is largely responsible for rejection of all things western. The emphasis of my research is on this form of global or transnational terrorism and its implications of shifting loyalties that ascribe to a common agenda of communities of violence (both real and imagined) across national borders.

One of the crucial questions that I address is the shift from local terrorisms to global terrorisms and this is perhaps best illustrated through an analogy. Regional terrorisms about seeking a homeland, like the IRA, in my analogy are like local companies that comprise a local constituency. The shift, as I call it, occurred in the last decade. To elaborate, I draw on Masao Miyoshi's distinction between definitions of multi-national corporations (MNC) and transnational corporations (TNC), which he says differ mostly in the degree of alienation from their countries of origin. MNCs are "headquartered in a nation, operating in a number of countries. Its high-echelon personnel largely consist of the nationals of the country of origin, and the corporate loyalty is, though increasingly autonomous, finally tied to the home nation". A TNC, on the other hand, "might no longer be tied to its nation of origin but is adrift and mobile, ready to settle anywhere and exploit any state including its own, as long as the affiliation serves its own interests" (736). Linking this to terrorism, the comparisons are obvious. Osama Bin Laden, originally a citizen of Saudi Arabia, moved to Afghanistan and trained by the CIA, he fought along with the Afghan

mujahideen and other Saudi Arabian, Pakistani, and Iranian citizens amongst others, against the Communist Soviet regime. It was a Jihad with a difference as it was clearly about freedom for the Afghanistani people, and about resistance against an invading Soviet army⁸. So while the actual foot soldiers may have been of different national origins, the people who spearheaded the movement were clearly tribal Afghan and Pashtun leaders. I equate this with a multinational corporation. Osama Bin Laden, as founder-leader of Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization, exiled from Saudi Arabia, operating first out of Syria and then Afghanistan and now out of Pakistan, Kashmir – we can only guess; with its cadres drawn from almost fifty nation-states, hosted and supported by the politics of the Taliban, funded by clandestine terrorist states, and waging attacks on the people of the United States and the interests of the United States, advocating the cause of Palestine against Israel, of ‘Azaad Kashmir’ against India and heralding the coming together of all Islamic nations against the West, and the infidels: terrorism is truly a transnational corporation. It is adrift, mobile and has no national allegiance and it exploits its national origins since it chooses affiliations that serve only its own self-interests. Transnational terrorism has arrived.

There are two facets of transnational terrorism that need to be addressed. The first is the importance of citizenship being invoked as a privileging enterprise. For example, in the case of John Walker Lindh, now known as the ‘American Taliban’, an American citizen whose passion for Arabic and Islamic studies took him from the

United States to Yemen and then to join the *jihad* led by Bin Laden - his American citizenship has been repeatedly invoked to explain away the misguided passion of his youth. Yaser Esam Hamdi, is another American Taliban, who was brought back to the United States from Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. His “American-ness” is effectively only the citizenship he holds (solely by virtue of being born in Louisiana) since he left the United States as a child and moved back to Saudi Arabia with his parents, who are citizens of that country. The politics of citizenship and its attendant privileges becomes problematic in this scenario. Are they to be tried as conspirators or traitors, we are yet to find out as the case is still in process.

The second facet is even more disturbing in its implications. On January 28, 2002, Wafa Idris, a 28-year-old Palestinian paramedic and a Fatah activist from al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah, became the first female suicide bomber in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Three other female suicide bombers including Dareen Abu Aisheh and Ayat Al-Ahras followed suit. While traditional groups like Hamas have been less willing to acknowledge these women as martyrs (by virtue of their sex) the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a more ‘secular group’, has claimed all four. The ramifications of this growing phenomenon are multi-faceted – the gender issues, the change in the terrorist profile, and the inflection of gender in the martyrdom process of Jihad. This has brought to the fore, the more ‘liberal’ interpretations of religious extremism, with Iraq and Palestine being commended for their more “liberal” as opposed to the more traditional interpretations of other Islamic nations. So, even as

Saddam Hussein ordered a memorial to Wafa Idris in Baghdad, in an even more interesting development, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Britain, Dr. Ghazi Al-Qusaibi wrote an ode to suicide bombers, “The Martyrs,” which specifically celebrates Ayat Al-Ahras amongst others. Need I explain the political implications of a Saudi Arabian diplomat in Britain - hailing from a nation-state that claims to be an ally of the United States and Britain in this war against terrorism - writing an ode to a Palestinian bomber?

You died to glorify the word of *my God*

In the land that was glorified with the *Israa*

Did you commit suicide?

[No] We are those who committed suicide

In a life whose dead are [still] living.

[O] *Our nation* we have died ...

... *O nation* we are dead

But mother earth refuses to accept us...

Tell ‘Ayat’ the bride of Heaven...

Everything is beautiful we are ready

To sacrifice for your eyes

The pure of our nation confronts the criminal

When the *steeds* are castrated [Emphasis mine]⁹.

The polarities of pure and evil, dead and living, believers and infidels, male and

female are clearly set up. It is when the “steeds” (read the masculinized male?) are castrated – the much dreaded and ultimate emasculation – that the people (men *and women*) must give their lives in the final sacrifice. For what purpose? Al-Qusaibi answers that too – for women like “the beautiful” Ayat, “the bride of heaven” – it is to be received by Fatma, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad in Paradise. The women of this nation are “the pure” – the nation is essentialized in the figure of the woman and nationalism manifests itself in its inherently hierarchical and exclusionary form. The emasculation is clearly reinforced in the choice of verbs Al-Qusaibi uses for the male subject of these failed nations – failed, wept, knelt down, pleaded, complained, and the imagery it invokes in ‘kissed Sharon’s shoes’.

The other more crucial question to ask is whose nation? What nation? Is this again a reference to the figurative *Ummah Islam* since the geographical boundaries of “the land” here obviously do not overlap with the current day nation-state of Saudi Arabia? The “land” and the claim to “our nation” can be explained drawing on the categories of “heterotopia” and “utopia” in the way Satish Deshpande develops Foucault’s terms to distinguish between geographical places (concrete, physical) and abstract, imagined spaces. Utopias according to Foucault are “sites with no place” and refer to “fundamentally unreal spaces” not real concrete places that “represent society itself in a perfected form”. Heterotopias on the other hand, are “real places – places that do exist”. Deshpande redefines the term heterotopias such that “they mediate in a mirror-like fashion between utopias and ideological subjects” (171).

Hence Deshpande argues that heterotopias function as an “ideological hinge, linking social subjects with a possible moral identity that they could assume to inhabit”¹⁰. The “nation” that Al-Qusaibi is reclaiming then is the heterotopia of Palestine on which he projects the paradise-like virtues of a utopia, the imagined *Ummah Islam*. While Palestine is a real place, this heterotopian identity is not a natural process but a socialized product refracted through religious ideologies. It is thus a transformation of the Palestinian conflict so that Palestine as a heterotopian site has opened up possibilities for a pan-Islamic identity that reflects the utopian identity of *Ummah Islam* and it forges a bond for people (and by this I mean the people who ascribe to these ideologies) who are therefore entitled to a sense of belonging. Bin Laden similarly co-opts the Palestinian Intifada for his own purposes. One can also read Israel as a heterotopia for Jews, an argument I will have to leave for another time.

Terrorism as a Trope in Cinema

In the course of my chapter, I have examined discourses of nationalism tracing it from its conservative and androcentric origins to its more discursive and inclusionary forms looking for collusions and collisions with (anti)nationalisms. Using terrorism as a rubric, I develop a discourse that derives and partakes from theories of transnationalism, globalization, and the changing focus of postcolonial studies, since most of what already exists by way of studies on terrorism is in many ways inadequate for this purpose. The reasons are obvious; the changing face of terrorism

that I choose to focus on is too contemporary, it is happening even as I write this. The theorizing will follow – it is but a matter of time. This dissertation is an exploration of this discourse using cinema, fiction and the global media as points of entry into examining this problem.

Having theorized the category of (anti)nationalisms and created a discursive space to talk about this new category, it is important to make the final connection with my choice of cultural media and its depiction of terrorism. Cinema and nation have been strangely congruent entities, even if nationalism as a theoretical discourse has never focused on cinema. Cinema studies however, have used nation as a salient mode of understanding cinema, whether it was as part of nation-building, or to talk about national-specificity or to identify a body of work that can be termed national cinema. The construct of nation has become crucial to cinema studies as the multitude of scholarship on this topic indicates. My preoccupation with cinema and nation is not to talk about the problematic of national cinema, but to talk about nationalism in cinema.

Two critics take a rather unique approach to nationalism in cinema. Sumita Chakravarty suggests that fiction film by its very nature is fragmented. This fragmentation in other words implies that film:

can only present fragments of the nation and project them as evidence of the whole. The story of a couple, family or group represents/re-presents the whole of which they constitute a part. Thus the ‘nation’ as an entity is

always eclipsed in cinema and has to be reconstituted by viewers through its screen absence. It is the absence which marks the fullness of the nation. The fragment is therefore both the nation's source of fear and its object of desire, its threat and its promise (226).

Chakravarty's argument is that the cinematic medium can almost seem resistant to national imaginings since it privileges the personal and the specific and foregrounds regionalism and the local. The representation of the majority population also subsumes regional specificities and minority cultures and yet, "in narrative cinema, the sense of collective identity can only be mediated and dramatized through the particular" (226). Therefore she articulates this only to foreground this inherent tension in representation and definitely not to suggest that cinema cannot reflect a national imaginary. She asserts that in Indian cinema, it is the fetishization and distancing of the stranger from within (the terrorist) as a hermeneutic strategy that accommodates terrorism in the Indian context.

In my reading of Bollywood narratives of terrorism, I argue that the particular is incorporated into the larger whole through the clever use of the family as a microcosmic unit (with its local and regional cultural specificity) that stands in for the representation of the nation. Linking the family to the larger whole of the nation helps constitute a national imaginary that is no longer fragmented. The new world order created by this imaginary is also significantly a reworking of the same hegemonic structures of patriarchal authority. In these newly re-formed constellations of power,

women do not participate in the creation of this new identity but instead serve as iconic stand-ins for minority representation and are given no real voice in this new normative nationalism.

Shohat and Stam, in their excellent essay, “The Imperial Imaginary,” problematize this relationship of cinema and the national imaginary pointing out how filmic chronotopes while very suited for representations of the national imaginary also contribute to an asymmetrical development of some national or racial imaginaries at the expense of others. Transnationalism further complicates this creation of national imaginaries, mediating between the historical and the discursive, making visible some hegemonic power structures and rendering some invisible. My category of (anti)nationalisms, I argue gives voice to these lesser developed national imaginaries, imaginaries of resistant groups that become the ‘Other’ for the privileged nationalistic discourses. I develop this argument further in the context of Hollywood cinema in Chapter 5.

The final connection I seek to draw is the interconnectedness of the violence and nationalism and how it manifests itself in the form of terrorism on screen. Cinema and multimedia both lend themselves to the spectacle of terrorism which enables the camera to reproduce the act of horror at 24 frames per second and reenact this image over and over again. The camera’s eye projects this gaze onto millions of spectators and revisits its enactment over and over again. The visual depiction of terrorism is what affords it the publicity it needs in order to be successful. Cinema like other

powerful forms of multimedia like television creates the necessary screen space and allows for representation of this violence in myriad ways. As Meeuf, succinctly puts it, “its power located in the extent to which it can be made legible to a mass audience, terrorism in many ways only exists as a mass mediated text” (5). It is imperative to note that all such dramatizations of acts of violence depicted by the mass media cast the perpetrators of terror as illegitimate and structurally align themselves with the state’s perception of this act and its consequent response to it. Not limited by the immediacy associated with new coverage of such events, films that visit this phenomenon become sites for the negotiation of meaning and ideological implications of such acts. In the closed fictional world of cinema, meaning adheres to the narrative and thematic imperative of the film as it gets limited by the logic of the impetus that drives the plot. The conflicts that arise because of the tensions within the plot, both on-screen and off-screen, by its presence and its absence allows for possibilities of readings quite unlike its other multimedia counterparts.

I conclude with re-visiting the paradigms that frame the ongoing changes in postcolonial studies. Amanda Anderson in her essay, “The Divided Legacy of Modernity,” formulates an argument for the place of cosmopolitanism in the current academic environment plagued by globalization and universalism. Despite some limitations, Anderson asserts that,

there are many aspects of the reconfigured cosmopolitanism that are appealing and certainly analytically useful: its promotion of descriptive

analyses from a participatory perspective that is nonetheless self-reflexive and critical; its exoteric genres and modes; its suggestive way of articulating relations among disciplinary formation, global position and lived ethos; its flexibility as a term that can describe various aesthetics, ethics, and intellectual programs; its desire to exert normative pressure and to refuse the fastidious pieties of negative critique; its linking of self-conscious positioning to the tasks of translation, receptivity to otherness, and the ongoing project of universalism (286).

Julia Kristeva, in the same vein of thought, eloquently articulates the need for a renewed look at integrating cosmopolitanism with universalisms as a discourse since she says, "... such upholding of universality appears to me as a rampart against a nationalist, regionalist and religious fragmentation whose integrative contractions are only too visible today" (27). The dangers of ethnic nationalisms can perhaps be countered only by civic forms of nationalisms.

Having made clear the theoretical connections between nationalism and cinema, my next chapter focuses on another kind of fictional narrative - two Indian novels, one written in Hindi and one in English. I use these to define the first kind of (anti)nationalisms as based in religious fundamentalisms in the Indian Subcontinent in both colonial and postcolonial settings. Riots or collective violence as a manifestation of this religious fundamentalisms, both Hindu and Islamic, are closely examined in my readings of these two fictional texts. Analyzing riots as the

breakdown of civil society perhaps suggests that the answers to combating this kind of (anti)nationalisms lie elsewhere in civil society.

¹ *Fatwa* is a religious decree in Islam. I elaborate more on this in Chapter 5.

² It is my understanding that these are not generalized terms and need to be defined within a local and global context and I define each of these as they are taken up for analysis in my chapters.

³ I revisit this argument in Chapter 3 with reference to collective violence.

⁴ *Jagrans*, an all night singing of religious and devotional songs are becoming a very popular form of “performed” Hinduism. I revisit this greater detail in Chapter 3.

⁵ Sumit Sarkar in his essay, “Patriotic Literature in South Asia” in Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray’s anthology, *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies* discusses this in detail, in context of how Urdu was systematically replaced as the language of the courts, and consequently in literature in an attempt to counter-act the use of Persianized Urdu primarily as a language of the elite. Sanskritized Hindi, written in the Devnagari script was propagated as a “national” language to create a pan-Indian Hindu identity even though it was not similar to the vernaculars spoken across northern India and was neither the language spoken in most Southern Indian states.

⁶ Parker cites two articles, in *The New York Times* dated July 28, 1990, George Brock’s “An ‘Ism’ that won’t go away,” questioning the formation of pan-European entities like the EEC and arguing that nationalism is an ‘Ism’ that has been the mainspring of History for two centuries, and a second article by Holly Hughes and Richard Elovich, “Homophobia at the N.E.A.” Parker’s argument is that the “commerce between eros and nation” can work in both directions.

⁷ Robin Morgan seems to base her argument that terrorism is masculinized violence

and a male rebellion primarily against males on this study. In the course of my dissertation, I have pointed out the problems with such an assertion. In addition, the increasing numbers of female suicide bombers (like Dhanu in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, and Wafa Idris in Palestine followed by three others) seem to suggest that terrorist organizations are availing of this misassumption by using female terrorists as decoys. Other examples of female terrorists include Leila Khaled, who, on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, hijacked a plane in 1969. In 1987, North Korean Kim Hyon Hui helped plant a time bomb on a South Korean airliner, killing all 115 people on board. The marked increase in the representation of female terrorist characters in popular cinema (Jude in Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*, Veeran in Gulzar's *Maachis*, Malli in *The Terrorist* etc.) seems to reflect this trend.

⁸ I discuss this in great detail in Chapter 4, where I define *Jihad*, its origins and the reasons for its polarization against the West and the US in particular.

⁹ This is an excerpt from the text first published in the London based Arabic newspaper *Al-Hayat* on April 13, 2002.

"The Martyrs"

May Allah witness that you are Martyrs,
[May the] Prophet and Holy men witness to that

You died to glorify the word of my God
In the land that was glorified with the 'Israa'
Did you commit suicide?
[No] We are those who committed suicide
In a life whose dead are [still] living.
[O] Our nation: we have died
Let us hear what eulogy says about us.
We failed until failure was fed up with us...
We wept until tears got tired of us...
We knelt down until kneeling got disgusted...

We pleaded until pleading asked for assistance...

We complained to the idols in a White House
full of darkness
We kissed 'Sharon's' shoes,
He cried: Slowly, you are tearing my shoes;
Please!
O nation we are dead...
But mother earth refuses to accept us...
Tell 'Ayat' the bride of heaven...
Everything that is beautiful we are ready
To sacrifice for your eyes...
The pure of our nation confronts the criminal...

When the steeds are castrated.
['Ayat'] The beautiful – kissed her death
While smiling with good tidings...
At the time when our leaders escape death
Paradise opened its doors
And Fatma, Al-Zahra' received you... ['Ayat']
Tell those who issued 'the Fatwas'
Against 'Jihad':
'Don't rush!' perhaps your 'Fatwa' will be rejected by Heaven
When the call comes for Jihad

It is a time for the ink and paper,
For the books and the 'Learned men'
To be silent.
When the call comes for Jihad
There's no need for a referendum or a 'Fatwa.'
The Day of Jihad is the Day of Blood.

¹⁰ Deshpande in his essay “Hegemonic Spatial Strategies: The Nation-Space and Hindu Communalism in Twentieth Century India,” uses these terms to specifically talk about Ayodhya the mythological birth place of the Hindu God, Rama in context of the growing sentiment of Hindutva across the nation. His argument is that Ayodhya, which is a real place, has been transformed into a heterotopia through the ideological construction of the utopia of Hindutva being transposed on it.

Chapter 3: Religious Fundamentalisms

A traumatic historical event usually finds the artistic and literary response twice. Once, during the event or immediately following it and again after a lapse of time, when the event has found its corner in the collective memory of the generation that witnessed it. The initial response tends to be emotionally intense and personal in character, even melodramatic. On the other hand, when the event is reflected upon with emotional detachment and objectivity, a clearer pattern of the various forces that shaped it is likely to emerge. *Tamas* is the reflective response to the partition of India – one of the most tragic events in the recent history of the Indian subcontinent (5).

Thus reads the Introduction to a novella that took a nation by surprise in 1974 and later evoked an even more unprecedented response when it was televised as a television mini-series in 1988. It wrought an emotional and a political firestorm with its unmitigated exploration of the horrors of the partition and a raging controversy ensued. A lawsuit filed in the Bombay High Court resulted in a now famous judgment that said, “*Tamas* is an anatomy of that tragical period. It depicts how communal violence was generated by fundamentalists and extremists in both communities ... how extremist elements infuse hatred and tension for their own ends at the cost of intercommunal harmony, how realization ultimately dawns as to the futility of it

all...” (6) The judgment allowed for the telecasting to continue arguing that the equal handed description of both communities ensured that it was not malicious or inflammatory in its intent or content and would not cause further bloodshed. The Supreme Court of India upheld the Bakhtawar Lentin-Sujata Manohar judgment, observing, “It is out of the tragic experience of the past that we can fashion our present in a rational and reasonable manner and view our future with wisdom and care ...There cannot be apprehension that it is likely to affect public order nor is it likely to incite the commission of any offence” (7).

One cannot say that controversy no longer surrounds any literary or cultural depiction of communal violence in India today like my discussion on several Bollywood films in the next chapter indicates. The crucial deciding factor for any cultural representation of such events seems to hinge on the secular nature of the Indian democracy which demands the equal representation and equal assignment of blame on all communities affected, Hindu and Muslim or Sikh. In films and on television, this is earmarked by a symbolic almost iconic representation of a minority figure, the necessary dialogue about secularism and humanism and any evidence to the contrary needs to be immediately negated by a reaffirmation of loyalty to the nation. In fiction, however, the artistic license seems to be far more lax, allowing for more freedom in representation of the disjunctions and fissures in society, perhaps driven by its more limited but intellectual and liberal audience. This difference in representation allows for a wider scope for my analysis.

In this chapter I take a closer look at communal tensions that surface periodically in the Indian subcontinent, what I perceive as the underpinnings of Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism and that in my opinion, finally fuels terrorism in the Indian context. Several scholars have argued that all the communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in the subcontinent date back prior to the Partition of 1947¹ that created Pakistan. And yet it was in the immediate aftermath of that decision to separate the land into two nations, to force a mass migration of people torn by their religious sentiments and driven by concerns for their safety to which one can trace the roots of recent communal discord. Even though constant but subtle references to the bloodshed, the mass migration, the huge loss of life and property abound in both fiction and film it was as if a unanimous silence prevailed on the subject of the Partition for years after the event. Re-visiting the topic, it seemed would unleash the same forces of hatred on a society that was still recovering from the death and destruction it wrought. While I do believe that the Partition in 1947 was a momentous event woven into the socio-political fabric of India as a nation, it is my assertion that the roots of fundamentalism have flourished and resurfaced every once in a while in the nation-state's history. I would thus argue that one can map several other major events in recent Indian history though none on the scale of the Partition itself, that have had significant repercussions in Indian society, like the assassination of Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguard in 1984 as a consequence of Operation Bluestar² and that sparked nationwide Hindu-Sikh riots; the demolition of

the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu fundamentalists in 1991³ that caused Hindu-Muslim riots across the nation, the Bombay bomb blasts of 1993 by Islamic extremists⁴ that triggered a similar response and the pogrom of violence in Gujarat after the burning of a train full of *karsevaks*⁵ returning from Ayodhya in February 2002⁶. I draw on specific historical events to organize this chapter, tracing the interconnectedness of violence and religious fundamentalism in the subcontinent.

At the outset let me clarify that in this chapter, in the context of these two texts, my category of (anti)nationalisms draws on religious fundamentalisms more than ethnonationalisms⁷ or regional nationalisms⁸ or linguistic nationalisms⁹ or subnationalisms¹⁰ or secessionism¹¹ as we know it in India today. In other words, although none of the other categories listed above are unknown in the Indian subcontinent, I choose to focus on religious identity as the primary marker in all the collective violence that manifests itself in the form of riots. A riot, that I go on to define later in this chapter, enables the participation of all like-minded citizens or denizens in the violence just as much as it demands that everyone else bear witness to the destruction it unleashes on society.

In this chapter, I argue that in the context of the Indian subcontinent, religious fundamentalisms and their manifestation as riots or collective violence incited and orchestrated in their name, constitutes the **first kind of (anti)nationalisms** that I explore in my dissertation. It is my argument that religious fundamentalisms are anti-nationalist in four ways. Firstly, they arise out of the assumption that the primordial

religious or regional identity supercedes the nationalistic identity. Secondly, they are anti-national since in the rioting most of the damage and destruction is very often against state property or the existing civic infrastructure besides property owned by the other community. This aspect of rioting leads to and underscores the absolute predictability of the outcome – a breakdown of law and order which helps create a vacuum that terror groups exploit to their advantage. This becomes the third way in which collective violence or rioting provoked by religious fundamentalisms is anti-national in its orientation because it provides the ultimate link to threats by terror groups towards destabilizing the nation-state. The fourth aspect of religious fundamentalisms that I identify as anti-nationalist is a little more indirect and complex. It arises out of the rejection of the westernized, secular, English speaking and modern identity associated with the nation-state, primarily the bureaucracy instrumental in the implementation of the state's policies. Coding the nation-state and the ruling classes as western and modern implies that their nationalism is derivative by nature. It suggests that with the ousting of the British colonizers came the replacement with a new class of Brown Sahibs, remade in the same image. The outright rejection of this secular modern nationalism for another more homegrown and home-spun nationalism based on a religious, mythological identity fomented by religious leaders constitutes the fourth aspect of this anti-nationalist nature of religious fundamentalisms. These four aspects of Hindu, Islamic and Sikh fundamentalisms and the rioting and collective violence they provoke help me define

the first kind of (anti)nationalisms that I examine in this dissertation.

In this chapter I focus on the close analysis of two fictional texts as a cultural response to the earlier mentioned historical events – Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974), set in the years just before the partition and Shashi Tharoor's *Riot* (2001) set in the years leading up to the Ayodhya debacle. I use these texts as a point of entry into the examination of Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism, to trace its origins in historical or political events, to determine the causes of violence that can abruptly erupt in its name and to interrogate the conditions in society that help foster and nurture such imaginings. This analysis spans several decades of Indian socio-political history, since I start with the discussing religious fundamentalism in a colonial setup which would be pre-Independence, move beyond the immediate postcolonial moment in a fledgling nation-state and then to events that came much after the establishment of India as a nation-state. The discourse that surrounds nationalism in these texts correspondingly shifts from being fundamentally derived from religious and ethnic origins, to anti-colonial and finally driven by other external impetus like 'Other' nation-states. I take a closer look at the local narratives of resistance within this discursive nationalism which as I pointed out earlier shifts dramatically in the course of little over half a century. My study of three narratives, each unique in terms of the time period, place, politics and the narrative form that frames these stories examines the formation of a dangerous subjectivity for these communities in relation to the divergent constellations of power in these different time periods of Indian history

Spatiality I will also argue plays a crucial role in categorizing riots. They are a direct result of the displacement of religion from the private realm into the public discourse and can be categorized in terms of four different spaces this violence occupies: the **temporal space, the symbolic space, the social space and the sacred space**. I will define these categories that I develop and elaborate on this argument later in this chapter. Riots constitute the major component of all the violence and aggression that surface in both these texts I discuss in this chapter and I will focus on aspects of rioting and how it ties in with the development of (anti)nationalisms.

Let me briefly summarize the storylines of both the texts that I take up for discussion in this chapter – *Tamas* and *Riot*.

Tamas

Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* is a novella, written in Hindi, that captured the nation's imagination with its simple but powerful storyline about the life in a city and its surrounding villages in a district near what would now comprise the north-western border of India and Pakistan. Sahni only clues us in about the setting of the novel through the discussions Richard, the English Deputy Commissioner has with his wife about visiting the nearby ruins of Taxila. While the names of several villages, *tehsils*¹² and nearby cities indicate the setting is an undivided Punjab, the story revolves around several different protagonists - Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. This shift in subject position prevents the reader from identifying closely with any one

perspective, from Nathu's despair at killing the pig, to Richard's issues with his wife Liza, to Ranvir's initiation into the Youth Sabha, to Lala Lakshmi Narayan's fear of being trapped in a Muslim *mohalla*¹³ to Shahnawaz's unconditional help for his Hindu friends to Harnam's Singh's forced exile with his wife from the only home he knows, the storyline shifts from person to person, from one collective entity to another.

It starts with Nathu, a poor *chamar*, a tanner by profession, who is asked to kill a pig by Murad Ali for a pittance - five rupees. Nathu buys Murad Ali's story about the pig being required by the veterinary doctor and struggles to tackle the resilient pig. The pig is finally killed and as per Ali's instructions it is hauled away by Kalu, the *jamadar* (the sweeper) just before the break of dawn. The dead pig (deemed unclean and dirty by Islam) is then unceremoniously left on the steps of the mosque, stirring trouble in the city. Meanwhile a group of Congress workers trying hard to follow Mahatma Gandhi's resolve decide to step out singing patriotic songs which quickly turns into a mission to clean the streets of the community to foster pride in the local and civic infrastructure. Their own disdain at being forced to do this work is obvious and some of them perceive it to be meant only as a symbolic gesture and do not want to physically labor on public amenities. The trouble starts out early with the party being stopped from entering a muslim *mohalla* by Mahmood Saheb because he declares the Muslims who are accompanying the Congress party as traitors to their religion. He asserts that the Congress party is only for Hindus and the Muslim League

alone looks out for the interest of Muslims. The hurling of stones at the Congress party workers and the general feeling of unrest disrupts any further cleaning efforts and the party disperses immediately.

We are then introduced to Vanprasthiji, a local Hindu religious leader as he leads his congregation in chanting Vedic *mantras* and *shlokas* (couplets from the Vedas). The tone of the meeting that is to follow is established early on for he says:

Horrible have been the sins of the Muslims in the land

Even the sky has refused us its favor and the earth its bounty (57).

The discussion led by Members of the Executive Committee and prominent leader of the Sikh community focuses on how to protect the Hindus and Sikhs from the reprisal they fear by the Muslim community. The dreaded retaliation for the killing of the pig with its foul carcass polluting the steps of the mosque seems to be forthcoming according to this gathering. The rumor about a slaughtered cow and its parts being strewn in front of the Mai Sati Dharmasala according to a Sikh gentleman further inflames the Secretary who declares, “If they dare slaughter a cow, rivers of blood will flow in the city” (60). We are then privy to some of the arrangements made to ensure the safety of the Hindus and the Sikhs, which include the stockpiling of rudimentary arms like sticks, axes and knives.

Meanwhile we are introduced to Richard, the all powerful British Deputy Commissioner, and his wife Liza. Richard, at the helm of the administrative hierarchy of the district displays an amused indifference to the wrangling of the Indians he

meets and interacts with and this attitude extends to the contentious issues they present him with as well. He is an intellectual taken up with the ruins of Taxila, a collector of all things esoteric, his fascination for Indian history far outweighs his concern for the people he governs and the reality of the issues that surround them. Liza, largely repulsed by her own living situation and marital dilemmas is simultaneously bored by all things Indian as well as drawn in by Richard's awareness of socio-cultural issues. Liza's outsider perspective is objective and deprived of any cunning that inflects Richard's administrative decisions. The tension builds up in the city, there are some stray incidents of people being killed in various localities which makes people rush to take precautions to protect themselves, like Lala Lakshmi Narayan rushes his family to safety in Shahnawaz's Buick. The deaths of Milhki, the General and Inder, the perfume seller amongst several others fan the flames of revenge as the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs close their ranks, and prepare for the forthcoming bloodshed.

Outside the city limits in the village of Dhok Illahi Buksh, Harnam Singh and his wife Banto, as the only Sikhs in an all-Muslim village, are forced to leave their home for fear of losing their lives. Their forced exile and the misadventures of the old couple reveal more of the intertwined nature of the lives of the Muslim and Sikh communities now fraught with dangers of communalism. Their son Iqbal Singh is chased and forcibly converted to Islam after being subjected to great ridicule and their daughter Jaswant jumps to her death in a well in an age old ritual,¹⁴ to protect her

honor. The clashes between the Muslims and the Hindus and the Muslims and the Sikhs intensify and once the fires burn themselves out, the British intervene to bring peace to the city and its neighboring villages. The deaths, the gang rapes, the destruction of property and the looting is registered and recorded by the Records Clerk in precise detail leaving out the horrific narrative that accompanies each incident. In the end, peace is restored, the bazaars reopen, people get back to business and the leaders of all communities get back to their amicable bantering over forming a Peace Committee.

Riot

Riot is the story of an American woman, 24 year old, Priscilla Hart whose love for India brings her to a small town, Zalilgarh, in Uttar Pradesh, India. As part of a program HELP-US to spread awareness about population control, Priscilla finds herself very closely involved in the socio-political landscape of the little town. She is conspicuously the only foreigner resident of Zalilgarh and her untimely brutal death on September 30th, 1989 during the communal riots, takes the town by surprise. The novel offers the reader an unusual insight into the life of Priscilla that unravels through the eyes of several different people – her parents Rudyard Hart and Katherine Hart, Priscilla's letters to her friend Cindy Valeriani, from notes taken by Randy Diggs the Reporter for the *New York Journal*, through Lakshman, the District Magistrate and later her lover, through Kadambari and Shankar Das her coworkers

and finally through the outsider academic perspective of researcher and Professor Mohammad Sarwar. The novel gives voice to all these people amongst several others and the retelling of the same events offers a heteroglossic (as Bakhtin defines it in his text *The Dialogic Imagination*)¹⁵ rendering of the events surrounding the mysterious killing of an American woman in Hindu-Muslim riots.

Priscilla is drawn to the country where she spent her childhood, growing up in a country that fascinated her as much as it did her father a marketing executive with Coca-Cola. The pull of India manifested itself through the generations of the Hart family starting with Rudyard's parents who worked as missionaries in India, then Rudyard himself who came with the forces of capitalism to help re-launch Coca-Cola in the country, and finally Priscilla, the doctoral student brimming with idealism and enthusiasm, wanting to work with and for the masses.

The timeline for the story indicates that the events unfolded just a few years before December 6th, 1992 when mobs of Hindu *Karsevaks* stormed Ayodhya led by leaders of the Sangh Parivar (a collective group of several political parties aligned with the Right in India – Bharatiya Janata Party, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Shiv Sena, Rashtriya Samaj Sevak and Bajrang Dal etc.) Prior to the planning of this big event, the Sangh Parivar had mobilized Hindus all over the country to collect bricks anointed in several consecration ceremonies in neighborhood temples and bring them to Ayodhya, where they would be used to build a temple, the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, on the disputed site claimed as the birthplace of the God Ram. The tension

in the town is palpable with a procession planned to celebrate Ram Sila Poojan (bricks anointed for the consecration ceremony of the new Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya) and the unexplained attack on two youth workers festooning the town on the eve of the planned festivities. Despite no clear evidence about the miscreants and their motives prior to the impending investigation into the attacks, the Hindus in the town mobilize themselves and prepare for battle. The Hindu leaders are appealed to, requests for toning down the festivities are made but it is all in vain. Although the local Administration does their best to stop it from taking place, the passion and the militancy that rent the air overlooks any need for caution and restraint and the procession continues as planned. The procession makes its way through the town of Zalilgarh with police presence marking all the hotspots for rioting and communal tensions. A crude bomb is thrown at the passing procession in a Muslim *mohalla* and a boy is fatally wounded in the process. This sparks a near riot and despite heavy police presence and swift action by the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, the mob cannot be controlled. Riots break out, seven people are killed, six Muslims and one American woman who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The novel also tells the love story of Priscilla Hart and Lakshman, the District Magistrate, who in his own words is “overweight, overworked and married” (260). Their secret meeting place, the haunted Kotli, also becomes Priscilla’s grave as she is brutally stabbed by an unknown assailant, waiting for her last assignation with her lover Lakshman. Oblivious to the tensions unfolding in the town, absorbed in the

tragedy of her own love story and the child she carried in her womb, Priscilla dies a horrific death alone. The novel suggests at several reasons and several motives that might have led to her death – from Kadambari’s jealousy and sanctimonious behavior, Ram Charan Gupta’s (a local Hindu leader) desire for revenge, Ali’s anger at Priscilla’s meddling in his marital affairs, Geetha’s (Lakshman’s wife) request to the Swamiji to save her marriage or the Muslim boys who happened to have chosen the Kotli to make their amateurish bombs. Like the unknown factors that caused the riots to scorch the town with communal passion, Priscilla’s homicide remains unsolved. She carries the secret of her passionate love affair and of her unborn baby to her grave and despite Katherine Hart’s astute observations and deep understanding of her daughter, she fails to unravel the mystery that surrounds Priscilla’s life in Zalilgarh. Despite Katherine Hart’s questioning, Randy Digg’s investigative journalism, the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death remains unresolved. The secrets remain in Zalilgarh as does the scrapbook with all the sketching, musings and details that Katherine Hart was looking for while in India.

Defining Communalism and Religious Fundamentalism

Riots fuelled by communal tensions and religious fundamentalisms form the central conflict in each of these texts, as I stated earlier on in this chapter. There is however a significant shift in the roots of these fundamentalisms given the different historical and socio-political settings of each of these texts. And yet, one factor remains

steadfast in each of these cultural representations, it is the primordial identity of religious affiliation that overrides any other form of identity including nationalism. My chapter interrogates the factors that lead to this overarching desire for religious superiority and dominance spanning a few decades of Indian history starting with the Pre-Independence era. I examine the causes of religious fundamentalism, both as a response to internal political conflicts at the local as well as the national level and as a distorted reaction to larger external forces like globalization. It is in these localized narratives that one can read the reverberations of larger national events. As Veena Das (1990) argues, “It is not once the a riot starts other hostilities become conjoined to the major symbol of the major hostility; it is rather that, in order for diffused hostilities to translate themselves into violent conflict, a contiguity has to be established between specific, concrete, and local issues on the one hand, and a master symbol on the other, in terms of which the conflict is viewed in the public consciousness” (14). Thus the controversial Ayodhya issue becomes germane to daily life in Zalilgarh and the narrative of the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi of 1984 is inserted into the discourse of communalism in Zalilgarh through its resonance in Gurinder’s memories. In *Tamas* the characters repeatedly talk of historic battles fought centuries ago by the Marathas and the Rajputs against the Mughals. It is this larger context of macro events that frames the rhetoric surrounding the localized rioting with its dramatic cadences of explosive rumors, the constant slandering and the provocative slogan shouting we see in all these texts.

Stanley Tambiah, in his anthropological text, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts in and Collective Violence in South Asia*, argues that the term “communalism” for South Asianists has a very specific resonance in context of its colonial history. It was used by the colonists to encompass all conflicts, clashes and collisions of all “religious, linguistic, regional and racial groupings” and consequently in South Asia today, the term has been “invoked and used with different affective and evaluative connotations and implications,” but always with a resonance of negativity and condemnation (23). Tambiah seeks to dispel the negativity long associated with the term to distinguish between what he sees as two kinds of communalism. One, he derives from the semantic meaning of the term as communal solidarity and brotherhood, and the other as “conflictual, divisive and destructive tendencies in what are called ethnic conflicts, especially in their impact on the alleged requirements and maintenance of ‘nation-states’ and on the attainment of national integration” (27). It is the second kind of communalism that I choose to draw attention to as being congruous with the (anti)nationalisms I identified earlier on and that I examine in the course of this chapter.

Tambiah offers a subaltern perspective to this master narrative of communalism by citing Gyanendra Pandey, a noted Indian historian, who argues that the British used ‘communalism’ to describe all riots and public disturbances that they felt were driven by sectarian violence even if historical records prove to the contrary. “Moreover, when carefully dissected, what were seen as massive outbreaks of

sectarian violence between Hindus and Muslims would seem to show internal competition between Hindu upper and lower castes, and especially the social ambitions of mobile castes espousing religious orthodoxy, to be more salient than a monolithic Hindu-Muslim divide” (23). Pandey’s assertion of caste and class as significant variables in this explosive mix of collective violence in the subcontinent does in no way lack validation. The collective aggression and violence Tambiah and Pandey refer to most often surfaces in the form of rioting.

In colonial India, the communal riot narrative was part of the official historical narrative controlled and disseminated by the state. A significant amount of recent scholarship focuses on investigations into these official narratives of sectarian and communal violence and its rhetoric in colonial India. They provide a very insightful examination of the official colonial account of this ‘native’ violence which was coded as barbaric, instinctive and bestial and distinctly different from the murderous European mobs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pandey, in his essay “The Colonial Construction of ‘Communalism: British Writings of Banaras in the Nineteenth Century,” observes that the colonialist reading of Indian history was characterized by “an emptying out of all history – in terms of the specific variations of time, place, class, issue – from the political experience of the people, and the identification of religion (or the religious community) as the moving force of all Indian politics. The communal riot narrative served to substantiate this reading of history” (95). This master narrative of communal rioting as public discourse surfaces

in the rhetoric used to describe this breakdown of law and order but also emerges in the practices and strategies used to contain this violence even in postcolonial India.

Social Structures and Conflict in Pre-Independence India

In colonial India, nationalism was a fledgling concept, powerful and yet quite abstract. It defined itself as a nation vis-à-vis the nation of the colonizer as it attempted to define Indianness in a socio-political context. The struggle for Independence and the desire to unite a peoples in the name of this struggle was political as much as it was social in its outlook. *Tamas* is a powerful indictment of an era, wrought with political tension and social conflict. The tremors of the Independence movement had surfaced in every town, city and village as we see clearly in this novella and yet the cleavages in society are drawn along traditional lines of religious affiliation.

Tamas is as much about individual people as it is about the politics that surround them. Sahni almost treats the several political parties, the Congress, the Muslim League and the Communists as protagonists themselves, giving voice to their ideologies and to the resistance fomenting within them. It helps provide an insight into their helplessness in the face of all the lack of unity and the constant labeling of them as being religious in their constituency. The simple interpretations offered by the local leaders of their political and social mission, like with cleaning of the community streets and the drains that flank the streets clearly indicates their inability

to comprehend the larger picture as well as their immediate desire to give in to their own selfish interests above all else. Independence and freedom seem largely foreign notions beyond their comprehension as they willingly turn to Richard, the Deputy Commissioner for constant guidance and help. Far from acknowledging Richard's lack of desire to step in at the appropriate time or the symbolic importance of the airplane that simply hovers over the area and acts as a reminder of British Imperial power, alludes to the deeply shackled subjectivity of these people. Unable to rise above their local pettiness in a society fraught with economic imbalances, the people in the novella, debate about the differences within the political parties. The Congress Party with its agenda of nonviolence and community upliftment as advocated by Gandhi only serves to add to the confusion of the townspeople as is evidenced by this exchange between Shankar and Kashmirilal:

‘Cleaning the drains is not going to bring swaraj any nearer’.

... ‘Shankar, you must know it is one way of expressing our sense of patriotism. This is the least we can do. We must descend to the level of the poor and get behind their minds. If you go to work among the poor, will you get dressed in a coat and pantaloons? If you go to them in khadi and holding a broomstick, they will think you are one of them’.

‘Ever since we took up reconstruction work the freedom movement has come to a stop.’ Shankar retorted. ‘Sweep the lanes and ply the spinning wheel – that’s all we seem to be capable of’(50).

The ideology behind wearing khadi along with the rejection of any British milled items as a demonstration of Indian economic self-sufficiency is lost on these local townspeople for whom it is reduced to a mere technicality of eligibility in the local elections. The class issue continues to drive their identities and prevents them from identifying with the local issues of civic sanitation and maintenance of the infrastructure. The Congress Party is repeatedly referred to as being Hindu in its constituency with Muslims being relegated to second class citizens within its folds unlike the Muslim League which was considered the party that united all Muslims under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah¹⁶. The political rift between Hindus and Muslims was further institutionalized through such political organizations in which the eligibility for primary membership itself was based on religious affiliation.

Richard's apathy towards the situation despite his love for India, its history, its literature and learning reflects the self-induced distancing of the British administrator, the colonizer, from the child-like antics of the colonized native populations. His arrogance about the inability of the Indians around him to appreciate their heritage or the past has a unique resonance of scholarly superiority. His cryptic disassociation with the people he governs coupled with his intimate fascination with their cultural heritage confuses his wife Liza who is unable to comprehend his ability to switch between two modes of existence. Richard explains this in very simple terms, "The country is not mine, but the subject is" (35). In other words, Richard embodies what Edward Said brilliantly articulated in his theory of Orientalism. Said theorizes that

one aspect of Orientalism is/was an academic enterprise or tradition of scholarship entirely based on an epistemological and ontological premise of the Orient as distinctly different from the Occident. Furthermore, with respect to colonialism, Said says, “Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). Richard’s large personal collection of Buddha figurines, his samplings of Indian folk art and his books on the subject unsettles Liza as much as his collection and memorabilia from his life in Africa. The main room of the bungalow overflowed with “samples of African art, bows and arrows, beads, bird’s feathers, totems,” all collected while he served in Kenya” (36). Richard is a self-described student of history, a connoisseur of art, and a collector of artifacts. To him, the Indians are a subject to be studied as he explains to Liza, as to why all the people who live in the northern parts of country look the same, since they all came from the same stock basing his observation on the theory of the Aryan race migrating from Central Asia to the valley of the river Indus¹⁷. His excitement about his brilliant point derives from his next observation, “They know nothing. That’s the whole point. They only know what we tell them...They don’t know their history. They only live it.” (37) Sahni in the well-rounded characterization of Richard captures the essence of the justification of the colonial enterprise. Ashis Nandy in *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, makes a

similar argument about the assumptions of colonialism:

Colonialism, was not merely the product of a theory of progress that hierarchized races, cultures and civilizations; it was also the byproduct of the Baconian theory of objective, scientific, 'true' knowledge which strictly partitioned off the observer from the observed, the subject from the object of knowledge, the enlightened agents of history from the passive ahistorical laity, the rational from the irrational (20).

Again, the conversations between Richard and Liza offer us invaluable insights into the British perspective of Indian social interactions, as Richard summarizes the main differences between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. He rightly points out the physical markers that give away religious identity as well as the differences in nomenclature. I will revisit these markers of difference in greater detail later on this chapter, as it is crucial to my study of collective violence and riots in the Indian subcontinent. Although Richard's is a simplistic reading of ethnic diversity, it also leads the conversation to the larger discourse of imperialism:

'Tension between the Hindu and Muslims is mounting. There could be rioting, and bloodshed'.

'You mean these people will fight amongst themselves? When we were in London you told me that they were fighting against us'.

'They are doing both – fighting against us and also fighting amongst themselves'.

... 'They fight against one another in the name of religion and they fight against us in the name of the country,' Richard smiled (42).

Liza's assertion that they are one nation at heart is countered by Richard's dismissal of her simplicity and lack of guile. "Darling, the rulers don't look for similarities, among the ruled. They are only interested in finding out what can keep them apart". (42) That little exchange resonates with political and administrative shrewdness of the British Imperialists that eventually led to the two-nation theory and the subsequent horrors of the partition of 1947.

Another fascinating episode in the novel is Karim Khan's public retelling of a well known Islamic parable about the prophet Khizr and a young Moses who wished to be his disciple. It tells the story of how Moses was to be initiated as a disciple by the prophet Khizr on the one condition that he not question any actions of the prophet no matter how repugnant or inexplicable they were. Khizr takes Moses to a neighboring village and they cross a river in a boat owned by a poor boatman. He then drills holes in the boat and causes extensive damage but he plugs the holes a little while later. Moses is baffled but no response is forthcoming from Khizr. A little while later, Khizr comes across a child and twists its neck killing it, again Moses is horrified. They continue on their journey and come across a broken wall which he proceeds to repair. Moses cannot fathom any of the reasons behind these acts till Khizr explains that he damaged the boat to help the boatman since the local administrator was a cruel man and would have taken away the poor man's only means

of livelihood. He says he killed the child because he would have grown up to be an evil and cruel man and done harm to many innocent people and he built the wall since there was a treasure buried underneath and the village people would find the wall an impediment and destroy it only to find the buried treasure. The moral of the story, Karim Khan explains, is that God is all knowing and all seeing and for man to analyze the cause and effect of larger actions is an exercise in futility. He compares the British as rulers as having similar powers of omnipresence and the ability of foresight. He reminds his audience that the British are shrewd and always watching. His ingenious use of a religious parable to remind his spontaneously gathered audience of the British rulers as their common enemy resonates with timeless wisdom. It provides a very unique and viable alternative perspective of a possible marriage of politics and religion, whereby a religious rendering of a parable can harness nationalistic fervor in a colonial setting. However, his insight is marginalized as is the politics of the communists and the political scenario as reflected in this novella remains rabid with strife with people torn between their conflicting loyalties towards religion and the nation.

Besides religious differences, caste and class played a very important role and determined people's lives. Society was delineated along caste and religious dynamics and the rhythm of the city was maintained by the well established division of labor along the same lines. In *Tamas*, the professions are specifically broken down according to caste (like the *chamars*, *jamadars*) or religion (the tailors, the butchers

are all Muslim) etc. As Sahni describes it,

In the city there was a clear-cut demarcation of work. The Hindus owned most of the cloth shops, The Muslims, the footwear stores. The transport business was in the hands of the Muslims whereas the Hindus had a monopoly of the grain trade. As for the petty trade, it was evenly distributed between the Hindus and the Muslims (87).

It is imperative to note that despite the interdependence of the castes, religious communities and classes of society, as I pointed out earlier, the demarcation of the social spaces each inhabited was clearly established and maintained by all segments of society almost like an unwritten agreement or social contract.

In *Tamas*, similarly the social divisions are recognized and respected by all for any disturbance to the rhythm of the city creates a ripple effect on all the trade and transactions. The first disturbance of any note as retaliation for the desecration of the mosque in *Tamas* is setting fire to the granary owned by the Hindu traders and it is this economic backlash that triggers numerous other episodes that spiral out of control.

The implication of this division of labor also ensures that even within the city, neighborhoods are earmarked for certain castes, classes and religious communities. This ghettoization of communities seems to ensure safety in times of crisis and people who live outside of those specific areas like Lala Lakshmi Narain and Harnam Singh, find themselves ill at ease, wary of their longtime neighbors, scared of being killed

and looted and totally dependent on the munificence of their friends of the other community like Shahnawaz Khan and Karim Khan for their passage to safety.

Class similarly plays a very important role in this aggression. Lala Lakshmi Narain's appeal to Shahnawaz Khan is met with a gesture of friendship, as he and his family are rushed to safety in another part of town, Sadar Bazaar, in the big blue Buick that goes around untouched. The Lala's concern for his property supercedes his concern for the welfare of his servant Nanku, who is ordered to first run an errand in the middle of the rioting and later told to stay home and guard their belongings. Similarly Raghunath's family moves away from their locality to a big bungalow elsewhere, leaving the servant, Milkhi behind to look after their house and property. Shahnawaz's random, gruesome and unwarranted act of killing Milkhi while retrieving Raghunath's wife's jewelry from their ancestral home goes undetected and indicates how class dictates the actions of these individuals before their religious affiliation does. Murad Ali, counts on Nathu's cooperation regarding the killing of the pig, only because he knows that class and caste would ensure Nathu's complicit silence. Sheikh Noor Illahi, in the end reassures Lala Lakshmi Narain that he had had the bales of cotton removed from the godown before the fire as a gesture of friendship cementing a lifelong bond of convenience.

In *Tamas*, unlike the master narrative of communal riots that informed official colonial history of India in the pre-Independence period, Sahni underlines the significant differences within society – caste, class and religious identity. His

characters are divided selves, torn between the various affiliations they subscribe to in their social, political and economic worldview. Nathu's killing of the pig is driven by economic necessity, as is Sheikh Noor Illahi's gesture towards the Lala and similarly Shahnawaz's help is extended only towards people in his own strata of society. So unlike Richard's simplistic rendering of social differences in the Indian context, my reading of *Tamas* illustrates the multiple facets of social interactions that came into play in determining a workable nationalism for pre-independence India. While (anti)nationalisms as I define them did not have a place in India prior to 1947, it is my argument that the master narrative of communal rioting was established and its reiteration in historical colonial accounts helped create the larger discourse that surrounds it even today.

Communalism in present day India

Some historians have indeed termed this communal violence as recurring convulsions in Indian society, or even as violent pathologies located in civil society. To briefly summarize some historical studies, noted historians Bipan Chandra and Mohanty¹⁸ both argue that communalism in the Indian context can be seen as a disease in the body politic. Bipan Chandra like Tambiah's earlier mentioned argument talks of communal ideology as being different from communal syncretism in that the former is exclusively based on an ideology of hatred of other religions and arises when religion enters the public discourse. Unlike Chandra's assertion that communalism is

a disease of civil society, Mohanty argues that it is a process of alienation from the authoritarian modern Indian nation-state. Nandy makes a similar argument differentiating between religious faith and religious ideology which corresponds to the earlier mentioned communal syncretism and communalism. He however refutes the notion of violence as inherent pathologies in society and asserts that rioting is primarily an urban phenomenon, sometimes fostered by the complicit involvement of the agencies of state and its roots lie in the lack of institutionalized regulation of heterogeneity and differences in modern day society. Conflict, Nandy argues, was controlled and contained through processes that evolved out of the syncretism in society and which the modern Indian nation-state has failed to do in the current context.

Riots, in my definition, include collective acts like arson, looting, destruction of property, killing, rape and other forms of assault against a specific social or religious group or against a political entity/organization or the state. While the last classification may suggest confusion with a political uprising or a revolution, riots rarely take on an organized character, in fact the spontaneity and lack of planning or discipline would clearly distinguish it from political acts of revolution and rebellion. Further, more often than not, riots erupt within a small enclosed world which encompasses both the perpetrators and the victims precluding issues of anonymity. However, the separation of the two after the fact has led to ghettoization not unknown in the country today. The 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi completely banished

the notions of anonymity and pointed towards the obvious complicity of politicians in the government as the rioters, armed with electoral lists of various political constituencies in Delhi, hunted down their Sikh victims. Rajiv Gandhi's now immortalized words, "When a mighty tree falls, the earth shakes," are a testimony to the political justification of this aggressive unwarranted violence in the face of a tragic assassination.

Finally, I interrogate the sparks that ignite the collective violence in this society that engulfs and consumes local neighborhoods, involves perpetration of violence against people within the same social framework. Then, just as easily, out of the burning ruins and embers, like the proverbial phoenix, an altered social infrastructure re-emerges marking a shift in the dynamics of the population and more importantly it underscores the unequal and unfair renegotiation of spatial inhabitation. This constant undercurrent of communal tension along with the actualization of violence has steadily ensured a ghettoization of the minority communities in specific rural as well as urban areas in India today.

Riots: Identification of Spatial Categories

In my dissertation spaces and spatial categories become crucial to the narrative of the nation. All the narratives of the nation that I look at in the course of my dissertation seem to abound in depictions of people restricted to closed spaces or a form of ghettoization. I take that up for detailed discussion in Chapter 4 with reference to

globalization and the asymmetrical development of nationalisms in Hollywood cinema through the systematic use of cinematic space.

Briefly, let me explicate on how spaces are used in these texts. Space signifies containment with reference to the Muslim *mohallas* in both *Tamas* and *Riot* as it does for Nathu waiting to kill the pig trapped in small space filled with rotting garbage and freshly spilled blood. For Liza, similarly her space is almost prison cell-like as she feels restricted within the confines of a large bungalow in a country she finds alien and inexplicable. The characters in *Tamas* seem to trade one closed space for another, from the supposed safety of their homes to the cramped attic of a neighbor's house or to the sanctorum of a *gurudwara*. The Sikh women later even trade that for the confines of a well to save their honor. The wide open spaces in *Tamas* denote vulnerability not freedom as Iqbal Singh is hunted down like a dog before his humiliating conversion to Islam. Closed spaces have a very different connotation in the novel *Riot*. Priscilla's humble one room apartment with its minimal furnishings and peeling paint on the walls is like her life unadorned by any of the comforts she grew up with, barely recognizable to her grieving parents. Closed spaces afford Priscilla and Lakshman the privacy of the haunted Kotli as a lover's paradise but it eventually becomes Priscilla's bloody grave. The Kotli, out of bounds for everyone except the District Magistrate, and later Priscilla, also symbolizes Priscilla's emotional and physical isolation from her social milieu. The love Priscilla and Lakshman share is taboo and just like the sunsets framed in the broken window

opening reflected again in the cracked mirror behind it, it exists only in the temporal moment. Spatially divided inhabitations mark Muslim *mohallas* from Hindu neighborhoods, they create self-contained *bastis* for the lower caste *chamars* just as much as they separate better developed areas from the lesser developed ones and they mark the boundaries of communal distrust.

Veena Das, a well-known sociologist, in the Introduction to the text *Communities, Riots and Survivors* elaborates on the form of the riot, its temporal structure and the regulation of control over sacred spaces. She observes that time as duration in the context of riots goes beyond just an external dimension but instead becomes constitutive of its meaning. Hence it relates time to the event structure of the riot and the narrative within which it is set and secondly it points towards objectified calendars that are ritually marked. B Farida Shaheed, in her essay, “The Pathan-Muhajir Conflicts 1985-6: A National Perspective,” about religious conflicts in Pakistan argues that every year during Muharram, one can anticipate the repetition of Shia-Sunni riots since it commemorates a historical conflict within the ritualistic expressions of the martyrdom of Hussain. In other words, the recurrence of this violence in the case of Shia-Sunni ethnic riots can be anticipated in calendrical time. Sacred spaces as Das defines them would include all pilgrimages centers, mosques, temples and churches that help define a religious community. It is “the control of sacred spaces and their protection” that “continues to be an important symbol around which communal conflicts tend to be organized” (11).

While I largely agree with Das's sociological delineation of the origins and structure of communal conflict in the form of riots, I clearly move away from her categories and definitions. To clarify, I do use her terms scared space and temporal space but I choose to imbue them with different meaning to define spatiality in the context of riots as occupying what I perceive as four unique kinds of spaces: temporal spaces, social spaces, symbolic spaces and sacred spaces.

Temporal space as I allude to it here evolves from the fact that most communal riots in India are time specific and revolve around religious festivals like Muharram¹⁹ or events like the demolition of the Babri Masjid or the assassination of Indira Gandhi or even mundane events like an India-Pakistan cricket match. The timing of the conflict is critical with reference to the annual celebration of religious festivals or the clash of timing of two different events, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the celebration of Diwali. In the novel *Riot*, the insistence of the Hindu religious leaders to go ahead with their planned procession in the face of the violence that erupts the prior evening establishes the temporality associated with the events that follow. Temporal space in the Indian context is as much dictated by the lunar calendar as it is the Gregorian calendar. And it is the shifting nature of the former that introduces an element of uncertainty and unpredictability to this space.

The **symbolic space** would refer to the ritualistic rendering of religious events in the forms of processions, *Rath Yatras*, *Jagrans*²⁰ or the religious posturing and slogan shouting that surrounds the Ram Sila Poojan in the novel *Riot*. The symbolic

brandishing of traditional weapons like *trishuls*²¹ and spears for Hindus to assert their readiness for Hindu militancy has similar reverberations. *Rath Yatras* were started by Bharatiya Janata Party leader L K Advani, in a nation wide effort to mobilize Hindu crowds to participate in the Ram Janmabhoomi issue. The spectacle of the adorned *Rath*²² as it proceeded on its journey from town to town across the nation helped elevate the discourse surrounding the controversial claim of the Ram Janmabhoomi issue to a higher plane of divinity. This transcendence serves a dual purpose: in the minds of the common man, it moves the debate beyond the jurisdiction of the laws of the nation-state to a higher court of divine law as much as it serves as an iconic reminder to the Hindu population of the glorious periods of Hindu history prior to the Muslim invasions and Mughal rule. In the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, the battle between Ram and Ravan over the abduction of Ram's wife Sita, symbolically the fight between good and evil is celebrated through a series of Hindu festivals starting with *Ram-Leela*, the dramatic re-telling of the story of Ram, followed by *Dussehra*, the re-enactment and celebration of the victory of Ram over Ravan and ends with the Hindu festival Diwali to commemorate Ram's jubilant return to Ayodhya. Advani's *Rath Yatras* in the imaginings of a Hindu nation can thus be read as another re-enactment of a victorious return to re-claim Ayodhya. This further opens up a plethora of possibilities to analyze Advani's narcissistic desire to equate himself with the Hindu pantheon of Gods and how this identification resonates with the monarchical assumption of the Divine right of Kings. But I will not get into that analysis in this

dissertation.

The third kind of space would be the **social space** within which riots seem to primarily function – the ‘hotspots’ Gurinder, the Police Chief of Zalilgarh, constantly refers to in the same novel. These would be the neighborhoods that are identified as being communally sensitive and where the violence is most likely to erupt. As I mentioned earlier, some of this is closely linked to the ghettoization that has occurred over the years as responses to prior rioting. Like in *Tamas*, in the face of impending trouble, people choose to move out of neighborhoods for fear of their safety and create new neighborhoods earmarked by exclusive populations of the same religious community. Unlike the social organization in colonial India along the traditional lines of caste and class and profession, as I discuss earlier in this chapter, which was by no means unproblematic, Ashis Nandy argues that communalism is a result of the failure of the postcolonial secular nation-state to recognize and regulate difference. In other words, this implies the necessity of re-organizing the social infrastructure to accommodate this heterogeneity of populations as a primary function of the secular nation-state without which difference periodically resurfaces as conflict or collective violence.

The fourth and final kind of space I identify is **sacred space** closely associated with the land itself. In my dissertation, it is also the most significant spatial category. Like Nationalisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that were closely linked to the homeland/motherland/Fatherland, the category of sacred spaces

as I define them, provides one of the only ways to ground (anti)nationalisms to a specific location. Unlike the other (anti)nationalisms that I deal with in this dissertation, the notion of sacred space in localized narratives of resistance makes this the most rooted in the local, in national and regional specificity. It is the only physical space that at many levels marks the crux of all religious fundamental disputes in the world today. It is the sacred space of Ayodhya, the birthplace of Ram for the Hindus as much as it is the site of the sixteenth century mosque, the Babri Masjid built by Mughal Emperor Babur for the Muslims; it is the Golden Temple in Amritsar for the Sikhs, and the mosque that is polluted in *Tamas*. The notion of sacred space can be further extended to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem for Jews, the nation of Palestine or Mecca for the Muslims. I make an argument in my previous chapter about Foucault's notion of spaces as utopias or heterotopias and link it to the notion of *Ummah Islam*. Utopias would be imagined unreal places that represent society in its perfected form while heterotopias are real places onto which a community can project the ideological virtues of an imagined Utopia. Palestine like Ayodhya becomes a heterotopia around which new nations can be imagined. Claiming or reclaiming this sacred space be it Ayodhya, Kashi, Kashmir, or Palestine forges a bond of kinship or imaginings directly outside of the Nationalisms that formed nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Sacred space becomes further relevant in tying in the notion of the abstract to the tangible. It can signify the physicality of an imaginary nation, as much as it stands

in for the projected desire for a homeland. Sacred spaces become integral to all narratives of nationalism that derive from a politico-religious identity.

Configuring the Muslim as the Other

In colonial India, the Muslim was the invader, the invading Turks as the Sikh women proclaim and in a strange moment of ‘unisonance’ (I define this term in my earlier chapter) the historical past and the present completely merge. It is a moment of reckoning in the sense that Hume used it – as the synthesis of time whereby in the context of a living present, certain aspects of the past are remembered and some aspects actively forgotten. For the purposes of my argument, unlike the “forgetting” that Renan²³ talks about at the birth of all nations, the emphasis here would be on the active act of “remembering”. Renan says that the violence and bloodshed essential to the birth of all western nations was forgotten for purposes of sanitizing the nationalism that was to be built on its foundations. My argument here turns this one on its head. In the case of (anti)nationalisms, the act of remembering the violence and the bloodshed is crucial to retain the negativity associated with image of the ‘Other’. The question that needs to be framed is a simple one: what do we choose to retain in our memories, oral histories and in the cultural repertoire that defines our identity? Homi Bhabha refutes Anderson’s notion of unisonance as it exists in ‘single, homogenous empty (western) time’ by shifting our attention to the ongoing negotiations and constant tensions between the dual processes of the *pedagogical* and

the *performative*. According to Bhabha:

In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of writing the nation (297).

Anderson and Bhabha both acknowledge that a nation's past considerably inflects its imaginary. The nation state evokes its past and writes its people into the continuity of the contiguous narrative that links its past and present but as Bhabha argues, the performative aspects that underscore repetition will surface to challenge the pedagogical enforcing of a rightful inheritance.

Unlike the official narrative of historical continuity, the collective memory of the community abounds in multiple references to the atrocities committed in the past which resonate with the rumors of conflict in the present. Rumor-mongering is a critical part of communalism and feeds on the frenzy of collective memory of subjective violence. It is in the malicious recounting of survivor's stories and oral histories that rumors take root blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction. In *Tamas*, the news of the desecration of the mosque with the dead pig's carcass results in the rumor of the killing of a cow and its parts being strewn all over the city. In the Gurudwara later in the novella, rumors about a killing in the Khalsa School and the arms buildup in the neighboring mosque take a life of their own.

In pre-Independence India, Muslims were as much the outsiders as the British. Invaders from the historical past, Muslims remained the 'Other', even in the face of colonial subjugation. In *Tamas*, Sahni characterizes this otherness in many ways. Despite Richard's obvious indifference to the seriousness of the situation, the anger augments itself against the Muslims, and vice versa. Again in *Riot*, Priscilla is the meddling outsider but the Muslims remain the 'Other' to the Hindu fundamentalists. As an aside that I cannot resist, Tharoor creates a rich and powerful resonance in the novel through the Hart family history. Priscilla's grandparents came to India as missionaries, her father as a Capitalist Coca-Cola executive and she herself, as a student and social worker, foregrounding three very different contextual interventions by Westerners in the Indian subcontinent. The textual reference by Priscilla to E. M. Forster's character Adela Quested introduces a whole other angle to this self-reflexive representation of the Westerner in India but that will have to be set aside to be discussed in another paper.

The otherness of the Muslim translates into the religio-ethnic signifiers coded on the body. Richard explains this to Liza in simplistic terms about observing difference amongst the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs. While he oversimplifies the details for Liza's benefit, most of his observations are rooted in fact. In South Asian society, religious signifiers are obviously placed on the human body, identifying them instantly as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The male body it can be argued is essentially Hindu till it is ritually circumcised to make it Muslim or the hair (including facial

hair) grown out and never cut to make it Sikh. The other side of this same argument would be that the Hindu male body can be subjected to conversion as can the Sikh male body by cutting of the hair etc. unlike the Muslim male body which is ritually marked and cannot be made whole again. The beard of the Muslim, the little Fez cap and the ability to recite the *kalma* become little cultural weapons in the repertoire of fanatic frenzied mobs to help identify male members of the Muslim community. The lack of the same marks a Hindu or Sikh male who can be converted to the Islamic faith by the performing of the same ritualistic act like we see with the forced circumcision of Iqbal Singh in *Tamas* (190-192). Iqbal Singh is also subjected to his hair being shaved off and to the forced eating beef (the cow being sacred to all Hindus and Sikhs) before being made to recite the *Kalma*. “Before nightfall all the signs of Iqbal Singh’s Sikhism had been carefully obliterated; in their place were all the external Muslim signs. From an enemy he had been transformed into a friend, not an infidel, but a believer - a Mussalman.” (192)

Deepak Mehta in his essay, “Circumcision, Body Masculinity: The Ritual Wound and Collective Violence” makes a powerful argument about “the inscription of circumcision by seeing how the male body is constituted, eclipsed and reformulated in three related domains”. The male Muslim body he argues “participates in three different zones of significance and initiates the processes of signification” (79). The male Muslim body is constituted through the ritual of *khatna* (cutting or circumcision), it is effaced under a series of verbal signs, signified by the

term *musalmani* (the act of being Muslim) and it becomes an alternate imagination of the body through circumcision with reference to the term *katua*. Muslims embrace the first two categories, privileging the wound as essential to the making of a Muslim but the term *Katua* referring to same act of circumcision as an act of destroying introduces stigma to the act by pointing towards another kind of cutting of the penis – castration. The rhetoric of the Hindu-Muslim riots is highly sexualized for purposes of provocation and these terms play into the fear of being ritually converted. It is the circulation of signs that reveals the slippage between the ideas of circumcision and castration which in the Hindu imagination becomes the bestial body.

Rape has been documented as a very common war strategy and surfaces in communal violence within the same performative paradigm of ritually claiming human bodies. Women's bodies become sites of resistance and in inscribing them through the act of rape, the community claims the women's body as their own. Rape, unfortunately, is a very common form of violence in communal rioting and I would like to acknowledge the tremendously powerful scholarship that exists on women, rape and war but since rape does not feature in the two fictional texts, I shall not enter into that discourse. In fact it is precisely the fear of rape by Muslim men that motivates the mass suicide by the Sikh women as they deliberately jump into the community well to protect their honor.

The constant repetition of historical references keeps this otherness alive. Ranvir's little troop of young men compare themselves to the gallant Rajputs waiting

for the Muslim invaders as in the battle of Haldighati²⁴. The Sikhs prepare for the violence by remembering their historical conflict with Muslims: “The Turks had come, but they were from the neighboring villages. The Sikhs believed they were settling scores with their traditional enemies, the same Turks with whom the Khalsas used to battle two hundred years ago. It was just one more link in a historic chain of battles” (193).

Slogan shouting as I discussed before is a prominent part of communal violence and this verbalized form of assault usually precedes the more physical forms of violence. It takes on many forms, from the common religious cries like “Allah-o-Akbar,” “Vahe Guru,” “Jai Shri Ram” and “Har Har Mahadev” to the more complicated sexualized insults that seem to be an inversion of the tradition of political slogans at election rallies. In *Riot*, the slogans are aimed at insulting the Muslim community with their pithy rhymes like “*Mussalman ke do hi sthaan, Pakistan ya Kabristan,*” (there are only two places for a Muslim, Pakistan or the cemetery) or “*Jo kahta hai Ali Ali, uski ma ko choddo gali gali*” (He who calls out to Ali, fuck his mother in every alley) (128).

Finally, the role of the rumors in collective violence takes on a larger function vis-à-vis setting up of the Muslim as the ‘Other’. The Hindu Right in India has deliberately cultivated a stereotype of the Indian Muslim as a threatening outsider undermining the nationalist fabric of the nation. The perception that the nation-state with its ideology of secularism caters to these minority populations has taken a life of

its own. Ram Charan Gupta, the Hindu leader gives voice to some of these unfounded notions in his conversation with Randy Diggs. The Muslims he says are allowed their own Personal Law which permits them to take up to four wives and which he argues contributes to their growing numbers and because of which the population of Muslims will soon overtake the Hindu population. He complains about their foreign origins, the minority appeasement policies of the government and the pandering to the religious sentiments by permitting a state funded Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca each year, none of these or similar privileges he alleges are accorded to Hindus. Every issue from the Shah Banu case to Kashmir Land laws become part of this political master narrative. He says, “Why is it that no Muslim country anywhere in the world is a democracy? Look around you, anywhere on the map, they are all dictatorships, monarchies, tyrannies, military regimes. Take my word for it, it’s the only way they know. Muslims are fanatics and terrorists; they only understand the language of force” (57). Not founded in fact or logic (Indian Muslims are a mere 13.4 % to 80.5 % Hindus), these stereotypical images nurture the Muslim as the enemy and conflate the issues the Hindu fundamentalists have against the secularist, modernizing mission of the nation-state with the Muslim minority.

Communalism as a new Nationalism against Modernity

Modernity enters into the discourse on nationalism and (anti)nationalisms as a complex problematic which needs to be addressed at several levels. I start with

clarifying the conflation of modernity with the nation-state as seen in these texts within the Indian subcontinent. I will then extend my argument to analyze other configurations of religious fundamentalisms especially Islamic fundamentalisms, in the global context, as being posited against modernity. Both these assertions look forward to the arguments I develop in the next two chapters of my dissertation.

In my next chapter, I develop an argument that militant Hindu fundamentalism in the Indian subcontinent is a byproduct of the adversarial and dialectical relationship of two different kinds of nationalisms – one based on religious-communal identity and one that is explicitly based on the modernistic ideology of development. Fundamentalism in this framework is also set up in opposition to the modernizing and secularizing mission of the Nehruvian social development policies in India as I have illustrated in this chapter. One can thus argue that it is the imbalance of economic development, and the continued maintenance of social hierarchies along caste and class lines within the nation-state that negates the modernizing and equalizing nature of the enterprise. The “modernizing mission” of secular politics in India as I said earlier was *in opposition* to a primarily communal identity, which was traditional and pre-modern. Further, in creating a seemingly inclusive space for nation-building and national development, it automatically relegated its ‘other’ to a pre-modern or anti-modern status. This secular and modern identity was not without its problems. It created a pan-Indian homogenous elitist identity, cut loose from any regional, religious moorings. This homogenization of the

middle class elite was made possible through the stripping of its ascriptive religio-ethnic markers as discussed earlier and by the universal adoption of Westernized ways, language and attire.

According to Maiello, it (this elite) “spoke in the modernist idiom of secular nationalism, scientific technology and economic development; by adopting this idiom, the elite were able to render invisible its own ascriptive markers” (186). It was a community drawn exclusively from the upper caste and middle classes and it found its home in deterritorialized spaces offered by the metropolis, in this case, largely New Delhi. Despite its exclusive nature and its erasure of difference, it had hijacked the “modernizing” agenda, and any opposition to it, was therefore pre-modern or anti-modern. It is this elite that constitutes the bureaucracy and the legal system (Lakshman and Gurinder stand in for these sections of society) that Ram Charan Gupta loathes, “These people, they come to our districts with fancy so called secular ideas they have learned in the English-language colleges, and they try to tell us what to do. They, who do not understand their own culture, their own religion, their own heritage. Such people have no right to call themselves Indians. But they rule over us, you see” (56). While Tharoor’s novel is largely unique in that it gives voice to the some of the marginalized ideologies vis-à-vis the English novel in India, like the Hindu Right, he exposes their self-righteousness and their misappropriation of religious sentiment towards their own political ends. It is through the character of Mohammed Sarwar, an academic intellectual and Professor of History that we get the

counterview to Gupta's poisonous misinformation. He says:

There's been a recent change in the dominant ethos of the country ... We're seeing more and more of this demonization of a collectivity. Look at the things they are saying! Muslims are pampered for political ends they say: look at the Shah Banu case and Muslim Personal Law. Muslims have four wives, they exclaim and are outbreeding everyone else; soon they will overtake the Hindus! ... I tried to argue the point at first with those Hindus who were willing to raise it with me, but found it almost too simple to do so. The Rajiv Gandhi government's action on the Shah Banu case was pure political opportunism; it was a sellout to Muslim conservatives but a betrayal of Muslim women and Muslim reformers. ... If Muslims have four wives – and not many do – how does that increase the number of reproductive Muslim wombs which still remains four whether by one husband or many? And by what statistical projection can 115 million Muslims 'overtake' 700 million Hindus? ... But it doesn't matter – this is not about logic or reasoning. The national mind has been afflicted with the intellectual cancer of 'us' and 'them' (114).

Lakshman and Gurinder represent the elite who subscribe to a different identity – an Indianness at large. Lakshman with his self-criticism and introspective ways, his Indianness slightly at odds with his westernized education, his moral compass finely tuned towards justice for all, finds his own personal dilemma in his love for Priscilla.

She embodies what his western education has taught him to desire – individualism and self-fulfillment. Yet he cannot give it all up for her as love cannot supercede his roles as an Indian son, husband and father. Finally it is tradition that tugs at his heartstrings. While Ram Charan Gupta’s Hindutva worldview is not validated, Tharoor’s complex characterization of Lakshman, in many ways, acts as an indictment of a bureaucracy and technocracy out of touch with the Indian majority, unable to translate their well meaning ideology into an implementation of the restructuring of social order. Spouting the secular idiom of the Indian nation-state, the view of religious tolerance and equality, Lakshman and Gurinder repeatedly find their hands tied by the legal system and the corruption of the politicians.

In fact, if any, Tharoor privileges the views of Mohammed Sarwar, the scholar of History, whose research on a revered Muslim warrior Ghazi Miyan brings him to Zalilgarh. His research illustrates the syncretism in society what he calls composite religiosity as opposed to composite culture. He argues the need for “nonsectarian histories of sectarian strife” (64). He is not limited by his westernized education – while Lakshman’s speech is ridden with Wilde witticisms, Sarwar speaks of the oral histories of small time warriors of Medieval India. And unlike Lakshman’s secluded citadel of power, he inhabits the impoverished and riot afflicted habitation of his poor relatives. Sarwar is a man in touch with the realities of India, he freely moves between the center and the periphery. As a middle class academic with his English education, he has access to the centers of power and as a Muslim he speaks for a

community he fears is fast being permanently relegated to the margins. His argument succinctly articulates the doubly marginalized status of the Muslim in India – the partition, he argues, courtesy of fanatic Islamists relegated Islam to a territorially inscribed area – Pakistan, denied to those who disagreed with a vision of a split India; and the Hindu fundamentalists deliberate desire to change the public discourse about Indianness would be to again deny the Indian Muslims a viable space in public discourse.

The discourse about modernity becomes crucial to our analysis as it is employed in the service of establishing hegemonic structures of power. My analysis of this manipulation of the discourse on modernity in both the local and global context foregrounds the contradictions inherent in such imaginings. So even as Hindu fundamentalists reject the modern and secular ways of the Indian elite, in their diatribe against the Muslims in India they echo the exact opposite ethos, as we have just illustrated in this chapter. Muslims are thus relegated to a pre-modern, uncivilized almost bestial status to promote the superiority associated with the faith of the majority population.

Modern, civilized, Western – homogenous monolithic categories – all of these are used interchangeably in the context of religious fundamentalisms. What kind of classification links these terms together? To categorize something as ‘modern’ is to study it in terms of its temporality; to be civilized is to have progressed and evolved; and to label something western, is to think geographically, or maybe even in geo-

political terms. Or let us think of them in terms of their binary oppositions – modern as opposed to traditional, primitive; civilized as opposed to savage and barbaric. But this gets complicated when we come to the term Western – as opposed to Oriental?

I am deliberately shifting the debate here to focus on an analysis of the rhetoric used to talk about (anti)nationalisms specifically Islamic fundamentalisms. There is a need to unpack these homogenous and monolithic categories before we can even begin to explore the historical, political and economic origins of terrorism.

Edward Said in his text, *Covering Islam*, comments on these ideologically loaded labels (he talks about the ‘West’ and ‘Islam’) and he says that they are enabling and disabling at the same time. However, he points out that ‘Islam’ is not pitted against ‘Christianity’ but the ‘West’ because the assumption is that:

whereas the West is greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity, its principal religion, the world of Islam – its varied societies, histories and languages notwithstanding – is still mired in religion, primitivity and backwardness. Therefore, the West is modern, greater than the sum of its parts, full of enriching contradictions and yet always ‘Western’ in its cultural identity; the world of Islam, on the other hand, is no more than ‘Islam,’ reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety that seem on the surface to be as plentiful as those of the West (10).

For me, as a postcolonial reader, this framing resonates with several implications, not

the least of which is the “civilizing mission” of colonialism. Sunder Rajan similarly grounds ‘modernity’ in a postcolonial context, when she says, “Modernity has never been simply the time of the present. It is now more than ever in postcoloniality more than elsewhere, a complex historical and cultural situation defined *against the past, the traditional, and the ‘West,’* with different kinds of value attached to what it represents” (7). Modernity, thus like nationalisms – is ineluctably shaped by its “Other” – the past or the traditional or the West.

Within the colonizer/colonized paradigm, the crucial question about race relations according to Stuart Hall, “is not whether man in general makes perpetual distinctions between groups with different racial or ethnic characteristics, but rather what are the specific conditions which make this form of distinction socially pertinent, historically active” (Sharpe, 5). The specific conditions that mark this distinction that Hall is talking about can be transposed to the current analysis of terrorism as well. Coding Islamic terrorism as an attack on modernity makes the western assumptions of superiority transparent; thus making the sanctioning of a war against terrorism inevitable. Hence the plethora of articles in the media about the regressive, traditional and sexist policies of the Taliban, imposed on Afghanistan, a nation that was originally “westernized”. We can condemn the imposition of the “veil” in Taliban ruled Afghanistan but we should not question the imposition of the *abaya* on “non-Muslim” female US Air Force officers stationed in Saudi Arabia²⁵. The double standards are obvious. Clearly, for this modernizing agenda – the

imposition of the exact “same” traditional practices *differs* from one Islamic country to another – it marks the recognition of the *specific conditions* which make this form of distinction *socially pertinent and historically active*.

Having defined modernity in the context of Islamic terrorism, let us examine this in the larger context of the history of terrorism, as we know it. Modernity, as we said earlier, can be defined in temporal terms. Using a central Western epistemological theory, Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, as a rubric – modernity suggests a move forward, a progression. Consequently, the “*act* of attacking modernity” is to privilege the traditional, and in the framework we just established, that is regressive.

Does fundamentalism then always constitute an opposition to the modern? Yes, but as I have shown it is the framing and the rhetoric that constitutes it as a discourse constantly in conflict with modernity and civilization and hence with Western thought that gives rise to these categories.

Subaltern Secularism

To bring my argument about religious fundamentalisms as (anti)nationalisms a full circle, let us revisit secularism as the opposing force to communalism in the Indian subcontinent. We have argued that in opposition to the Nationalism that developed in the immediate postcolonial moment, the Indian nation-state finds itself at crossroads again, whereby it is being challenged by the emergence of a new militant Hindu

nationalism. The Nationalism of the new nation-state post-1947 was nurtured as a Nehruvian dream of a secularizing, modernizing mission of nation-building which Maiello describes as “an illusive self-perception of a morally superior society anchored in the ethos of tolerance and brotherhood” that relegated the harsh reality of religious identity to the backburner (100). As an assertion of anti-western sentiment, it refuted the colonial paradigm of a communally divisive society, and attempted to exorcise the ghosts of Partition. Secularism became its byline in this goal of territorial integrity and modernizing mission. The failure of the nation-state through a succession of self-serving political governments to provide homogenized economic development throughout the nation, has in turn, given birth to several (anti)nationalisms that threaten this status-quo, Hindu fundamentalism being a primary contender.

I have in the course of my chapter, shown the historical antecedents of Hindu and Islamic fundamentalisms especially in its manifestation as collective violence. I have defined spaces this communalism occupies and the rhetoric it uses to spew its hatred. Scholars now talk of the fragmentation within the Indian nation-state as a systemic crisis which can only be subverted through the continued prevalence of the ideology of tolerance, secularism and brotherhood. But just as the master narrative of communalism has its origins in colonialism, I would like to conclude this chapter with Homi Bhabha’s powerful analysis of the term secularism which resonates within the colonial/postcolonial paradigm in his essay “Unpacking my Library Again”.

Secularism he points out, like other concepts individualism, liberalism etc. are “ideas, and ideals, that are increasingly complicit with a self-reflective claim to a culture of modernity whether it is held by the elites of the East or West, or the North or South. We may define them in different ways, assume different political or moral positions in relation to them, but they seem natural to us: it is as if they are instinctive to our sense of what civil society or a civic consciousness must be” (208). Bhabha asserts it is crucial to understand that these complex universal concepts have been “transformed through their colonial and postcolonial contexts that are particularly important to our current social and cultural debates in a multicultural and multi-ethnic society” (209). In other words, these western ideals of government are themselves derived from the colonial and postcolonial experience. The classic form of secularism is a privileged secularism, a secularism of the elite as I have argued in the chapter. A subaltern secularism is not based on the utopian notion of universalism and individualism that bears no connection to the lives of the marginalized or the oppressed, it is instead derived in a social space communally shared with others and from the process of a collaborative and collective ethics of choice in which solidarity is not based on similarity but on the articulation and recognition of difference.

Can one assume that it is this subaltern secularism that the two fictional texts ambivalently meander towards? These novels unlike the films we analyze in the next two chapters focus largely on the fissures that split society, they enhance the nature of these disjunctures and they underline their inherent violence and circumscribe their

limitations. The films, on the other hand, I argue point towards the similarities and the homogeneity and build towards a nationalism that encompasses all. By foregrounding difference and the focusing on the debate that surrounds its expression in secular society because of the failed nature of the state's policy of modernized secularism, perhaps the fictional texts open the possibilities for the emergence of subaltern secularism?

¹ Partition refers to the formal creation of Pakistan as an independent Islamic state out of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The word Partition in Indian history resonates with the horrors of the forced mass migration of millions and the trauma of sectarian violence that ripped a nation apart

² The assassination of the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards was in response to "Operation Bluestar", a military operation that took place June 4 to June 6 1984. The Indian armed forces entered the Golden Temple (the holiest Sikh shrine) for the purpose of flushing out the heavily armed Khalistan separatists who were using it as a base of operations to carry out terrorist activities across Punjab. The anti-Sikh riots referred to here took place over three days in November 1984 in response to the assassination of Indira Gandhi and claimed thousands of lives.

³ Ayodhya, has long been the controversial birthplace of the Hindu God Ram. The Bharatiya Janata Party led by L K Advani initiated a Rath Yatra in 1990 to rally the masses to march to Ayodhya and take back the holy site from the Muslim Mosque; the Babri Masjid supposedly built there by the Mughal Emperor Babur in 1528 AD after destroying the original temple. As to the authenticity of this claim, it is still controversial and not historically or archeologically evident. The case is still pending

in the courts and the site had been closed for worship by the Supreme Court of India. On December 6th, 1992 a huge mob of *Karsevaks* stormed the mosque and destroyed it which caused communal tension across the country.

⁴ The Bombay bomb blasts took place in March 1993 as a supposed response by Islamic terror groups (linked to the Bombay mafia) to the widescale riots that consumed Bombay from December 6-12 and then again from January 7-16 after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

⁵ The term *Karsevaks* is used to refer to people who offer their services for free (volunteer) to a religious cause. It originates from the Sanskrit words *kar* (hand) and *sevak* (helper). It has been used to refer to people who offered their services at Ayodhya to build the Ram temple and rather controversially to refer to people who demolished the Babri Masjid. Also, after Operation Bluestar, referred to earlier, karsevaks helped in rebuilding the Harmandir Saheb in the Golden temple at Amritsar.

⁶ The Godhra riots captured the nation's imagination with the carnage that followed after a bogey of the Sabarmati express carrying Hindu *Karsevaks* returning from Ayodhya was destroyed in a fire killing 59 people on February 27, 2002. The accusations that a 100 people strong Muslim mob was responsible resulted in widescale violence across Gujarat that many feel was partially unleashed by the Right wing government in the state of Gujarat, under the leadership of Chief Minister Narendra Modi. Rakesh Sharma's documentary *Final Solution* released 2004, captures the politics of hate and the complicity of the Hindu fundamentalists in the genocide that rocked Gujarat.

⁷ Enthnonationalisms I define as nationalism based on ethnic identity for example the movement for Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka fuelled by the for LTTE or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. They claim that they are the only legitimate representative of all Tamils in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and control significant parts of northern Sri Lanka today.

⁸ Regional Nationalisms would include nationalism that derives from a regional identity like the conflict in Kashmir. The demand for a Kashmiri homeland is based on what they often refer to as *Kashmiriyat* and while Islam does play a role in it as explained by the forced exile of Hindu Kashmiri Pundits from the valley, the regionalism supercedes it. However, it is also a secessionist movement in its demand for an independent Kashmir, a new nation-state.

⁹ Linguistic Nationalism in the Indian subcontinent has not really translated into a conflict beyond the constant assertion and refusal of non-Hindi-speaking states especially in Southern India to recognize Hindi as an official language of the nation-state.

¹⁰ Sub-nationalisms would include the demands for the creation of new states within the larger republic of India. For example, the splitting of Bihar into two and the creation of a new state Jharkhand or the creation of Uttaranchal out of the largest Indian state of Uttar Pradesh etc. It is not marked by a legitimate separation from the nation-state but a fragmentation that can be incorporated and assimilated within the larger national body.

¹¹ Secessionism is marked by a desire to secede from the nation-state. The demand for Khalistan, a new homeland for the Sikhs as an independent nation-state to be created out of Punjab is clearly a secessionist movement.

¹² *Tehsil* was a district in Colonial India governed by a *tehsildar*.

¹³ *Mohalla* is the Urdu word for a local small neighborhood. It resonates with notions of community in the sense of brotherhood.

¹⁴ The ritual is known as *Sati*, and performed by Rajput women to protect their honor against Islamic invaders known to rape the womenfolk or to take them captive. Women, once widowed would rush to kill themselves in a ritualistic fashion either by jumping into a well or more commonly by burning themselves on the pyre of their

husbands. In this case, the Sikh women jump into the well to save themselves from being dishonored.

¹⁵ “The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization--this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel.” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 263).

¹⁶ Muhammad Ali Jinnah also referred to as *Quaid-e-Azam* was the founder leader of Pakistan. As President of the All Indian Muslim Leagues, he helped found Pakistan as an Islamic nation-state in 1947.

¹⁷ This is now a contested theory and the Aryan question is now explained away as a series of small scale migrations and consequent assimilations over centuries.

¹⁸ Mohanty as cited by Veena Das in *Mirrors of Violence*.

¹⁹ Muharram is a Shia commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussain in the Battle of Karbala in the month of Ashura. Shia Muslims take out processions on Muharram. While Sunni and Shia are more alike than dissimilar, there are significant theological differences that implicate history, class, ethnicity, culture, and faith and have practical consequences for the relationship between politics and Islam.

²⁰ *Jagran* is a relatively newer form of Hindu worship with the singing of religious songs through the night usually in the precincts of a temple. The chanting and singing

is broadcast over loudspeakers and many see it as a reaction to the Islamic call for Prayer (*Azaan* for Sunni Muslims) five times a day similarly broadcast from the minaret of a mosque by a muezzin over a loudspeaker.

²¹ *Trishul* is a trident associated with the Shiva, the destroyer in the Hindu trinity.

²² *Rath* is the Hindi word for an adorned chariot associated with legendary rulers, warriors and the Hindu divinity.

²³ I elaborate on this in Chapter 1.

²⁴ The battle of Haldighati took place in 1576 between the Rajput King, Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar and the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

²⁵ I refer to a lawsuit filed by Air Force Lt. Col. Martha McSally about a Pentagon policy that required women in the military serving in Saudi Arabia to wear traditional Muslim garments specifically the abaya when they travel off base. Other restrictions imposed by the Pentagon include prohibiting women military personnel from driving a car, going off base without a male chaperone, and being forced to sit in the back of the car. The lawsuit was filed on the basis that it was discriminatory against women. The Pentagon has since revised the wording from 'required' to 'strongly encourages' the use of the *abaya*.

Chapter 4: Reaffirming the Nation: Bollywood and Terrorism

The 1990s in India saw a sudden spate of Bollywood films¹ that dealt directly or obliquely with terrorism, some of which were obviously influenced by real-life political events. The use of terrorism as a narrative strategy, backdrop or as the central conflict in these films could be attributed to a changing political climate in the country and the amalgamation of several political and historical events centered around socio-political change that had suddenly metamorphosed into “hydra-headed” monsters of terror. Mani Ratnam’s film *Roja* released in 1992 marked a series of firsts in Indian cinema. It was one of the first films to deal with terrorism onscreen, and to successfully transition from the localized regional film to the national cinematic space (originally produced in Tamil, it was widely accepted in its dubbed version by the pan-Indian audience of Hindi films) and the first to successfully popularize song lyrics within that largely Hindi-speaking audience, even though some verses were retained in Tamil and Malayam. In my argument however, all of these firsts are crucial in setting the stage for a close analysis of how narratives of terrorism in film inflect and shape the discourses of nationalism through the conflicted relationship of the local and the global (in this case the regional and the national)². By locating this analysis in the specifics of this conflict between the regional and the national, this chapter offers a critique of a pan-Indian aesthetic of popular films that

despite its supposed secular impulse to introduce inclusiveness and heterogeneity in order to reflect India's diversity, only serves to promote and reaffirm a homogenized nationalism.

The questions that arise out of this popular use of terrorism as a narrative strategy can be used to interrogate the genesis of these movements in complex historical and political issues, in conflicts of ideologies of religious intolerance and ethnic cleansing and most certainly in responses to economic and capitalist hegemonies. Even as Nationalism is predicated on difference upon difference, terrorism in India and subsequently its depiction in popular film cannot be treated as a homogenous whole. This chapter seeks to define terrorism as it is represented and constructed in cultural/historical terms specific to the Indian context through the close analysis of four Hindi/Urdu films: Mani Ratnam's *Roja* (1992) and *Bombay* (1995), Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *Mission Kashmir* (2000) and Khalid Mohammed's *Fiza* (2000). I will also touch upon other films like John Mathew Matthan's *Sarfarosh*³ (Rebel Ahead, 1999) and Gulzar's *Maachis*⁴ (The Matchstick, 1992) briefly in the course of my discussion.

My analysis will be divided into the following three sections: the first section locates these films in a socio-cultural, political context, and provides exigency for the analysis. I contextualize terrorism in historical and political terms very briefly here, to trace its roots in political decisions and historical events that were cited as springboards for different terrorist movements in several states in India. The second

section of this chapter frames these films in a larger generic category of trauma films whereby the collective memory of traumatic events (in my thesis, I specifically deal with violent acts of terrorism) centers on the paradigm of remembrance/forgetting even as it is articulated in the public sphere through the use of the cinematic medium. The third section focuses on a closer reading of the narratives of terrorism in each of these popular films. It is my argument that these mainstream films foreground terrorism as a narrative strategy which helps to promote a normative notion of patriotism that despite its attempted symbolic and equal handed acknowledgement and representation of difference only serves to enhance and reaffirm a homogenized nationalism that erases difference, marginalizes minorities and celebrates the nation even as it questions the nation-state. In the final section, I further develop my earlier argument about Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism in the Indian subcontinent not just as a byproduct of the *adversarial* or *dialectical* relationship of two different kinds of nationalisms – one based on religious-communal identity and the other that is explicitly based on the modernistic ideology of development - but more as a *third kind of nationalism*, an (anti)nationalism, which emerges from my analysis of these films and I argue is a result of both the dialectical and the adversarial relationship of the earlier mentioned kinds of nationalism.

Framing Terror Narratives in Bollywood Cinema

Ratnam's *Roja* was the first Indian film that interestingly subverted the 'Kashmir as

paradise' motif in Hindi film. Kashmir with its picturesque valleys and snow covered terrain had long been the Bollywood⁵ cinematographer's dream, featured as a backdrop for the song and dance routine in hundreds of Hindi films - for example, Raj Kapoor's *Barsaat* (1949), Shakti Samant's *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964) and Ramanand Sagar's *Arzoo/Love in Kashmir* (1965). The political climate and violence in Kashmir through the 1980s had forced filmmakers to move beyond, using alternative and more expensive locales abroad like the Swiss Alps to recreate the snow capped mountains so dear to the Hindi film audience. Mani Ratnam's film, *Roja*, not only introduced terrorism in Kashmir as a new narrative strategy in Bollywood cinema but in many ways metaphorically reclaimed Kashmir for the national film audiences through its use as an integral and invaluable on-screen cinematic space⁶. This reclaiming of Kashmir as an onscreen space further echoed the nationalist agenda of the political rightwing through which the middle class Hindu bourgeoisie could claim intervention in the act of reclaiming Kashmir (India's only Muslim majority state) as an integral part of India. Further, the identification with the westernized, middle class professional yet patriotic hero (he works as a cryptographer for the Indian government), helps make that process of reclaiming Kashmir seem not only like a tangible and achievable goal but in its inclusiveness reasserts the role middle class Indian citizens can play in that process. As Tejaswini Niranjana, in her essay, "Integrating whose Nation? Tourists and Terrorists in Mani Ratnam's *Roja*," argues, Mani Ratnam succeeds in primarily cultivating an audience composed of "the newly

assertive, and self-confident middle class that is also claiming for itself the spaces of the nation and secularism premised on Hindutva” (79).

The plot centers around a popular and much abused strategy by which militants routinely took senior government officials and foreign tourists as political hostages and used them as political ransom to negotiate the freedom of arrested militants. Ratnam through the clever use of this plot device unambiguously linked the terror strategies employed by militants in Jammu and Kashmir to the lives of ordinary citizens and government employees in the Southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It was perhaps this mapping of a truly national terrorscape in the film, a very successful narrative device that resonated with the cinema audiences nationwide. *Roja*, thus introduced a significant change in Bollywood cinema by moving beyond the pastoral romances and the rural/urban conflicts with its populist base in the Hindi speaking-belt of Northern India. It was the first of a string of films that successfully reconnected the vibrant political-scape of the 1980s and the 1990s to a newly emerging nationalist landscape in Hindi cinema.

Roja was followed by several films that innovatively introduced the motif of terrorism in cinema. Films that used terrorism as a springboard to address issues of civil rights; films like *Bombay*⁷ (1994) that attempted to interrogate and respond to the events that shook Bombay in 1992/1993 and the communal riots that followed⁸. Films like *Maachis* (1994) that revisited issues raised by “Operation Bluestar,” when the Indian army entered the Sikh’s most sacred shrine, the Golden Temple in

Amritsar on June 5, 1984 which was being used as an arsenal and a safe-house by Sikh separatist groups demanding a secession of Punjab. The subsequent assassination of Indira Gandhi, then the Prime Minister of India on October 31, 1984 led to mass scale killing and rioting against the Sikh community across the country⁹. Films like *Dil Se* (From the Heart, 1998) and *The Terrorist* (2000) that used suicide bombings as narrative strategies, triggered by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India in May 1991¹⁰ and of Beant Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab in 1995. These assassinations and terror attacks effectively brought these separatist movements from the fringes, the border states of Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam to the streets of New Delhi. Separatism and terrorism were no longer mutually exclusive and neither was it restricted to the border states, instead it became a part of the everyday existence not only in the main metropolitan cities, but by its introduction as a subject for several films that dealt with it tangentially or directly, it also succeeded in bringing these issues directly into the homes of millions of spectators across the country, through the media, and through cable TV channels and VCRs and DVDs.

Furthermore, I argue that a very interesting trajectory can be traced through these films - a trajectory that suggests a distinct shift in the ideology behind these terrorist acts. From secessionist movements rooted in their demands for a separate state based on linguistic/religious lines in the case of Punjab as is seen in *Maachis*, and Kashmir in *Roja* to a more complicated progression in *Mission Kashmir* in which the religious motivations of Jihad or the holy war of the Mujahideens is directly in

question; to the later films *Sarfarosh* and *Fiza* where the motivations for terrorism become ambiguous and amorphous, an amalgamation of several (anti)nationalisms, ranging from religion to a far more globalized form of terrorism driven by a widespread need to foster instability, violence and fear instigated for political and economic expediency. Terrorism is no longer restricted to conflict within the borders of the nation-state but it moves beyond that to a more global level, with clear emphasis on state sponsored terrorism to almost what can be termed transnational terrorism with its roots in more than one country, shifting and amorphous, bringing into question political alliances and economic coalitions. This is taken up for detailed discussion in Chapter 5.

Ironically, this transnational terrorism as seen in popular cinema is not combated in a transnational tribunal since it raises too many hairy questions of accountability but instead the responses remain restricted to the confines of the established framework of law and justice within the nation-state. The equating of terrorist activity with criminal behavior is an interesting aspect of this phenomenon in Bollywood Cinema. So even as issues of national security are placed on the line and there are direct and indirect references to neighboring nations and some of these films do engage with the military response to a situation, there is no clear and direct allusion to the declaration of war against another nation-state. The constant underlying subtext of war, however, is fuelled by this resurgent nationalism and is very much present in suggestions of border skirmishes and infiltrations across

borderlines.

The use of the rhetoric of war is commonplace in many of these films, some of it rather clichéd. Terrorists, as we have pointed out elsewhere in this dissertation, deliberately use the rhetoric of war to provide legitimacy for their actions. For example, the title *Mission Kashmir* suggests a war maneuver and as we soon find out, it is the codename for a terrorist plot in the making.

All of the films discussed in this chapter, deal with specific acts of terrorism and its fall out in the lives of the protagonists and their families. Here are the brief plot summaries of the four films I deal with in detail: *Roja*, *Bombay*, *Fiza* and *Mission Kashmir*.

Roja

Mani Ratnam's film *Roja*, starts out with non-diegetic sounds of a rural pastoral scene ruptured by the staccato of gunfire. The storyline starts out with the Indian army closing in on a wanted terrorist Wasim Khan, in the jungles of Kashmir. The theme of terrorism is established early on, as is the primary location of the conflict. The locale then shifts to a village in Southern India, Sundar Bhanpur and in that idyllic pastoral setting, we are introduced to the two young sisters Roja and Lakshmi. The arrival of the hero, Rishi, a cryptologist with the Indian Government, with his mother is almost an intrusion into this utopic setting and we are told that he is a prospective groom for the older sister Lakshmi. The love story takes a twist with Lakshmi's refusal of the

marriage proposal, since she is romantically involved with someone else and the obvious solution to this embarrassing dilemma is for Rishi to marry Roja. (We are shown most of the interaction including the confession between Rishi and Lakshmi in flashback.) Unaware of the circumstances surrounding the switch and Rishi's timely intervention to save the family from embarrassment, the marriage takes place much to Roja's annoyance. The married couple returns to the city and tensions continue to mount. This clearly demonstrates and establishes Roja's feistiness and single-mindedness. Rishi is unexpectedly called away on a top security assignment to Baramullah, Kashmir to work for the Indian army. The director cleverly uses the intercutting of shots accompanied by the sound of shutters clicking, to show us the training of the Indian army as well as of terrorists in Kashmir. These shots are clearly from the point of view of the terrorists and mark the degree of infiltration by terrorist groups into army occupied areas of Kashmir. Soon after his arrival, Rishi is taken hostage by a militant group headed by Liaquat Ali to negotiate an exchange for the release of Wasim Khan, the noted terrorist leader.

The dynamics of the militant group are established very early on. Liaquat Ali's daughter prepares meals, cleans the little hut and takes care of all the daily household chores. However, when she is slapped for opening Rishi's restraints, he intervenes in the altercation. His transition from an ordinary man to a heroic citizen begins at that moment in time. His desire to protect the terrorist leader's daughter becomes a microcosmic reflection of his desire to protect his country. Significantly,

the Kashmiri woman is nameless and continues to be so throughout the film. The small resistance group, similar to the ones in *Maachis* and *Fiza* is run like a family unit. The militants are humanized, their pain and their problems are given voice, and Liaquat clarifies that “*tum se hamaree jaatee dushmani nahin hai*” (we do not have a personal enmity with you), even as he asserts that it all about their *desh-prem*, love for their homeland (Kashmir). Meanwhile Roja’s desperation to see her husband freed from captivity takes her to the military base where she meets Colonel Rayappa. In my reading of the film, her request that Wasim Khan be freed so that her husband can come home foregrounds the representation of the Indian woman’s priorities, personal over public, family above nation. The Colonel’s criticism of what he calls a selfish request, arguing that Wasim Khan had killed over 50 people and that he had been captured at great risk to the soldiers, speaks to a much larger debate about the politics of expediency as practiced by the Indian politicians. The debate between the law enforcement agencies (Indian Police force and the army) and the politicians on the policy of negotiations with terrorists has its roots in the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed (daughter of Union Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed) in December 1989, an event that many in India see as a watershed moment in the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. The release of five noted terrorists by the Central Government in exchange for Rubaiya’s life set a precedent that encouraged many militant groups across the country to use hostage taking as a common strategy to get their terms met¹¹. The film makes a strong case against such negotiations and Roja giving voice

to such a request relegates this and all Indian women to the periphery of the debate on nationalism. Women in this film are seen as the repository of national values, their emotional investment in family and the personal is congruent with a man's love for his nation. While the male citizen is able to easily rise above his personal affiliations and enter the public discourse, Roja with all her spirit and middle class origins is contained in her limited world of the domestic discourse. Her ability to enter the public forum is only possible with the intervention of another male, Chajju Maharaj, who despite his lower class origins and lack of formal education, acts as her translator and guide. Her language issues, she speaks only Tamil, seem to further restrict her access to public discourse. Language becomes a useful tool to distinguish between the local and the global in this particular situation where Hindi is the lingua franca of choice for this nationalism¹² and affords the passport of access that she is clearly denied. She is dismissed readily and alike by the Colonel, the political leader and Wasim Khan underlining the assumption that she has no place in public discourse.

The killing of the young militants at the border by the Pakistani forces is seen as a betrayal by Liaquat Ali. He senses defeat and the loss of his son, further humanizes him. He becomes a defeated man, ignorant and duped and with no real cause to fight for.

Rishi's attempts to escape come at a crucial juncture, and he defies the demand for the release of militants to ensure the safety of his life. Rishi transcends from being the victim to being a hero, he moves from verbal retribution to physical

retribution as he takes matters into his own hands. His final escape and his confrontation with Liaquat Ali, is symbolic as Liaquat Ali recognizes his patriotic spirit and accedes to it. The film ends with a patriotic song about the citizen's love for the nation and their willingness to sacrifice their lives for their nation at any point in time.

Bombay

Bombay, starts out with a very scenic panorama of the village of Malanpur followed by a shot/reverse shot of the protagonist Shekhar and a *burqa*-clad Shaila Bano. The ethnic markers in the family homes and their attires establish that Shekhar comes from a middle class conservative, traditional Hindu family and Shaila Bano from a lower class Muslim home. The romance between the two occupies a significant amount of screen time and allows for the usual Bollywood cinema devices – cinematography that celebrates nature during the monsoon season with several song and dance sequences along with the use of specific blurring to highlight the eye match.

The song “*Tu hee re, tere bina main kaise jiyoon*” (You are the one, how can I live without you, in my reading of the film marks the emotional consummation of their relationship symbolized by her shedding of the *burqa*¹³ as she runs into his arms. This shedding of the *burqa* is not only the shedding of her inhibitions and hesitations – it is furthermore the shedding of her Muslimness so to speak. The anger that results

from this forbidden love, results in the confrontation of Bashir Ahmed, a brick kiln owner against Narayan Mishra, the trustee of the Hindu temple in the village. This confrontation is a visually powerful moment in the film, which I go on to analyze in detail later in the chapter. Despite all the opposition, the threats of bloodshed etc. the young couple decides to run away and Shaila Bano slips out of her house after paying her obeisance to the holy Koran.

Bombay, the big city affords the anonymity this Hindu-Muslim couple is looking for – the only place where new social structures can be made and old ones broken. Shekhar and Shaila Bano set up home in Bombay, as tenants of Mr Malgaonkar. Even as they struggle to keep social pressures from entering their little private world, the strange world of tenancy affords enough opportunities for the complete invasion of their privacy. The landlord requests that some of his guests stay with the young couple and their presence in the bedroom prevents them from consummating their marriage. The world of religious fanaticism is always right outside their door. The saffron flags of a strident militant Hindu brigade scare Shaila Bano as does the landlady's reaction to her name. Significant to all this religious unrest fomenting in the city, is Shaila Bano's easy adoption of Hindu attire. She dons the *mangalsutra*¹⁴ and starts wearing sarees and bindis, traditional markers of Hindu married women. The couple has twins and attempts to reconcile their differences between their respective faiths by naming them Kamal Bashir and Kabir Narayan. The symbolic coupling of both Hindu and Muslim names creates the perfect foil to

the claim of ownership of the boys by the grandfathers.

The politically fanned flames of religious extremism buoyed on by the march of Hindu sevaks to Ayodhya affects even the small village of Malanpur. We are shown the hysteria of crowds impassioned by this desire for *karseva* (community service in the name of god) and the door to door campaigning by the Shakti Samaj group seeking donations. There is deliberate usage of actual footage of the Ayodhya debacle and the destruction of the Babri Masjid through the use of still shots of newspaper articles before it cuts to the riots that ensued. The riots bring mayhem, death and chaos to their doorstep and kindle unusual and unexpected friendships across religious lines.

Like Rishi, the protagonist from Ratnam's earlier film in his trilogy on terrorism, *Roja*¹⁵, Shekhar makes the transition from ordinary citizen to a passionate patriot, from a citizen to a hero. The children get lost in the chaos of the riots and are saved by some policemen and the initial intervention of the state reinforces the effectiveness of law and order. Subsequently, the failure of the nation-state in the riots that follow the bomb blasts is evident. I take this up for discussion later in the chapter.

Fiza

Fiza is a story of the Ikramullah family in Bombay, comprising of a mother Nishatbi, the daughter Fiza and the son Amaan. The narrative voice is of Fiza, who introduces

us to the family and the political climate prevalent at the time (1993) in Bombay. The close up shots of the mother and sister establishes sympathy early on for the family even as the montage of black and white stills from actual footage show the viewers the aftermath of the riots in the form of heaps of dead bodies scattered on the streets and carcasses of burnt BEST buses¹⁶.

The film begins with Nishatbi in the police station wanting information on her missing son, six years after the fact. The use of a song sequence focusing on Hajji Ali, one of Bombay's most famous Muslim shrines, with aerial rotating shots establishes Nishatbi's faith in her religious beliefs even as her clothes, her demeanor and the mode of greeting emphasizes her Muslimness to the viewers. These are clear ethnic markers as are the shots of minarets and domes and the use of Urdu, the language spoken by Muslims in the country. Having set the stage for this Muslim family now consisting of only the mother-daughter duo, the film moves on to show us the daily life of Fiza, whose lack of male protection makes her vulnerable to harassment by the men in the community. Her love interest is a rich, Hindu boy whose initial overtures are rejected by Fiza, as she attempts to provide for herself and her mother on her own terms. Fiza's inability to find a job is a direct comment on the nation state's failure to tackle unemployment and the consequent hopelessness faced by the youth of the country.

Fiza, who has lost hope of ever finding her brother unlike her mother, one day, spots Amaan across the road in traffic, and rushes to catch up with him. Her

desire to seek the truth about what happened that one night, takes her to meet Police Inspector Prakash Ingle. His version of the events that unfolded that night clearly establishes Amaan's innocence and foregrounds the complicity of the police force. The deliberate rejection of help for a Muslim citizen by the police, along with the taunting ("*Bhagne ka hai, ja Pakistan ja,*" You want to run, go to Pakistan, go) is justified by the Inspector as looking out for the greater good of the people at large. Saving one life then, he says, would have meant more lives lost. His reckless and uncaring attitude dehumanizes him, categorizing him as representative of an uncaring nation-state.

Fiza's quest for the truth takes her to two prominent religious leaders, VK Singh and Sayyad Saheb, who see in her the perfect opportunity to rekindle religious sentiments for their political benefit. V K Singh represents the Hindu fundamentalist perspective, whereby all Muslims are outsiders, invaders who came to the country and stayed on, or conversely they are the 'Other' who went on to create Pakistan. Fiza, confronted by this Hindu fundamentalism is taken aback even as she emphasizes that her Indianness transcends her Muslimness. Fiza is welcomed by Sayyad Saheb, as one of his own, but told to leave old matters alone, since it might result in new bloodshed. The complicity of the politicians in aiding and abetting communal violence and their desire to exploit this for their own political advantage is made obvious through these interactions.

The film uses flashback to recreate happy times with Amaan romancing his

fiance Shenaz, and locating them within their specific community firmly entrenched in their faith. In sharp contrast to the politician's behavior, we see Nishatbi's openness and willingness to embrace Aniruddh, Fiza's Hindu boyfriend. Fiza comes to know of Amaan being in Rajasthan with a known terrorist group and travels in search of him. She finds Amaan and confronts him in what turns out to be a very emotionally fraught meeting. Amaan argues that he is fighting a *jihad* not against his country but against evil and injustice. In flashback, we are again shown how events transpired that night but from Amaan's perspective and how he was eventually rescued by Muraad Khan, a terrorist leader. He was initiated into the gang and indoctrinated to take on the state represented by the police force to fight against the injustice faced by Muslims and Hindus alike.

Amaan returns the prodigal son, the family is reunited and his responsibilities, as the only male member of the family, revisited. Despite all his attempts to reconcile with society, Amaan falls back on having to fight off the criminal element that plagues the local community and goes back to his old ways of taking the law into his own hands, and he becomes a killer. Nishatbi kills herself in grief, and Amaan comes back for the funeral and to console his sister despite being a killer on the run. Muraad Khan capitalizes on Amaan's desperate situation and re-inculcates him with his doctrine of hatred. Amaan agrees to a mission to kill some corrupt politicians but does not succeed in doing so. His amateurish emotional reaction to the situation and the plan to eliminate him after the completion of the mission makes him realize that

he is expendable to the terrorist organization. In the end there is no going back for Amaan, though he vehemently clarifies his cause was not the same as Muraad Khan's, "*Yeh nafrat nahin hai, nafrat ke khilaaf jihad hai*" (This is not about hatred, it is a holy war against hatred) and death is his only way out.

Mission Kashmir

The film starts out with a picturesque establishing shot of a shikhara at sunrise, locating the film in Kashmir. The peacefulness is disrupted by a powerful explosion that blows it up into smithereens. The arrival of the policemen on location and their investigation introduces us to SSP Inayat Khan¹⁷ and his men. The camaraderie between the men and Inayat Khan's instinctive heroic act to save his subordinate police officer, Kuldip's life gives us an insight into the workings of the Police Force of Kashmir. Inayat Khan is depicted as a true patriot, driven by his love for the law and an exemplary police officer who puts his life on the line for Indian citizens as well as his own men. The event is staged to also show us cleverness of the device to lure the police in, as the militants plant IEDs on the docking platform which is triggered to blow up when the police rush in. Inayat Khan's ability to see through this ruse and his quick response to the situation contextualizes the police as humane, intelligent and well in control. He is injured in the explosion and treated by a doctor who is later threatened for treating the SSP and then killed along with his entire family by a well known terrorist, Malik-UI Khan. Malik-UI Khan as these events

reveal has issued a *fatwa* against the SSP which results in the denial of medical attention to his dying son. Irfaan dies while being rushed from doctor to doctor and the tragedy devastates both Inayat Khan and his wife Neelima.

The death of his son because of the *fatwa* gives Inayat Khan a new mission to destroy Malik-Ul Khan and he proceeds to plan an attack. The scene then shifts to the house of a Kashmiri Muslim family, which Malik-Ul Khan and his men are using a safe house by forcing the owner to play host to the men and their arsenal. The planned attack to kill the terrorist and his men goes awry with the innocent family being killed in the crossfire as well with the exception of the young boy Altaaf who is rescued by Inayat Khan. Altaaf is witness to his parent's and sister's death and retains a strong image of the man responsible for the shootout – Inayat Khan in a facial mask. Neelima, driven by her husband's guilt over the death of the innocent people convinces him to adopt the boy, and Altaaf comes to live with the Khans.

The trauma of his parent's death is relived by the boy repeatedly and his frantic sketching of the man's face in a mask consumes the boy's life. The film depicts the happy memories of the family with Irfaan in flashback slowly replaced by shared moments with Altaaf. The replacement of one son by another as Neelima points out, helps resolve any issues of guilt for Inayat Khan. The plot also foregrounds the deep awareness and consciousness of difference instilled in the child as the six year old boy questions his adopted mother on her Hindu identity (which her name Neelima reveals) and how she married a Muslim man. The importance of

names in the Hindu-Muslim context is introduced into the text, a thread that continues to inform the rest of the film's narrative. Neelima's Hindu identity is highlighted by Altaaf's observation even as her clothes, jewelry and language mark her as a Muslim wife. Her visits to the Shankracharya temple and the Hazratbal mosque with Altaaf as Inayat Khan later remind his adopted son, points towards her unique status of living in the in-betweenness of the two worlds.

Altaaf grows up in the happy home of the Khan's but ten years later, he accidentally comes across the mask worn by Inayat Khan on that night of the shootout. He makes the connection between his adopted father and the events of that night and finding his father's service revolver attempts to kill Inayat Khan before slipping away into the night. Inayat Khan reflexively wrests the revolver out of the young boy's hand and shoots at his retreating back. The mutual enmity is established that night, which only increases as the father and son finds themselves on the opposite sides of the law.

Altaaf the terrorist-protagonist is born that night and he melts away into the shadows of the night, finding solace and shelter with the militants. He revisits the trauma of his childhood repeatedly and it fuels his anger and hatred against his father. Hilal Kohistaani, an infamous terrorist exploits this anger and recruits the young Altaaf into his terrorist outfit. The international links of this jihadi outfit with the jihad in Afghanistan and Pakistan hint towards the larger scope and backing of this terrorism even as the film locates it in the valley of Kashmir. The sophistication of the

arms and ammunition as well the telecommunication systems available to these groups indicates access to unlimited funding. Kohistaani's discussion with his backers reveals the details of the project 'Mission Kashmir' which is to use missiles to destroy the historic Hazratbal mosque on a Friday, killing thousands of Muslims in prayer antagonizing Muslims all over the country and inciting them to join the jihad. They also plan to use a TV tower to broadcast this event live, adding to the instigation, with careful shots of men in army uniform, corroborating the rumor that the Hindu forces of the Indian Army were responsible for this genocide¹⁸.

Altaaf returns an adult and attempts to kill Inayat Khan a second time, by impersonating a police officer. He asks to meet SSP Khan which gives him away as Khan has now been promoted to an Inspector General of Police. Altaaf escapes after his unsuccessful attempt to the hideout where his comrades in arms are seen living in desperate conditions. In sharp contrast to the allusions of unlimited funding, the mise-en-scene reveals cramped, bare and very basic living quarters of these men. The all male community is revealed to be all Muslim, indicated by the conversation and the names – Sadiq, Altaaf, Ghafoor etc.

The plot shifts to the romantic mode with love blossoming between the childhood friends Altaaf and Sufiya Parvez, now a well known TV professional. The meeting brings back nostalgic memories of childhood that culminated in the fateful night of July 23, 1989. As opposed to the desensitized male community of the terrorists, the presence of Sufiya, his longtime love and his adopted mother Neelima

in Altaaf's life nurtures his more sensitive and human side. He opens up to his emotions, reveals his vulnerability and succumbs to their loving presence. This creates sympathy for his appeal as a misguided and exploited individual who gives in to the tug at his heartstrings unlike the hardened Hilal Kohistaani. Even though Altaaf uses Sufiya to gain access to the heavily guarded TV station, and proceeds to blow it up, he returns to pledge his undying love to Sufiya. The plot then develops further with the added complications of the Indian Prime Minister's scheduled visit to the area and the implications of Mission Kashmir and how it ties into that state visit. Inayat Khan's Muslimness is brought to the fore and his integrity and loyalty questioned in light of his wife's meeting with the terrorist son. Inayat Khan re-affirms his ability to handle the security detail for the Prime Minister but the accusation brings violence into their happy household and Altaaf's plot to kill his father in a bomb explosion kills Neelima instead of the intended target, Inayat Khan. An enraged Inayat Khan, furnished with new information succeeds in unraveling the plot and gains access to Hilal Kohistaani. He manipulates him to find Altaaf and after a brief and bloody confrontation convinces Altaaf to switch sides by explaining the details of Mission Kashmir. Altaaf's realization that he has been used and kept in the dark and horrified by the actual carnage that would result from this plan, kills Kohistaani, averts the missiles and saves the day. Father and son are reunited as are the lovers Sufiya Parvez and Altaaf.

Trauma Films

Placing these films within a film genre to provide a larger framework for analysis, I find Ann Kaplan's theorization of trauma films in Hollywood derived from the genre of melodrama, useful as one of the entry points into this investigation and exploration of terrorism as a trope in Indian films in the 1990s. Kaplan's genre of trauma films is valuable to my analysis only so far as categorizing the body of Bollywood films that use terrorism as a trope because they all use specific historical or political events as focal points – Operation Blue Star, the Ayodhya aftermath or the Bombay bomb blasts. I should also clarify that Kaplan's category cannot be uniformly applied to all bodies of work resultant from traumatic experience because of issues of cultural specificity and national specificity. As I analyze the representation of the trauma of these real life events being revisited in these fictional narratives, I locate my analysis in the context of the Indian subcontinent and more specifically in the tradition of Bollywood cinema to formulate and articulate the reworkings of the narratives of the nation.

As I have pointed out earlier in Chapter 1, violence was an integral part in the birthing of all new nations as was the collective amnesia around that violence that forged the unity of these nations. For nascent nations emerging from colonialism, this public forgetting of the trauma of violence contributed to a healing process as a nation preoccupied with nation-building. Yet, even in this collective forgetting, the remnants

of memory surrounding that trauma of violence remained and re-surfaced in historical interrogations, scholarly analyses of public documentation, personal reminiscences, and cultural and social interpretations¹⁹.

Kaplan, in her essay “Melodrama, Cinema and Trauma,” theorizes that:

personal and social traumas caused by political and social transition were displaced into fictional melodrama forms where they could be more safely approached or remembered but also forgotten, in the peculiar nature of trauma (202).

She further contends that in a culture, similar to that in an individual, an overwhelming event cannot be absorbed or assimilated and it re-surfaces in fictional forms, which may be marginally related to it, with an insistence on remembrance. Trauma films, according to Kaplan, therefore do not use the structured linear form of classical continuity in the Hollywood sense, but instead use other means like flashbacks, hallucinations, story fragments and nightmares to visually re-construct the event. To clarify, traditional Bollywood films do not follow the Hollywood style of continuity departing from the idea of linear continuity through the use of song and dance sequences. This awareness informs my nuanced reading of the critical departures from the narrative style within the Bombay film structure and how this is effectively used to evoke public memories of historical traumatic events.

So with regard to Bombay cinema, I argue that the disruption in the linear narrative foregrounds the individual’s consciousness and forces the spectator to

interpolate meanings into these gaps and fissures. It invites the spectator to actively engage in this process through diegetic and non-diegetic elements specifically through musical interludes and repeated images that often serve as a commentary on the cause-effect narration as much as it serves to reinforce the traditional Indian aesthetic of *rasa* or the mood of the sequence. There is also a deliberate insertion of black and white stills, title cards, montage sequences as well as actual media footage that disrupt the narrative and are used to establish authenticity and provide historical relevance to these acts that echo through each of these films.

To elaborate on this further, in *Fiza*, the first scene introduces us to the small and happy Ikramullah family and the unexpected circumstances that spiral out of control and lead to the disruption of their family life as they knew it. As narrated by Fiza, the female protagonist, the jarring sequence establishes the traumatic events that destroyed a family and this provides a segue into a montage sequence of black and white stills of the Bombay riots – dead bodies on city streets with close-ups of the charred remains of people, property and burnt buses. As the credits begin to roll, the audience identification and sympathy for the Ikramullah family, especially for the son Amaan, as an innocent victim caught up in a whirl of hatred and violence is complete. The montage sequence of the traumatic events is hence not only crucial to the storyline but through its interpolation forces the audience to re-visit the events that are instantly recognizable as a specific event (in this case the Bombay riots of 1993 that received widespread media coverage) and for the larger national audience as

symptomatic of riots in general. The use of close ups of newspaper mastheads and headlines, title cards with place names and dates (like “Ayodhya Dec 6, 1992” or “Jan 5, 1993 Dongni, Bombay”) help situate these events in geographical spaces and historical times. Ravi Vasudevan argues that the use of these features “place a film in the arc of recent public memory, and make it an intervention in the construction of that memory” (“Bombay and its Public,” 18). I would add that these films succeed in drawing in their audiences by making them bear witness to the recognition of certain events, whose public memory of the trauma is then consequently re-invented through their identification with the gaze of the protagonist.

My analysis of these five films within this larger framework of trauma films in Bollywood, helps formulate a construct of terrorism and consequently nationalism as it manifests itself culturally in the way these films envision and depict terrorism within the narrative and its representation on the screen. However, given the rather interactive nature of this viewing in Indian theaters, the more crucial and complicated construct of nationalism is one that plays itself out in the theatre vis-à-vis the spectators who bring their own emotional, passionate and nuanced experiences into this space. Their interpretation of these texts is steeped in cultural and political references and nuances that lie outside of this space and yet must be configured in the total viewing experience. It is specifically with reference to spectator-identification that using a terrorist as a protagonist, for example as in *Maachis*, *Mission Kashmir* and *Fiza* becomes problematic. The most commonly used strategy to overcome this

significant hurdle of audience identification is to provide a context and justification for the actions of the terrorist-protagonist, as a victim of social and political wrongdoing. The trajectory of the plot, however, constantly shifts, allowing for redemption and sacrifice on the part of this terrorist-protagonist in the end. The use of shifting points of view in these films addresses this issue somewhat by forcing the spectator to constantly renegotiate this construct of “national” identity to provide the yardstick against which terrorism can be defined. I argue, therefore that these films help the spectator articulate a new political formulation of citizenship vis-à-vis the representations of the anti-national through the dual process of affirmation of the “national identity” as well as the deconstruction of the “Other” or the anti-national which in each of these films is either obliquely or openly referred to as a community of violence that is aided and abetted by the neighboring nation-state of Pakistan²⁰. Even as I emphasized and differentiated between the secessionist movements in Punjab and Kashmir earlier on in this chapter, it is significant that both these movements have received ample support from terror groups and state support from across the border. All of these films hint at this support, either obviously as in *Sarfarosh* (where the Pakistani military officer Major Baig is himself implicated in the process); or more subtly as in *Roja*, when Liaquat Ali says, “*Yeh log us paar ja rahe the, training ke liye*” (These people were going to the other side of the border for training – translation mine). In *Bombay*, there is an extensive discussion on who supplies these weapons of destruction, and the answer is a cryptic “*waheen se*” (from

there, implying Pakistan). There are several such references peppered throughout each of these films.

For all obvious purposes, the simplest motivation for terrorism according to these films is anti-national sentiments or any act of violence that can be read as being directly against the nation-state's interests. These films, however, seem to take this beyond the simple and obvious nation/anti-nation polemic. Using the plot formula of the corruption of the state (police, politicians and bureaucrats alike) popular in Hindi films after the Emergency in 1977²¹, these films add a new twist to this inefficient and hapless state machinery incapable of handling the new issues of terrorism, in fact in some cases contributing to it. In these films, the action in the plot is driven by characters with a grievance against the state and who can find common cause with terrorist groups and militant movements and thus be incited to these violent acts of destruction. This helps draw a clear distinction between the corrupt nation-state wrought by inherent problems of greed, manipulated by politician's ambitions and self-styled nepotism and the more amorphous nation symbolized by the just, modern and humane. Politicians like V K Singh and Sayyad Saheb in *Fiza* epitomize these corrupt politicians complicit in fuelling communal riots for their own political gain and who treat communities as potential vote banks and little else.

The possibility of redemption for these terrorist-protagonists is also carefully charted out through the course of their actions. This is established by emphasizing the innocence of Amaan, (*Fiza*) Altaaf, (*Mission Kashmir*) Kirpal and Veeran, (*Maachis*)

early on as victims of circumstances and later by clarifying that their actions as terrorists do not really target civilians or claim innocent victims. Guilty only of killing corrupt politicians and government officials or those whose actions identify them as being anti-nation, it provides for the possibility of their characters being redeemed in the eyes of society even if it can happen only through their death at their own hands. The notion of the anti-national therefore shifts predictably in the case of these characters whose final choices and actions place nation and society before self. Thus Altaaf's final act of preventing the destruction of the Hazratbal Mosque and the Shankracharya temple reveals his real patriotism and his misplaced desire for revenge against society is replaced by his repentance, symbolized further by his father's acceptance of him back into the familial fold. Moreover, each of these films deflects the violence and hatred from these terrorist protagonists towards characters like Hilal Kohistaani in *Mission Kashmir*, Munawar Khan in *Fiza*, Wasim Khan in *Roja* and Sanaatan in *Maachis*. All of these storylines play on the conflict between nation and state, whereby nationalism and the love for the nation permits the citizenry to participate in quelling any anti-national activities and in restoring order to a chaotic and corrupt society.

Terrorism as it is seen in these films is in many ways represented as a gendered response to a personal situation – Altaaf in *Mission Kashmir*, is a forced witness to the brutal killing of his family caught in the crossfire between the police force and Malik-UI Khan, a wanted terrorist; Kripal Singh in *Maachis*, is caught up in

the spiraling violence of a fractured society, as his fiancée's brother is mistakenly arrested and charged with the assassination of a Cabinet Minister in New Delhi. In *Fiza*, Amaan, denied justice and help by the police in a politically sponsored communal riot, finds solace in a militant group on the wrong side of the law. The traumatic event that shapes the future course of their lives is repeatedly shown in flashbacks, or introduced through different perspectives and as recurring nightmares within the fictional world of these films. In *Fiza* and in *Bombay* the experiences in the Mumbai riots are shown in black and white stills (actual footage of news coverage of the Mumbai riots) where the use of still photographic images disrupts the narrative flow to introduce horrific images that revisit the traumatic events central to the films. Having become outlaws, these young men become ideal recruits for a terrorist organization – disavowed, angry and driven by hatred and revenge. Their anger is further fuelled by the patriarchal rhetoric of Hilal Kohistaani who takes Altaaf under his wing, Sanaatan who moulds Kirpal Singh in *Maachis* and Munawar Khan (in *Fiza*) who reinforces Amaan's desire to wreak terror on the society that he thinks failed him. Their rhetoric is predictable and equates manhood with family honor and community honor and it plays on the notions of *qaum*²² and *mazhab*²³ that build community and brotherhood on communal and religious lines. Building new “nations” on a shared violent heritage or a common cause helps them fuel and spread their message of hatred. This gendered response also plays out differently on the opposite side of the spectrum where violence does not beget violence. Instead it

evokes the opposite reaction in Ajay Singh Rathod in *Sarfarosh* and he joins the Indian Police Force motivated by the terrorist act that left his father paralyzed for life. To go back to my earlier use of Kaplan's model for trauma films, based on the earlier genre of melodrama, I assert congruence with the fact that these films occupy a space "between history and the unconsciousness" and therefore they offer "an imaginary focused on the private sphere of the family – where traumas are secret or hidden – yet in an arena structured by male power in the public sphere" (202).

Let me elaborate on my argument further. It is my argument that in the case of all these protagonists, the family unit is the locus that helps provide the possibility of a stable social identity. A complete family unit assumes the presence of a father, the patriarchal head of the family, and a mother who is the repository of the family's value system. The absence of these crucial figures marks a significant departure from the norm and initiates a necessary upheaval in roles. Since in these films, this is disrupted by a traumatic event it has to be re-negotiated in a public space in order for the successful resolution of the conflict. Significantly, each of these family units lacks a father figure and the absence of the father signals a shift in authority from the absent father to the son via the mother. It is these fatherless sons (except in *Sarfarosh*, where the father is paralyzed) who move out into a public arena as they attempt to fulfill their filial duties towards their families. Entering into a fractured and fragmented society and being outside of the family unit directly results in moral transgressions given that their moral center (the mother figure) no longer retains any control over

their actions. These protagonists attempt to recreate an artificial family, with its own rules of organization. While the patriarchal role is easily fulfilled by the likes of Hilal Kohistaani, Munawar Khan and Sanaatan, the mother's role in their lives is retained by their biological/adopted mothers. The bond of the mother-son relationship cannot be easily replaced and provides the unbreakable link to civil society and in the end makes redemption possible for these terrorist-protagonists.

The desire to reconstruct an artificial family/community in *Fiza* fails to substitute itself for the real family as Amaan's loyalty and commitment to the cause is constantly in question and the exclusively male community, based solely on a common hatred, cannot sustain it. Similarly, an attempt to re-construct this familial bond artificially in an "imagined community" in *Maachis* is seen when Veeran (Kirpal's fiancée in *Maachis*) joins the terrorist cell as the missile expert. Her induction as a female member into an all male community upsets the equilibrium even as it reaffirms typical gender roles – for example, Veeran takes over the cooking and cleaning for the male members of the cell. The relationship between Veeran and Kirpal is also seen at variance with the existing bond amongst the rest of the cell members. Their relationship causes Sanaatan to take Veeran hostage when Kirpal is assumed to be a mole and he issues orders for her execution. The artificiality of the bonding in this community and the superficiality of the relationships formed hence become transparent and are directly contrasted with the actual family unit (Veeran, Kirpal and Jasse) in which the emotional ties remain intact and untouched despite

conflict and prolonged absence.

In direct contrast to this, is the deliberate destruction of the real and adopted family units in *Mission Kashmir*. While Altaaf's real family is killed as innocent bystanders in a confrontation between the militants and the police, Altaaf's rejection of Inspector Inayat Khan as the adopted father removes the presence of a patriarchal figure in his life even though he continues his relationship with his adopted mother, Neelima who becomes his emotional center.

In many ways this deliberate focus on the personal as opposed to the public, (the tagline for Philip Noyce's *Patriot Games* reads, "Not for Honor, not for Country, but for his wife and Child,") becomes crucial to the formal structure of this genre itself. Clearly the need here is to comply with the premise of audience identification with the protagonist, and at that level, it is the personal over the public that serves this interest best. It is only when the audience identifies with the protagonist's personal dilemma, can they accept his transgressions against society and overlook his flaws, and allow for the possibility of his re-acceptance in society. Further, from the point of view of filmmaking, trauma needs to be personalized in order to capture an audience's attention and evoke an emotional response while retaining the integrity of the plot's limitations.

Yet despite the focusing in on the microcosm of the family unit, the transition from the family to the nation is easily explained. The discourse surrounding a nation abounds in terms like fatherland or more pertinently motherland which help

perpetuate this notion that family stands in for nation. Engendering the nation, in tropes like the rape of the nation further reiterates this connection.

I cite several critics who point towards this primordial connection family and nation that becomes beneficial in disguising the abstract nature of the artificial imagined construct of the nation. Susan Hayward argues that this “closed, self-referential, even vicious circle gets established whereby one concept feeds the other: threat to nation leads to (manifestations of) kinship, and kinship leads to nationalistic discourses (in the name of the mother nation etc.) – i.e., a nationalism which in turn engenders the notion of nation” (89).

Ravi Vasudevan in his essay on the film *Bombay* elucidates Shekhar’s transition from a concerned parent searching for his children lost in the communal riots to a patriotic citizen to make a somewhat similar point:

The discourse of the family meets with that of state and civil society when the protagonist moves beyond his own concerns into a wider frame of action and restitution. Thus from the logic of recovering his family, the hero is thrust into the logic of protecting society.” (2)

Or as S.V Srinivas argues,

Roja interpellates the ‘common man’, upper-caste middle-class male really, to protect ‘national interest’ by fighting terrorism. The correspondence between family and nation serve to bring home larger problems like terrorism by turning abstract concepts like national security into

immediately recognizable ones like family well-being (1225).

All these films however, in no way subsume the larger “national” interest using the non-diegetic elements like soundtrack music²⁴ to reinforce nationalist and patriotic sentiments, to glorify this heritage, and to create nostalgia for the lost unified “nation”.

Mission Kashmir begins with an establishing shot of a sunrise over a *shikhara* (houseboat) moored in Dal Lake and the serenity of the scene is shattered by a loud bomb explosion that rips through the shikara destroying it completely. Even as the flames consume the boat the soundtrack of the scene laments this change,

Smoke, smoke, only smoke, smoke everywhere,

In these winds of conspiracies, in these storms of intrigues,

this hallowed land of the Gods has been bloodied

we hear no more the sacred call of the conch,

And no more the call to the faithful,

Alas my land is cursed.

... This is a battle for power,

A war between politicians

The blood of innocents is the color used to draw borders between our hearts²⁵. (translation mine)

This opening sequence suggests at intrigue and deceit using the metaphor of partition and borders that hold strong symbolic meaning for the intended audience raising

memories of an earlier partition marked with unmitigated horrors and bloodshed²⁶. The metaphor of borders and fragmentation continues as we gradually see the unfolding of the details of the operation, 'Mission Kashmir'. The mission of the terrorists is to use missiles to destroy two of Kashmir's holiest shrines, the Hazratbal mosque, and the Shankracharya temple. The *Jihad* of these terrorists does not uphold the sacredness of its own religious shrines. The shift between religious terrorism and the hijacking of the religious manifesto for a completely different agenda is clearly underlined here in the winds of conspiracies and the battle for power. It is the perception of Kashmir as utopia before the horrors of terrorism that functions as a repeated motif in both *Roja* and *Mission Kashmir*. Similar to the sound track in *Mission Kashmir*, there is a celebration of the beauty of Kashmir in *Roja*, with its "haseen vaadiyan, yeh khula aasman" (beautiful valleys, the open sky) inherent in which is the lament of the possibilities of a loss. The patriotic spirit much heralded in the rest of the film reaches a crescendo with the final soundtrack

Bharat humko jaan se pyaara hai

Sabse nyaara gulistaan hamara hai

Sadiyon se Bharat Bhumi duniya kee shaan hai

Bharat Mata kee raksha main jeevan qurban hai.

India is more loved by me than life itself

Ours is the most exquisite garden

For decades India has been the pride of the world

I will sacrifice my life to protect Mother India (translation mine)

In *Bombay*, a similar refrain is heard in the song, “*Mazhab ko choddho, watan kee socho, hindustaani pehele sab hain ham*” (Leave religion and faith, think of the nation, we are all Indians first). Even as we see this celebration of the homeland in verse in some of these films, we also see a shifting perspective on what constitutes the homeland. It is a specific location (more local than global in a sense) that is being celebrated not necessarily the entire nation. For example in *Maachis*, the two Punjabi songs “*Chod Aaye Hum Woh Galiyan*,”²⁷ and “*Chappa Chappa Charkha Chale*”²⁸ talk of a utopic life in Punjab with its meandering rivers, and fields ready for harvesting, using the idiom of love. Punjab, in these songs is engendered but becomes synonymous with romanticized love, not like the earlier mentioned mother-son love associated with the homeland.

Ravi Vasudevan, in his essay, “National Pasts and Futures: Indian Cinema,” describes a new trend in commercial Indian films. He states that Hindi popular cinema has now “adapted realist characterization and an imagery of the ordinary citizen, but to different ends, promoting not a critical outlook on society and the nation-state but a patriotic attitude” (123). While it is true, that in some ways these films finally address a privileged cosmopolitan urban middle class audience and that the nationalism that is being realized in these films is presented as a homogenized, pan-Indian male identity that glosses over regional and linguistic differences; I disagree with Vasudevan’s assertion that these films do not offer a critical outlook on

society and the nation-state. In fact, as I argue over the course of this chapter, these films use this as an effective strategy to promote patriotism, placing nation over nation-state.

A Third Kind of Nationalism as an (Anti)nationalism

Given the nature of the trauma of terrorism and the recurrent fear of the fragmentation of the nation-state, using narratives of terrorism in popular film clearly seems to validate the legitimization of the transition of the spectator to the citizen. *Roja*, takes this patriotic discourse to a newer level and as Madhav Prasad argues, "... it becomes evident that the transaction between state and citizen can be expressed to the audience with a directness that disrupts the smooth channeling of emotional effects in character driven narration. Thus Arvind Swamy, the hero of *Roja*, can shift from the mood of romantic dalliance into the hortatory mode of passionate citizen" (Making Meaning, 21). Shekhar's dramatic monologue to his friends at the end of the riots has similar overtones where he rejects the labels of Hinduism and Islam and asks them to embrace their identity as Indians. Similarly the discussion on loyalty and patriotism is given a new twist by Police Inspector Salim in *Sarfarosh* and Inspector General of Police, Inayat Khan in *Mission Kashmir*, articulating their anger at being unfairly removed from sensitive projects relating to the nation-state's interests because of their religious persuasion. This justified anger and this constant demand for ritual re-affirmation of their patriotism is neatly channelized in the narrative, as is the carefully

structured balance between the characters creating a larger secular social group that functions within the vertices of political citizenship and religious affiliations²⁹. To borrow a term from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, this is a perfect example of the use of “syncretism” as an artistic strategy, the practice of the “esthetic politics of the impure” (313). In the small world of the village of Malanpur, we are initially shown that Hindu and the Muslim worldviews are inexorably intertwined culturally in the social fabric marking a celebration of the hybridity and the intermingling nods towards a recognition of the heteroglossic realities. Similarly, we are also given the perspectives of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Kashmiri pundits in Mission Kashmir. However, the cultural discourse of religious and communal tolerance clearly does not translate into the political discourse of a pluralist society. In the village of Malanpur, the declaration of a love relationship between Shekhar and Shaila Bano quickly ruptures this fragile worldview and the intrusion of the Ayodhya movement completely shatters the remnants of peace. To further expand on this, let us take a closer look at the actual representation of Hindu and Muslim ethnicity in each of these films.

Roja begins with a scene in a forest in Kashmir just before dawn with non-diegetic sounds of birds etc. reminiscent of the pastoral which is abruptly ruptured by the sound of staccato machine gunfire. The soundtrack shifts to the Islamic call for morning prayer and the use of a blue filter for the entire scene casts an ominous tone for the events to follow. The imagery associated with hunting is further developed as

we see the army closing in on a wanted terrorist, Wasim Khan, who is on the run. A title card informs the audience that the “*Khoonkar aatankvaadi*” or the bloodthirsty and dangerous terrorist has been captured. The scene immediately cuts to sunrise in a pastoral rural village, Sundar Bhanpur in Southern India and the vividly set up contrast between the two worlds cannot be more dramatic. The darkness that surrounds the scenes in Kashmir with its inherent violence and Islamic fanaticism is in stark contrast to the peaceful, colorful and bright world that symbolizes a Hindu village. Thus the first two scenes set the tone of this representation with the shots of Kashmir and Sundar Bhanpur at daybreak and the clever use of the soundtrack and lighting establishes the difference between the two worlds even though that is never commented on in the film. The audience can infer that it is a Hindu village in South India from the ritually coded markers of difference like the women’s sarees, bindis, jewellery, the wedding customs, names etc. The Hindu village seen here is presented as a normative Indian village symptomatic of an ideal, peaceful, united India that needs to withhold and keep the threat of Islamic fanaticism at bay. Rustom Bharucha describes the village of Sundar Bhanpur as one that is:

essentialized as a totally harmonious social structure dominated by older women ...Apart from a slight feud in Roja’s family which is countered through her grandmother’s intervention, there are no caste politics, no tensions, no panchayat politics, no blatant disparities of income – in short we are presented with a totally ‘unreal’ utopia from which Roja is thrust

into the 'realpolitik' of Kashmir (1392).

This depiction of a utopia is further developed through the film. In her reading of the film *Roja*, Niranjana rightly points out:

As the Hindutva forces reoccupy the discourses of liberal humanism in India, an anti-colonial bourgeoisie nationalist project is refigured and the secular subject is reconstituted. The project is now one that bestows citizenship on the Hindu as Hindu, the supposed 'tolerance of Hinduism', allowing it to function as 'truly secular'; in the demarcation of this new space of the secular, the communal Muslim is defined through a process of exclusion. (79-80)

She argues that Hindu ethnicity is normalized and we see that in repeated ways in the film from the funny irreverence associated with Roja's prayers, to Rishi's ability to co-opt modern ways despite his rootedness in the traditions of the village of Sundar Bhanpur. In sheer contrast to this is the depiction of Muslim ethnicity represented in the ways of Liaquat Khan and his family which is seen as backward, anti-modern, anti-national, intolerant and fundamentalist. The constant intercutting between the scenes of him praying with the sinister efforts of his group underlines this representation further. I agree with Niranjana's conclusion that:

So while there is an ethnicity that is seamless with modernity, there are other ethnicities that are seen to subvert the project of the modern and must therefore be rendered powerless or invisible ... Perhaps I should put it

differently; the new nationalism is pro-western, and is thus by definition, anti-Muslim (1299).

Going back to my earlier argument of the two kinds of nationalism (derived along religious lines or based on modernizing missions), I would conclude that it is the marriage of the two kinds of nationalism that helps us arrive at theorizing the *third kind of nationalism – an (anti)nationalism*. It becomes the representation of an unproblematic pairing of modern and western with this new hegemonic Hindu nation that provides for a reconstituted subjectivity. Hence, if difference and the assertion thereof is the marker of anti-colonialism; then ethnic markers that are presented as normative and those that are seen as illegitimate otherness help define the new (anti)nationalism. Mani Ratnam's film *Bombay*, similarly characterizes this convergence between modernization and Hinduism, and draws heavily on the difference in representation of these two ethnicities. The film, according to Vasudevan, "figures modernity as evolving from the trajectory of Hindu subjectivity" (17). The world of Narayan Mishra, as a trustee of the temple and a pillar of the community is one of the upper caste, middle class wealth where labor and profession are not really mentioned except in the case of Shekhar who moves to Bombay for a higher education and goes on to become a successful journalist. The world of Bashir Ahmed, in contrast, is distinctly lower class associated with brick making and fishing. He is at once conservative whereas Narayan Mishra is traditional; he is given to gestural aggression and takes recourse to knives and butcher's cleavers where

Narayan Mishra falls back on verbal insults and threats. Interestingly what makes Narayan Mishra modern is his ability to give his son an English education and his vision which Shekhar eventually translates into progressive liberal views whereas Bashir Ahmed's desire to give his daughter an education is still perceived as clouded in orthodox beliefs and shrouded in the veils of the *burqa* she dons everyday. The *burqa* as a signifier of Muslim tradition surfaces repeatedly in this film and not just as a coded marker of difference that conceals and protects Muslim women; it is used at once to convey a suggestive intimacy as it shrouds them in secrecy even as it provides a disguise for a cross dressing Shekhar. More importantly when Shaila Bano struggles to free herself from the *burqa* when it gets entangled in the branches of a tree, it marks the final moment of her transition into becoming a Hindu wife.

The veil of secrecy that marks their premarital sexuality however carries over and resurfaces in the lack of privacy and the forced barriers set up because of the presence of the children who visit and share their bedroom, in the sarees hanging on the clothesline and through the landlady's constant presence. Despite this obvious lack of privacy, and the censorship that surrounds the visual representation of explicit sexuality in Bollywood films, we are still witness to a creative visualization of the consummation of their marriage. Their sexuality is constantly displaced into a public forum, moving it from the 'real - the here and now' to the 'imagined'. We see it at the time of the consummation of the marriage which is echoed in the intercut scenes of the choreographed enactment to the song "*Humma, Humma*", to the almost unreal,

bizarre taunting of Shekhar by the prostitutes in the community, culminating in the very public request for a girl child during the song “*Kucchi kucchi rakamma*”. While this is a trademark of Ratnam’s films³⁰, we see this in *Roja*, as well, with the older women of the village very suggestively dancing to “*Rukmani, Rukmani*”, as the young couple consummate their marriage, I would like to point out, what in my reading is a significant departure in the case of the film *Bombay*. It is the public suggestion of the sexual union between a Hindu man and a Muslim woman made socially acceptable and furthermore validated that is unique. The consequent impregnation of the Muslim woman also plays into this new normative form of nationalism. The representation of the sexual union of a Muslim man and a Hindu woman, in Bollywood films while rare if not unknown, would never be similarly displaced into a public forum. For example, in *Mission Kashmir*, there is a depiction of a Muslim man married to a Hindu woman, but the only time their passion is shown onscreen it is interrupted well before consummation by an explosion that kills the wife, Neelima. Shekhar and Shaila’s sexuality transcends their marital union for in giving birth to twins that they name Kabir Narayan and Kamal Bashir, Shekhar and Shaila Bano give birth to the ideal concept of a unified nation with no religious or communal differences. And yet, even as the film departs from the norm and introduces inter-communal marriage at the core of the narrative, it maintains the status-quo of Hindu hegemony by ensuring that the hero comes from the Hindu community, “thereby exercising a symbolic patriarchal-communal authority over the constitution of the

nation” (Vasudevan 12). Similarly in *Fiza*, while Amaan’s love interest is restricted to the small conservative community and he falls in love with his childhood friend, Shenaz, his sister Fiza, who epitomizes the modern, liberal, articulate, working professional, moves outside of the Muslim community, to fall in love with Anirudh (a Hindu friend). The end of the film is also imperative to my reading of this new modernized nationalism as pro-western and anti-Muslim. The deaths of Nishatbi and Amaan leave Fiza alone and her impending marriage to Aniruddh provides for the possibility of her being co-opted within the larger Hindu majority. This destruction of the Muslim family unit and its eventually being subsumed by the larger Hindu majority is indicative of this trend. The modern, secular imagining of the nation is therefore rooted in a liberal Hindu nationalism that can allow the co-opting and the assimilation of any other minority communities as long as the Hindu patriarchal mores are well established and accepted.

The Conflict between Nation and Nation-State

To go back to my earlier point about the intersection and disjuncture of state and nation, these films foreground this separation while in some ways suggesting that this is an artificial divide. I have argued earlier that this conflict provides a point of entry, permitting the interpolation of the hero-citizen into the events that transpire out of the failure of the state to combat terrorism.

It is equally imperative to examine these films as a whole, to enable us to

enter into dialogue with the larger overarching discourse of nationalism as well. Much critical debate has centered on the film *Roja* vis-à-vis the role of the nation and the state, its representation and what many critics perceive as the failure and hence rejection of the state. Tejaswini Niranjana, in her essay, “Integrating Whose Nation? Tourism and Terrorism in *Roja*”, makes two critical arguments; firstly how the nation is being re-configured in the film and secondly how it marks the rejection of the state. In her reading of the film it is through Rishi Kumar’s patriotic gestures and his two acts of defiance that he succeeds in outmaneuvering the militants and circumvents the need for any government/military intervention. Therefore she states:

The middle class, in claiming its complete identification with the nation, has to demonstrate that demands made on the state are not met. The new class has to show its self-reliance instead, for the state apparatus is outworn, out of date, however large and impressive it may seem (81).

Venkatesh Chakravarty refutes Niranjana’s reading of *Roja* as a rejection of the state and using Foucault’s observation that the police and army as an extension of the state are only termini of power which are eventually localized in units like the family, argues that power returned to the family through Rishi is consequently power returned to the state. Hence, he argues:

The apparent inability of the state in the film actually masks its silent and powerful ability and in that sense the ultimate victors in the film are the state and the Hindu patriarchal culture with which the desire of Rishi

Kumar, the hero coincides ...the entire narrative of the film is keyed to the disavowal of the violence of the state and the proclivities of female subjectivity. By such a disavowal, the state is affirmed rather than defeated (642).

S. V Srinivas introduces a different perspective to this debate with his assertion that the army alone “is projected as the authentic voice of the state” (1226) It is his contention that politicians are not recognized as authentic voices of the state and therefore “the conflict is not between two representatives of the state but between one authentic representative and an unpatriotic (even if avuncular) opportunist” (1226).

However, in my reading of the film, the distinction is not between the authenticities of the voices that represent the state as much as it is to the legitimacy provided to the nation. In the film, the validation of Rishi’s Kumar’s actions and the nation vis-à-vis the inability of the state/army/politicians to provide for its citizens is momentarily significant. Whether this happens because of restrictions arising out of the fear of setting precedence or the state’s desire to achieve what in Utilitarian terms would translate into upholding the benefits for a larger majority as opposed to an individual need is not imperative to my larger argument.

Niranjana’s response relocates the debate that ensued as a re-imagining of the nation counter to the formation of the state in the immediate postcolonial moment and her valid assertion of the film’s rejection of the state constituted a challenging of the postcolonial Nehruvian state and its basis in welfarism. She states:

I emphasize the ‘newness’ in order to indicate that a different kind of nation is now being imagined, a nation not necessarily congruent with the sovereign state of the 1950’s, a nation in which the assertion of true Indianness is not at odds with the erosion of economic/political economy (1299).

To reiterate my overarching argument, militant Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism in the Indian subcontinent is a byproduct of the *adversarial* **and** *dialectical* relationship of two different kinds of nationalisms – one based on religious-communal identity and one that is explicitly based on the modernistic ideology of development. The “modernizing mission” of secular politics in India as I said earlier was *in opposition* to a primarily communal identity, which was traditional and pre-modern. Further, in creating a seemingly inclusive space for nation-building and national development, it automatically relegated its ‘other’ to a pre-modern or anti-modern status. Maiello’s argument, unlike mine, does not see the two nationalisms as co-existent (he posits quite like Niranjana’s argument that religious fundamentalism is a direct result of the skewed economic development practiced by the modern, secular nationalists) but I agree with his argument that this secular and modern identity was not without its problems. It created a pan-Indian homogenous elitist identity, cut loose from any regional, religious moorings. It (this elite) “spoke in the modernist idiom of secular nationalism, scientific technology and economic development; by adopting this idiom, the elite were able to render invisible its own ascriptive markers” (186). To

elaborate, it was a community drawn exclusively from the upper caste and middle classes and it found its home in de-territorialized spaces offered by the metropolis. Despite its exclusive nature and its erasure of difference, it had hijacked the “modernizing” agenda, and any opposition to it, was therefore pre-modern or anti-modern. Further, the continued maintenance of social hierarchies along caste and class lines within the nation-state negated the modernizing and equalizing nature of the enterprise which was at the heart of the Nehruvian social development policies in India. In other words, one could argue that the failure of this secular modernizing mission provided ample opportunities for newer ideologies and re-imaginings of the nation.

The nascent Hindu upper-caste middle-class (anti)nationalism that emerged in India in the 1980s with the burgeoning Hindutva movement and the concurrent rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Hindu Right with its unprecedented electoral victories (till the 2004 general election) seems to suggest that this ideology has indeed captured the imagination of a large constituency of the nation. It is a *third kind of nationalism* – an (anti)nationalism that we see play out in the films discussed in this chapter. Having co-opted the modernizing agenda as well as the religious communal identity, this (anti)nationalism derives from both a dialectical and adversarial relationship between the two earlier mentioned nationalisms as has been argued in the course of this chapter. The new ‘supposedly secular’ subject that these films seem to validate like Shekhar and Rishi are fashioned out of a Hindu upper

caste male subjectivity where the ideas of inclusiveness derive out of a Hindu patriarchal tradition that is willing to accommodate Liaquat Khan and his sister for their eventual loyalty to the nation, and Shaila Bano and her family for their almost-assimilation into Hindu society.

While there is an argument about the failure of the state or lack thereof in the film *Roja*; in films like *Maachis*, *Fiza* and *Bombay* it is the failure of the state to protect its citizens and to uphold their individual rights with the enactment of the Terrorist Prevention Act (TADA) that further separate the state and the nation in this discourse of citizenship³¹. In *Fiza*, there is absolutely no ambiguity about the failure of the state and its inability to protect its citizens. Amaan's desperate plea for help the night he is being attacked and pursued by a mob is instantly rejected by the Police Inspector Prakash Ingle whose response is clichéd and trite. The complicity of the police with the Hindutva movement is blatant as is the manipulation of the communal tensions to increase the electoral fortunes by the two major politicians and religious leaders Sayed Sahib and V. K Singh. The dehumanization of the Police Inspector who is corrupt and open to bribery as well as the indifference of the policemen who Fiza interacts with at the Pakistan/Rajasthan border, coupled with the cynicism and suspicion of the gypsies towards them, is indicative of a police force, seen as ineffectual. In the aftermath of the riots, they seem unable to cope with the sheer numbers of atrocities inflicted on the victims and are completely overwhelmed by the large numbers of missing people, some of whose bodies were burned in mass

cremations or buried in mass graves. The policewoman, who Nishatbi visits repeatedly for news of her son, is compassionate and understanding but the failure of the police to locate Amaan repeatedly undermines the effectiveness and capabilities of the state machinery. The breakdown of law and order in the city is further exemplified by the men who disrupt the gathering of the people in the park and come back to harass Fiza and it is only Amaan's intervention and vigilantism that succeeds in thwarting their attempts.

The use of automatic weapons as props is significant in *Roja*, *Maachis*, *Fiza*, *Sarfarosh* and *Mission Kashmir* as repeated motifs that demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the standard state issued service revolvers that the police officials use against the unending supply of Kalashnikovs and AK-47s that the terrorists seem to have. The visual images of mass destruction that these automatic weapons, missile launchers and bombs wreak are graphic and clearly demonstrate the odds the law enforcement agencies (State Police, Crime Branch) etc. face in this struggle. The opening sequence of *Mission Kashmir*, posits two shots one after the other, a boat full of policemen with standard issue rifles and a single terrorist with an AK-47 – the contrast cannot be starker, the implications are obvious. While these films implicate Pakistan in state sponsored terrorism and as an arms supplier, they do not question further where the arms are manufactured before being routed through Pakistan, though *Mission Kashmir* also implicates Afghanistan and other such allies in this. In this context we also need to re-examine the question of state-sponsored terrorism in

that these films foreground this connection to the flow of transnational capital and the transnational arms supply.

On a side note, the collation between fact and fiction becomes more complicated in that the hero-protagonist of *Mission Kashmir*, Sanjay Dutt was himself charged under the purview of TADA for the possession of illegal weapons and involvement in the Bombay bomb blasts in 1993, a fact that underlines the connection of the film industry in Bombay to the underworld that controls a large part of the financing of these productions³². These links to certain middle-east countries are still under investigation but again in an ironic twist, the financing of these films through these sources only serves to highlight the possibilities of cultural terrorism and the obvious control they exert over the production houses in the Bombay film industry. So despite clear references, and the use of plot devices like the arms trafficking in *Sarfarosh*, none of the assertions are corroborated and the suggestion that it is a part of a common well-established global terrorist network remains to be seen.

In terms of cinematography, the graphic and bloody cinematic images of violence and terror wreaking havoc on society through the use of automated weapons creates a climate of fear and anguish by which the spectator is vicariously traumatized through the re-enactment on the cinema screen.

The failure of the state in *Fiza* is not just restricted to the situation of law and order but extends beyond to the corruption of the politicians, the problem of unemployment implicit in the long lines outside prospective job placement agencies

and the hopelessness of the qualified candidates who are turned away. While we have touched upon the “middle class” roots of this homogenized nationalism presented in these films, it is also crucial to note that for each of these protagonists earning a decent livelihood is the only way for upward mobility in society marked by hierarchical structures of class and caste. The unemployment factor resulting in an imbalance of economic development only adds to the frustration and helplessness of these young protagonists and leaves them susceptible to the endorsing ideologies of violence against the state.

The lack of legal recourse for these protagonists suggests the final rejection of the state machinery. Unlike Bollywood films of yesteryears that focused on long courtroom dramas, none of these films use the legal system of justice to redress any of the issues. Instead, very unusual resolutions are used: in *Fiza* and *Maachis*, Amaan, Kirpal Singh, Jasse, and Veeran all take their own lives, justice is served but on their own terms. In *Sarfarosh*, the complications of a legal trial and the issue of diplomatic immunity for Major Baig, the Pakistani cultural ambassador, are circumvented by Ajay Singh who pits the two antagonists against each other tricking Ghulfam into killing the Pakistani major. Justice is served again, and the end justifies the means. Besides the issues of jurisdiction, several other complications come into play here, not the least of which is the sympathy factor for these terrorist protagonists like Amaan Altaaf, Kirpal, Veeran and Jasse who are at once victims as they are terrorists. So even as the films suggest a total breakdown of law and order in society

for narrative agency, inherent, in these films is the assumption that violence and communal tensions stem from within the existing social structures as shown by figuring aggression as located specifically in the community (like in *Bombay* or *Fiza*) and which can hence be contained by the direct action of the state and its citizens. It is imperative for the closure of the narrative that order be restored and that all ruptures, fissures in society are smoothed over in order to provide closure for the audience that has just been witness to the reenactment of a traumatic experience. It is in keeping with that desire that terror, riots and communal violence are seen not as a systemic long term problems but their treatment of it as criminal activity and within the jurisdiction of the Indian Police and the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) that deal directly with domestic security, is a clear assertion of that. In all these films (with the exception of *Roja* where the army is called in, since Rishi Kumar is in Kashmir for a defense assignment dealing cryptography) the police are responsible for re-establishing law and order. In other words, it is seen and represented as a domestic issue to be handled within the borders of the nation-state. Even though there are references to terrorism as an extension of the three wars between India and Pakistan, in these films, this rhetoric is never validated.

I would also argue that the use of the rhetoric of war for terrorist activity acknowledges recognition of their cause and further provides a legitimacy of their entity as a nation. In fact to extend this argument further, militant Islamic groups use the term *Jihad* for precisely the same motive – to legitimize their actions, to give it

rationality and justification that is universal, making cause with a larger global community and drawing on the religious tenets of Islam. These films choose to make the issues and causes murky such that Amaan's *jihad* is humanitarian and not sectarian, it is driven by injustice alone, not religious motivation and is directed against the 'elected' representatives of the state not the citizens or the bureaucracy. This distinction made in each of these films between the nation-state and its functionaries allows for the possibilities of change in governance such that a renewed and resurgent nationalism (the problems of which have been addressed in detail through the chapter) can eliminate the gap between nation and the state, such that the nation can be mapped over the nation-state.

As Ravi Vasudevan, in *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*, argues, the state,

is recurrently invoked as a political concept produced by film narrative in the form of an emblematic character, the narrative agent, and perhaps most complicatedly, the imaginary authority involved in the organization of narrative. It is as if the overarching political form governing our lives has intruded into the autonomous domains of cultural production, inviting us to imaginatively participate in the (re) fashioning of authority into an object of desire. In this role, it invites us to surrender our subjectivities to it, and does not operate as a brute vehicle of power. Thus in films such as *Roja*, there is an argument for bridging the emotional distance between state and nation (15).

The advocacy of active participation in restoring legitimacy to the nation-state through a populist re-imagining of the nation through Bollywood cinema has taken on a momentum perhaps in the tradition of nation-building first seen in the post-independence Indian cinema of the 1950s and 1960s. The spate of films that use terrorism as a narrative has seen a steady increase since the early 1990s. This can be seen as a direct consequence of increased media attention to terrorism in India and hence as a cultural reflection of historical and political realities in India. It is also symptomatic of the increased fear of the threat of the use of nuclear weapons that have changed the political fabric of the nation especially in the case of Kashmir. The realities of the struggle in Kashmir and the Kargil war with Pakistan in March 2000 brought to the fore the universal realization that the conflict is no longer spatially contained in Kashmir and its neighboring states but has begun to affect the realities of the majority and the nation at large. These films serve to foreground these issues of terror, violence and conflict even as they use the discourses of nationalism and patriotism to counter a climate of fear and political anxiety. As in the model of trauma films, the repetitive telling of stories about a traumatic event betrays a cultural symptom but “the mode’s adherence to realism, and thus to closure, seals over the traumatic ruptures that the culture has endured. The style reassures the viewer who leaves the cinema believing she is safe and all is well in her world” (Kaplan 203).

As I point out earlier, there is a distinct shift in the terrorism and its causes from being specifically located in land (like in Kashmir) to secessionism (like in

Punjab) to the more amorphous terrorism, an amalgamation of several (anti)nationalisms in *Mission Kashmir* that departs from its religious and regional roots linking it to larger terror networks with global repercussions. I take this up for discussion in my next chapter, examining the transnational nature of terrorism today that shifts the margins, and in a subversion of globalization brings the periphery to the center.

¹ I choose to use the term Bollywood to connote Hindi commercial cinema that many have even called India's national cinema. I steer clear of the term national cinema which I find problematic in many ways since it is not state-funded nor is it government controlled cinema. I understand that the term Bollywood is derivative and it implies an affirmation of the centering of Hollywood cinema in the global context. As a postcolonialist I do take issue with this, except I do not see it as a validation of Hollywood Cinema. Bollywood Cinema to me is a tongue-in-cheek reference to a very popular and distinctly different style of filmmaking that does not derive from the Classical Continuity Style of Hollywood. The Bollywood film industry also produces more films per year than any other film industry in the world.

² I have elaborated on this conflict between the local and the global and its consequent repercussions in Chapter 1.

³ *Sarfarosh* is the story of Ajay Singh Rathod, a young college student whose love for music, especially ghazals sung by a famous ghazal singer, Ghulfam Hasan results in an accidental meeting with Seema. Seema's brother, Roshan is a record producer with exclusive rights to Ghulfam Hasan's music. The budding romance between Ajay and Seema is interwoven through the film's parallel storylines. The film's main storyline is about arms trafficking from across the border from Pakistan. Some of those guns finally land up in the hands of tribals in a village on the border of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The brutal killing of a busload of villagers, sprayed with bullets as they flee for their life and other such incidents of violence connect the dots between the terrorist acts across the landscape of three states, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, all connected through the narrative of arms trafficking. The film's narrative links several kinds of (anti)nationalisms, from the Naxalite movement of tribal villagers in Andhra Pradesh to the jihad of Ghulfam Hasan as revenge for the Partition of 1947 to the Bombay underworld with its links to the Middle-east. The narrative moves back and forth in time and the repeated references to ACP Rathod build up narrative suspense regarding this powerful and intimidating police office

whose fame precedes his actual screen presence. The narrative goes back to flashback mode to explain the genesis for his desire to fight terrorism. His personal life is completely changed after a terrorist incident leaves his father paralyzed and his older brother brutally killed because his father agrees to be a witness in a court hearing involving terrorism. Then the narrative goes back to present time with musical interludes that depict Ajay's interaction with Seema and his consequent meeting with Ghulfam Hasan. Meanwhile, in the course of the investigation Inspector Salim, as a Muslim finds his loyalty questioned, because he let Sultan get away. We are also privy to the odds faced by the police force armed only with service revolvers and the automatic machine guns, AK47s that all the terrorists use against them. Through a series of stake-outs and other investigative efforts, Ajay uncovers the nexus between Beeran (the Naxalite outlaw), Sultan, Patil and Rajan of the Bombay underworld and Mirchi Seth, the gunrunner in Rajasthan and Ghulfam Hasan the mastermind who under orders of a Pakistani Army General attempts to create situations of insurgency in India. The final confrontation between Ajay and his band of police officers at Ghulfam's ancestral home brings together the three kingpins of this gunrunning network together – Ghulfam, Mirchi Seth and the Pakistani contact, Major Baig. Major Baig in India on a cultural mission, claims diplomatic immunity, and Ajay through his clever use of psychological tactics pits the two antagonists against each other, ensuring Ghulfam Hasan kills Major Baig. This series of events circumvents any travesty of justice and ensures that Ajay has a perfect legal case against Ghulfam. Ghulfam's rant about the 1947 partition at the end and all its injustices in the name of religion is undermined by Ajay's declaration of how millions suffered just like him and how India as a nation is attempting to heal those wounds caused by the horrific violence and trauma of the Partition.

⁴ *Maachis* is a film about terrorism in Punjab. It takes a very poignant look at the circumstances that contribute to militancy in the state in the aftermath of operation Bluestar. The film focuses on the lives of three young friends: Jasse, his sister Veeran and his closest friend, Kripal who is also Veeran's fiance. Their carefree youth is disrupted by Jasse's wrongful arrest as a wanted terrorist by an aggressive police force desperately looking for closure in a famous political assassination. Kripal is

unable to get Jasse out of prison and despite his attempts at legal recourse, his every effort is thwarted by the relevant authorities. Jasse returns home, tortured and brutally beaten. Overwhelmed by his frustration with the system, Kripal leaves home. He witnesses a terrorist act, a bomb blast on a bus giving him an insight into an alternate world-order and he turns to the perpetrators of the act, seeking a different form of justice. His request for help from the leaders of the terrorist outfit, Commander and Sanaatan, results in his initiation into terrorism. The film clearly links this terrorism to the storming of the Golden Temple, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 through the insertion of black and white stills of newspaper headlines. Kripal then finds himself, left with no choice and his initial hesitation to handle arms is soon replaced by a new found mission for justice, driven by his desire for personal revenge which conflates with the ideology of the group motivated by hatred and revenge against the nation-state. All the young male members of the outfit share stories of oppression and excesses of the state as well as injustice meted out to them at the hands of society in the 1984 riots. Kripal is trained to carry out assignments by the terrorist group, all the while fuelled by his anger against the senior police officer responsible for arresting Jasse. Meanwhile, Jasse is re-arrested and tortured repeatedly and in absolute despair, he kills himself in prison and his mother unable to handle the torture her innocent son undergoes, dies of grief. Veeran, left alone, decides to follow in Kripal's footsteps and joins the same outfit as a missile expert. The conflict between personal loyalty and loyalty to the cause quickly translates into anger and distrust between the members of the group when Kripal gets arrested trying to kill a senior police officer. His failure to take the cyanide pill to kill himself before being arrested is misunderstood as betrayal by Sanaatan who holds Veeran hostage. The film ends with Veeran's escape and she visits him in prison where she manages to give him the cyanide pill she had taken away from him. Disillusioned and disgruntled, death seems to be their only choice and Veeran and Kripal take the cyanide pills killing themselves.

⁵ I deliberately use the term 'Bollywood cinema' as opposed to other terms like Bombay cinema or Indian Popular cinema to encompass a larger genre of films that

do not only originate in Bombay but that adhere to a particular cinematic style and draw on certain specific characteristics associated with this cinematic form. Madhava Prasad in his essay “This Thing called Bollywood” argues that this popular term Bollywood suggests a kind of reflexivity that recognizes the “the contrastive values and pleasures it represents vis-à-vis Hollywood” and yet emphasizes its own uniqueness as a source of cultural identity.

⁶ Though I make the point about reclaiming Kashmir in the context of nationalism, I must clarify that Mani Ratnam used Wellington and Kulu-Manali as locations for the shooting of *Roja* because of the political conflict.

⁷ Mani Ratnam’s *Bombay* is a love story of a couple caught up in the violence surrounding the Bombay bomb blasts orchestrated by terrorists in 1993. (see below).

⁸ On March 12, 1993, there were a series of bomb blasts in the city of Mumbai. The Bombay Stock Exchange and several other buildings were destroyed and 257 people were reported killed. Later Hindu – Muslim riots erupted all over the city killing thousands more. The Mumbai Police was accused of being complicit in the rioting and the B N Srikrishna Commission was set up to investigate these charges. *Fiza* provokes this issue of police duplicity and its implications for Amaan.

⁹ Juergensmeyer’s in *Terror in the Mind of God* does a comparative study of religious terrorism, its causes and consequences. In his detailed study of the Punjab problem in India, in his article, “Sword of Sikhism,” he discusses the violence and terrorism that marked the years 1981 – 1994. He further analyzes the initial peaceful campaigns for Sikh autonomy that were further complicated by the political alliances between the Akali Dal, a political party in Punjab and the Congress Government at the Center.

Bhindranwale, who led the separatist movement, was killed in the Golden Temple in June 1984. About 2000 people including innocent worshippers were killed and even more in the Hindu-Sikh rioting that followed Indira Gandhi’s death.

¹⁰ Rajiv Gandhi's brutal assassination by a suicide bomber in the town of Sriperumbudur, on May 21st, 1991 by an LTTE operative was the beginning of several such terrorist events in India. Suicide bombing was till then not a known form of operation for Indian terror groups.

¹¹ Rubaiya Sayeed was kidnapped on December 8, 1989, by a militant group called the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. They demanded the release of five imprisoned militants, Abdul Hamid Sheikh, Sher Khan, Noor Mohammad Kalwal, Altaaf Ahemed and Javed Ahemed Jargar. The Vishwanath Pratap Singh led Congress Government accepted these terms and negotiated the release of the Union Home Minister's daughter, Rubaiya. The five men were released from prison on December 13th, 1989. This was the first known case of negotiations with terrorists and established a precedent that the central government found hard to live up to in the following years.

¹² Linguistic chauvinism is a big problem for the Indian nation-state and contributes to the difficulties of promoting Hindi as a national language. Several regional film industries have flourished across India (Malayalam films, Telugu films, Tamil films and Bengali films are probably the most famous) part of my problems with declaring the Bombay film industry as Indian national cinema.

¹³ *Burqa* is the outer robe worn by Muslim women, who observe *Purdah* or veil themselves especially in public or the presence of strange men. It is usually black in color, and is accompanied by the wearing of a headscarf with a mesh-like covering over the face.

¹⁴ *Mangalsutra*, is a necklace worn by married Hindu women as a sign of their allegiance to the husband and his family. It is a significant moment in a wedding ritual when the groom places it around the neck of his bride declaring them officially married. It is considered auspicious and worn as a protection of the husband against evil. The mangalsutra is made of gold and black beads and depending on the social status of the family, can include diamonds etc.

¹⁵ Mani Ratnam made a trilogy of films on terrorism, *Roja* in 1992, *Bombay* in 1995 and *Dil Se* in 1998.

¹⁶ B.E.S.T buses (Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking) are one the public transportation system in Bombay. Most commuters in Bombay use the local metro system.

¹⁷ The Indian Police Service also called the IPS has a clear hierarchical structure. Most officers start out as Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) followed by Superintendent of Police, (SP) then Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), then Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), then Inspector General of Police (IGP), then Additional Director General of Police (Addl. DGP) and finally Director General of Police (DGP) who is in charge of the entire state. The hierarchy of the police force is used as a clever plot device to clarify how Kuldip manages to save Inayat Khan during the second attempt on his life. BSF or the Border Security Force also referred to in this film is another branch of law enforcement. The narrative hints at the usual jurisdictional issues between different law enforcement agencies.

¹⁸ This part of the plot is a play on real historical events referring to the Indian army entering the Golden Temple and the immediate response by the Sikh community with a call to arms across the country.

¹⁹ Some obvious examples come to mind regarding work done around the Partition of India and Pakistan, and the Holocaust. These include extensive research into historical documents that surround these two traumatic events. The scholarship that evolved around these two major historical tragedies ranges from the personal to the more public. The representation of these events in novels, diaries, films, and television series brought these events back to life and made them very much a part of public discourse again.

²⁰ Every Bollywood film dealing with anti-national elements makes clandestine or obvious references to state sponsored terrorism aided by Pakistan. Some films clearly

use characters of Pakistani national origin to explicate this point, some refer to the “state across the border” and others merely hint at enemy nations. Given the history of the four wars fought between India-Pakistan in the post-Independence era (post 1947), Indian audiences are much attuned to understand these references.

²¹ In 1977, Indian politics saw the emergence of an all powerful leader in Indira Gandhi, who declared a state of emergency and used the special powers vested in her by the constitution of India to override the Houses of Parliament, lash out at her political opponents, give her son Sanjay Gandhi free rein of the political powers of her office and establish a dictatorial setup in a democratic country. The powers were later repealed, the houses of Parliament were re-elected, but the time became synonymous with absolute, unchecked powers of the government.

²² In Urdu, *Qaum* means nation with resonances of religious duty towards a community of our own.

²³ *Mazhab* in Urdu derives from its Arabic roots meaning to adopt a way or a code of conduct based on religious duties. In the postcolonial sense this can be codified as community or nation that adopts similar means of conduct.

²⁴ Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel elaborate on the song and dance sequence in Hindi films in their Text *Cinema India: The Visual Culture of Hindi film*.

²⁵ All the films in my analysis have musical interludes with similar refrains, in *Fiza* there is the song “*Piya Haji Ali*” that celebrates the love of all religions where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians all find solace and grace and in *Maachis*, it is echoed in the song “*Chhod aaye hum woh galiyaan*” that evokes memories of an innocent childhood spent in a land once prosperous and peaceful.

²⁶ The reference here is to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 along religious lines. Several of these films finally trace the roots of dissent to this partition, whereby

in *Maachis*, Sanaatan repeatedly uses this as the origin of all state sponsored violence, as does Ghulfam in *Sarfarosh*.

²⁷ The song, “*Chod Aye Hum Woh Galiyan*,” is a song that laments the state of Punjab today in terms of its resplendent past. Punjab, for the longest time, was the richest state in India, given its flourishing agrarian economy.

²⁸ “*Chappa Chappa Charkha Chale*,” is a very rhythmic Punjabi folksong reminiscent of an agricultural based lifestyle, sung around a campfire. It is nostalgic and remembers the womenfolk left at home and glorifies their beauty and the daily rituals that so occupy them.

²⁹ The marginalized perspective of the Kashmiri Pundit, forced to flee Kashmir because of ethnic cleansing is articulated here, as is the Sikh policemen’s rendering of his family’s loss in the Sikh riots of 1984. While all of these positions are articulated none of these really engage in a meaningful dialogue with each other.

³⁰ Mani Ratnam uses choreography to depict sexual scenes to circumvent the limitations issued by the Censorship Board of India. For the longest time, Bollywood films used shots from nature intercut with shots of the couple to suggest sexual intercourse. Ratnam popularized this technique which had been used in earlier films. The lyrics to these songs while explicit found more universal acceptance than others that came before.

³¹ TADA here refers to India’s Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act that was repealed in 1995 following charges of violation of human rights under this ordinance. India is now in the process of negotiating the implementation of POTO (Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance) in Parliament, which is many ways a re-working of TADA.

³² In its written submissions in the designated court trying the March 1993 blasts case here, the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) implicated film actor Sanjay Dutt and

122 others. It accused them of indulging in a conspiracy to commit terrorist acts in the country at the behest of underworld dons Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon and others. Sanjay Dutt, confessed to the possession of an AK-56 rifle which violates section 5 of TADA that relates to possessing arms in a notified area. The CBI further alleged that arms and ammunition were transported from Pakistan and delivered to the Shekhadi and Deghi coasts in Maharashtra's Raigad district. (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, November 2, 1993)

Chapter 5: The Theater of Terrorism

Cinema, as we have discussed in our earlier chapter, lends itself to the depiction of projected narratives of nations and now global empires. It imposes a fictitious unity of national aspirations onto a willing and captive audience that shares common origins, language, location and culture. In my previous chapter, I developed an argument in the postcolonial context about the articulation of a normative and homogenizing nationalism in Bollywood cinema in India, analyzing the use of terrorism as a trope. Shifting the argument significantly from the margins to the center but within the rubric of postcolonial studies, I now examine the depiction of nationalisms and (anti)nationalisms in a more global context vis-à-vis Hollywood cinema.

Cinema, we note, has a grandiosity of scope that far surpasses the audience that Benedict Anderson referred to in the imagined communities that came about through print capitalism¹. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, in their book, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, make the argument that the fiction film of the twentieth century, has since inherited the legacy of the nineteenth century realist novel in the era of print capitalism, in capturing the imaginaries of nation-building. Cinema easily helped perpetuate the projected narratives of nations and empires and imposed a fictive unity on a diverse and heterogeneous population. The linear progression of a complicated plot within a temporal narrative that eventually leads to fulfillment creates a national

imaginary, even as it negotiates the historical and discursive spaces essential to the configuration of national identity. Shohat and Stam go on to allude to the ability of cinema to introduce a whole new aspect to the imperial imaginary whereby the apparatus of cinema has “tended to be deployed in ways flattering to the imperial subject as [a] superior and invulnerable observer”. It is their observation that “the ‘spatially mobilized visuality’ of the I/eye of the empire spiraled outward around the globe, creating a visceral kinetic sense of imperial travel and conquest, transforming European spectators into armchair conquistadores, affirming their sense of power while turning the colonies into spectacle for the metropole’s voyeuristic gaze” (104). Fatimah Rony in her text, *The Third Eye* articulates a similar perspective albeit in relation to her analysis of ethnographic films when she says, “ethnographic cinema is often harnessed to ideologies of nationalism and imperialism; it has been the instrument of surveillance as well as entertainment” linked to the discourses of power, knowledge and pleasure (10). I use this as an entry point into my own argument – it is my contention that none of these national imaginaries are constructed in isolation and their direct oppositional ‘Other’ is the discourses of (anti)nationalisms that are developed simultaneously albeit asymmetrically in the same texts. So while Shohat and Stam focus largely on how cinema uses spectacle and narrative to enact the story of colonialism from the perspective of the colonizer, in this chapter, I offer a different perspective to create a space for the discourse on (anti)nationalisms as seen in these films.

In this chapter, it is my argument that the turn of the last century has taken this to a whole new level in what I see as the next stage of nationalism where the impetus of colonization and imperialism have given way to globalization and transnationalism and the notions of “Empire” resonate with a newfound context and nuance. The Hollywood films we deal with in this chapter, shape the national narrative along temporal and spatial lines that reflect a somewhat similar imperial imaginary that develops asymmetrically, thrusting certain national narratives into the foreground at the obvious expense of others. The transnational nature of this national imagining is the focus of my chapter as I analyze two Hollywood films and some documentaries that deal with terrorism but in the larger global context. Further, I feel that the use of the film format becomes crucial to interrogate the representations of these national imaginings even as they simultaneously straddle two or more cultures and rework the notions of temporal time.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the useful notion of *simultaneity* drawing from Anderson’s idea of “homogenous, empty time” in terms of calendars and clocks to stress the importance of the coexistence of the past and the present in a critical moment of imagining (24). Hence, in our reading of the texts, *The Siege* and *The Three Kings*, we need to take into account, actual historical events as well as the temporal world created in these fictional films, and the present world events that shape our reading of these texts in context of the ongoing second Gulf War, all of which act as microcosmic worlds that may or may not be complete within themselves

and which mediate between the historical and the discursive. The spectacle of terror and its depiction in formalist terms is the point of entry into this discourse.

This chapter uses a two prong approach: the first is theoretical and draws on my theory of (anti)nationalisms as developed in the previous chapters even as it locates the analysis in a political, historical and globalized context. The second and more overarching approach is a formalist one that focuses on the physical spaces inhabited by the characters. This chapter therefore, hinges on the idea of spaces and the representation of terror as it unfolds on the cinema screen. Space, in the classical Hollywood style of continuity editing would necessarily have to be subordinate to narrative causality to create what Bordwell, Thompson and Staiger call almost “transparent space” in an effort to overcome the limits of the uni-dimensional cinema screen by effacing the picture plane. Continuity editing imputes a certain level of passivity to the spectator and establishes a specific set of expectations with reference to the narrative style. The 180 degree editing that maintains consistency with the eye-line match also places the spectator as the ideally placed onlooker, acknowledging the onlooker and privileging his/her perspective. Departures from this Classical Hollywood Continuity style of editing as we see occasionally in these films therefore jar the spectator out of pre-conceived film watching habits, which I will touch upon later in the chapter. It also presumes that the spectator ignores off-screen space, what Gombrich calls a ‘screen’, a blank canvas onto which viewers can project hypothetical elements². I point towards this to highlight that the significance of the

representation of screen spaces in these films thus induces the viewer to amplify the same thematic connotations onto the off-screen spaces, which in my argument, is obviously Iraq.

We analyze how spatiality is used in these two films as we examine how the two films deploy the use of enclosed/open spaces, private/public spaces, and national/foreign spaces within the mise-en-scene and more so, how these designated spaces are represented within the filmic world. In fact, I argue, that it is the mobility between spaces and sometimes precisely the lack of, that become crucial to the movement of the plot. Spaces are also crucial to the issues of jurisdiction as the conflict plays out between the characters in both the films. In the course of my analysis, this chapter also touches upon several other films, both fiction and documentary that have dealt with similar subjects like Mark Pellington's *Arlington Road* (1999), Phillip Noyce's *Patriot Games* (1992), Martin Smith's *Hunting Bin Laden* (2000) and Steven Emerson's *Jihad! In America* (1994). Let me clarify at this point that I do not posit the two documentary films as the realistic or authentic version of the historical events touched upon in these fictional films, I am conscious of their artificial staging and point-of-view editing and take this into account in my analysis. Both these documentaries are in the Expository Mode, which Bill Nichols defines as one that "addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that advance an argument about the historical world" (34). The Expository mode hinges on rhetorical continuity more than spatial or narrative continuity and emphasizes the

impression of objectivity and “the voices of others are woven into a textual logic that subsumes and orchestrates them” and used to substantiate the larger argument that the text addresses (37).

The first aspect of the *simultaneity of time* deals with the historical context of the terrorism in the United States, both domestic and international and its reverberations on the spirit of nationalism that defined the nation-state. Domestic terrorism was not unknown in the United States in the 1990s like in many other parts of the world, but unlike countries like India, Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia and the Middle East, tackling the issue of terrorism was not a significant component of domestic and foreign agenda. The first big act of terrorism in the United States was not the horrific act on September 11th, 2001³ that has since become symbolic as the start on the “War on Terror” but it came way before that, on April 19th, 1995 with the Oklahoma City bombing that killed 169 Americans in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The headlines read “Terror in the Heartland” and in the aftermath of the horror that shook the country, debate was fuelled by the cause, the reasons and the perpetrator’s motivation. Terrorism, hitherto unknown on US soil, has since shaken the country, shattered its nationalist innocence and introduced new vectors into nationalist imaginings. Timothy McVeigh’s execution in June 2001, has still not brought the chapter on justice to a close and a current Google search (August 24, 2005) brings up 1610 results on the event, of which most websites seem to still focus on causes while conspiracy theories abound. *Arlington Road*, directed by Mark

Pellington (1999) made in this climate of paranoia and fear of the unknown, grapples with the subject of domestic terror groups driven by varied agendas and further rendered inexplicable by the immediate and effective secrecy that shrouds the investigation of any such events. It was one in a series of films that tuned into this climate of fear and attempted to replay the horror of terrorism on screen.

Moving beyond the national stage, the real life link between domestic terrorism and international terrorism in the United States is anything but a tenuous connection. Timothy McVeigh, a Gulf War veteran, claimed that his knowledge and expertise was a direct result of his military training and offered the argument that this bombing was no different from the atrocities he had seen committed in the First Gulf War. I do not wish to get into a dialogue with McVeigh's defense and his justification of the act, but bring it up here, solely to point out how domestic terrorism and international terrorism are in some ways so closely linked in the vicious cycle of cause and event. The fragmented nation captured the imagination of the world at large, in real life, on cinema screens, the internet and TV channels and the events of September 11th, 2001 brought this terror alive on television screens across the world.

The connection of September 11th to the Gulf War, is a more immediate and obvious one. In the summer of 1996, Osama Bin Laden declared a *fatwa*⁴ calling for *Jihad* against the United States of America. The *fatwa* was issued as declaration of war against the United States in protest of its policies in the Middle-East, more specifically, Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the declaration of war came from a unique

source – not the political monarchy that governs Saudi Arabia but from a single man on the fringes of Saudi society.

The call to wage war against America was made because America has spearheaded a crusade against Islam sending thousands of its troops to the land of the holy mosques, meddling in Saudi affairs and politics, and supporting its oppressive, corrupt and tyrannical regime. These are the reasons behind singling out America as a target (*Hunting Bin Laden*).

This *Jihad* and the implications of a war declared by a single man against the United States changed the notions of warring nations and reconfigured the roles of nation-states in declaring war. Loyalties are now transcribed not by location, language, and culture in the present time and not even by geographical boundaries but by the imagined nation of the *Ummah Islam*⁵, the nation of Islamic believers that stretched across the Middle East before the British carved it up in nation-states. The notion of “simultaneity” echoes in this call for Jihad as it draws on the co-existence of the past and present in this critical moment of national imagining.

Speaking in historical terms, September 11th, 2001 was not the first act of terrorism against the United States in this call for *Jihad*, as several attacks had been perpetrated against US interests abroad, from bombings of military barracks in Saudi Arabia (June 25, 1996), to the bombings of two US Embassies in Africa (August 8, 1998) amongst others. In Steven Emerson’s documentary film, *Jihad! In America* (1994) Sheikh Mohammad Al-Asi, Religious Leader of the Islamic Education Center

based in Potomac, Maryland gives voice to these sentiments when he said,

If the Americans are placing their forces in the Persian Gulf, we should be creating another war front for the Americans in the Muslim world – and specifically where American interests are concentrated: in Egypt, in Turkey, in the Indian subcontinent, just to mention a few. Strike against American interests there (Chicago 1989, *Jihad!*).

Steven Emerson defines *Jihad* as “an armed struggle to defeat non-believers or infidels, and their ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic Empire”. While this may have read as a line from a fictional work earlier, in a post-September 11th world, it resonates with meaning. It is not a question of the semantics of this definition however that will provide the answers – the answers lie elsewhere. Suddenly global terrorism or transnational terrorism, if you will, is a horrific reality. It is no longer restricted to isolated pockets but has its roots everywhere – Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Philippines, Indonesia, Saudia Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan – the list is endless, and the terror network is truly globalized.

In attempting to historically and politically locate this phenomenon of representation of terrorism in cinema, I choose to apply parameters to my study because of the limitations of the scope of this study. While Islamic extremism can be traced to having its origins in the twelfth century, I restrict myself to exploring its roots in the Middle Eastern crisis and the Afghanistan crisis in the 1970s – 80s. I will also try to identify the theological-ideological roots of this Islamic terrorism, which

are used to legitimize it as a movement in the minds of these communities that are based on a culture of violence.

Bodansky in his text, *Bin Laden: The Man who Declared War on America*, identifies the mid 1970s as the boiling point in the Middle East, “when the Muslim world empowered by new petrodollar wealth, was exposed to Western Civilization as never before... the shock was immense” (xiii). He argues that leading Islamic fundamentalists were convinced that Western liberal thought and materialism were in absolute contrast to, and hence posed a direct threat to, traditional Islamic society governed by strictly regimented codes of behavior defined by *Sharia*⁶ (law governing mankind). The sentiment grew and spread from Iran to Sudan where Islamic governments were in power. In 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a major setback to the Muslim world. The people of Afghanistan responded with a call to *Jihad* against the Soviet Union. The United States fearing the increasing control of the Soviet Union over Central Asia launched a massive covert CIA mission to finance, arm and train the Afghani *mujahideen* in order to defeat the Soviet forces and destabilize the communist regime. According to Steven Emerson, three billion dollars worth of arms and ammunition was pumped into Afghanistan channeled through Pakistan’s secret service ISI. The call for *Jihad* against the Soviet Union resulted in the recruitment of several thousand *mujahideen* from Muslim countries across the globe. The defeat of the Soviet forces in 1989 and the end of the Cold War however did not in any way dissipate this movement, which found a new impetus and spread

uncontrolled across the Central Asian region. In 1991, the invasion of Kuwait and the threat of Saddam Hussein however, changed the political climate of the Middle East. The Saudi Arabian regime invited US troops into the region, and the US presence in the Middle East became another powerful source of dissension. Osama Bin Laden's grievances against the US mark their beginning at this point in history. In 1995, the Taliban government came to power in Afghanistan and this fundamentalist regime with its implementation of the rigid and codified Islamic Law created a new resonance in the *Jihad* against the West. Several scholars have studied the causes for this dissension and anger against the "monolithic west" and the quagmire of politics in the Middle East. However, in the final tally, the monolithic, homogenized West in this Islamic extremist point of view translates into one single entity, the United States of America.

The Siege: Jihad in New York City

This conflict over US presence in Saudi Arabia becomes a point of reference for Edward Zwick's film *The Siege* that deals with the bombings of military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and then goes onto the shift the battleground to the streets of New York, where random acts of terror like bomb blasts on a city bus, a Broadway theater and the FBI headquarters take a vice-like grip on the city. Anthony Hubbard, an FBI agent with the counter-terrorism unit is called in to investigate along with his Palestinian-American partner Frank Haddad. The plot takes an interesting twist with

the entry of Elise Kraft, a CIA undercover agent who seems to have much more information than she cares to share with Hubbard. The two start out with an obvious confrontation over jurisdiction that gets further complicated with complex issues of expedient foreign policy. Over the course of the investigation, the FBI headquarters are bombed and Hubbard is left strapped for resources and obviously emotionally distraught. The military is called in to patrol the streets of Brooklyn under the command of General Devereaux, and even as the fear of martial law brings a new found terror on the streets, civil rights are trampled upon and Hubbard faces off against this new antagonist. The Arab-Americans are subjected to racial profiling and herded into camps and Haddad's son is among them. Haddad's anguish at this rather telling lack of trust is perhaps the only example of the emotional price immigrants pay despite their legal status, citizenship and allegiance to the flag. The film resolves all these issues once the sleeper cells are identified, Elise Kraft's identity is compromised and she is killed in the service of her country. Devereaux's oversteps his boundaries and ignores the law and is finally arrested after a face-off (another Western convention) with Hubbard⁷. As the ideal protagonist, true American patriot and exemplary law enforcement officer, Hubbard saves the country and the day.

Even as the film attempts to go a step further than the terrorist films of the 80s to un-demonize the stereotypical Arab-American as the 'other', it fails to develop the characters of the two Arab-Americans Haddad and Samir and in the end Samir's actions only serve to reinforce the "Arabs hate us" mentality that was so pervasive in

the films that came before. The film thus clearly delineates Arabs as the enemy, elides the Arab voice and in fact goes further to rope in all Americans of Arab ethnicity as suspect. The film does offer three spectatorial positions and each of them elicit sympathy and audience identification – Elise Kraft who has sacrificed much for her country and yet slips in a moment of weakness, General Devereaux whose patriotism as a soldier cannot be questioned though his megalomania is his undoing, and Hubbard whose idealism and passionate defense of the oppressed is above and beyond the call of duty. However, the Arab-Americans are not fully fleshed as characters and in fact are feminized through their overly emotional investment in personal relationships above all else, as seen when a distraught Samir is reduced to tears while discussing his brother's story and Haddad, even though he is a likeable character, ultimately puts family loyalty above the nation. The audience cannot relate to these characters and they continue to be the 'other'.

The first scene in the film, *The Siege*, starts with a medium shot of the US military housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, bombed to rubble in 1996⁸. Edward Zwick's film, *The Siege* attempts to contextualize terrorism by using actual footage of the Dhahran bombing, and President Clinton's condemnation of this act as a point of entry into a fictional representation of terrorist acts in New York. The film is specific about the location (New York) and time period (late 1990s) and it uses a real life event and actual footage from news coverage as a narrative strategy for two purposes: firstly it provides the narrative with exigency and authenticity, and thus acts

as a persuasive strategy and secondly it also serves as a bridge for the film spectator between the real and the imagined worlds. It almost seems to cue the audience into treating this film as a realistic political film. The suspension of disbelief is complete.

Having set the stage by the presumed “kidnapping” of a prominent Iraqi leader, Sheikh Ahmed Bin Talal who is held responsible for the bombing in Dhahran, the focus shifts to New York. The use of unrestricted narration (the voiceover discussing the “package” and the editing) helps establish the cause and motivation for the terrorist activity that follows even though the spectator is not privy to the complete implications of this kidnapping. The crucial scene of the actual kidnapping happens off-screen even as the audience watches the stage set for the potential ambush with the goatherd, a very commonly used film device to dramatize abductions. The goats in the scene are a rather telling replacement for the common and familiar genre convention in Hollywood thrillers that use delivery trucks to overtake and surround the protagonist’s car and screech to halt immediately cutting off any escape route. This replacement of the image of powerful and seemingly indestructible trucks by a herd of goats, makes a very effective and yet subtle statement on the lack of economic and material progress in the petroleum rich Middle East and despite the Mercedes we see speeding down the desert roads, the stark contrast reflects the lack of homogenous development that marks the nation’s third world status. The audience deduces from the language used “the package”, “the target” and “zero eight hundred hours” that the people involved in this kidnapping are

obviously American agents. Even though we are not introduced to the protagonist till later in the film, this use of unrestricted narrative zeroes in to the heart of the conflict clearly creating a focal point and aligning the spectatorial position with the good guys making the transition to Hubbard's point of view instantaneous.

This scene is interestingly played out with constant juxtapositions of shots of President Bill Clinton's speech, "America takes care of our own" and the shots of the Sheikh being forced into a helicopter. The US response is decisive and instantaneous, even as the President re-assures the nation. The cross-cutting used in this scene is important as it instantly establishes the implicit connections between the bombings in Saudi Arabia of the US barracks orchestrated by an Iraqi leader and the US response which goes to the heart of my thesis of terrorism now being completely globalized.

However, the questions the film raises are not to do with causes of terrorism (which we see glossed over in the first five minutes of the film), but with the US response to terrorism on US soil. The film also completely ignores the ramifications of the US response on foreign soil that undermines the sovereignty of other nation-states. Iraq as a sovereign nation-state is not even acknowledged in the film that blithely equates Iraq with homogenized Islamic terrorism even as the film uses actual footage of the Dhahran bombings in Saudi Arabia. The film shifts between geographical spaces and political borders with an impunity that is only possible in the fictional world of the film, ignoring the boundaries of politically defined areas of jurisdiction even as the film makes a point about illegal crossing of borders in the

case of Elise facilitating the entry of middle-eastern men into the US and Archie Gates being stopped at the Iran-Iraq border for similar reasons.

The Siege deals with a one sided exploration of terrorism as it were, with the enemy comprising of a indiscriminate mix of Palestinian, Iraqi and even Lebanese peoples with no clear agenda and no shared heritage except an irrational common hatred of the US and its foreign policies. So unlike its predecessors⁹, this film does move beyond the stereotypical Muslim terrorist of unknown Middle Eastern origin towards a more developed conflict but it takes the exploration of the conflict only so far and not further.

This film is critical to my analysis of terrorism because this film foregrounds the enactment of the fictitious possibilities and scenarios as they may play out on the national stage in the event of a terror attack in the US. It touches upon several issues that in light of September 11th, have become a reality – issues of jurisdiction in terms of terror attacks, issues of racial profiling and the targeting of certain specific ethnic populations, issues of civil liberties and civil rights violations to name a few.

The film having started out with a long shot of the desert landscape in Lebanon cuts to a bird's eye view of a skyline dotted with mosques and resounding with the Islamic call to prayer. The camera is used here to clearly make the familiar unfamiliar as we come to realize that the skyline is New York City, more specifically, its Brooklyn suburbs. This de-familiarization of probably one of the most famous city skylines, especially in Hollywood cinema, serves to reinforce the global in the local

and to imbed the localized nature of this globalized terrorism. In keeping with familiar Hollywood panoramic establishing shots, the desert landscape, reminds the audience at the subliminal level of the Western genre, with the vast and desolate expansive views and a frontier just waiting to be remade in the image of the civilized world. The use of imagery in this film reiterates the Western paradigm in many ways and establishes audience expectations along similar lines. The constellations of power and hierarchical structures are not only maintained through the use of such popular and recognizable imagery but they are also reaffirmed at the expense of other racial and national imaginaries, in this case specifically Arab and Iraq.

The protagonist, Anthony Hubbard, the head of FBI/NYPD Terrorism Task Force, with his Palestinian-American partner Frank Haddad, is called upon to find the terrorist cells across Brooklyn and destroy them. What complicates the politics of the film is the presence of Elise Kraft, a CIA agent who works undercover in Iraq and in the Arab-American community and US Army General, William Devereaux. The dynamics of the plot derive from this conflict of interest between the CIA, the FBI and the US army. While overtly they are all on the same side, their agendas are somewhat mutually exclusive.

In my reading of the film, Elise (also called Sharon) represents the most problematic facet of the American counter-terrorism taskforce – as a CIA undercover agent, more so as a woman and specifically in her relationship with Samir Nazdhe, a Professor of Arab Studies in Brooklyn College, of Palestinian origin. In all of her

avatars, Elise is finally a conflation of several ideologies some of which are in direct conflict with each other. She articulates a very liberal perspective when she tells Hubbard about the US foreign Policy in Iraq that created Sheikh Ahmad Bin Talal, who eventually and unbeknownst to the CIA, became the mastermind behind the terrorist bombings in New York. Elise confesses:

The Sheikh was to help us overthrow Saddam. He was our ally. We were financing him...then there was a policy shift...its not that we sold them out exactly, *we just stopped helping them. They were slaughtered.* (emphasis mine)

It is an acknowledgement of responsibility for a foreign policy gone all wrong, changed for political expediency and manipulated for short-term political gains. Hubbard forces the issue seeking clarification about the CIA training, “you taught them how to make the bombs, and now they are here ... doing what you taught them to do”. This is not offered as an apology nor is it to suggest a justification of the terrorist activity that results in the loss of innocent lives. The books cannot be balanced so easily.

And yet, Elise also represents the bleeding heart sympathizer of the Islamic cause, her dealings with Samir Nazdeh are suspect and more than once in the film, General Devereaux warns us “she has been compromised”. Multiple questions arise with respect to her being compromised. Is she compromised as a CIA undercover agent because the Arab-American community knows her actual identity?

Compromised because her dealings with them are suspect? Compromised because she continued to help the Iraqi resistance by helping them enter the US after the foreign policy shift? Compromised because she is sleeping with the enemy? Compromised because in some ways she presents the possibility of an alternative viewpoint, a leftist academic perspective, in a bipolar ideological world of right and wrong? Elise has transgressed in more ways than one, and there is no way for the narrative to sustain her. Her motives become questionable even as she attempts to locate the last cell. Her last words reflect this too, for she ends the Lord's Prayer with a call to Allah – she finally belongs on neither side. Her loyalty to her country and her personal guilt cannot co-exist in life, but they can in death. Elise's sexuality becomes significant to the conflict as her body becomes the site for the confrontation and her emotional investment in Samir is indicative of these constant political and emotional conflicts of loyalties that she experiences. Her use of her body to elicit information which consequently results in her being dismissed by the male political hierarchy is another very problematic aspect of the film. When Devereaux says, "How could you possibly remember who you are fucking?" he speaks for a nation wronged by such moral transgressions and in sleeping with the enemy, Elise raises the horror of the specter of miscegenation that no one is willing to address let alone acknowledge in the film. There are several such derogatory references to Elise's sexual behavior in the film. Devereaux dismisses her professional expertise even though she is part of the National Security Council, when he says, "A woman would never understand the

Middle East ... Between you and me, Elise Kraft would not know a Sheikh from a prophylactic by the same name". Uncontained female sexuality harbors the threat of overturned social and patriarchal norms that society cannot comprehend and furthermore it subverts the hegemonic structure and power balance in favor of the Arab male as the penetrate, while the reverse scenario can and is usually more than acceptable and interpreted as an expression and extension of the white male's superiority and power play. It is never made clear whether this use of her sexuality is an individual decision or a suggested official method of extracting information but her multiple identities and numerous roles eventually result in her death at the altar of nationhood and she is redeemed in her service to the nation¹⁰.

Hubbard in contrast, is completely idealized. His moral compass is finely tuned, his friends are well chosen, his loyalty to his team is impeccable, his loyalty to the country unquestionable. He straddles the ideological fence, not for him the rightist conservative ideology that Devereaux represents nor the radical ideology that Elise represents. He protests the racial profiling, he protests the herding of all Middle Eastern men in stadiums, he protests the unusual interrogation methods that Devereaux uses, and he protests the military patrolling the streets of New York. His is the measured, rational voice in a time of emotional and moral turbulence and fear. The film ultimately nods towards this perspective where the war is not against Islam, not all men of Middle Eastern origin are suspect, where racial profiling brings back memories of Japanese internment camps and the democratic fabric of society is

preserved.

He does not, however, represent the majority population of the nation in terms of his ethnicity or race but yet he stands in for the idealized American and his marked American-ness is what is clearly validated in the film. This choice of a black male protagonist here is similar to Mani Ratnam's choice of a South Indian protagonist (as opposed to the typical North Indian protagonist of Hindi films). By depicting Arvind as the moral center of the Indian nation in his film *Roja*, Ratnam projects a desire to re-imagine a larger heterogenous community even as the film's storyline reiterates and re-establishes the homogenous nature of this imagining and erases all signifiers of difference¹¹. Hubbard's "blackness" plays no role in the film and recedes promptly in the face of his American-ness even as the "Arabness" of the Arab-Americans takes center stage in the conflict. The film only shifts the issue of difference from one minority population to the other, choosing to incorporate some and exclude the others. Thus Hubbard's American-ness is clearly juxtaposed not just against Elise's or Devereaux's but also against the Arab-Americans, the Iraqis and the aberrant Iraqi-Americans before the nation's sense of justice prevails above all else. Shohat and Stam's analogy of armchair conquistadors is complete with the American nation having conquered not just the warring nations of the middle-east and their policies of terror but it has also taken back and reinstated the moral center of the nation from the fringes of society that attempt at co-opting it.

The film thus completes the cyclical pattern of order, chaos and restored

order, all the while using the ‘Other’, from without, the Iraqi warlords and the ‘Other’ from within, the Arab-Americans, to define the nation. Clearly undermining one and reclaiming the other, completes the nation’s imaginary, and restores faith in the new multi-ethnic American national identity. The clear reference to Japanese internment camps in World War II is another nod to the re-envisioned national imaginary that in its entirety encompasses a larger community of immigrants but only once they renew their pledge of allegiance to the nation.

The spaces that the Arab immigrant community occupies in New York City are restricted to the boroughs of Brooklyn which as General Devereaux informs us is the general pattern of relocated immigrant communities, whereby they tend to live in contained parts of the city. This containment to the boroughs of Brooklyn, voluntary or otherwise proves to be useful to the General as he can, he claims, “rumble every rat hole, trap, market...to find everyone whoever said a bad word about this country”. Similarly, even after the Arab-American men are rounded up the spaces they are forced into the enclosed stadium, reminiscent of a prison with its high barbed wiring and suggestive of holding cells. Other Arabs, even powerful men like Sheikh Ahmed Bin Talal are seen in dark dingy prison cells once he is taken out of his home environment. Similarly, Samir, is also seen only in enclosed spaces like his apartment, which unlike the safe haven a home suggests, does not offer him protection against Sharon’s presence as she forces him to play informer or more so, against the invasive nature of the surveillance cameras that record all his intimate

moments. Finally, the bathhouse that represents all things holy is another enclosed space that is easily intruded upon by Hubbard and Haddad, and once again serves as a way of containment of the Arab terrorist who is cornered into defeat and consequently death. Haddad, in his weaker moment, is seen in his apartment secluded and in distress over his son's fate. The Arab-American community, and the Arabs only occupy enclosed confined spaces – both private and public and the constant references to Gaza, the Internment camps, West Bank and Palestine, all echo this notion of containment. So, no space is left unchallenged, unconquered and the ease with which the Americans can enter and leave is what undoubtedly tilts the balance of power in their favor. The wide open desert horizon is reduced to and replaced by these closed spaces and the conquistador imagery that Shohat and Stam refer to is unconditionally complete.

The role of the nation-state is echoed by the position and maneuvering of the US army by one megalomaniac general run amok, who clearly acknowledges that the Armed forces are trained to deal with enemy nations and their civilian populations but most definitely not their own, marking the clear divide between the nation and the nation-state. Hubbard's stand-off with Devereaux in the end reins in the megalomania and reasserts the inherent benevolence of the nation-state towards its citizens by embracing the nation with its re-established moral center. The stand-off is reminiscent of the paradigm of the Westerns film genre, and though it is not the usual shoot out, guns are drawn, buddies lined up alongside for loyalty till the moment, Hubbard

asserts the law to arrest and take Devereaux prisoner.

The Siege goes beyond the trope of one hero against the terrorists and enemies of the state to a more complex and further developed plotline that interpellates several positions of law enforcement and agents of counter-terrorism units. It does dispel the thriller notions of a one-man army but yet does not quite meet the initial expectations of a realist political film. The Arabs (of no clear national origin) are still the terrorists, hypervisible because of skin color and yet without a voice of any significant importance. Their nation is not defined and their national agenda is not defined by nation-states but only by religious and fanatic zeal which is in stark contrast to the rational, civilized and loyal Americans whose love for the nation supercedes all other loyalties. As a character in the film points out, “Sometimes in addition to being a nationality, being a Palestinian is a profession, a very lucrative one”. Being Palestinian, in this context is either about being a fanatical terrorist or in some ways even worse, a sell-out like Samir, ready to betray the nation. Nationalism in the Palestinian context in the film is not patriotism but a double edged sword with negative attributes whether as a friend or foe of the American people. The American nation is threatened, but only to be later reaffirmed and revalidated.

Shohat and Stam argue that cinema combines “both narrative and spectacle to tell the story of colonialism from the colonizer’s perspective” (109). Further, it disseminates the hegemonic colonial discourse and engenders “a battle of national imaginaries within the fissured colonial spectator”. In a neocolonial context and the

world of diasporic populations with hyphenated identities, the conflict takes on a complicated hue. Arab-American audiences of films like *The Siege* are similarly subjected to dual national imaginaries, both at odds with each other, as the “us” and the “them.” The irony is lost out on the member of the crowd who proclaims, “they love this country as much as we do”. This collision of national imaginaries within a single individual in the world of the diaspora thus revisits these questions of hegemony and imperialism as encapsulated by cinema and its spectatorship.

The film also uses other formalist elements to enhance the horror of the spectacle of terrorism and we are shown graphic scenes with bomb explosions on buses and Broadway theaters. It drives home the possibility of terror in schools and the narrative uses suspense in several scenes to create a false illusion of safety. Even as the federal government is having a strategy meeting, we see shots of the bomb being placed in the van and the pointed use of discontinuity editing as the bomb is activated. The constant cross-cutting back and forth between the two suggests the meeting as the potential target until at the last minute it switches to a shot of One Federal Plaza (the FBI Headquarters in the film), just before the van drives straight into it. So even as the film succeeds in instilling fear and insecurity in the American audience faced with possibilities of terror and its implications, the neatly wrapped up loose ends reaffirm all the confidence in the nation-state and its overarching ability to protect its citizens. The fissure introduced through the friction between the separate branches of law enforcement and the chasm that makes people question state policy is

reworked and the transition from dissenting individuals to loyal citizens cheering on the Brooklyn Bridge is complete. When peace is restored, the nation can be mapped onto the nation state and though there is no obvious moral growth in the protagonists or effective change in the imaging of the nation and its subjects, the audience is reassured that the state and the nation can never be in conflict except in a transitional moment of crisis.

Three Kings: The Global in the Local

David Russell's film *Three Kings* starts off at a very crucial moment of national imaginings, the US has just won a war against another nation, Iraq, and the film opens with the rowdiness of celebrating US soldiers in a war that they feel was rather short lived helped by the implementation of superior technology in modern warfare. The crassness of their jokes about their unfulfilled desire to see someone shot, and their insensitivity to the grotesque aspects of war is in direct contrast to the tone the rest of the film takes. The war may be officially over as the title card suggest "March 1991, War just Ended" but the film, *Three Kings* picks up on and showcases the violence, the outrage and the horror in this post-war situation. The lack of color in the film stock and the use of a "limited palette" make the bleakness and the horror of the proceedings even starker especially with the use of saturated vibrant colors in some key scenes.

The film *The Three Kings*, initially titled *The Spoils of War*, is the story of

four US soldiers who find a secret map with the location of Saddam's buried treasure of gold bullion stolen from Kuwait and stored in a secret underground bunker and set off in search of it. The main protagonist is Major Archie Gates of the Special Forces who devises and implements the plans, along with his team of Troy Barlow, Chief Elgins and Conrad Vigin. The rather common tale of greed and spoils of war fast descends into moral chaos as these American soldiers meet up with the Iraqi resistance, Saddam's famous Republican Guard and the innocent citizens caught up in the crossfire. These aberrant outlaw-soldiers are unusual protagonists whose personal greed and amoral justifications of their actions set them apart from the usual hero-soldiers of war films. They pledge allegiance to their own ambitions not the US flag and do not hesitate to put self-interest above everything else. Their plan is to get away to the bunker near Karbala and get the gold but the simple but ingenious plan goes awry rather early on when they are forced to confront the ugliness of the brutality perpetuated by Saddam's soldiers on the Iraqi prisoners. Archie Gates decides to free the prisoners and eventually save them from the merciless beatings and cold-blooded killing. The Iraqi resistance leader, US educated Amir Abdullah, however quickly wises up to the plan of this renegade group, and recognizes that they are acting on their own and not on behalf of the US army. He negotiates a deal to split the gold in exchange for his help and free passage across the Iraq-Iranian border. Using rather unusual methods of deception, Gates and his troop, manage to recover the gold and despite the resistance from Saddam's men they make their escape. Barlow is taken

prisoner and interrogated and tortured but eventually is rescued, Conrad is killed but the rest of Gate's band of brothers manages to reach the border. Barlow makes a call to his wife in the US, when held captive, providing details of his exact location and Adriana's curiosity about Gates's secret mission, gets the military involved and the group is stopped 100 yards from the Iranian border. Eventually Gates shows true compassion and rises above the greed and personal quest and trades in the gold bullion for the safe passage of the Iraqis. This unexpected gain in moral stature is the climax of a slow but steady transition from the initially insensitive and moral debunked group of soldiers to true heroes. Gates also successfully uses the media card to ensure this event is recorded by Adriana Cruz and the final credits assure us that Archie Gates, Chief Elgins and Troy Barlow are honorably discharged by the army. The film ends on this high note of how a small group of US soldiers acting on their own successfully save several Iraqi lives, the true heroes of a war that as Adriana in her news broadcast states, "they say has exorcized the ghost of Vietnam with its clear moral imperative".

The film does not start out with a clear moral center specifically in its choice of protagonists, and furthermore, this is obfuscated by the constant allusions to a morally ambiguous war staged with closely monitored media management as well as the resounding references to the betrayal experienced by the Iraqi resistance. The errant American soldiers are told that the Iraqis were encouraged to revolt against Saddam by the US army only to be later left unsupported and subsequently

slaughtered by the Iraqi soldiers in the aftermath of the ceasefire agreement. Several comments interspersed throughout the film allude to the question of a lack of a “clear moral imperative” and yet the film despite its seemingly anti-war agenda continues to perpetuate the neocolonial mission of its predecessors.

Not unlike the spaces we see the Arabs and Arab-Americans occupy in the film *The Siege*, the Iraqis in this film too, are seen as prisoners, in bunkers, in hiding places, in village squares that are enclosed and that have gates and guard houses. Unlike the American soldiers whose movement is uninhibited and unrestricted, the Iraqis are forced to live in enclosed spaces; their movement is restricted by Saddam’s soldiers and the lack of resources supposedly available to them. So, despite having access to a fleet of Mercedes and other luxury cars, they can only use them at the behest of the American soldiers. In a typical colonial paradigm, this situation symbolizes the childlike representation of this population that desperately seeks guidance of a western superior in order to achieve their own potential. Hence, despite the leadership of Amir Abdullah, and with access to all the amassed wealth in the bunkers, it takes the help of five American soldiers to get these Iraqis to safety across the border.

The vast, barren desert landscape in this film signifies the last frontier that the Americans have to conquer and civilize not unlike the landscape and associated imagery of the genre of Western films. There is no representation of Iraqi towns, urban settings or economically and technologically advanced communities but only

small impoverished villages, villagers deprived of basic necessities like milk and water. The petrodollar wealth of the nation manifests itself only in the piles of Rolex watches, jewelry, gold bars and gold coins, and the fleet of luxury cars all incongruously hidden in bunkers that does not translate into the framework of a civil society but instead brings up images of piracy, with chests and trunks full of ill-begotten wealth. While some of this representation is historical and factual vis-à-vis Saddam Hussein's hoarded wealth, it is precisely the on-screen absence or exclusion of any other forms of civil society that I point towards in this film. Like the vast barren lands of the Western frontier waiting to be civilized and developed in America, as seen in the genre of Western films, it is this lack of development in Iraq that the camera focuses on. The significance of this absence underscores the representation of this unbalanced, undeveloped, and uncivilized society that needs to be recast in the image of westernized civil society, another frontier to be tamed and then remade. The representation of this nation itself is skewed to begin with and the nationalism that develops can only be asymmetrical as such. Hence, the nationalism in the context of the Iraqis is framed as two-dimensional, a hatred for Saddam Hussein and a desire for freedom brought by the Americans. Interestingly, this desire for freedom for the resistance groups translates into a desire to cross the border into Iran and into the constricted spaces of refugee camps. Like in *The Siege*, the only spaces fit for Iraqi or Arab habitation are always enclosed and contained. This is a rather telling and ironic moment in the film, perhaps lost on most of the audience, as they cheer the passage of

these innocent Iraqis to freedom. One can only read this desire for freedom not as a legitimate desire to replace Iraqi nationalism with a nationalism of a different kind, an Islamic Nationalism as seen in Iran, but as an absolute inability to replace it with one of their imagining. Though the nation of Islam seems to be the uniting factor, it is not elaborated upon, as these disenfranchised Iraqis find refuge in a nation-state sworn to be Saddam's enemy but also to the United States.

One of the most powerful moments in the film is also one of the most problematic scenes in the film. Barlow is taken captive and his interrogator engages him in a very forthright conversation about the war. His fluency in English, he explains, is courtesy the training the US army provided the Iraqi soldiers (then Allies) during the Iran-Iraq war as are the weapons and the military expertise. This ironic revelation is lost on Barlow as his Iraqi interrogator shifts the conversation to his curiosity about Michael Jackson. This moment is almost lost on the audience as well, especially since several such cultural issues are raised by curious Iraqis and used earlier in the film to generate humor. I foreground this particular example as the Iraqi interrogator articulates a rather profound observation about the innocuity of Michael Jackson's personality. The pop star icon's appearance and his obvious rejection of his own "blackness" troubles the Iraqi who sees it as the manifestation of the self-hatred the African-American community has internalized after years of oppression by the whites. This thoughtful insight based on his connection of a shared history of oppression between the Arabs and the Blacks in the US, briefly makes the white

protagonists of the film the 'Other'. The film does not clarify or interrogate this racism leaving the spectator to make the connections it only subtly hints at in the narrative. This analysis of racism is also counteracted through the depiction of racism in another scene later in the film, when Chief Elgin as the only African-American character objects to the use of certain racial epithets used by the US soldiers. In asserting his difference from the Arabs, Chief Elgin distances himself and his blackness from their colored skin. As the soldiers discuss the political correctness of distinguishing between their Arab allies (Saudi Arabians) and their Arab enemies (Iraqis), Elgin says, "I don't give a shit if he is from Johannesburg. I don't wanna hear 'dune cocoon' or 'sand nigger' from him or anyone else". Barlow intervenes to say "The point is that 'towelhead' and 'camel jockey' are perfectly good substitutes". Elgin's objection is clearly an assertion of his self constructed in opposition with the foreign non-white population. The distinction drawn in the racial epithets used, ironically, becomes his marked attempt at disassociating his blackness from the Arabs, enunciating his belonging with the majority population in the US.

Lila Kitaeff, in her essay, "*Three Kings: Neocolonial Arab Representation*," rightly argues that race plays out very interestingly in this film. Elgin's character "reinforces stereotypical and liberal discourses of blackness". Elgin is scripted as coming from the lower class population of Detroit, a major urban center for the working class Black population. Outside of his military service, he works as manual labor in contrast to Barlow and Gates who are educated, white and from the middle

class. Elgin “is also presented as having greater athletic abilities than his white counterparts, as seen when he destroys a helicopter by hitting it with a football strapped with explosives” (9). His religious nature relates “to the liberal discourse defining blackness as the center of spirituality and morality” that seems to provide him with a protective spiritual armor and he is the only character who is untouched, the only one not killed, tortured or shot at.

The torture scene raises this specter of racial oppression which is then projected back onto the Iraqi soldier by Barlow’s actions after he is freed. Even as it seems this has intruded into his consciousness, visualized by the projection of the horrors of the war onto Troy’s family in the US, his quick dismissal of the issue helps circumvent the situation. By reiterating the moral righteousness of the US intervention to save Kuwait he affirms his clear assertion of the mission’s overt objective and clouds any moral indignation. His refusal to shoot his torturer later is very significant. Kitaeff points out, how this “recuperates the US soldier-thief’s humanity so that narratively Taghmaoui’s (the Iraqi) complex depiction gets left behind” (8). So despite the candid observation and critical reference, there is no overt questioning of the role of the US in the Middle East, nor of the historical framework that preceded the military engagement in Iraq.

Color is used to demarcate spatiality in the film. Saturated color stock is used to depict spaces that are idealized. These should be primarily off-screen spaces that are not part of the plot as it unfolds. By thrusting these events that unfold only in the

imagination of the character, in full blown color, the director uses it to make a strong comment that disrupts the continuity of the film. Russell's use of vivid color in the film for highly graphic scenes is a clever use of cinema in foregrounding certain key moments in the narrative. To portray the horrors of what transpires when a bullet enters a human body, the scene switches to vibrant color mode to not only make the unseen seen, but also to clearly enhance the experience for the viewer. Russell effectively uses the spectacular in cinema to visualize death and destruction. The stark humor, the casual long shot of a head being blown off, the fountain of blood that spurts out from the man's neck as the head flies off, is instantly replaced by the grisly, intense color filled images of the internal organs of the human body, as the foreign object plows into it causing havoc. The imagery is grotesque, to say the least, and it captures the horrors of war vividly for the audience used to the spectacle of violence on screen¹². Several such moments abound in this rather self-reflexive film about the horrors of violence and the spectacle of terror that have wooed the audience lulling them into passive spectators. To the American viewer, the war in Iraq is reduced to the palatable version of sanitized images broadcast in the 'shock and awe' campaign in the US media in which the bomb blasts and missile hits were shown through the telescopic lens of cameras. That media blitz not only captured the imagination of American viewers as missiles hit Baghdad in the second Gulf War but reiterated and reaffirmed the power and might of the most powerful country in the world. What we have here instead, are images of war that are de-sanitized, and thrust back to the same

audience as raw images and perhaps even overly dramatized, unmitigated horror used for effect to break that passivity with which viewers see choreographed violence on screen.

Color is also effectively used in the torture scene, with Barlow. The death of the Iraqi's wife and child in the bombing allows the viewer into a rare moment of insight into the Iraqi's perspective. And then, by showing the visualization of Troy's family being destroyed by a bombing on US soil, again in saturated color mode, the audience is forced to identify with Troy's traumatic realization of the possibilities of war. These deliberately provocative moments in the film jar the film's continuity¹³ and break the suspension of disbelief that most filmmakers nurture. The director deliberately uses unsaturated color for most of the film, to show the grimness and despair that the war and the bleakness of the Iraqi desert landscape represent and the vibrancy of the color in the scenes representing life in the US show the starkness of the happy idealized world untouched by the horrors of the war. However, this rare moment of identification is instantly downplayed by Barlow's interjection of how Iraq had no business invading Kuwait and it was imperative that the US intervene. Any interpellation with the Iraqi subjective position that may complicate the narrative is withdrawn and all the audience is left with are some awkward apologetic interventions of anti-war ideology.

There are several remarks in the film that hint at an ideology seemingly anti-war and need to be addressed. Adriana, at the beginning of the film, refers to this war

as a mission “to exorcise the ghost of Vietnam with a clear moral imperative,” while Ron remarks later, “You want to occupy Iraq, do a Vietnam all over again?” The comparison to Vietnam, and the lessons learnt from that war is a shadow still to be lifted decades later, and reverberations of that echo through this film with the constant obsession with the moral imperative that Barlow tries to impress upon the Iraqis.

Some of the images in the film are also very powerful and subject themselves to a similar reading. What starts out as a joke, with the soldiers complaining of no action, not having seen anyone shot etc. results in the blowing up of a cow and that then becomes very ironic and telling later on in the scene. So that when the soldiers splattered with blood, not unlike butchers, enter a crowded village square and announce themselves as representatives of the President of the United States of America, the images that come to mind are certainly not that of liberators or heroes. Film audiences familiar with such liberation scenes from countless Hollywood films of the world war era, are no doubt taken by surprise again at this conscious attempt to thwart audience expectations.

The action that follows is equally out of place in many ways, we see tankers pull into the village square and contrary to our expectations, they do not have gasoline but as we realize on their being blown up, gallons of milk pour out and almost drown the villagers watching. There is a distinct sense of relief for the audience expecting a massive explosion and multiple deaths, and yet, the distress is magnified by this appalling act whereby relief efforts and basic supplies are blown up

in this climate of distrust and suspicion. Russell uses the film devices of surprise and suspense, in a rather unique way to disrupt the continuity of the narrative and to provoke an unexpected response from the nearly passive audience. These constant interventions, manipulation of audience expectations serves the distinct purpose of unsettling any previously held beliefs even as the rest of the plot soothes any ruffled feathers. To a discerning audience, the message is very mixed and while the witticisms provide a lot of entertainment, they also add to the general confusion of the film's world-view.

The film is also self-reflexive in its use of media and technology to promote ideology and propaganda. The embedded media is seen as intrusive and has to be shepherded by the troops for their safety as well as to ensure limited access to information. Adriana's persistence in getting information and her unique methods constantly seem to strain her relationship with the army officers who attempt repeatedly to rein her in. This self-reflexive moment about how the news and information is filtered before it reaches its mass audiences becomes key to the film's plot. Archie Gates uses this to his advantage when he gets the media to film the passage of the Iraqis into Iran. He uses this footage as leverage to negotiate the unconditional release of himself and his little band even though initially, Gates does everything to hide the news about the gold bullion, and dodges being followed around by Adriana by sending her off on a wild goose chase. This manipulation of the media through the control of information is very revealing of how media coverage of the last

two Gulf Wars colored a nation's perception of the ideology that propelled and instigated the wars as much as it sanitized the collateral damage in the aftermath of the war. In recent historic terms this is not unlike the tele-reporting of the Gulf Wars in the western media. The "shock and awe" campaign helped instill a sense of invincibility in the viewers, who saw the power of technology, infra-red vision, smart bombs and accepted it to be a clean war with minimum collateral damage. The simultaneous introduction of familiarity with the action of a war unfolding halfway across the world and the obvious antiseptic distance provided by the camera, and the remote satellite access ensures the feeling of powerfulness backed by righteousness even as it precludes the blood and gore. The rhetoric of America as the savior echoed in the Gulf wars and in this film, helps drum up the jingoism essential to keep the patriotic fervor, and as Adriana points out, takes away the ghosts of the Vietnam War.

Shohat and Stam argue that the during the Gulf wars an "already powerful media apparatus became wedded to another apparatus of the gaze – that of military simulation and surveillance. As a consequence, telespectators were encouraged to enjoy a quantum leap in prosthetic audio-visual power"(125). They use Donna Haraway's concept of "the conquering gaze from nowhere," a gaze that is, "the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (125). The media therefore, introduces its own biased perspective even while escaping representation through their insistence of claimed objectivity. In this film, the media succumbs to the prescribed role the army charts out for it, and literally becomes the spectator's eye

within the filmic world. In a very interesting twist, the film's audience also succumbs to the same perspective, and identifies with the same gaze¹⁴, and accepts the army's point of view albeit through identification with the renegade protagonists. So the film's audience in envisioning the national imaginary not only buys into the machismo and militarism but also the subtle references to righteous wars. In identifying with the gaze of the bad boys, the audience gets a vicarious thrill of having defied authority only to be rewarded for it. Not unlike the Bollywood films discussed in the previous chapter, the protagonists are redeemed by their final actions and any anti-national motive is promptly undercut by their ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

Despite the suspect hero-protagonists the film starts out with, there is little doubt left at the end of the film. In the film, the main Iraqi resistance group, fuelled by nationalistic ambition, and weakened by the years of oppression is seen leaving their country, abandoning their nation. In absolute contrast, the little band of brothers and renegade US soldiers finally live up to their American ideals and show 'true nationalistic spirit' by virtue of their actions. They clearly exhibit a strong sense of loyalty, put duty towards women and children above all, obviously keep their word and their end of the bargain. Their desire to help the oppressed gets the better of their personal greed and ambition at the altar of true heroism. The film thus neatly wraps up the plot with the emergence of a true American hero even as it redefines the nationalistic pride in such men who make up the nation, reaffirming true patriotism

and the American spirit that drives it.

Moving beyond this fictional representation, to the analysis of two documentaries requires a big shift in approach. These fiction films and these documentaries however provide the final link that ties fiction and fact in this global context of terrorism. Produced for PBS, by two independent filmmakers, these documentaries *Jihad! in America* and *Hunting Bin Laden* use different forms of conventional representation – interviews, media coverage, straightforward narration and archival footage. Unlike the fictional films discussed earlier in the chapter, these documentary films made for the consumption of the audiences of the Public Broadcasting Services assumes a very different and rather limited spectatorship. They are filmed in Expository mode with omniscient narration. Both the filmmakers make no attempt to hide their directorial interventions in terms of camera placement or decisions of editing. It is also important to clarify these are small budget films with no unlimited access to state of the art technology.

Jihad! in America provides us with a look at terrorism from the other side, defining Jihad, its supporters and the elaborate network they have established in the US. Through the reporting of Steven Emerson, the film explores how this propaganda is disseminated across the country and across the globe. The film includes footage of the first Islamic conference on Jihad held in Brooklyn, New York in 1989 and then later all over the US with a predominant concentration in cities in the Midwest – Kansas City, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Chicago, Washington DC and Tampa, Florida.

Amongst several people interviewed, Emerson also interviews Charles Cogan, a former CIA agent, who was part of the largest covert CIA operation that financed, armed and trained the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan through the help of Pakistan. Cogan, talking about this operation says, “we do not need to be apologetic about this”. We see a slightly different refrain echoed by the fictional CIA agent Elise Kraft in *The Siege*.

The film documents various propagandist literature and films produced in the US for the purpose of recruiting more Muslims for *jihad*. The film further investigates the complex network across several continents and the intersections and conjunctions of several militant groups across the world. The message is simple and unequivocal: a declaration of *jihad* against America.

Dr. Sami Al-Arian, President of the Islam Committee for Palestine, based in Florida, drums up support for the movement with provocative rhetoric. He says,

We assemble here today to pay respects to the march of the martyrs...to the river of blood that gushes forth...and does not extinguish, from butchery to butchery, and from martyrdom to martyrdom, from *jihad* to *jihad*.

The rhetoric is inflammatory, anti-American. It also uses powerful imagery and loftiness of language that seems to give it the legitimacy of the divine word.

Osama bin Laden, uses similar rhetoric and again images of violence to reinforce the message of *jihad*. Martin Smith’s *Hunting Bin Laden*, investigates the man who declared a *fatwa* against the US. It gives voice to people on both sides of the

debate, the Islamic perspective and the position of the US Government. The interviews reaffirm the Islamic fundamentalist perspective that argues against the US presence in the Middle East, specifically in Saudi Arabia, home to the two holiest shrines for the Islamic community in Mecca and Medina.

These two documentaries have another facet that I have discussed earlier, the use of the media for promoting the cause of a violent ideology. Although the Islamic extremist perspective rejects all that is Western, it does not hesitate to use Western technology, weapons, communication systems, etc. in the war against the West.

Beau Grosscup, in *The Explosion of Terrorism*, encapsulates the seven assumptions of the “ideology of terrorism”, what he calls conventional wisdom. They are:

1. Terrorism is primarily a strategy of revolutionary groups or individuals directed against a state.
2. Discussion of state terrorism should be focused on totalitarian, fascist, or Communist states and cannot include the liberal democratic states.
3. Terrorism is primarily a strategy of the political Left in theory and practice.
4. Terrorism is indiscriminate violence.
5. Terrorism is ineffective as a strategy of social or political change.
6. Terrorism is criminal not political activity.
7. Terrorism is theatre.

This definition is by no means unproblematic. It does not account for right wing extremism nor does it fully accommodate state-sponsored terrorism and moreover, it rests on the basic premise that any democratically elected government cannot practice coercion since they are by definition representative governments elected by popular vote. Grosscup himself goes on to deconstruct each of these premises and to make an argument as to how this is a politically partisan definition.

My interest in this definition focuses on points 4 and 7. My argument here is that terrorism as we see it represented in these films is indiscriminate violence and the victims are random targets chosen with only one objective in mind – maximum mileage in terms of publicity. Secondly, and more importantly, terrorism is theatre; it is orchestrated as a spectacle – undoubtedly a horrific and graphic one, but enacted in a fashion that demands attention, demands spectators. It is also my contention that media coverage becomes crucial to the terrorist intention as the reenactment of this horrific act again, on a million television sets, brings the fear into millions of homes. Hence in *The Siege*, we see the terrorists wait for the news helicopters before they blow the bus up, and by extension of the same logic we see Osama Bin Laden's willingness to talk to the media, grant interviews, release recorded video tapes, etc. This symbiotic relationship between the state and the media becomes even more tenuous in situations like these. And just as nation-states use media and technology to promote a national imaginary, terrorists now employ the same strategies to promote their violent agendas.

Positioning viewers of fiction films and documentaries helps create a new narrative of nationalism and fosters a new national imaginary. In a postcolonial reading, it is this positioning, that helps us enter into a derivative discourse whether it is embracing the colonizer's perspective or questioning the representation of the manifestation of the fissured subjectivity of the colonized peoples. It reveals the fundamental asymmetries in these imaginings within the existing hegemonic power structures. Just as technology makes available the experience of television and film viewing for millions, it also helps obliterate the experience for countless others. It gives voice and representation to the multitudes just as it takes away that power of representation from some. Hollywood film uses several spectatorial positions to interpellate and mobilize spectatorial desire¹⁵ to participate in and support the neocolonial mission of the protagonists. It also projects any unwarranted injustices and oppressive tactics onto a faceless bureaucracy, the mammoth like institutional machinery of the military, a megalomaniac general even as it gives face to individual heroes who work within or outside the system as they transition into morally superior figures through the trajectory of the film. My analysis of these several films provides a close and detailed look at how viewers construct a national imaginary, and how it is thrust upon them.

My category of *(anti)nationalisms* as seen in these films, is constructed and deconstructed, only to be made over again in a different avatar and this echoes in the current day global situation. On September 20, 2001, President Bush addressed the

Congress, and he declared, “Any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime”. Elaborating on this definition further, on Oct 30, he said, “If you feed a terrorist, if you provide sanctuary to a terrorist, if you fund a terrorist, you are just as guilty as the terrorist that inflicted harm on the American people” (*The Washington Post*, Nov 27, 2001). The war in Afghanistan is over, although Osama Bin Laden is still at large. President Bush has further expanded on the parameters of the definition of terrorism to include “countries that develop weapons of mass destruction could be a target in the US war on terrorism...”

Jihad on America was declared officially in the summer of 1996, and the *fatwa* still stands. The US retaliated by declaring war on the Taliban government in Afghanistan that was harboring Osama Bin Laden, on October 7th, 2001. The US also declared war on Iraq on March 19th, 2003. Current events indicate the possibility of a breakout of a Shia-Sunni ethnic conflict that might result in an all-out civil war. New nations are being formed and the (anti)nationalisms that help define them. The rest is yet to be seen.

¹ Benedict Anderson, in his seminal text, *Imagined Communities* argues that nations are imagined communities conceived out of a deep horizontal comradeship. They are inherently limited because even the largest nation has finite albeit elastic boundaries outside of which lie other nations. They are also *sovereign* because they have their genesis in a time when divinely ordained dynastical rule was being challenged.

² I refer to Bordwell, Thompson and Staiger's essay "Space in the Classical Film" in their text, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*.

³ I refer to the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon in Washington DC and the twin towers at the World Trade Center towers in New York City on September 11, 2001. Al-Qaeda members flew three hijacked commercial airliners into these targets in what has now become the largest ever terrorist act on US soil.

⁴ A *Fatwa* is a legal pronouncement in Islam, issued by a religious law specialist on a specific issue. Usually a fatwa is issued at the request of an individual or a judge to settle a question where Islamic jurisprudence, is unclear.

⁵ *Ummah Islam* is an Arabic word also spelled *umma*, meaning community or nation. In the context of Islam, the word *umma* is used to mean the community of the believers (*ummat al-muminin*), and thus the whole Islamic world. The phrase *umma* *wahida* in the Quran refers to the Islamic world unified. Some modern Islamists use the term "Islamic Ummah" or "Muslim Ummah" to refer to the people in the nation-states and nations that are predominantly Muslim and that were once under the control of the Islamic Caliphate.

⁶ *Sharia* means Islamic Law. In an Islamic state, *Sharia* governs both public and private lives of those living within the state encompassing many aspects of day-to-day life - politics, economics, banking, business law, contract law, and social issues. Seyla Benhabib offers a brilliant analysis of the adaptation of *Sharia* in Islamic countries

with respect to the public but not the private sphere of society in the face of globalization in her essay, "Unholy Politics".

⁷ The Western uses the face-off as the final moment of climax in the confrontation of the protagonist (in this case the cowboy) with the antagonist usually in the form of a face to face duel like encounter. The audience is aware that any such face-off will obviously result in victory for the protagonist so the pleasure derived is not from the suspense of the final outcome but simply from the action and the speed of the draw in the western film.

⁸ The Dhahran bombing took place when a large truck bomb hit the Khobar Towers apartment complex in Khobar, near Dhahran on June 25, 1996 in which 19 American soldiers were killed and 372 wounded in the blast.

⁹ Several Hollywood films have been made on the idea of terrorism in the US. Some notable films include - *Passenger 57* (1992), *Under Siege* (1992), *Executive Decision* (1996), *The Siege* (1998) *The Devil's Own* (1997) *Arlington Road* (1999).

¹⁰ A lot of scholarly work exists on the use of rape as a strategy of war, and as its depiction as a necessary tool for release of pent up anger and frustration in a war zone. As a tool of war, the impregnation of the women of another race or class or nation also allows for the supposed perpetuation of the so called superior race/class/nation. The nudity of a black or brown female body also feeds the male gaze and nourishes spectatorial desire for the white male audience.

¹¹ Mani Ratnam's choice of a South Indian hero protagonist in a national cinema dominated by people of North Indian origins and catering to a largely Hindi speaking audience is rather unusual. Bollywood cinema has always used the north Indian male as the archetypal macho hero and true patriot. Arvind, the nerdy South Indian hero-protagonist whose overarching patriotism is cheered by the audiences in the end, allows for the creation and the assimilation of a new kind of a professional, urban,

English speaking, middle class male, whose patriotism also makes him an ideal citizen though not akin to the rural, Hindi speaking, macho hero-protagonists battles class hierarchies and overturns dominant and hegemonic social structures in the cinema of the early 1950s in India that helped in the myth of nation building.

¹² I seek to differentiate here between the kinds of violence the cinema audience is used to and thrives on – on cinema and television screen as well as in video games and the depiction of violence that Russell indulges in. While violence – almost choreographed violence, is commonplace in films starting with the thrillers to the war films, I argue it is the positioning of the spectatorial perspective that makes this violence palatable. So films like Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* and *Kill Bill Vol I* and *Vol 2* manipulate their audience and their popular expectations of violence by building on the spectator’s identification with the protagonist followed by a sudden let down and grotesque violence that subverts all their previous cinematic experiences.

¹³ I refer here to the Classical Hollywood style of continuity.

¹⁴ I use “gaze” in Laura Mulvey’s definition of the term.

¹⁵ I draw on Laura Mulvey’s essay “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema.”

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In *Riot*, the Hindu crowds chants slogans to incite and provoke the violence against Muslims and the cries of “*Jis Hindu ka khoon na khaula, Khoon nahin woh pani hai*” (The Hindu whose blood does not boil has water in his veins) and “*Jo Janmabhoomi ke kaam na aaye, who bekaar jawanee hai*” (he who does not work for the Janmabhoomi is a useless youth) rent the air (128). In what seems to be a startling coincidence that spoke to me in more ways than one, the beginning of a recently released Hindi film, *Rang de Basanti* (2006) directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra¹ echoes a variation of the same words: “*Ab bhi jiska khoon na khaula, khoon nahin woh paani hai, Jo desh ke kaam na aaye, woh bekaar jawanee hai*” (Whoever’s blood is not yet boiling, has water running in his veins, and whoever does not work for the nation, wastes his youth).

(Anti)nationalisms analyzed in the context of the Indian subcontinent in Chapter 2 continue to reverberate with similar rhetoric in today’s cinema bringing us a full circle from where we started. But there is a big difference in the context of the enunciation of the versions of two little ditties, I mention here. That difference serves as another example in my overarching argument of the need for my category of (anti)nationalisms.

The use of the slogan shouting in *Riot* is specific to the inflammatory rhetoric of religious fundamentalisms – it provokes Hindu male youth, inciting them to action

against the Muslim ‘other’, demanding they reclaim the land that is rightfully theirs. It taunts their inability to harness their male energy towards this nationalistic enterprise and by displacing religion and ethnic identity into the public forum ensures that religion informs political manipulation and maneuverings. In *Rang de Basanti*, the (anti)nationalisms are not based in religious fundamentalisms at all but instead draw on the conflict between nation and nation-state. The call to respond is not directed at the Hindu youth alone, but to all Indian youth irrespective of caste, religion or class to rise up and meet the need of the hour. The need being articulated here is to fight their own apathy in order to take on the corrupt nation-state, its branches of government and to demand accountability from the politicians. The failure of the nation-state to provide for its citizens in the film manifests itself in multi-dimensional ways.

Rang de Basanti, connects all the dots in my dissertation. Its thematic content blends seamlessly with several of the texts I have chosen for my dissertation even as its temporality spans the entire duration I deal with in my dissertation, from 1930s colonial India to contemporary India. The parallels are endless and I touch upon only a select few here. From the Indian freedom movement we see in *Tamas* that is re-imagined and re-enacted in this film, to the shades of Richard we see in James McKinley as a British administrator, uncomfortable with the duties he is required to carry out, to the passion and zeal of Priscilla Hart that we see echoed in Sue’s unbridled enthusiasm for her dream project, this film reverberates with my analysis of

the earlier texts in several ways. Sue like Priscilla revisits India to balance the books, her desire to celebrate the life of these Indian freedom fighters as unsung heroes is similar to Priscilla's desire to give back to India what she perceives her father used only for his exploitative ends. Like the terrorist-protagonists of most of the Bollywood films I analyze, *Rang de Basanti* is also about disavowed, disgruntled unemployed urban educated youth, whose vulnerability and passion is easily manipulated and channelized into violence. The camaraderie of the morally bankrupt renegade soldiers in *Three Kings*, the very attributes that make them unlikely heroes translates into similar unlikely heroes in the fun-loving, beer-spilling, reckless but loveable characters of *Rang de Basanti*. But, despite all these similarities, *Rang de Basanti* is important for my conclusion because it invests each of these parallels with a difference in representation crucial to my larger argument.

The film tells the story of an Englishwoman, Sue McKinley and her desire to make a film about several famous Indian revolutionaries from colonial times whose passion and nationalism features prominently in her grandfather's diary. Moved by the eloquent prose of her grandfather, James McKinley, a jailer in British India, as he wrote about the grace of these men and women who embraced death to provide freedom to their nation, Sue arrives in India armed with only a dream, her night-school Hindi and her movie camera. Through Sonia her contact in India she is introduced to five disgruntled youth enrolled at the University of Delhi and as one of the wisecracks indicates, the one thing no one has ever accused them of is actually

studying there. They are older than the average student and seem to thrive on their unlimited free time, scared to go out into the real world and tackle real problems they live their lives in a time warp. They obviously subscribe to different religious faiths so we have the Hindus (Karan, Sukhi) and the Muslim (Ashfaq) and the Sikh² (DJ or Daljeet). The two outsiders are Lakshman, who is also Hindu, albeit of the fundamentalist variety and Flight Lieutenant Ajay Rathod (Sonia's fiance), who is gainfully employed and stands apart from the rest in this and in many more ways. Unlike the others who dismiss nationalism as irrelevant to their daily lives, Lakshman and Ajay embrace their own versions of nationalist pride. Lakshman as a party worker of a Right-wing Hindu political party believes in 'Hindutva' as the only pure form of nationalism, rejecting the westernized ways of his peers and asserting the exclusionary nature of his male Hindu chauvinism by directing his anger towards the Muslim, Ashfaq. Ajay, as a fighter pilot in the Indian Air force, is invested in the nation and its borders, putting his life on the line to protect the nation-state he pledges allegiance to. Sue persuades these youth to act in her film, *The Young Guns*, about the Indian revolutionaries Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Ramprasad Bismil, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aslam and Durga Bibi. The film within a film unfolds in sepia, and the protagonists get drawn into the spirit of nationalism that pervades their consciousness despite their resistance to it. Their innocence is shattered by the tragic death of Ajay in a flying accident, caused by the malfunctioning of the MIG-21 plane of the Indian Air Force because of the cheap and outdated parts used for repairs. The tragedy fast

evolves into a political drama when the threat to expose the corruption at the highest levels of government turns the silent memorial protest march into a spectacle of violence and police brutality. Lakshman, too eventually succumbs to the spirit of the secularized nationalism that engulfs them all with the unfolding of these tragic events. The disillusioned and disgruntled protagonists decide to take the law into their own hands and inspired by the revolutionaries who brought about change through their actions, they decide to assassinate the Defence Minister mimicking their roles in Sue's film. The plotlines of the two films merge at this point and the dialogue and actions overlap and the constant intercutting between the two films establishes the parallel in the plot narrative. They cleverly use the media, the FM radio channels, choosing their target audience of Indian youth, to broadcast their message of anger against the corrupt state. It appears they succeed in revitalizing the youth across the nation, winning their sympathy and the heavy handedness of the state in killing them all in the end despite their being unarmed only serves to reinforce their message to take back the nation from its current guardians. The five men protagonists die as heroes in the imagination of a new generation.

The film, like all Bollywood films, uses spectacle and excess with its interruptions in the MTV style montage of the choreographed song and dance sequences, the constant flirtatious efforts of DJ to woo Sue, and the vivid color of the film's title that spills onto the screen in the festivities associated with the Basant festival in Punjab. Let me however qualify my cinephilia here, the film is not without

problems. The role of Sonia and Sue as cheerleaders on the sidelines is problematic to say the least. The transition of the characters from carefree youth to passionate citizens maybe read as a little hasty and not well developed. But that will have to wait for another time, another paper.

Having pointed out the parallels that were staring me in the face, now, let me take a step back and analyze the difference in treatment of the subject matter that I said validates my argument further. In *Tamas*, as we discussed in Chapter 2, the fledgling Indian nationalism and the struggle of the local leaders to translate the larger vision of the nation into the daily lives of a largely rural population permeates the entire novel. The fissures of society surface competing with the nationalism of the freedom movement. And like in *Riot*, this privileging of other forms of identity above nation, results in collective violence or riots, manifestation of the (anti)nationalisms I discuss earlier. In *Rang de Basanti*, we see the opposite play out, with a celebration of the unsung heroes of the Indian freedom movement that inspires a new generation of Indians with their simple unbridled passion in their cause. Again, there is a manifestation in the form of violence, it is anti-national in its focus but the (anti)nationalisms that drive it are not religious fundamentalisms. It is a different kind of (anti)nationalism, completely political in its focus, directed exclusively towards the nation-state and the violence it inspires does not cause the deaths of fellow citizens. In what is an ironic twist, the malfunctioning of the fighter-jet is not about terrorism at all, in fact the (anti)nationalism in this context, is about a failure of the nation-state.

Like the transgressive terrorist-protagonists of *Maachis*, (Kirpal) *Mission Kashmir* (Altaaf) and *Fiza* (Amaan), the young men in this film are unemployed and disillusioned. When confronted by personal tragedy, DJ, Ashfaq, Sukhi, Karan and Lakshman don't join forces with terror organizations like Kirpal, Altaaf and Amaan. They take the law in their own hands but direct their anger towards one single target, a corrupt politician, and mirroring the actions of Indian revolutionaries refrain from unmitigated violence. Their's is a measured response, they do not fire back at the policemen who surround them in the end and die as unarmed targets in an unprecedented bloodbath. I wish to remind the reader at this point of my argument about the differences in the (anti)nationalisms and their motivations for terrorism in the case of Kirpal, Altaaf and Amaan whose actions mark them as terrorists and ensure that they cannot be easily taken back into the folds of society. The family as nation trope with absent fathers continues with Daljeet who is fatherless and the moving force of the group, whose loving mother functions as the moral center for the entire group, anchoring them in the social structure, reining in their joie-de-vivre occasionally. The comparisons are endless as are the disjunctures.

Let me conclude by drawing on a clear example of how my category of (anti)nationalisms helps in bridging the discursive gap between nationalism and terrorism as we know it today. *Rang de Basanti* offers us a clear example of the distinction I draw in my dissertation between the nationalism as part of a freedom movement and the (anti)nationalisms that I define in the current socio-political

milieu. In Sue's film *The Young Guns*, Bhagat Singh, a young Sikh attempts to kill the British Police Chief Scott to avenge the brutal death of Lala Lajpat Rai killed while peacefully demonstrating against the Simon Commission of 1928³. This historical lesson reinvents itself in the (anti)nationalism that consumes this young group when faced with the rampant corruption in today's government. Far from acknowledging and celebrating Ajay Rathod's heroic act of saving civilian lives, these morally bankrupt politicians twist the truth to paint Ajay Rathod as a reckless brash young man, whose antics cost the nation. Their effort to demonstrate peacefully and protest this unfair portrayal of a patriotic young man is met with police brutality that lands his mother in a coma. Like Bhagat Singh, another Punjabi youth is inspired and DJ steps up to kill Shastriji. In the postcolonial context, the (anti)nationalism that inspires this group has different roots, it has a different enemy and a different constituency. It does not promote a privileging enterprise for a top-down approach like the normative homogenized male middle-class Hindu national imaginings we see in the Bollywood films, not does it present the anti-modern nationalism of the Hindu Right, instead it offers us an alternative kind of inclusive national imaginary that rises from below within a younger generation already modernized.

And yet, despite the violence associated with this (anti)nationalism with its anti-national sentiments, it is clearly not terrorism as the protagonists themselves assert repeatedly. This crucial difference between nationalism, (anti)nationalisms and terrorism is the crux of my thesis. As I have argued earlier, the narratives of the

nation are being re-written, it is now to be seen who write that history and who is written into it.

¹ *Rang De Basanti: A Generation Awakens* (Paint it Yellow) directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra in January 2006 has already been hailed as a cult film.

² Many Sikhs in the wake of terrorism in Punjab cut their hair and stopped wearing the customary turban that marked them as Sikhs. Some even saw it as a need to modernize themselves, stripped of ascriptive markers, blending with the majority population of secularized citizenry. Daljeet (the name suggests he is Sikh) is one such example. His grandfather and mother are obviously Sikh in their manner, dress code and their visit to the Golden Temple in Amritsar validates this.

³ The British government created a commission under Sir John Simon to report on the current political situation in India in 1928. The Indian political parties boycotted the commission because it did not include a single Indian as its member. When the commission visited Lahore on October 30, 1928, Lal Lajpat Rai led the protest against the commission in a silent march. He was killed and Bhagat Singh vowed to avenge his meaningless death. He conspired to kill Scott but in a case of mistaken identity, Bhagat Singh accidentally killed J.P. Saunders, a Deputy Superintendent of Police. He was later tried and sent to the gallows.

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