Chapter I

Introduction

Any social category is difficult to define exactly because the peculiar characteristics we talk about do not necessarily exist in every single individual belonging to any group. There are always conflicts of opinions and assumptions. Similarly, the accounts of nationalism are never devoid of political, cultural, social, religious, geographical, linguistic and military conflicts. In the modern political and cultural contexts of postmodernism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, it becomes still more complex to interpret and define 'nation' ideology in simple and comprehensive manner. The term 'nation' is not to be considered only in relation with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with larger cultural system. Origin of national traditions is mingled with the acts of association, establishment as well as displacement, exclusion and cultural assertions by different people.

In postcolonial cultural scholarship, Homi k. Bhabha is the major exponent of the idea of nation as a socio-cultural construct. According to him, the discourse of nation is 'Janus-faced'[1] that is two-faced. One face reveals a frightening countenance of exclusion, xenophobia, fanaticism, expansionism, aggression, ethnic cleansing, endless bloodshed and the other face reveals a relatively positive side of community, national sovereignty, independence, self-assertion and pluralism. It is always impossible to arrive at an elaborate explanation of this concept. This chapter proposes to explore the different connotations of the term 'nation'.

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[1] Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Routledge, London (1990) p.3.

I

The doctrine of nationalism achieved its prominence as a result of different theories proposed by various European philosophers by the end of the 18th century. The idea developed during the Enlightenment in response to an intellectual political crisis that accompanied the fall of the monarchy and rise of individualism in Europe. The new concepts of free individuals provided a powerful ideal and made possible a new realization of man in which these free individuals could ally themselves with nation rather than kings. Sacred collective personality of the nation came into existence. 'Nation' as a modern phenomenon owes its development to Europe (the French Revolution, 1789) and North America (the American Declaration of Independence, 1776).

Frederick, the Great, of Prussia, in his work 'Letters on the Love of the Fatherland' (1779) says-

"Love of the fatherland is not a mere concept of reason, it exists really."[2]

According to Goethe,

"If we can find a place where we can rest with our possessions, a field to sustain us, a home to cover us, has we not there a fatherland?" (On the Love of the Fatherland, 1772)

Belonging to a particular 'body of men' was the pre-requisite for the doctrine of nationalism. In ordinary speech, 'natio' meant a group of men belonging together by similarity of birth, larger than a family, but smaller than a clan or a people. The term was used particularly for a community of foreigners.

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[2] Akzin, Benjamin, *State and Nation*, Hutchinson, London, (1960) p.10.

In classical ,post-classical and medieval Latin 'nation' was only one of several terms used approximately in sense of the Greek word 'ethnos' . In the Medieval times, 'nationes' was used most often without any political connotation.

In the 18th century, Hume stated in his essay 'Of National Character' –

"A nation is nothing but a collection of individuals who by constant intercourse acquire some common traits."[3]

In Encyclopedie', Diderot and D'Alembert defined 'nation' as –

"A collective word used to denote a considerable quantity of those people who inhabit a certain extent of country defined within certain limits and obeying the same government."[4]

In the course of time, the word 'nation' acquired a political meaning. It was considered as a body of persons who could claim to represent or elect representatives for a particular territory at councils. Thus, the Church Councils, the Estates General of France etc. were divided into nations. In 'the Spirit of the Laws ', Montesquieu uses the term 'nation' to indicate two dynasties in France - the lords and the bishops.

In the 19th century, Rousseau, the founder of modern nationalism, rejected the consideration of nation as the ruling class and presented parallel meanings of 'nation' and 'people'. This became the basic principle of French and American revolutions. 'Nation' was regarded as a people of common birth. It referred to a public interest including different classes, regions and religions in the state.

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[3] Akzin, Benjamin, *State and Nation*, Hutchinson, London, (1960) p.10.
[4] Akzin, Benjamin, *State and Nation*, Hutchinson, London, (1960) p.14.

At this point, difference between the terms 'nation' and 'state' must be brought out. The term 'state' is referred to those political bodies, which successfully claim the attribute of sovereignty or legal independence from any other human organization. Benjamin Akzin describes 'state' as-

"A political formation of sufficient stability, sufficient resources and sufficient power to make its writ respected over a reasonable period of time and space by inhabitants and foreign states alike".[5]

'State' is obviously political and closely associated with the overwhelming power.[6] Marxists have described it as the 'executive committee of the bourgeois class'. So state was merely executive of the 'nation'. Almost all nationalists demand that nation should have some kind of pre-political existence. It should be considered as a people united pre-politically on the basis of religion, language, blood, values, customs etc. The doctrine of nationalism argues that nation must be a natural community. But the term is now used with totally different connotations than it has been used throughout history. Michael Collins, an Irish nationalist leader says –

"I stand for an Irish civilization based on the people and embodying and maintaining the things – their habits, ways of thought, customs – that make them different - the sort of life I was brought up in --- ."[7]

A society is essentially pluralist. In complex societies, people establish their separateness with reference to specific attributes or cultural

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[5] Minogue, K. R., *Nationalism*, Methuen, London, (1967), p.36.
[6] Ibid, p. 36.
[7] Ibid, p. 85.

characteristics. These distinguishing cultural features may be- language, territory, dress codes, diet, customs, religion, colour and race. A group behaves in these specific, concrete ways and interacts with other groups in that society. Therefore, it can be considered that the concept of nation and nationalism is formed on the basis of language, religion and race. Most of the Afro-Asian countries are examples of the nationalism of those under domination of European empires; these undeveloped countries show a variety of religion, language, customs and life-styles. For example, millions of people speaking more than 400 languages inhabit Africa. Only the 'will' of the people can create such nations.

In the example of macro-nationalism of Africa, the nation in question is scattered and shows a pan-movement. Here, the nation becomes an aspiration based upon geography, colour, language and race. For example, the pan-Arab movement of the Middle East.

The nationalism of the homeless, of the people in search of a home can be found in the Jews of Europe and the Negroes of America. These two are social minorities that suffered various forms of discrimination. In such cases, the sufferers have to be convinced first that they are a 'nation' and they must find a territorial home to establish their own state.

However, above consideration can be controversial. The race of a people is firm and fixed factor. Nevertheless, today, no race in the world is pure. Therefore, ethnographic considerations cannot constitute a modern nation. The leading nations of Europe have all mixed blood.

Nations cannot be formed merely on common platform of language, as language cannot force people to unite. People of United States and England, Latin America and Spain speak same languages, but do not form single nations. On the other hand, India consists of people who talk a variety of languages and yet, is a single united nation. Hence, it is clear that the 'will' or 'desire' of people and not their language keeps them united as a whole.

Similarly, religion cannot constitute a nationality either. In modern world, people no longer believe in a uniform manner. Each person believes and practices according to his/her wish and abilities. Religion has become an individual matter. Therefore, nations cannot be divided into religious states like Catholic or Protestant.

Nations can be divided geographically with the help of natural frontiers like rivers, mountains etc. but even this division is doubtful and nothing is absolute when we consider the doctrine of geography.

It means that race, religion, geography, tradition, language, size etc. are insufficient to determine the essence of a nation and yet, people fight and die for the 'nation'.

"The nation ---- is an abstraction, an allegory, a myth that does not correspond to a reality that can be scientifically defined." [8]

What is this nation then? What is it that keeps a people united in spite of all differences? It can say that the will of people makes a nation. As Ernest Renan says,

"A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things--- constitute this soul. ---- one is the common possession of a legacy of memories----

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[8] Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London (1990) p.19.

- the other is ---- the desire to live together , the will to perpetuate the value to the heritage that one has received in an undivided form." [9]

The desire to share their sufferings and joys unites people more effectively than race or religion. In cultural studies, the concept of 'nation' is parallel to that of 'tradition', 'folklore', 'community' and nationalism to 'belonging' and 'commitment'. According to Kedourie, 'nationalism' is a state of mind in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is directed towards the nation-state.

'Nation' is a community of people having a common heritage or cultural background and a common past of sufferings and joys; which aspires to continue its presence as a united political body; in spite of differences in religion, language, geography, race etc. This will or desire to remain united and the loyalty to the particular political body can be considered as 'nationalism'. When we talk about a nation, we must talk about the people, their aspirations, their beliefs and traditions; their way of life, the language used in the particular territory and also about the inevitable spirit of unity that lies under the apparent diversity of race, geography, and individual point of views.

"Nationalism is both an ideology and a political movement which holds the nation and sovereign nation-state to be crucial indwelling values, and which manages to mobilize the political will of a people or a large section of the population."[10]

So, nationalist ideas are a form of modern thought that shapes the political action and cultural identities of individuals or groups.

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[9] Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London (1990), p.49.
[10] Alter, Peter, *Nationalism*, Translated by Stuart McKinnon-Evans, London (1994) p.4.

Nationalism is a substitute for the traditional religion in the modern space and time, as it is sentimental, emotional and inspirational. The normal affirmation of the faith in this new religion can be found in daily lives of its believers.

"A nation's existence is a daily plebiscite just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life." [11]

To conclude, the idea of 'nation' lingers in minds of people in the form of their psychological attachment to a particular land and their loyalty to the community which shares the land and its culture. In modern era, nation has occupied a major role in the formation of individual identity. A common past and the sense of belonging to a particular people underline this identity.

"To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more- these are the essential conditions for being a people." [12]

II

The past in which a nation glorifies itself is brought to present in the form of 'historical narratives' which depict the myths of nation's birth. Edward Said termed them as 'nationalism's heroic narratives' [13] which are handed over to next generation in the process of building the nation.

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[11] Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London (1990).
[12] Renan, Ernest, 'What is a nation?' *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London ,(1990) p.19.
[13] Brenan, Timothy, 'The National Longing for Form', *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London ,(1990) p.44.

'To narrate' means to relate something, which one knows about the past. Narration is depicting actions in the past or telling a story. In a sense, it is recounting series of events and situations; since a story is a sequence of actions in past. Either the events in narration can occur in an imaginary or an actually existing place or time. In other words, narration is a process of communication in which the narrative as a message is transmitted from one person to another or by addresser to addressee. A narrative is a part of the representation process taking place in human discourse. The different forms of art like literature(drama, epic, poetry, novel) ,sculpture, painting, folklore (written and oral), dance etc., along with the modern electronic media- cinema, television and the informative print media like newspapers, journals , historical documents etc. are different aspects of the process of narration.

When an author writes, not only his or her emotional world, but a lot of 'unsaid' or 'untold' world also is penned on the paper. This 'unsaid' is the past to which an individual belongs and past constitutes the culture of the individual's community. The narrative keeps moving back and forth into personal and collective memories. It does not only represent a single, cohesive world, but also provokes different responses from reader. The text is controlled by cultural contexts.

During the late 18th and early 19th century Europe, when the idea of nation-state evolved, it was inseparably a part of imaginary and other forms of literature. As the nationalists were focusing the national heritage and national language, literature was divided into different types of 'national literature'. The German romantics separated the 'national literature' from other forms of literature. The people were aware of the nation through national print media like

the newspapers, nationalist writings (pamphlets) and popular literary forms of novel, poetry and drama. But it was particularly the novel as an elaborately imaginative work of art that played an important role in defining the nation as an 'imagined community'. As 'nation' was, still an absurd ideology under development, something imaginary, fictional, the novel form provided the fictional glory to the concept of 'nation'.

"Nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence

on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature

plays a decisive role"[14].

According to Benedict Anderson, nation is an "imagined community" because its citizens maintain a deep attachment even though they do not have face-to-face contact.

"The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of

their fellow members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the

minds of each lives the image of their communion."[15]

Newspapers, radio, electronic media and novels form a shared experience, which connect these communities and make them 'national'. These forms of communication represent the nation. Characters of a novel inhabit a sociologically complex world and move together unaware of each other just like real people. Thus, novel forms the nation's possibility condition by imitating or reflecting the nation's culture. The cultural products of nationalism enforce the self-sacrificing love for nation through different forms and styles. Through novels

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[14] Brenan, Timothy, 'The National Longing for Form', *Nation and Narration*, (1990), p.49.
[15] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, London, 1983.

and newspapers, children come to know about the stories of their nation. They identify with the communities that are larger than the local world in which they live.

"Fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community —which is the hallmark of modern nation." [16]

Nation, being imagined construction, needs to assert itself through national narratives and nationalistic rituals. The self- asserting state- apparatus of official nationalism results into empty mass rituals like official ceremonies of commemoration, systematic educational programmes, through creation of nationalistic history, national heroes and official national culture. This is systematic instilling of nationalist ideology and propaganda. Communication, language and writing play a major role in the construction of the ideology of a modern nation.

" There is a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of nation,

the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live

it." [17]

There is always difference of opinion between those who seek a coherent narrative of community's existence and those whose presence, ideas and culture determine the coherence. Without differences, there is no meaning in the search for unity and identity of a nation against 'other' nation. The desire for a coherent nation emerges from this principle of 'otherness'. The modern nationalism focuses the ambivalent relation between desired coherent national identity and

[16] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, London, 1983.
[17] Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Rutledge, London (1990), p. 1.

the 'other' that makes this coherence possible. Definition of a new nation necessarily depends on existence of an 'other' that never disappears. Therefore, the desire for unified, coherent nation is challenged by these differences- the different narratives, different cultural traditions, different sexual, racial and ethnic identities etc.

It is through racializaiton, sexualization and genderization that nation is able to transcends modernity and becomes a timeless and homogenous entity. Hence, the objective of this dissertation is to analyze critically the two novels by studying relationships between concepts of race, gender and nation.

III

The two selected novels- Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* and Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* are set in two totally different nation-situations, in different space and time. The conflict of the people in India (the pre-partition Lahore in *Ice-Candy-Man*) is an out come of 'ethnic' difference (or 'communal' differences based largely on religious assumptions) and that of in England (London in *The Nowhere Man*) is resulted from racial bias and hatred. The two terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' are considered with their commonly assumed implications as two different concepts. Further, in global and transnational cultural context, both terms merge.

Race is a mode of classification of human beings, which distinguishes between them on the basis of physical properties (skin colour,

facial features etc.) which are derived by genetic inheritance[18]. The racist ideology subordinates some significant physical and behavioural differences. It presupposes that possession of one particular set of characteristics signifies physical difference as well as difference of identity, nature and intrinsic values. Racism draws a hierarchical distinction between different communities of people having different inherited biological features. It sets one racial group over another in terms of moral worth, intelligence, importance or power. Racist ideology significantly discriminates against 'other' people through institution or practices. The sense of 'self' of those who are subjected to racism is also affected. On the other hand, 'ethnicity' refers to different racial or national groups on the basis of their shared practices, norms and beliefs. It denotes self-awareness of a particular group of its own 'cultural 'distinctiveness.

"Any group of people dissimilar from other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and containing within its membership the elements for a complete division of labour and for reproduction forms an ethnic category."[19]

In any multi-ethnic society, a particular ethnic group may claim self-recognition through demands for status, civil rights etc. They may demand a major say in political systems, control over certain territory within the country or a country of their own with sovereignty. This process of nation-building takes place through articulation of social, economic, political rights for the group, creation of self-aware language community, claim for religious protection, formation of caste associations, leaders using symbols of identity, making familiar places and historical sites the sacred shrines etc. When any ethnic group succeeds in

[18] Edgar, Andrew, Peter Sedgwick, *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*, Routledge, London (2004), p.323.
[19] Brass, Paul R., *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparisons*, Sage Publications, India, 1991.

achieving and maintaining its goal, it establishes itself as a nation. Most of the time, different ethnic groups in the pluralist community try to accommodate each other. Tolerance of diversity recognizes corporate rights of ethnic communities within state. Permission to free expression of political demands through organizations may result in ethnic conflict over matters like resources, identity, patronage, policies etc. Peace can be maintained through institutionalized channeling and some forms of engagements. The simple routine interactions of life like whether families from different communities visit each other, eat together regularly, jointly participate in festivals and allow their children to play together in neighborhood, business associations etc. help in maintaining peace. When institutionalized ethnic conflict like protests, speeches and rallies etc. takes violent forms, rioting breaks out on the streets or civil war may ensue. Some minority ethnic groups never make the movement form ethnic group to community. But powerful elites from these groups cooperate with the authorities and adopt the language and culture of the dominant ethnic group in order to maintain their own power.

In narratives, which deal with partition of India, the ethnic conflict between Hindus (along with Sikhs) and Muslims forms the backdrop. These narratives depict hatred and unrest started by communally spirited leaders of both ethnicities. The ensuing violence proclaims extremity to which people can reach to fulfill their political aspirations and to assert their national identities. The nation is divided into two separate national identities and minority people establish their own sovereign state with their own language and religion. (The Parsee community in *Ice-Candy-Man* represents the minority ethnic group, which is self-conscious, yet has accepted the policy to stay politically neutral in the

conflict of the majority classes.) The racial conflict between the 'white' British and the 'black' (or 'coloured') Indians is also used as major themes in the partition narratives.

The racial stereotyping is not product of colonialism alone. Europeans have always considered their origins (or race) to be of prime importance. During the Restoration in France, historical changes in the racist ideology took place. Germans regarded themselves as being entrusted with a divinely ordained mission. Charles Comte (1782-1837) explained the exploitation of man-by-man, of the slave by his master on the basis of race. When different races confront one another in a conflict, they preserve their customs and beliefs born of domination and servitude. The last kind of pride to be extinguished in the spirit of man is the pride of race. In early times, the main indicator of the quality of a race was its power to dominate, masters were superior to slaves and Europeans had amply proved their supremacy throughout world. The blacks were the 'others' placed at the bottom of human scale. As they never conquered any foreign race, they were considered inferior. It was believed that race was everything and civilization depended on it. Even the Bible was interpreted from a racist point of view. According to these interpretations, the white race held the monopoly of beauty, intelligence and strength and was guided by the providence from the start. Adam was the first creation and coloured races were secondary or inferior. So the whites were noblest of all and the blacks were degraded as- he who can blush is a man; he who cannot is a Negro. Hegel emphasized the baseness of the coloured races as-

"---they have no knowledge of immortality of the soul---- the devouring of human flesh is general in the African race---this condition is capable of no development or culture."[20]

For Engels and Marx, white race was the bearer of progress, gifted than all other races and blacks were lowest savages[21]. In the racist ideology, for white man (and woman), black man is marked by his colour and limitless sexuality. The white subject, the black 'other' is everything that lies outside the 'self'. On the other hand, for the black subject, the white 'other' stands for everything that is desirable for the 'self'. This desire is embedded in the power structure and thus turns the white man in not only the 'Other', but also the master- real or imaginary.

Thus, in an attempt to establish the identity of 'self' an individual or a group or a nation needs to differentiate itself from the 'other'. This binary division is the fundamental psyche behind the origin of dichotomies like 'self' and 'other', 'us' and 'they', 'black' and 'white', 'good' and 'bad', superior' and 'inferior', 'center' and 'marginal', 'majority' and 'minority' etc. 'Othering' of people and their construction as backward and inferior results into the discourse of racial or ethnic discrimination. Such differences are essential to create the images of 'self'. One's ethnic or racial identity results from process of labeling (identification) by either self or other; which is situational and strategic. To call or to be called 'black' or 'Indian' or 'Jewish' or 'Muslim' is not just a statement, but it is a political and historical assertion. It defines one's rights and relationships. So in different situations, different identities are asserted.

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[20] Poliakov, Leon, *The Aryan Myth*, Translated by Edmund Howard, Chatto-Heinemann, (1974), p.242.
[21] Ibid, p.244.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha considers race to be central in the construction of modernity. The failure to assert a fixed identity gives rise to hybridization. Between two races, there is simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from the 'other' race. This fluctuating relationship of complicity and resistance creates ambivalence, which decentres the authority from the position of power, so that authority may also get hybridized. Those at periphery or regarded as marginal by the centre of authority react by constituting the centre as ambivalence. since in the era of transnational capitalism, there is no such thing as a pure race (due to cross-breeding) ,there can be no clean cut ways of grouping human beings into discrete biological or cultural population. Again this ends in the hybridization and liminality of culture. 'Race' and 'ethnicity' are now used synonymously, as experiences of diaspora people shifts our focus to themes of alienation, longing and belonging, search for a collective true self and a common ancestry. The binary division of 'self' and 'other' haunts the identity of an immigrant and puts him/her in a liminal cultural position. Problems of migrants, transnationals and dispossessed people create cultural hybridities, unhomeliness and Interstitiality.

Interstitiality gives rise to peculiar cultural behaviour among the immigrants. Due to this in-between position, the marginalized people try to mimic or imitate assumptions, habits and values of those in the power position. So, marginalized minority of immigrant races, in process of assimilation, follow this principle of mimicking the tradition and culture of host nation. But mimicry can be dangerous and threatening as marginalized subjects can never adopt the dominant culture and abandon their own completely. This results in their liminal or interstitial position. This creates a transcultural space in which a continuous

process of movement towards communal or personal selfhood and exchange of different identities take place.

The major characters in *The Nowhere Man* undergo this entire etho-cultural crisis. The novel centers round the theme of search of self-identity and nationhood by Srinivas, the south Indian immigrant tradesman. It is set in the London of 1960-70s when the racist extremism is at its peak. The large scaled migration to developed countries like England, United States, Canada, and New Zealand from third world countries took place in the post-war period. In England, in the earlier period, immigrants from commonwealth countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh etc.) were allowed an easy entry and were well received by white neighbours. These immigrants brought with them a cultural baggage of religion, language, music, art, dress code, cuisine etc; from homeland. They migrated here in hope of better fortune, education, business, marriage, adventure, in search of a shelter from communal persecutions and many such reasons. These first generation immigrants faced comparatively mild racial contempt. The colour of their skin always kept them in the inferior, 'other' position. In such situations, an immigrant belonging to minority race tries to assimilate and integrate with host culture in the form of – losing identity by changing dress and hairstyle, giving up their language and restricting forms of worship etc. Assimilation demands giving up the past, traditions, culture and not passing them over to the next generation.

This creates the haunting sense of loss of the motherland, a sense of being an 'exile'. The immigrant keeps on searching for self-identity in wilderness and entertains thought of returning to the land of birth. When Srinivas (in *The Nowhere Man*) finds that after considering England as his own nation for
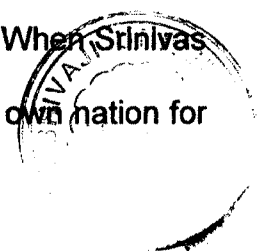
the lifetime, he is still an alien to his neighbours, he is at complete loss of identity and wishes to return. But there is nowhere to go and he feels like an exile-the nowhere man, homeless, dispossessed. The second generation of immigrants-born in the land of acquisition tends to make the host country their own by internalizing its culture completely. (Srinivas's both sons are brought up in Christian educational system, fight, sacrifice for the country, and never once wish to visit India.) For them the nation of their ancestors is always imagined and often with roots lost. Even then, they are never accepted completely by the host community and have to be at the marginal and liminal position.

By the 1960s, the attitude of white people in England towards coloured immigrants changed totally. They were considered as 'a foreign wedge', a drain on public funds and a burden on the state as they occupied maximum jobs and homes. They were denied occupations and accommodations. The racist feelings were aroused and the whites started resenting the blacks. Acts and regulations (for example, Commonwealth Immigration Act-1962, Immigration Act-1971 and British Nationality Act-1981) were issued to curb the growing influx of the black immigrants. Blacks were considered a threat to the whites. Their colour became the main cause of discrimination, deprivation, segregation and exclusion. Stronger sentiments were given voice by far Rights and Fascists organizations. The conservative leaders like Enoch Powell aggravated the racial tension and hatred by predicting 'rivers of blood'[22]caused by presence of the blacks. All this ended in outbreak of racial violence by the end of 1970s.

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[22] A speech by Enoch Powell given on 20th April 1968 as found on
www.sterlingtimes.co.uk/powell_press.html

The extreme racist mentality of the whites towards inferior and marginalized 'others' is reflected in Powell's speech.

"Differentiation by colour-- - is a permanent and involuntary uniform--

- distinguishing one side from the other--- making it possible to see--

- where to attack. The uniform of colour--- becomes an irresistible

force of dominating and disciplining those who wear it."[23]

Thus, the quest for ethno-cultural identity is an integral part of the study of diaspora nationalities. In order to preserve identity, they try to relate to their country of birth. Their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by existence of such relationships. Diasporic narratives deal with issues like the movement between home country and country of immigration, culture shock, attempt for a fixed ethnic identity, the idea of marginality and the shift to a more positive identification. It tries to bring forth the double experience of migration with loss and recovery of home. Absence of nation and destruction of home becomes an emotional space of ancestral memory, family and community ties. The displaced immigrant individual tries to establish his or her ethnic identity in the host nation by cherishing the imagined nation to which he or she once belonged; across thousands of miles.

IV

Since nation is an imagined community, it can be explored by the way it is gendered. Gender is a social construct (in contrast to 'sex' which is a biological construct) and is inseparably contributor to nation ideology, because

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[23] A speech by Enoch Powell delivered on 21st Jan 1977 as found on www.natfront.com/powell.html

gender and sexuality have dynamic interactions with race, class, age and ethnicity. Process of nation building involves power-relationships between its men and women. If nation no longer relies on hierarchy of gender, its identity and continuity will be in danger. Maintaining patriarchy is a gender sensitive aspect of mechanism of nation formation. Then, it must be true that national identities are constructed though gendered representations, hierarchies and narratives.

Process of nation building demands some sacrifices from its citizens and ascribes certain duties to them. There is a division of labour in which women reproduce the nation physically and symbolically; while men protect, defend and avenge the nation. The bodies of women are claimed as the instrument of nation's regeneration. Women are expected to perform their duties as – biological reproducers of the ethnic collectivity, symbolic reproducers of the nation's boundaries ('us' or 'them', 'self' or 'other'), transmitters of the culture, signifiers of national differences. Thus, women's bodies serve as media for nation's reproduction and territorial markers. Men are supposed to be protectors of nation and its boundaries. These gender roles reinforce sexual stereotypes in national narratives. Women are looked upon as mothers, daughters, wives for their childbearing duties. They require the protection from the patriotic sons. So, symbolically, a woman is assigned the role of 'Mother Nation' (as well as mother of nation). In this imagery, the feminine motherland is passive, receptive and vulnerable and the masculine active image of the man is the force behind government, conquest, defense and invasion. For maintaining the real and imagined national boundaries, a control and discipline over those bodies is needed onto which the nation is projected. . Through religious and social

regulations, models of behaviour are forced on them and their sexuality. This is supposed to bring order and national recovery at the wake of political chaos and disintegration. Community and religious practices tie and supervise women's bodies and imbibe concepts of female chastity. Then good women become the symbol of national virtue, which must be defended by the nationalists. When women are violated and contaminated, symbolically the nation is raped or defiled. This is how their bodies become boundaries of the nation and upon them wars are fought.

The term 'boundaries' gives rise to binary concept of 'us' and 'them', 'our women' and 'their women'. 'Our women' are virtuous mothers and are to be respected and guarded, while 'other women' are bad because they reproduce enemies and multiply the number of outsiders(others). So, other women are to be assaulted and thus, symbolically the borders of the 'other nation' are invaded. This explains why during communal conflicts (like those during partition of India in *Ice-Candy-Man*), racial outrages and wars, the most affected –physically and psychologically-victims are women. In all national narratives, we find the sexual violence inflicted against women during political disturbances.. Women repeatedly become vulnerable victims of rape and are under the constant fear of it.

Rape is not only the manifestation of unlimited male sex-drives but it is also a tool to violate the honour of 'other' men who take pride in the virtues of their women. It is a way of subjugating the female 'other', too.

"Rape is essentially an offense one male commits upon another."[24]

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[24] Millet, Kate, *Sexual Politics*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London(1973), p.44

"Men use women as verbs with which to communicate with each other."[25]

Rape is not a contact between victimizer and victim, but between her and her male relatives. Patriarchy allots possesional rights to the male making him the owner and the female is object of his possession or 'belonging'. An assault against her can be considered as exploitation and suppression of the 'other'- both woman and man from 'other' community. This subject position of woman results from the patriarchal mentality in which man is central and woman is the repressed marginalized and ignored 'other'. So she suffers subordination because the 'other' has to be subdued to the 'self'. Violation of women symbolizes the despoiling of an entire other race, an attack on the purity of race, caste and people as a whole.

Narratives, which deal with the Indian partition, portray how the men of rival community who treat their bodies as sites of revenge doubly victimize women during communal riots - first. The aim behind this violence is to spoil everything that is sacred and valuable to the 'other'. Secondly, their own men who disown them for no fault of their own offend women. They become victims of patriarchal consensus where women's chastity enhances honour of men. They are made to feel ashamed of their raped and humiliated bodies. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, the women in rehabilitation camp are considered"fallen women". No doubt, men also suffer the savagery of the partition violence. They suffer death, material destruction and displacement. Their mental and material losses are repairable and with passage of time are made up to certain extent. But women lose their dignity and self-respect which is considered to be inseparable

[25] Sucher, Laurie, *The Fiction of Ruth Prawar Jhabwala: The Politics of Passion,.* Macmillan, London (1984), p.90.

from their chastity. They continue to bear the burden of mental trauma and torture in the world where even their husbands and fathers refuse to acknowledge them for their sufferings.

Nation is most of the time viewed as a family. In family allegory, it is emphasized that nation is as natural as the biological family. The social hierarchy based on the women's subordination is also naturalized. Women are cast as mothers, wives, virtuous daughters and are called upon to produce the nation. The husbands are the heads of the household and the political representatives of the family. It expands men's capacity for citizenship; while limiting and controlling the field of women within the imagined community. Being a householder, man becomes the provider and protector whom wife owes her obedience and service. The woman has to submit to the man's authority with consent and not as bondage. Family generates civic and social virtues, becomes a foundation for national morality, and has a gendered dimension.

In a patriarchal nationalist discourse, woman's sexuality is subdued and controlled by the community. Man is not a subject to any prohibitions regarding the free play of his sexuality, as he is virile, active element of society. Woman is supposed to be passive, virtuous and asexual in expressions of her desires. It is banal for a woman to talk about her sexual fantasies and explorations of her own body. Until recently, female writers avoided talking about a woman's carnal desires and experiences. Doing so is considered to be a taboo in the nationalist ideology. But Bapsi Sidhwa tries to explore the awakening sexuality of a girl child which helps the girl in asserting her identity.

Thus, the gendered roles assigned to individuals by the nation reflect its assumptions and beliefs. Gender and nation are inseparably

connected social constructs. Social and political hierarchies complicate national battles over reproduction, representation and control over sexuality. These hierarchies separate different nations. Gender and sexual identities shape the public spheres of politics as well as private spheres of families. The dynamics of modern nationalism is built upon the ideal constructs of masculinity and feminity. So, it becomes essential to consider gender along with race to examine the complex relationship between nation and narration.

- Discussion on the concept of a nation.
- Establishing nation as abstraction · relevant to a feminist point of view · Gender bias as seen in Iraqi society · present day value syst...
- departure by Sidhwa .