A Certain India

An enquiry into a claim to national territory

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Abstract

In both intimate and abstract encounters, India is today understood as a land certain, and a land connected naturally with the Indian nation. India is, for many, a land visible in the physical world, a land visible on the world map, and a land the exclusive political domain of a definable group of people. This was not always the case. This thesis enquires into the circumstances and campaign that have made it so; this thesis enquires into the claim to national territory in India. Specifically, I seek in this work to explain how the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean has been produced as the national territory of the Indian nation, and how this national territory is understood by these nationalists.

To conduct this enquiry, I take in this work two broad steps: the construction of a framework within which we can theoretically situate the Indian national territory, and the application of this framework to the specifics of the case at hand. To construct the required theoretical framework, I turn first away from the Indian national territory to the more abstract phenomenon of the national territory in general, and to theoretical literature against which this more abstract national territory in general can be situated. In this, I turn to both theoretical works on nations and nationalism, and theoretical works on space. Here I suggest that we can theoretically situate the abstract national territory in general against both our understanding of the essence of the nation and our understanding of the essence of space; that the national territory is both one element of that which is of the nation, and one particular form of space. Located in this way, I argue in this work that the national territory is a form of space emergent in the intersection of the highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical dominant with the onset of modernity, and knowledge of the physical derived from forms of integration more intimate, particular and local. I argue, more precisely, that the national territory is a form of space produced through both the emergence to dominance of highly abstract forms of knowledge of the physical, and the renegotiation of these dominant forms according to interests and understandings more intimate and particular.

From this point, I then proceed to locate and describe the specifics of the production and understanding of the Indian national territory. To do this, I draw on the theoretical framework constructed in the first part of the thesis to trace the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical, and, following this, the response to this derived from the more intimate forms of knowledge of the physical marginalised by this emergence. Thus in this second step I chart first the emergence to dominance of highly abstract forms of knowledge of the physical in southern Asia. In this I look in particular at the forms of social integration and knowledge of the physical that emerged to dominance under the British Empire. Following this, I then trace the response to this emergence to dominance offered by two significant political perspectives: one of 'secular Indian nationalism', the other of 'Hindu nationalism'. With this, I argue that the Indian national territory is a space which has been produced through the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical, and the complicated and ongoing efforts to renegotiate this highly abstract knowledge according to interests and understandings more intimate and particular. The Indian national territory is understood, thanks to this production, as a land natural and concrete, eternal and certain, in both embodied locales and the world at large; a land, that is, for which people have willingly died.

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Glossary

Adivasi	Those of the communities listed as Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution of India.
Ahimsa	Non-violence.
Akhand Bharat	'Undivided India'. The area of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean now occupied by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (and, perhaps, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka).
Arya	Those of the Aryan community.
Bhadralok	Literally, 'the respectable ones'. A class of largely Hindu landowners prominent in 19th century Bengal.
Bhagwa Dhwaj	The triangular saffron flag prominent in Hindu and Hindu nationalist discourse.
Bharata	The land of Bharat; India.
Bharatbhoomi	The soil of Bharat; India.
Bharat Mata	Mother India.
Bharatavarsa	The country of Bharat; India.
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party.
Brahmin	One of the traditional *varna* (castes) of Hindu practice. Traditionally associated with a spiritual or doctrinal social role.
Charka	Spinning wheel.
Dalit	Those of the communities listed as Scheduled Castes in the Constitution of India. Also known as *Harijan*, *Panchama*, 'untouchable'.
Darshan / Darśan	The duality of seeing and being seen crucial to much Hindu worship.
Dharma	The divine will; natural law.
Diwani	Revenue management rights.
Ekatmata	Unity.

Harijan	A common early 20th century name for those of the communities now listed as Scheduled Castes in the Constitution of India.
Hartal	Strike.
Hindutva	Hindu-ness; also, V D Savarkar's text on the topic.
Jati	Caste group or people; perhaps in parallel with an occupationalised ethnic group. In some sources a conception of caste different to that of *varna*, in others a subdivision of the *varna-vyavastha*.
Jambudvipa	The continent at the centre of the Puranic cosmography; the land (lotus petal) to the south of Mount Meru in the *Mahabharata*.
Khadi	Home-spun cloth.
Lathi	Truncheon.
Lok Sabha	House of the people; the Parliament of India.
Mahabharata	Both a legendary war for the throne of Hastinapura, and the epic poem describing this conflict.
Mahamandal	Great temple.
Mahasabha	Great house / great council.
Mandal	Temple.
Masjid	Mosque.
Mleccha	Vedic term for those foreign to or outside of the Aryan community.
Mount Meru	The mountain at the centre of the universe / world in much Puranic cosmography.
Muhajirs	Refugee or immigrant. Also, those who migrated to Pakistan following Partition.
Nawab	Governor.
Panchama	Those of the so-called 'fifth caste' or 'fifth *varna*'; now those of the castes listed as Scheduled Castes in the Constitution of India.
Pandit	Teacher; synonymous in some contexts with *Brahmin*.
Pardeshi	Foreign made.
Puranas	Traditional texts dealing largely with history, religion and tradition.
Raj	Prince or royalty; also empire, and specifically the British Empire.
Ramayana	The epic poem describing the life of Ram; important in much Hindu philosophy.
Ram Janmabhumi	The birth place of Ram, hero of the *Ramayana*.
Rashtra	Nation.
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or National Volunteers Association.

Sabha	House / council.
Sadhu	Ascetic; one who has forsaken pleasure, wealth and duty in the search for spiritual liberation.
Samaj	Society.
Sampradaya	Literally, 'what is handed over'; the teachings of local sages and sects.
Sanatana Dharma	The eternal religion; Hinduism.
Sangh Parivar	The 'family' of organisations associated with the RSS.
Sannyasin	World renouncer; one who has forsaken pleasure, wealth and duty in the search for spiritual liberation.
Sarva Dharma Sambhava	The principle of religious tolerance; that 'truth is one, though sages may describe it differently'.
Sati	Widow immolation.
Satyagraha	Truth struggle.
Shakha	School.
Shuddhi	Purification / 'reconversion'.
Swadeshi	Home made / self sufficiency; also, the campaign for this.
Swarajya	Home rule.
Upanishads	Religious texts which deal primarily with meditation and philosophy.
Vande Mataram	Literally, 'Hail to the Mother(land)'; specifically, a poem by Bankimchandra Chatterjee.
Veda	The most ancient works of the Hindu cannon; the texts central to Vedic / Aryan thought.
Varna	The four- (or perhaps five-) fold division of caste groups of the Vedas. The four groups are *Brahmins* (priests); *Kshatriya* (warriors); *Vaishya* (business people); and *Shudra* (workers). Those outside this division (in some eyes *Mleccha*, in others *Panchama*) hence form a 'fifth caste'.
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad; World Hindu Council.
Yajna	Ritual sacrifice.
Yatra	Pilgrimage / procession.
Yuga	Age.
Zamindar	Under the Mughal Empire, 'tax collector'; under the British, 'landlord'.

The light dove, cleaving the air in her free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that its flight would be still easier in empty space

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

Introduction

This thesis enquires into the claim to national territory in India. I begin this enquiry by situating this topic – this national territory – before an investigative gaze. I begin, that is, with the juxtaposition of two radically different spaces.

I

There is a space in which India is a land eternal and concrete, in which India is a land connected naturally with the people of the Indian nation. We can restate in more explicit terms. There exists a space – an understanding of the physical world held by countless millions – in which India stretches with certainty from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean; in which India precedes the archaic past and will stretch with certainty into the limitless future; and in which India is inescapably, obviously, and naturally, the national territory of the Indian nation. In this space, India, to state simply, is certain. It is this space – this space of the Indian national territory – on which this thesis focuses. It is this space I endeavour, in this introduction, to situate.

II

This thesis is situated in a space radically different. This thesis is situated, to state briefly, in a space we can label as that of late modern social research. This is a space within which we can abstract and situate the intimately held beliefs, understandings and behaviours of others; a space within which we can abstract social and political meaning from the complicated world that is prior. It is from this space, I suggest, that we can look at the claim to national territory in India. It is from this space, that is, that we can look at the space in which India is a land eternal and concrete, in which India is a land connected naturally with the Indian nation.

From the space of late modern social research, the concrete and eternal India – the certain India for which men and women have willingly died – appears as a space emergent and abstract. We can elaborate. The Indian national territory can be seen, from the space of late modern social research, as

a space particular to a certain moment in human history, as an understanding of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean possible only during certain moments in the long arc of human development. The Indian national territory can be seen, to continue, as a space not emergent simply from the physical Earth between the Himalayas and the seas, but emergent from the abstract – human – understanding of that ground. This radical difference – this space emergent yet eternal, abstract yet concrete – presents us with a significant and important problem for the understanding of modern politics in southern Asia and the understanding of nations and nationalism in general. In essence, if we are to gain a better understanding of these topics – if we are to better understand the important issue of *why* people of the Indian nation feel themselves powerfully and passionately connected with the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean – then we must ask *how* this necessarily emergent and abstract India became, for countless millions, a concrete, eternal and meaningful fact of the world. We must turn, that is, to the problem of the national territory.

I seek in this thesis to enquire into the emergence and functioning of the claim to national territory in India. At heart, I seek to address two interrelated questions: 'how has the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean been produced as the national territory of those who consider themselves Indian?'; and 'how is this national territory understood by these nationalists?'. In addressing these two questions, I suggest that we can gain a means to understand how India became, for many, a concrete, eternal and meaningful fact of the world, a land for which they might willingly die. This in turn will afford us a greater understanding of modern politics in southern Asia, and a greater understanding of the phenomena of nations and nationalism in general.

To begin to answer these questions, we must turn first in this introduction – in this thesis – to the space within which this work is situated. We must turn, that is, to the space from which we might see and within which we might theoretically situate the Indian national territory.

Towards a theoretical framework

To begin to enquire into the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, it is necessary to construct a framework within which this space can be theoretically situated; a framework from which this space can be theoretically seen. More explicitly, to address the questions guiding this thesis, we must construct a theoretical framework which can allow us to see the concrete and eternal Indian national territory as intimately as possible from the space of late modern social research, whilst maintaining our foundational assertion that from this space of late modern social research, this Indian national territory is a form emergent and abstract. In this section I begin to construct such a framework, outlining the path I will take to address the research problem. In this, I begin by looking

first away from that which is intimate to this Indian national territory, and I take three situating, abstracting steps.

First, we can suggest that the Indian national territory is a particular example of a broader – more abstract – phenomenon of national territories in general. We can suggest, that is, that the concrete and eternal India is a particular space that can be seen and situated in a world of similar national territories. Accordingly, we might assert that England, Serbia, Russia and Rwanda are similarly held by certain people as concrete and eternal national territories, as lands for which they might die. This is not an assertion that those who consider the Indian national territory certain necessarily think of their India as an example of a broader type. Rather, this is an assertion that with our first abstraction away from the Indian national territory, we can situate this space as but one example of the more abstract form of the national territory in general.

This first step in our construction of a theoretical framework – this turning to the national territory in the abstract – can be usefully extended with a second abstraction. Thus we can take a second step: we can consider the national territory in general as a particular example of yet broader social and spatial phenomena. More precisely, we can theoretically situate the national territory in general within what we can take here as yet more abstract social and spatial categories.

This second theoretical abstraction could proceed in at least two directions. We could, for example, consider the national territory as a particular form of territory, or as a particular form of space. That is, we could theoretically situate the national territory in general within the more abstract categories of 'territory' or 'space'. We might suggest, for example, that the national territory shares some relationship to the 'essence of territory' with the territory of a feudal lord, with the territory of a street gang, and with the territory of a door-to-door salesperson. Similarly, we could suggest that the national territory is a particular form of space: a space that shares some relationship to the 'essence of space' with the space described by cosmologists, the space between 'this' and 'that', and the space of late modern social research.

We could proceed in this theoretical situating in another direction: we could consider the national territory in general as a particular example of that which is of the nation, or a particular example of social phenomena more generally. That is, we could theoretically situate the national territory in general within the more abstract categories of 'nation' or 'social phenomena'. Thus we might suggest, for example, that the national territory shares some relationship to the 'essence of the nation' with national flags, national anthems and national dress. Continuing in this direction, we might suggest that the national territory is a social form that shares some relationship to the 'essence of the social' with other phenomena as diverse as fashion, religion and family. At heart, I argue here that the abstract

category of the national territory in general – the abstract category of which the Indian national territory is a particular example – can itself be theoretically situated amongst broader, more abstract, social and spatial phenomena.

This second step in our construction – this second abstraction away from the Indian national territory – hints at a third. In the conceptual intersection of the abstract social and spatial categories described above we can find a more secure way to situate the abstract national territory. In essence, in the conceptual intersection of our abstracted understanding of the nation and of our abstracted understanding of space, we can begin to situate the national territory as intimately as possible before the gaze of late modern social research. More simply, these two abstract categories, of nation and space, provide what I suggest are strong conceptual foundations against which we can begin to see the national territory in general – and the Indian national territory in particular.

What remains, then, is to order our discussion – to order our development of this theoretical framework. Two clear paths exist. We could proceed from the abstract category of 'space' to the abstract category of 'nation'. In this, we could begin with an 'essence of space' and proceed by locating that which is national in the category of spaces in general. Alternately, we could proceed from the abstract category of 'nation' to the abstract category of 'space'. In such a path we might begin with an 'essence of nation' and proceed by locating that which is spatial in the category of nations in general. Either of these paths would offer us a means to draw our space of late modern social research more intimately to the national territory in general, and in turn, more intimately to the Indian national territory. Indeed, in so far as both would provide useful ways of situating the national territory – in so far as both would offer ways to draw the space of late modern social research as intimately as possible to the concrete and eternal Indian national territory – the decision to follow either course is largely arbitrary. However, because I argue that the insights offered by this work will afford a better understanding of the phenomena of nations and nationalism in general – because I write, quite simply, to enhance our understanding of the role of the Indian national territory in modern politics in southern Asia as well as to enhance our understanding of the role of the national territory in the phenomena of nations and nationalism in general – it is with the nation that I begin.

We must turn now, then, to the details: to the theoretical literature on the nation and on space through which we can begin to understand the abstract national territory in general. In the two subsections below, I raise some of the key ideas presented in the theoretical literature on these topics. I will explore and develop these ideas in greater detail later in the thesis; here I seek simply to offer this work's conceptual position on the essence of the nation, on the essence of space, and on the intersection between these two categories. In essence, I sketch over the next two subsections the

theoretical foundations from which we can begin to see the national territory – and hence the Indian national territory – in the abstract.

Locating the national territory in the nation

In the construction of a theoretical framework able to see the Indian national territory, I have turned twice to the abstract. I have turned, that is, from the Indian national territory to the more abstract national territory in general, and I have turned from the national territory in general to yet more abstract social and spatial categories within which this national territory can be situated. In this section, I begin a conceptual return.

In this section, I turn to the first of two conceptual foundations against which we can begin to see the abstract national territory in general. Here, I turn to the nation. In simple terms, I aim in this section to raise, from a brief discussion of the theoretical literature, a standpoint on the essence of the nation, and to describe the intersection – the conceptual location – of the national territory within this literature. The theoretical discussion from which I raise these two arguments will, in this section, be only brief. A more expansive discussion of this conceptual foundation, and exploration and critique of this literature will comprise a key element of the more expansive discussion later in the thesis.

The various scholarly efforts to understand the nation can be considered as efforts somewhat in parallel with our present discussion of the national territory. They can be considered, that is, as efforts to see, and to situate, the nation in the abstract. This theoretical situating has, over the past two centuries, taken a great variety of forms. I raise here, in broad strokes, some of the more noteworthy. In order to organise this brief discussion, I divide these efforts to situate and understand the nation between those who have seen the nation as a form of community natural to humanity, and those who have seen it a form of community emergent within the course of recent human history.

There exists a significant body of thought in which the nation has been considered a form of community natural to humanity, an entity marking both the human condition and the historical record. At the heart of this position, the nation (or, perhaps, the division between nations) appears entirely intimate to humanity, as natural to the human condition as having arms and legs and as quantifiable as a measure of height or weight (see a similar point in Gellner 1964: 150). An archetypical example of this position can be seen in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's early 19th century argument that the nation resided in natural reason. For Fichte, "the True Life, – the Life according to Reason" could only be found in a dedication to the 'universal consciousness' that he saw in the nation (1889 [1806]-a: 38; 1968 [1807-8]: 117). This made the nation not only a natural form, it made it, essentially, good. In a related way, Johann Gottfried von Herder suggested in a similar era that the nation could be found in

language – that nation and language were inescapably bound (1968 [1784-1791]: 7). More recently, theorists such as Edward Shils, Clifford Geertz and John Armstrong have located the nation in the "primordial bonds" and the "primordial affinities" of the ethnic group (Geertz 2000: 31; Shils 1957: 131), or in the attitudinal boundaries between long existing communal groups (see Armstrong 1982: 4). In these more recent arguments, the nation itself may not be natural, yet it certainly appears a form directly connected with communities deeply embedded in human history, a form merely the latest version of natural elements of the human condition.

In contrast to these arguments – in contrast to the suggestion that the nation is a form either eternal or part of the long historical record – we can find a variety of theorists who have seen the nation in social phenomena and organisation more recent. We can find, that is, theorists who have seen the nation as a form of community brought into being by the revolutions of modernity. In this vein, some have seen the nation in the politics made possible by the development of the modern state. Anthony Giddens, for example, has argued that "the nation and nationalism are distinctive properties of modern states" (1985: 116; see also Breuilly 1985: 352). Others, meanwhile, have seen the nation in the developments occasioned by industrialisation. Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm have, for example, suggested that the nation is a sociologically necessary outcome of the developments of industrial capitalism (Gellner 1964: 151; Hobsbawm 1992: 10). Similarly, we can find compelling arguments that the nation can be found in the socially constituted conceptions of temporality ascendant in conditions of modernity. In this, Benedict Anderson's suggestion that the nation can be located in the modern "modes of apprehending the world" (1991: 22) offers much for this work.

These two broad positions mark what has been labelled a conceptual 'Great Divide' (see, for example, James 1996: 127). That is, the opposed arguments that the nation is a form natural to humanity and that the nation is a form emergent in recent history hold little common ground: the stance on the essence of the nation held by each camp is radically and intractably different. What I suggest is that in the critiques of both positions, in the efforts to move beyond this Great Divide, we can locate a more intimate – more useful – position on the nation. We can turn briefly to this critique and, following this, to this more intimate position on the nation.

At heart, those who have considered the nation a form natural to humanity can be charged with employing a nationalist vision: with projecting what are essentially nationalist ways of understanding community and land into both the past and the intimate. This leaves us, quite simply, unable to see the nation in the abstract. Yet those who have suggested that the nation is a form emergent in recent history do not, meanwhile, offer a problem free position on the essence of the nation. Quite simply, those who have suggested that the nation is an essentially modern form of community have offered little to understand how the nation is subjectively experienced, and why the nation is experienced as a

form intimate and natural. These criticisms will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. At this point however, we can turn to a third position on the nation, a position perhaps free of the dilemmas of the Great Divide. In this, we can follow Paul James' argument: that the nation can be theoretically located in the intersection between the highly abstract, disembodied forms of integration made possible with modernity, and the more intimate forms of social integration more prevalent in human social existence (James 1996: 184). The nation, that is, is a form *framed* by the forms of integration made possible with modernity (such as the bureaucratic state, mass public education, industrial modes of production and systems of print capitalism), yet *experienced* through the more intimate, embodied forms of integration (such as the family, tribe or the religious community) reshaped by the onset of modernity. It is this intersection that has, according to James, made the nation an abstract, modern community – yet "one which always, subjectively and ideologically, reaches back to more concrete ways of living and representation" (1996: 2). With this, we can state this work's position on the essence of the nation.

I argue that the nation is an abstract political community, framed through the highly abstract, disembodied forms of social integration made possible with the onset of modernity, yet experienced through forms of social integration which may well be more local, personal and concrete. This means, in essence, that the nation is formed in highly abstract ways removed from the individual, yet is understood in ways that will necessarily be particular and intimate to each person who considers themself a member of that nation. This argument – crucial to the framing of this enquiry – will be developed in greater detail later in the thesis. Of greater importance now, however, is to turn to the ways the national territory has been conceptualised in the theoretical literature on nations and nationalism. Of greater importance, that is, is to turn to the ways that the national territory has traditionally been situated by theorists of the nation.

I argue that the national territory has been conceptualised in three different ways in the literature on nations and nationalism in general. In one conceptualisation, the national territory has been viewed as a natural form of space, as land naturally and permanently connected with the nation. This stance can be found most readily in the work of theorists who have considered the nation itself as natural. It can, for example, be readily seen in the work of Fichte and Herder, and more recently (though with significant differences) in the work of Geertz, Shils and Armstrong (evidence for this will be shown later in the thesis). Such an account – that the national territory is a natural space, a space eternal and concrete – is, of course, clearly aligned with the understanding of space held by the nationalists we wish, in this research, to study. This account appears, that is, within the nationalist picture of space. At heart, this is therefore a position intimate with the space which we wish to study, yet it is also one ignorant of our foundational assertion that this space is, when situated before the gaze of late modern social research, emergent and abstract.

A second position can be found in a variety of the theoretical works which have suggested that the nation is an entirely modern form. In these accounts, the nation appears as a constructed entity, as a form brought into being by the politics, thinking and technologies of modernity, yet the national territory appears, in contrast, as a received entity – as a form prior to the nation. This position, which at heart suggests a lingering nationalist understanding of space can be found in otherwise modernist works, requires brief demonstration. In this, we can turn to Gellner's influential theory in *Nations and Nationalism*. In this work, Gellner clearly asserted that the nation is a modern construction, that

> nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent… political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality (1983: 49).

This argument did not, however, carry through to his understanding of the national territory. Thus in one passage, Gellner described the emergence of nationalism amongst the fictional 'Ruritanians':

> The Ruritanians were a peasant population speaking a group of related and more or less mutually intelligible dialects, and inhabiting a series of discontinuous but not very much separated pockets within the lands of the Empire of Megalomania. The Ruritanian language, or rather the dialects which could be held to compose it, was not really spoken by anyone other than these peasants. The aristocracy and officialdom spoke the language of the Megalomanian court, which happened to belong to a language group different from the one of which the Ruritanian dialects were an offshoot.
>
> Most, but not all, Ruritanian peasants belonged to a church whose liturgy was taken from another linguistic group again, and many of the priests, especially higher up in the hierarchy, spoke a language which was a modern vernacular version of the liturgical language of this creed, and which was also very far removed from Ruritanian. The petty traders of the small towns serving *the Ruritanian countryside* were drawn from a different ethnic group and religion still, and one heartily detested by the Ruritanian peasantry (1983: 58, emphasis added).

What Gellner described in this passage was, in essence, an ethnic group. The 'Ruritanians' were a population who shared some cultural features which would become, when industrialisation began to uproot and distort their world, the grounds for a nationalist ideology. What is important to note here is that though Gellner went out of his way to describe (over the passages that followed) the ways that the modern industrial context was fundamental to the construction of the national group, he treated the territory in question – 'the Ruritanian countryside' – as a received object. 'Ruritania' was, for Gellner, an already existing homeland which was transferred directly to the nationalist movement. In essence, I argue that a variety of the theorists who have considered the nation modern have, like Gellner, reflexively echoed nationalist thought on the national territory. They have, that is, taken the national territory as a concrete entity into which the nation, once constructed, naturally stepped.

We can, however, find a third way of understanding of the national territory in theories of nations and nationalism. In this position, the national territory appears an entity constructed with the nation; a product, like the nation, of the politics and technologies of modernity. This argument can be found most clearly in Anderson's 'Census, Map, Museum', a chapter added with the 1991 edition of his *Imagined Communities*. It is with this position – with Anderson's suggestion that the onset of

modernity ushered in both changing apprehensions of time *and* changing apprehensions of space (1991: xiv) – that we can begin to see the concrete and eternal Indian national territory from the space of late modern social research. It is with this position, that is, that I suggest we can begin situate the space of the nation.

Anderson's conceptualisation of the national territory in 'Census, Map, Museum' is not, however, without problems. I will discuss this theory in greater detail later in the thesis, yet we can stress here that this theory offers an understanding of the production of the national territory, yet it offers little to appreciate how the national territory is subjectively understood. Quite simply, in this account the national territory appears an entity constructed entirely from the 'top' down; a form brought into being entirely by the technologies of the modern state. At heart, if we are to draw our abstractive space of late modern social research as intimately as possible to the space of the national territory, we must develop a better, more intimate, conception of the national territory than that which can be found in contemporary theory on nations and nationalism. To do this, we must turn to the alternate theoretical axis within which we can locate the national territory. We can turn, that is, to space.

Locating the national territory in space

In the construction of this enquiry's theoretical framework, I have, as noted above, turned twice to the abstract. I have turned from the Indian national territory to the national territory in general, and I have turned, following this, to the more abstract social and spatial categories within which the national territory in general can be situated. Following this turning to the abstract, I have commenced a conceptual return, raising the first of our two conceptual foundations against which we can see the national territory. I began with the nation. Yet as much as we are able to draw from the contemporary literature on nations and nationalism a definition of the essence of the nation – a task crucial to this project – the understandings of the national territory prevalent in this literature are inadequate for the present needs. Quite simply, theories of nationalism appear either too closely aligned or too distant from the nationalist space which we wish to situate. What this means is that to better see the national territory from the space of late modern social research, we must turn to a second conceptual foundation against which we can situate the national territory. We must turn to that which is national in the abstract category of space.

In this section I turn to theoretical literature on space which can resolve some of the conceptual problems raised above. In this, I will parallel the above discussion by taking two steps: I will describe firstly the understanding of space employed in this work, while secondly, I will move to situate the national territory against this understanding. More simply, in this section I offer this work's standpoint on the essence of space, and on the intersection of the nation with this conception of space.

This, we must note, will not directly mirror our discussion of the national territory in the above section. At heart, while in both sections I raise an essence against which we can locate the national territory, in this section I move from critiquing existing accounts of the national territory towards building anew. This will draw this discussion directly towards the theoretical framework and the thesis argument.

What is space? What is it that is shared by the space described by the cosmologists, the space between 'this' and 'that', the space of late modern social research, and the space of the Indian national territory? We might begin to answer this by turning first to the particular, to the (perhaps deceptively) simple space between a 'point A' and a 'point B':

A • • B

What is this space? There is, certainly, a space between. We could answer this question scientifically. Accordingly, we could suggest that the space between is a measurable, quantifiable displacement, a number of millimetres in a definable direction. This, of course, is not wrong. Yet perhaps more importantly, it is also not exhaustive. The displacement between point A and point B is, in essence, only one way of describing the space between, only one element of the space between. Thus we could continue. Between point A and point B is a relationship in a conceptual thesis, a relationship in a broader argument that requires their conceptual participation. Again, we might suggest that between point A and point B is a spatial hierarchy, a positional priority determined by the order of the alphabet and the direction of reading in standard English. We might continue: between point A and point B is some mental arrangement, some cognitive mapping of the perceived points. Still further, we might suggest that between point A and point B there is nothing: that between these two points there exists precisely no thing, and that these two 'things' exist entirely independently of each other. Indeed, we might assert that what is between is simply a space. What is important is that not one of these accounts is wrong. Yet at the same time, not one offers any possibility of conceptual exhaustion, any complete account of the space between. We can rephrase. All of these accounts are non-exhaustive abstractions of a prior existence. The space between, I suggest, rests in this.

In this work I follow Henri Lefebvre's assertion that "(social) space is a (social) product" (1991: 30); Immanuel Kant's position that it is "solely from the human standpoint that we can speak of space, of extended things" (1934: 47). In elaboration, I suggest that the space in which we live – and hence the space of late modern social research and the space of the Indian national territory – is a form emergent in the prioritised abstraction of the pre-existing material world. This means, in essence, that spaces – whether that between point A and point B or that described by the cosmologists – are not prior, but emergent appropriations of that which is external to abstraction. Spaces, in essence, are produced. This understanding will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. Now however, we can return with this understanding to the national territory. We can begin, that is, to situate the national territory

against this understanding of the abstract category of space. This, as I suggested above, will not directly parallel the situating of the national territory in the literature on the nation that was offered above. That is, where previously I turned to the prevalent understandings of the national territory in the literature on the nation, I turn now to a situating of our essence of the nation before the essence of space. I turn, that is, to this work's theoretical conceptualisation of the national territory amongst spaces more generally.

All societies produce space. All societies forge their own appropriations of the material world (see Lefebvre 1991: 31). What concerns us here, of course, is the difference between the space of the nation and the space of non-national societies. To conceptualise this difference, we can return briefly to literature on the nation. In this, we can draw from conceptualisations of the nation offered by both Anderson and James. Thus for Anderson, the nation is

> an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion… The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has *finite*, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations… (1991: 6-7, emphasis added in part).

In a similar way, James argued that

> The nation is at once assumed to be a rich and inalienable relationship of *specifiable* compatriots; at the same time it connects anonymous strangers most of whom will probably never even pass each other in the street (1996: xi, emphasis added).

What I wish to suggest is that the idea presented by James and Anderson – that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to specifiable and finite compatriots, despite the impossibility of those of any nation ever personally seeing the majority of their compatriots – can be paralleled directly in considering the national territory. That is, I suggest that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to a defined, definable territory, despite the impossibility of the members of any nation ever personally seeing – ever having, that is, an embodied engagement with – the totality of that land. In essence, I suggest that the difference between the spaces of nations and the spaces of non-national societies is that nations hold a certainty – an imagined certainty – about the physical world at scales, and in a spread of locales, impossible to personally see or know through an embodied engagement. This, I stress, is a form of knowledge of the physical radically different from non-national societies, and forms a key component of our theoretical situating of the national territory. Thus I argue from this that it is at different dominant levels of abstraction that nations and non-national societies produce their space. To state more directly, I argue that it is in different forms of knowledge of the physical that nations and non-national societies produce their space. That is, if we follow James in taking the nation as "an abstract community which only becomes possible within a social formation constituted through the emerging dominance of relations of disembodied extension" (1996: 194), then the national territory only becomes possible with the

emerging dominance of disembodied extension, and of disembodied knowledge of the physical world. This, I suggest, is an essentially modern occurrence.

Various scholars have (as I have suggested above) seen the emergence of the nation in developments ushered in with the onset of modernity. Some, for example, have seen the nation emerge in the development of the bureaucratic state; others in the revolutions fostered by industrial capitalism; others still in the philosophical revolutions of the Enlightenment. These ideas offer much to this work – yet I do suggest that to historically situate the national territory they can be usefully augmented with an understanding of modernity as the emergence to dominance of a disembodied epistemology; in the gradual increase in social dominance of ways of understanding community and land that have (to employ James' phrasing) "denied the deceptively complex fact that human beings have bodies" (1996: 31). This, I suggest, can be traced at least partially to the thinking of René Descartes. That is, the thinking of Descartes afforded a radically different appropriation of the physical world. "With the advent of the Cartesian logic," Lefebvre has argued, "space had entered the realm of the absolute" (1991: 1). What is crucial for this enquiry is that it is this form of space – this appropriation of the physical – in which the national territory emerged. We can describe briefly how.

The key point of the Cartesian logic (described in Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (1912 [1637]) and *Meditations on the First Philosophy* (1912 [1641])) is the argument that the physical world cannot be known, with certainty, through the body or the senses. That is, because Descartes "discovered error in judgments founded on the external senses" – because he *could* doubt the evidence provided by the external senses – then for him, certain knowledge of the world must be derived from "the office of the mind alone" (1912 [1641]: 131, 136). In extension, to discover what could be "known with certainty regarding material objects" (1912 [1641]: 120), Descartes turned to what he could know, with certainty, from his position wholly removed from the material world:

> …and what I here find of most importance is, that I discover in my mind innumerable ideas of *certain objects*, which cannot be esteemed pure negations, although perhaps they possess no reality beyond my thought, and which are not framed by me though it may be in my power to think, or not to think them, *but possess true and immutable natures of their own*. As, for example, when I imagine a triangle, although there is not perhaps and never was in any place in the universe apart from my own thought one such figure, it remains true nevertheless that this figure possesses *a certain determinate nature*, form or essence, which is *immutable and eternal, and not framed by me, nor in any degree dependent on my thought* (1912 [1641]: 120-21, emphasis added).

From this position, Descartes argued that the only things that can be known with certainty about the physical world are those to which the rational mind has applied the certainties of pure mathematics (see discussion in Lefebvre 1991: 2-3). What is crucial for this enquiry is that this contention – that the physical world could be known, with certainty, only through the rational application of mathematical principles – contributed enormously to the construction of a particular representational world (see discussion in Ó Tuathail 1996a: 23; Soja 1989: 151). This is the world visible in the

modern atlas, the world in which we are able to see various countries spread out on a plane projection, the world in which we, as individuals with bodies, can be situated with (an imagined) certainty. This construction will be described in greater detail later in the thesis. What is most important for this discussion is that it is in this particular world – this world produced through the disavowal of the body – that the national territory has been produced. To describe how – to raise the final plank of our theoretical framework – we can raise two points crucial to the modern representational world constructed in the wake of Descartes.

The first point we must note about the Cartesian world is that it holds, in modern society, a dominant authority: as if the Cartesian depictions of the planet are entirely innocent, entirely objective depictions of 'the world as it is'. It is the knowledge, that is, from which spatial certainty is derived in the modern world. We might, in this, turn to the modern institution of land ownership. In a variety of modern societies, the ownership of land is marked and recorded by cadastral maps. This means that the dominant knowledge of particular parcels of land – the knowledge that permits ownership – is given not by any intimate, embodied engagement, but by abstract, Cartesian forms of knowledge. More will be discussed on this authority in later chapters.

The second point we must note about the modern Cartesian world is a significant critique of its claim to objectivity: that despite the claims of its protagonists, the modern Cartesian world has always and inescapably been framed by particular interests. In essence, though claiming objectivity, the crafters of the geographical world *began* with the assumption that 'the world' was "a reality" that existed "'out there', separate from the consciousness of the intellectual" (Ó Tuathail 1996a: 23). The problem with this is that despite Descartes' claim, there is no way to separate the supposed 'rational consciousness' of the modern geographical author from the 'world' that formed it. There is, that is, no 'objective' way of knowing the difference between the Cartesian charting of the physical and the assumptions regarding the physical the Cartesian surveyor already carried. What this suggests is that the modern Cartesian world is, inherently, a world reflective of particular interests. That is, this space – though framed in the dominant form of abstraction – is necessarily produced and taken up in ways reflective of more intimate forms of integration. With this, it is, I suggest, in the intersection of highly abstract and more intimate knowledge of the physical that we can begin to see the Indian national territory.

Theoretical framework

In this thesis I enquire into the production and understanding of the claim to national territory in India. More precisely, I seek to answer two interrelated questions: 'how has the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean been produced as the national territory of those who consider themselves

Indian?'; and 'how is this national territory understood by these nationalists?'. To answer these questions, I have argued that we must construct a theoretical framework able to see this Indian national territory as intimately as possible from the space of late modern social research, while maintaining our foundational assertion that this space appears, under this gaze, a form emergent and abstract.

To construct such a framework, I have turned first away from that which is intimate to this Indian national territory and taken three broad situating steps. To begin, I have suggested that the Indian national territory can be taken as a particular example of – can be situated within – the more abstract category of the national territory in general. I have suggested, that is, that the Indian national territory can be situated in a world of similar national territories; that England, Serbia, Russia and Rwanda are similarly held by certain people as lands for which they might die. In turn, I have suggested that the abstract national territory in general can itself be situated in broader, yet more abstract social and spatial categories. I have suggested, that is, that the national territory can be considered as one example of that which is of the nation, or as one particular form of space. Finally, I have suggested that in the conceptual intersection of these abstract categories – in the intersection of our understanding of the essence of space and our understanding of the essence of the nation – we can, with some conceptual confidence, begin to locate the national territory. We can return to these essences here.

The nation, I argue, is an abstract community framed through the highly abstract, disembodied forms of social integration that emerged to dominance with modernity, yet experienced through forms of social integration which are more local, personal and concrete. Space, to continue, is a form emergent in the prioritised abstraction of the pre-existing material world. Between these two essences we can see – we can theoretically situate – the national territory.

The national territory appears as a form of space emergent in the intersection of the highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical dominant with the onset of modernity, and knowledge of the physical derived from forms of integration more intimate, particular and local. We can rephrase. The national territory appears as a form of space *produced* through two processes: the emergence to dominance of highly abstract – disembodied – forms of knowledge of the physical, and the renegotiation of these dominant forms according to interests and understandings more intimate and particular. The national territory is a form of space *understood* – thanks to this production – as concrete, eternal and certain, in both embodied locales and the world at large.

With this theoretical framework – with this framework able to see the national territory from the space of late modern social research, this framework able to situate the national territory in the abstract – we can return to India.

Thesis argument

The Indian national territory is an assertion in certainty. The concrete and eternal India, the national territory for which men and women have willingly died, is a space *produced* through the assertion of particular, intimate understandings of the physical in the dominant, certain knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. The Indian national territory is *understood*, thanks to this production, as a space natural and concrete, eternal and certain in both embodied locales and the world at large.

We can rephrase and expand. The Indian national territory is a space which has been produced through a twin process: the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of highly abstract forms of knowledge of the physical, and the complicated and ongoing efforts to renegotiate this highly abstract knowledge according to interests and understandings more particular and intimate. More simply, the Indian national territory has emerged through efforts to make the highly abstract India *look* like that which experienced by particular people in portions of the land between the Himalayas and the seas, and, in turn, to make that which can be seen in the physical earth between the Himalayas and the seas *look* like this highly abstract India.

We can explain this argument in greater detail here by describing briefly the two processes I have suggested are crucial to the production of the Indian national territory. We can, that is, situate in history both the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical, and the responses to this derived from forms of integration more intimate and particular.

The land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean has been known in an uncountable variety of ways. We cannot, of course, pretend to describe even a fraction. Yet we can assert that gradually, the dominant ways of knowing this physical area – the forms of knowledge from which spatial certainty has been derived – have tended towards the ever more abstract. In this, the very earliest human knowledge of portions of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean emerged from an embodied engagement. This primordial knowledge came, quite simply, from a direct sensorial contact: a direct human seeing and touching of the physical. What is important is that since that primordial contact, others have come to know the soil between the Himalayas and the seas, at

least partially, through an abstracted engagement. People have, that is, come to know this physical land through representations that would precede any embodied engagement.

For much of the past few millennia, the dominant knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean has – we can safely assume – resided in what can be called face-to-face and agency-extended forms of knowledge (see James 1996: 23-25, these concepts will be developed in greater detail throughout the thesis). More precisely, the spatial knowledge that has allowed farmers to know what lands are theirs, that has allowed subjects to know what rulers hold sway, and that has allowed the faithful to know what sites are sacred, has, for much of the past few millennia, been sustained and propagated through embodied and corporate social networks. More will be discussed on this later in this work. What is important for this discussion is that in 1498, the dominant form of spatial knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean began to change to a form yet more abstract.

In 1498, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut, on the southwest coast of modern India. With the recording of this event, portions of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean gained a location in a disembodied representation of the physical. This was a representation that drew its ability to represent – its certainty – not from people or institutions, but from disembodied mathematical certainties. This was not the first such disembodied portrayal. We can find, for example, Mughal campaign maps and more ancient cosmographies that have also represented parts of the land between the Himalayas and the seas (see discussion in Schwartzberg 1992b). Yet what was different about da Gama's chart was that the behaviour of a number people in southern Asia became guided in dominance by this disembodied representation. People began to sail to this land on the basis of this nautical chart. This representation of the physical land between the Himalayas and the seas in a highly abstract, disembodied chart was initially limited. Only very small numbers of people would come to understand the land da Gama's chart represented according to such a disembodied portrayal. Yet over the centuries that followed, this changed dramatically. In essence, over the years of colonial contact with southern Asia – and particularly under the British Empire – the disembodied representation of the physical launched by da Gama became ever more influential, ever more dominant. In this, the developments of Cartesian and cadastral mapping, European maritime exploration, British military expansion, the industrial revolution and the instigation of a knowledge intensive imperial state brought ever greater numbers of people in southern Asia into a disembodied integration, into disembodied ways of seeing the physical world.

The disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical fostered by the British Empire were always employed for the benefit of particular interests. That is, throughout the entire colonial enterprise the British administrators sought to normalise their own particular understandings of the world within the

disembodied framework; to make the understandings of the world derived from their intimate communities (their families, guilds and religious institutions) congruent with (and hence hidden within) the supposedly objective disembodied abstractions. For the British imperial administrators, this presented few problems. Yet for those who did not share the intimate communities of the British administrators this occasioned a powerful political marginalisation. In the earliest period of the colonial contact this marginalisation was felt externally. That is, for the earliest people of southern Asia to feel the effects of the disembodied integration, the marginalisation rendered their ways of understanding the land redundant and obsolete. Quite simply, the defining of the ownership of the land (as one, particularly important example) was removed from intimate village corporations (see discussion in Marx 1858; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 222) and social networks to a collection of disembodied records and maps in a land registration office in the colonial capitals.

Over time however, a new class emerged in British India, a 'native elite' schooled in the disembodied knowledge of the physical offered by the British. For this class, the marginalisation of their face-to-face and agency-extended knowledge was still felt; yet for them, the marginalisation was felt internally. At heart, these people were welcomed to a world of disembodied abstraction, a world in which supposedly certain knowledge of the planet was offered. Yet this world had long been framed in favour of other people's intimate forms of integration. This framing made, in essence, the knowledge the native elite derived from their parents and their religious institutions *wrong*. In their attempts to reconcile the contradiction these thinkers felt between their face-to-face and disembodied abstractions – between their parents' and the state's stories of the world – we can find the emergence of an Indian nationalism. This brings us to the second of the two processes I suggest are crucial to the production of the Indian national territory.

I suggested above that we can think of the Indian national territory as a space emergent in the intersection of highly abstract forms of knowledge of the physical and knowledge of the physical derived from sources more intimate and particular. It was through the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction, I suggest, that this framing was made possible, yet what I now suggest is that it is only through the complicated *response* to this emergence to dominance, derived from the more intimate forms of knowledge marginalised, that the Indian national territory became for many a day-to-day reality and a concrete part of their lives. What I argue is that the response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction in southern Asia has involved an elaborate campaign to achieve two interrelated goals: to renegotiate the terms of the dominant disembodied representations of the physical to make them more congruent with the understandings derived from their intimate communities; and to renegotiate the spatial representations employed in their more intimate communities to match those of the disembodied. More simply, these activists and thinkers have

attempted to make the highly abstract India *look* like their intimate day-to-day spaces, and their intimate day-to-day spaces *look* like their understanding of the highly abstract India.

At this point, we must return to our understanding of the nation, and a nuance contained within: that nations are, inherently, understood differently by each individual who considers themself a member. In essence, what we must recognise is that any response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction derived from more intimate forms of integration is, by definition, particular to that social integration. Quite simply, though the Indian national territory is framed in highly abstract integration, it is understood and experienced in subjective ways, individual to each person who considers this India theirs. What this means is that though we can readily trace the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction in southern Asia – we can, for instance, trace with some precision the growth of industrial economics or Cartesian mappings of the area – the response to this emergence is not so readily charted. In essence, there are alive today perhaps one billion people who might identify themselves as Indian; there are one billion people who have responded in personal ways to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction. To trace the response of each and every one of these people is, of course, simply unfeasible. All we are able to do is deliberately choose particular perspectives from which we might gain some understanding of the Indian national territory. In this, gender, caste, class, religion, region, language and family (and, of course, countless other forms of identity) all offer compelling perspectives from which we might gain some access to the response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration, some understanding of the Indian national territory. In this enquiry I explore two. These are the stances of 'secular Indian nationalism' and 'Hindu nationalism'. These are, respectively, the arguments raised by Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore (and others) that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful territory of all who call this area *home*; and the arguments raised by V D Savarkar, M S Golwalkar and L K Advani (and, of course, others) that this same patch of land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this area. These I choose because of their significance in the contemporary Indian political scene (Khilnani 1999: xv-xvi), because of the significant bodies of literature in which each have been discussed, and because between these two disparate camps we can locate much of the contemporary political dynamic in modern India (see Ramachandra Guha 2004a; 2004b; 2004c).

This argument offers what I suggest are new and useful ways to look at both modern politics in southern Asia and the phenomena of nations and nationalism more generally. For our understanding of modern politics in southern Asia, this argument offers at least three advantages. Firstly, this argument offers a way to see Indian politics as not the fighting over a pre-existing and eternal India, but as the ongoing making of India. Secondly, this allows us, in parallel, to link the domestic and international political spheres in southern Asia: to step conceptually away from any divide between

these two inherently linked domains. Finally, this argument allows us to see why the India that might appear as abstract, emergent and, indeed, diffusely understood, can still be passionately loved. In essence, we can, with this argument, come to understand why the portrait gallery in the Parliament House, or the glaciers high in the Himalayas become such important spaces worth fighting and dying for.

In turn, this argument also offers what I suggest are new and important ways to look at the phenomena of nations and nationalism. Firstly, this argument allows us to consider the national territory in general – the form held by countless millions around the planet as certain and meaningful – as intimately connected with the phenomena of nations and nationalism, and not some prior entity. We can see nationalism, that is, as the ongoing making of space, and not the fighting over some space that is pre-existing or eternal. Secondly, this argument allows us to see nationalism as a space making force visible in both the disorganised riot and the organised strategic defence of a country. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this argument offers a way for us to step out of – to situate – the nation. That is, if Benedict Anderson, Paul James and Elie Kedourie (and, of course, others) have offered us ways to step out of the thinking and the temporality of the nation, this argument offers us a way to step out of – and to situate – the space of the nation. This, if we are to understand the nation – if we are, perhaps, to move to a world in which the boundaries of nations might fade into the neverwere – is an important and necessary step.

Method and outline

To demonstrate the argument described above, this thesis will take two broad steps. Each of these two broad steps will, in turn, be composed of two components. The first step is the development, in greater detail, of the theoretical framework described briefly above. In this step, I will examine and assess various theoretical literature which might allow us to see the national territory (and thence the Indian national territory) from the space of late modern social research. This theoretical discussion will be developed through two related – though distinct – components.

In the first component of the construction of the thesis' theoretical framework, I focus specifically on the theoretical literature on nations and nationalism. As with the brief discussion on this topic offered above, the expanded version of this discussion, offered in chapter 1, will review the existing theoretical literature on nations and nationalism for two goals: to develop a theoretical essence of the nation against which we can situate the national territory, and to describe the various ways the national territory has been understood in existing theories of nations and nationalism.

In the second component of the development of the theoretical framework, I will turn more directly to an exploration of the production of national space. In this discussion (offered in chapter 2) I seek to raise a stance on the essence of space, and to situate our understanding of the nation against this. This situating – this locating of the conceptual intersection of the essence of space and the essence of the nation – offers our means to situate the national territory in the abstract. To do this, I offer in this chapter a four stage review of the human understanding of space, framed by the conception of the nation developed in chapter 1. What must be noted at this stage is that the discussion offered in this chapter will take the form of a literature review, yet it will be one that rejects the assumption that 'space' is something 'out there', external and prior to human understanding. What I mean is that we must begin with the recognition that the space we live in is, as I suggested above, produced by humans, that "(social) space is a (social) product" (Lefebvre 1991: 30). What this means is that I will review in this chapter (in necessarily broad terms) not the understanding of *space* per se (which suggests a priority to space, and a teleological assumption that space can be completely known), but the human *understanding* of space; the ways that people have *understood* the space they live in. With this review, we can offer an essence of space, and we can situate that which is national – the national territory – before this. With this conceptualisation of the national territory, we can return, then, to India.

The second broad step taken by this thesis will be the application, in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, of this theoretical framework to explore the production and understanding of the Indian national territory. After a brief introduction and historical overview in chapter 3, this discussion of the production and understanding of the Indian national territory will explore the two historical processes which I suggested above were (and are) crucial to the formation of the Indian national territory. These two processes, to recap, are the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of disembodied integration and spatial representation, and, following this, the responses to this derived from forms of integration and spatial representation more intimate and particular.

In chapter 4, I chart the first emergence of modern forms of thinking, technology and politics in southern Asia under the British Empire. In this chapter I suggest that the European colonial powers (and specifically, the British) brought technologies and structures of power to southern Asia that ushered in the dominance of a disembodied form of integration, radically different from anything seen in the area before. To do this, I examine both the administrative and non-administrative discourse reflective of British thinking in southern Asia, and the British manipulation of the physical environment in the lands they ruled. Importantly, I also seek to demonstrate in this chapter that the British imperial dominance of this area was based on an inherently unsustainable logic, on ways of thinking that suggested their own demise. In this, the British dominance of the Indian subcontinent depended (as I have suggested above) on the political marginalisation of non-British abstractions of

community and land. That is, understandings of community and land derived from non-British face-to-face and agency-extended communities were treated as irrelevant to the exercise of political power, as irrelevant to India.

In the chapters that follow, I then trace the response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction offered by two significant political perspectives. In chapter 5, I explore the stance that can be usefully labelled as 'secular Indian nationalism'; the arguments raised by Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore (and others) that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful territory of all who call this area *home*. In chapter 6, I explore the stance that can be usefully labelled as 'Hindu nationalism'; the arguments raised by V D Savarkar, M S Golwalkar and L K Advani (and, of course, others) that this same patch of land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this area. These two perspectives on India, it must be stressed once again cannot be treated as composing an exhaustive picture of the contemporary nationalist imagination, of the contemporary response to the dominance of disembodied abstraction. They can, however, offer a perspective on modern India from which we can learn much.

What I aim to demonstrate in chapters 5 and 6 is that in both the secular nationalist and Hindu nationalist stances on India we can find significant efforts to resolve the contradiction between the disembodied abstractions of community and land first offered by the British, and the more intimate understandings derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration of the nationalist leaders. That is, both secular nationalist and Hindu nationalist actors have expended considerable political energy attempting to produce space: to make people see the physical world according to the dictates of their ideology, to make people see the spaces of their everyday lives as within their abstract India. To explore these campaigns – and to demonstrate the thesis argument – I examine in each of these chapters both the administrative and non-administrative discourse of the various nationalist leaders, and the parallel administrative and non-administrative manipulations of the physical environment driven by these nationalist thinkers.

A note on terms, names, sources and words

Before commencing upon the details of this enquiry, several important procedural matters must be described. Firstly, we must note that while every effort will be made to convey the ideas of the author with clarity, for a variety of reasons, some terms, names and words may appear to be used in ambiguous or contradictory fashions. At a simple level, a variety of names may appear to be used in the work in an inconsistent manner. The name of the author of the novel *Anandamath*, for example,

has been rendered in English by others as Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and variations thereof. Throughout this work I shall endeavour to remain consistent in the names used, hopefully employing those upon which there is some scholarly consensus. In quoting another author, however, I shall use their spelling. In a similar fashion, I shall aim for clarity and consistency when rendering Sanskrit, Hindi or Bengali (or any other non-English language) terms, concepts and words in English. Occasionally, this may mean employing terms which have gone out of favour in modern Indian political discourse, or were defined – with all the attendant disregard for local forms of knowledge – by organs of the British Empire.

At a more fundamental level, it must also be recognised that the very concepts to be discussed here have been employed previously in a deliberately ambiguous fashion. The term 'Indian nationalism', for example, has long been considered synonymous with the ideas of Nehru and Gandhi. This has, of course, been a political success of their campaign. Because of this, I shall endeavour to avoid the term 'Indian nationalism' (except where necessary), and use instead 'secular Indian nationalism' to discuss the ideas of Nehru and Gandhi, and 'Hindu nationalism' to discuss the ideas of Savarkar, Golwalkar and Advani.

Finally, it must also be acknowledged that the texts and speeches discussed here will be limited to those available (in either original or translated form) in English. Though this certainly excludes a large number of possible sources, it does not seriously limit the work at hand. In essence, as English remains the dominant (though certainly not exclusive) language of Indian politics, our attempt to see the Indian national territory as intimately as possible will not be fundamentally weakened by an exclusive use of English language sources and translations.

With this, we can turn now to the first step in our discussion; to the literature on nations and nationalism.

1

On nation formation

In introducing this work, I posed two questions vital to the understanding of modern politics in southern Asia, and vital to the understanding of nations and nationalism in general. How, I asked, has the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean been *produced* as the national territory of those who consider themselves Indian? How, to continue, is this national territory *understood* by these nationalists?

With this chapter, I begin to construct an answer to these questions. In this, I examine here some of the key theoretical literature on the phenomena of nations and nationalism. It is with the insights offered by this literature, I suggest, that we can begin to explore the production, and understanding, of the claim to national territory in India. Yet what I also seek to demonstrate in this chapter is that as useful as the contemporary literature on nations and nationalism is for this task, some critical issues remain inadequately addressed. Most centrally, this literature remains only partially able to account for the spatial dimensions of nation formation. I trace in this chapter three broad theoretical stances on the phenomena of nations and nationalism, and the spatial assumptions and understandings embedded within each account. The pivot of difference between these theoretical positions rests largely – as I will demonstrate below – in each stance's assessment of the role of modernity.

The first stance I discuss in this chapter – labelled here as 'primordialism' – has broadly suggested that the nation is a form of community that existed prior to modernity; that nations have existed throughout human history. This position has been held by both nationalists and (in different ways) a variety of scholars of the phenomenon. For some (such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte and V D Savarkar) this understanding has meant that the nation is the prime form of human community, an essentially natural and good form. For others (such as Clifford Geertz, Edward Shils and John Armstrong), this has merely meant that the impetus behind nation formation – and, indeed, the communities now known as nations themselves – are ancient and transhistorical; that nations were *changed* but not *made* by the revolutions of modernity. Historically, this argument saw political and scholarly dominance

throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Though it is no longer central to the academic analysis of nations and nationalism, a number of its ideas remain – as I will show below – influential.

The second stance to be discussed in this chapter is that of 'modernism'. This broad stance has reacted against the primordialist claim that nations are natural, and has instead suggested that nations are the products of the technologies and politics of modernity: that nations are, in essence, produced by nationalism. Some of the ideas of this camp can be traced to 19th century Marxist thought, yet it was only after the Second World War that these ideas became dominant. In this period, the various works of Elie Kedourie, Anthony Giddens, John Breuilly, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson offered a powerful argument about nation formation, together suggesting that the various developments of modernity – Enlightenment philosophy, industrial capitalism, the modern state and mass literacy – both facilitated and drove the production of nations. For these theorists, the meaning a national identity holds for each individual is entirely constructed, entirely the product of the changes in social organisation fostered over the last few centuries.

Finally, against these first two accounts of the nation, we can trace a third 'postmodern' stance which has emerged in recent decades. Reacting to the intractable 'Great Divide' between those who have seen the nation as inescapably modern, and those who have considered it to be a community existent throughout human history, this stance has suggested instead that we cannot understand the nation through what has been termed 'meta-narrative' approaches. That is, as much as we cannot take the primordialist account of nation – that the nation exists as a natural and cohesive community – at face value, we must also be wary of modernist accounts which have sought to explain nation formation through one plane of analysis. In this, modernist scholars who have suggested that the nation is an exclusively state produced entity, or a phenomenon driven ineluctably by the needs of industrial capitalism, have been charged with reductionism. In essence, though such modernist accounts have presented important and useful ideas about the structure and impetus of nation formation, they have also trivialised the ways each nation is understood by its members. In response, various thinkers – such as Paul James and Alex Bellamy – have suggested that we must explore the ways the nation has interacted (and interacts) with other forms of identity and how the nation is understood differently by each nationalist. I will suggest below that it is with the ideas of this stance, beyond the intractable primordialist / modernist 'Great Divide', that we can find fruitful ways to explore the nation and, importantly, the national territory.

Throughout this discussion, I aim to show that both primordialist and modernist accounts of nations and nationalism hold fundamental problems in their understanding of the national territory. In essence, I suggest that both primordialist and modernist thinkers have tended to accept the nationalist

claim that the national homeland exists as a concrete entity, and can readily be connected with a particular people. What I seek to show later in this thesis is that counter to this, particular portions of the Earth's surface must be *produced* as a cohesive land connected to a particular people. Indeed, I suggest that it requires an elaborate effort to get people to *see* their own day-to-day lives as within a 'national homeland'. Both modernists and primordialists have ignored this, in essence accepting that if a person considers themselves Indian (for example) they know and understand that a well defined patch of the Earth's surface is their national homeland.

The nation as prior to modernity

For many, the nation is a form of community which has been part of human existence for as long as we have records. In this section, I chart the various strands of thought to have argued this; to have claimed that humanity is, and will always be, divided into nations. To begin, I look at some of the earliest examples of such thinking, the German Romanticism of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder. For these thinkers, the nation represented the only true, organic and eternal community, the only community that shared thinking and understanding. Following this, I chart some of the more recent writers who have seen the nation as emblematic of long established human behaviours. Here I discuss the anthropological 'primordialism' of Clifford Geertz and Edward Shils, the 'perennialism' of John Armstrong and the 'ethno-symbolism' of Anthony D Smith. These writers have offered arguments perhaps more nuanced than those of the earliest primordialists; in their works, nations are not necessarily 'natural' and 'organic' forms of community, nor necessarily based on shared language or thinking. However, for these thinkers, the symbols and fact of division – despite the protests of the modernist thinkers to be discussed below – still necessarily mark communities heavily connected with the past.

The nation of the German Romantics

Some of the earliest expressions of primordialist thought can be found in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, particularly in a number of followers of Immanuel Kant. Perhaps most noteworthy, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (with his *Foundations of Natural Law* (1796), *Addresses to the German Nation* (1968 [1807-8]) and *The Characteristics of the Present Age* (1889 [1806]-a)) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (with his *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1968 [1784-1791])) offered ideas and systems of thought which – though derived from Kantian ideas – moved explicitly towards an affirmation of the natural place of nations.

Fichte was a follower of Kant. Much of his work was derived from a recognition of Kant's separation of the 'external', phenomenal world from an individual's 'inner' world, and an embrace of Kant's ideas of self-determination. Yet Fichte was troubled by Kant's separation of the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds (see discussion in A D Smith 1971: 32). For Fichte, the world was *not* the product of Kant's 'individual consciousness'; indeed, people generally agreed about the features of the world they lived in independent of the senses. To resolve this, Fichte suggested that it was not individual consciousness that sat at the heart of society, but a 'universal consciousness' or 'universal Ego'. In this conception, the individual derived meaning only from the 'whole', from the society of which he or she was part (Fichte 1889 [1806]-b: 331; see discussion in Kedourie 1993: 32). Thus for Fichte, "the True Life, – the Life according to Reason" was to be found in the ideas and thinking of the nation:

> … But the Life of the Race is expressed only in Ideas; – the fundamental character of which, as well as their various forms, we shall come to understand sufficiently in the course of these lectures. Thus the formula which we laid down, – '*That the life of Man be dedicated to that of his Race*,' – may also be expressed thus, – '*That the life of Man be dedicated to Ideas*;' – for Ideas embrace the Race as such, and its Life; and thus the Life according to Reason, or the only good and true Life, consists in this, – that Man forget himself in Ideas, and neither seek nor know any enjoyment save in Ideas, and in sacrificing all other enjoyments for them (1889 [1806]-a: 38, emphasis in original).

With development, this thinking lead clearly to what has been called an 'organic theory of the state' (see A D Smith 1971: 32). "The Absolute State", argued Fichte, is "an artistic institution, intended to direct all individual powers towards the Life of the Race and to transfuse them therein; and thus to realize and manifest in individual life the general form of the Idea" (1889 [1806]-a: 160). Thus in Fichte's eyes, it could only be *through* the collective that the individual could truly find freedom and meaning, only through the nation that an individual could live the 'true life' (1968 [1807-8]: 115).

In Herder's work we can find a similarly direct – though differently argued – statement of primordialist thinking about the nation. For Herder, nations formed clearly distinct segments of humanity, spread about the Earth in natural accordance with the diverse physical environment (see 1968 [1784-1791]: book VII). "If a man were to compose a book of the arts of various nations," Herder argued, "he would find them scattered over the whole Earth, and each flourishing in its proper place" (1968 [1784-1791]: 52). Explaining this fact, Herder suggested that nation and language were inescapably bound, that "every nation is one people, having its own national form, as well as its own language" (1968 [1784-1791]: 7). In essence, Herder argued that *because* language could only be learned in community, and that (perhaps more radically for his time) language was synonymous with thought, then each community necessarily had its own mode of thinking (see 1968 [1784-1791]: 328; and discussion in Breuilly 1985: 337). This presented an inescapable and natural – indeed, primordial – barrier between nations.

If we turn to the spatial understandings of Fichte and Herder, we can see some of the key spatial assumptions that I suggest are inherent in much primordialist thinking on the nation. Most centrally, both conflated nation and territory, as if they were inherently inseparable entities; both presented the feeling of 'love for country' as obvious common sense; and, finally, both talked of national homelands as eternal. Fichte, for example, directly conflated nation and 'fatherland' in asking "what is love of fatherland, or, to express it more correctly, what is love of the individual for his nation?" (1968 [1807-8]: 111). Drawing on his organic theory of the state, Fichte then suggested that only those who loved their nation – those who realised their place in the 'organic whole' – could love their eternal fatherland:

> He who does not first regard himself as eternal has in him no love of any kind, and, moreover, cannot love a fatherland, a thing which for him does not exist. He who regards his invisible life as eternal, but not his visible life as similarly eternal, may perhaps have a heaven and therein, a fatherland, but here below he has no fatherland, for this, too, is regarded only in the image of eternity – eternity visible and made sensuous – and for this reason also he is unable to love his fatherland. If none has been handed down to such a man, he is to be pitied. But he to whom a fatherland has been handed down, and in whose soul heaven and earth, visible and invisible meet and mingle, and thus, and only thus, create a true and enduring heaven – such a man fights to the last drop of his blood to hand on the precious possession unimpaired to his posterity (1968 [1807-8]: 117).

In a similar way, Herder directly conflated 'people' and 'region', while asserting that a nation would belong to and love only its 'natural' patch of the Earth:

> Observe yon locusts of the Earth, the Kalmuc and Mungal: they are fitted for no region but their own hills and mountains. The light rider flies on his little horse over immense tracts of the desert… Here these wild tribes, yet preserving good order among themselves, wander about among the luxuriant grass, and pasture their herds: the horses, their associates, know their voices, and live like them in peace… In every other region of the Earth the Mungal has either degenerated or improved: *in his own country he is what he was thousands of years ago*, and such will he continue (1968 [1784-1791]: 8, emphasis added; see similar sentiments in Crawfurd 1863).

These sentiments – that the nation is a community naturally embedded in particular segments of the Earth's surface – have, as I will demonstrate below, found echo in much subsequent theorisation and understanding of the nation.

Fichte's and Herder's ideas – that nations represent the natural vessels for shared reason and thought, eternally connected with particular portions of the Earth's surface – have been widely criticised. Many, for example, have noted that language is a weak criteria for nation: many languages spread across international boundaries, some nations include populations of various languages, and indeed the content of 'a language' resists an essentialist capture (Renan 1990 [1882]: 12; Giddens 1985: 117; Davidson 2005: Ch 7). More importantly, it must also be recognised that Fichte and Herder sat clearly *within* nationalist discourse, trumpeting the 'natural existence' of a phenomena they themselves were (as modernists would suggest) imagining and inventing. More of this criticism will be discussed below. What is important to observe here is that despite such criticism, the ideas behind Fichte's and Herder's thinking saw many years of profound influence. Both nationalist thinkers, and scholars of

the phenomenon, long talked of the nation in the terms described above. Indeed, the idea that the nation was a natural element of the human condition remained crucial to much 19th and early 20th century political thought. Though modernist thinkers have (as I will show below) mounted a powerful critique of such an argument, we must recognise that there remain scholars who have argued that the nation is a form of community perhaps *changed* by modernity, but nevertheless, inherently connected with the communities of the past. It is to these scholars I now turn.

An anthropological assessment: primordial ties in modern times

The conceptualisation of the nation offered by Clifford Geertz (1963a; 1963b) and Edward Shils (1957) centred on what I suggest is primordialist thinking: that the ethnic group is the necessary direct predecessor to the modern nation. These writers admitted that modernity occasioned dramatic changes for the peoples of the world, yet they stressed that the nations we see in the world today *require* the "primordial bonds" (Geertz 2000: 31) and "primordial affinities" (Shils 1957: 131) of the ethnic group.

Geertz's discussion focused largely on the 'peoples of the new states' who emerged to independence in the wave of decolonisation after the Second World War. At root, Geertz suggested that people's political motivations in these new states were simultaneously driven by two "powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives – the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions 'matter,' and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state" (2000: 30). In essence, one of these motives was a 'practical desire' for a 'modern' and 'efficient' state; the other, was a desire for *identity*. The key to Geertz's theory was that this identity – though pushed into a new context by modernity – was inescapably derived from a series of 'primordial attachments' or 'givens' of social existence (2000: 31). These 'givens' included a number of facets – family, religion, language, custom or region – yet their power rested in the very fact of the bond itself:

> One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, *ipso facto*; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, *but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself* (Geertz 1963a: 109; see further discussion in 1974).

This argument presented the 'terminal political community' of these new states as inescapably based on primordial communities; this was a position Geertz clearly derived from Shils' work.

In Shils' argument, the large and 'impersonal' modern society was clearly directly based on the 'primordial affinities' of the ethnic group. In essence, Shils suggested that modern society – the modern nation – was, despite its tendencies towards the soulless, impersonal and egotistical '*Gesellschaft*', held together by the powerful ties of ethnicity:

> As I see it, modern society is no lonely crowd, no horde of refugees fleeing from freedom. It is no *Gesellschaft*, soulless, egotistical, loveless, faithless, utterly impersonal and lacking any integrative forces other than interest or coercion. It is held together by an infinity of personal attachments, moral obligations in concrete contexts, professional and creative pride, individual ambition, primordial affinities and a civil sense which is low in many, high in some, and moderate in most (1957: 131).

The modern nation, here, was simply the amalgamation of the '*Gemeinschaft*'; an amalgamation of the highly integrated ethnic communities of old (Shils 1957: 132).

Shils and Geertz demonstrated understandings of the nation perhaps more nuanced than those offered by Fichte and Herder. Their recognition of modernity, for example, accepted that the pre-existing ethnic communities were forced into a new context. Yet in Geertz's assessment we can find an understanding of the physical that belied a lingering belief that the territories claimed by nations were somehow primordial. Thus in enunciating "the actual foci around which such [primordial] discontent tends to crystallize", he included "region":

> Although a factor nearly everywhere, regionalism naturally tends to be especially troublesome in geographically heterogeneous areas. Tonkin, Annam and Cochin in prepartitioned Vietnam, the two baskets on the long pole, were opposed almost purely in regional terms, sharing language, culture, race etc. The tension between East and West Pakistan involves differences in language and culture too, but the geographic element is of great prominence owing to the territorial discontinuity of the country … [These are] examples in which regionalism has been an important primordial factor in national politics (Geertz 1963a: 113).

This may seem a somewhat obvious argument, yet it masks some key spatial assumptions. In essence, there can be nothing primordial about any of the regions mentioned. Certainly, people are born at particular physical places, and their attachment to the village of their birth may, indeed, be a 'primordial' sentiment. Yet the 'regions' Geertz discussed – East and West Pakistan, prepartitioned Vietnam – are simply impossible to imagine without the complicated *modern* process of their creation. To do so, as Geertz did, is to overstate the 'primordial'. Beyond this, it is also important to recognise that Geertz treated the attachment to such 'primordial regions' (as with his other 'givens') as 'unaccountable' and 'non-rational' (1963a: 109, 128), as if we cannot account for such a feeling. This, I suggest, is a flawed way to approach the phenomena of nations and nationalism (see discussion in A D Smith 1998: 154).

Perennialism

Perhaps the clearest contemporary argument for the pre-modern existence of nations can be found in the body of work known as 'perennialism'. In this, John Armstrong (in *Nations before Nationalism* (1982)) and Hugh Seton-Watson (in *Nationalism, Old and New* (1964) and *Nations and States* (1977)), argued that the oft-made modernist argument – that the nation is an unprecedented *modern* phenomenon – is a fallacy. Instead, these authors suggested that we should look to the '*longue durée*',

or a "time dimension of many centuries", and recognise that the group we know as the nation "permeates the historical record" (Armstrong 1982: 3-4).

Both Seton-Watson and Armstrong accepted, from the very outset of their works, that national*ism* is a modern phenomenon, a doctrine existent only after the French Revolution (Seton-Watson 1964: 5; 1977: 6; Armstrong 1982: 4). Yet importantly, both were at pains to suggest that *nations* – directly counter to the modernist position – existed long before this. In Armstrong's account, the 'nation' was but a modern name for the ethnic group, a sociological phenomena he saw throughout the historical record. At the heart of his study, Armstrong was interested (drawing on the work of Fredrik Barth (1969)) not in the 'essence' of an ethnic group or a nation, but in the boundaries *between* nations, *between* ethnicities. It was these attitudinal boundaries, Armstrong suggested, that allowed the long term maintenance and persistence of an ethnic group or nation (1982: 7). "Modern nationalism", in this perspective, was merely a "part of a cycle of ethnic consciousness" (Armstrong 1982: 4).

Seton-Watson rested his understanding of nations and nationalism on the (rather vague) definition that "a nation exists when an active and fairly numerous section of its members are convinced that it exists" (1964: 5). The important point here is that for Seton-Watson, it is clear that well *before* 1789 (that is, well before the French Revolution), "old nations", such as "the English, Scots, French, Dutch, Castilians and Portuguese… Danes and Swedes… Hungarians, Poles and Russians" could be found in Europe (1977: 7). These nations (different, he suggested, to those 'new nations' formed after the French Revolution) came to awareness of their existence via a "slow and obscure" development, "not willed by any one" (Seton-Watson 1977: 8). In essence, the nation was not a necessarily modern phenomenon, but an entity that could emerge at any time when enough people became convinced of its existence.

It has been suggested (see Bellamy 1999: 122; A D Smith 1998: 174) that the central problem with perennialist accounts of the nation is their projection of modern understandings of community and land onto vastly different historical epochs. While both Seton-Watson and Armstrong recognised (if, perhaps, a little belatedly) the shifting nature of political boundaries (see Armstrong 1982: 14; Seton-Watson 1977: 17), I suggest that this projection of modern understandings on to the past is nowhere more apparent than in their spatial assumptions. At a simple level, this means these authors found modern understandings of territory in the past. Armstrong, for example, suggested that "medieval farmers *in France* adopted the instrumentally superior German peasant house type at the very moment when German upper classes were adopting French styles" (1982: 14-15, emphasis added). While it is entirely plausible that these forms of architecture saw geographical movement in these times (see discussion in Fletcher 1948: 292), and that medieval farmers had some idea of the political and ecclesiastic boundaries that circumscribed their lives, this argument lumped together forms of the

physical world in entirely modern ways. Did these farmers understand themselves as adopting *German* styles of architecture, or just styles seen in a neighbouring village? Did they see such an adoption as a transgression of what deserved to be 'in France', or did they have no particular care for what forms were normal and natural 'in France'? Even when Armstrong noticed the role of nationalism in such a development, he still seemed to suggest that the nation, and particularly *national* ways of understanding and being in the world, extended deep into history:

> Such forms as peasant house construction or village layouts that are intimately related to the life cycle, might plausibly become cherished marks of ethnic identity. Some latter-day nationalists have singled out such forms for idealization as, for example, the Ukrainian whitewashed adobe and thatch cottage versus the Russian timbered house (1982: 14).

In Armstrong's account, the 'Ukrainian whitewashed adobe and thatch cottage' was presented as an unproblematic element of Ukrainian national culture, merely *highlighted* by later nationalists. This treatment suggests that those who built such houses *before* the nationalist 'idealisation' still considered themselves to be performing a 'Ukrainian' architecture. This is, I suggest, an entirely problematic way of looking at the past.

Ethno-symbolism

In the work of Anthony D Smith (in particular, in *The Ethnic Revival* (1981) and *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986)), John Hutchinson (in *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism* (1987)) and Walker Connor (in *Ethnonationalism* (1994a)) we can find a fourth significant camp to have suggested that our understanding of the nation should not be limited to modernity and its influence. At root, the thinkers of this camp have argued that the nation – though modern – is inherently and inescapably connected with the ethnic communities that permeate the historical record.

Smith accepted – like the perennialists described above – the inherent modernity of the phenomenon of nationalism. Indeed, Smith moved beyond the arguments of Armstrong to suggest that even the nation itself – when defined as

> a group of human beings, possessing common and distinctive elements of culture, a unified economic system, citizenship rights for all members, a sentiment of solidarity arising out of common experiences, and occupying a common territory

– is inherently modern (A D Smith 1998: 188; 1995). Yet for Smith, an analysis of such an entity as exclusively modern could answer only some of the important questions. In essence, Smith suggested that even though the *nation* might be modern, to understand why and how *particular* nations formed, we must turn to an analysis of the communities that were in existence beforehand (1991: vii). Simply, to understand contemporary nations, we must look to "their ethnic background" (A D Smith 1986: 13). Doing this, Smith suggested, we find that "many nations and nationalisms spring up on the basis of

pre-existing *ethnie* [ethnic groups] and their ethnocentrisms"; moreover, to 'forge' a nation, it seems essential to gather and draw on pre-existing ethnic components (1986: 17; 2000: 1398).

At the core of his theory, Smith argued that "throughout history and in several continents" we can find evidence of communities – such as the Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Persians, Chinese and Japanese – which have held a significant continuity (1998: 191). These groups, or *ethnie*, demonstrated significant and lasting continuity of "name, language, customs, religious community and territorial association" (A D Smith 1998: 191). They were not, according to Smith, nations; yet thanks to their continuity, they offered significant symbolic resonance for the modern nations which developed in their place (1991: Ch 3).

Smith began *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* with an interesting question: "why are men and women willing to die for their countries?" (1986: 6). This, he suggested, was something that remained inexplicable in the modernist theories of the nation. Perhaps. What I suggest however is that if we unpack this question, we come to some of the key problems with Smith's 'ethno-symbolism', and some of the key spatial assumptions upon which his theory was based.

What I suggest is that asking why people are willing to die for their 'country' was a neat trick for Smith. The word 'country' is, of course, used throughout the literature in a deliberately ambiguous fashion, to mean either state, nation or territory. Perhaps Smith's reason for using the word 'country' in such a question, was, then, to immediately shortcut those who would suggest that people also seem willing – with little discrimination – to die for states (such as the Soviet Union), as well as for nations, or for patches of the Earth's surface they might consider their own. Yet perhaps more importantly, it also points to another connection in Smith's ethno-symbolism – that both the nation and the *ethnie* are necessarily united in their connection with the 'country'. This, I suggest, is a clear writing of inherently *modern* understandings of nation and country onto the *ethnie* of the past.

Smith's projection of modern understandings of nation and country onto his pre-modern *ethnie* can be seen most clearly in his mapping of the key dimensions of the *ethnie*. One important aspect of an *ethnie*, for Smith, was "an association with a specific territory" (1986: 28). "*Ethnie* always possess", argued Smith, "ties to a particular locus or territory, which they call their 'own'" (1986: 28). As examples, Smith suggested that "recognition is accorded to *ethnie* who still inhabit their 'original home', like the Bretons in Brittany, the Mongols in Mongolia or the Tibetans in Tibet" (1986: 29). The problem with this is that we *cannot* assume that prior to the onset of modernity, 'the Mongols' understood 'Mongolia' to be 'their own'. On the one hand, we must recognise that regardless of how this particular area of the Earth's physical surface was understood in pre-modern times the word 'Mongolia' now evokes a *geographically specified* area of the Earth's surface. This, I suggest, has

only become possible with modernity. On the other hand, how can we know that prior to the onset of modernity, 'the Mongols' as an *ethnie*, considered any land to be 'their own'? In what way did the nomadic tribes of this area think of land rights? Did a sense of land 'ownership' extend beyond the warlords and chiefs to women, to the low ranked, to slaves? In essence, the territory of an *ethnie* and the territory of a modern nation must be understood as radically different entities – defined in radically different systems of knowledge, and defined in relationship to radically different sources of authority. This difference will, of course, form a significant element of the discussion in chapter 2.

The nation as prior to modernity?

A variety of theorists have argued that the nation is a form of community existent prior to the onset of modernity. In the minds of the primordialists, represented (in different ways) by Fichte, Herder, Geertz and Shils, nations are ancient elements of human history, the inescapable divisions of humanity. In the thinking of the perennialists – Armstrong and Seton-Watson – the nation is not necessarily a natural division of humanity, yet it is a form that can be found throughout the historical record. Finally, in the thinking of the ethno-symbolists – Smith, Connor and Hutchinson – the nation itself may be a modern form, yet the communities from which it emerged (and emerges) are necessarily the much more ancient *ethnie*. In all, these thinkers have suggested that the national communities we see across the face of the Earth today *necessarily* draw on countless centuries of prior communal existence; they are, essentially, *not modern*.

Some of the particular problems with these theories have been discussed briefly above. In general, however, we can offer here the central critique of these theories as offered by the modernist understandings of nations and nationalism. In this, all theories that suggest that the nation is a form existent prior to modernity – regardless of their individual details – can quite clearly be charged with projecting *modern* understandings of time, space, people and politics on to the communities of the past. In essence, the thinkers discussed above in some way or other appear trapped within the *nationalist* writing of history and community. To return briefly to the questions driving this research: if we were to follow a primordialist account of nations and nationalism, we must take the Indian national territory as something already considered to be owned by the 'Indian people' prior to the onset of modernity. The problem with this, I argue, is that prior to modernity there existed no ability to know with any certainty what this Indian national territory was and where this Indian national territory was in the world. This certainty – as I will suggest and demonstrate in greater detail in chapter 2 – is something that only became possible with the advent of the modern understandings of the physical. Before that, we can now turn to a discussion of the various thinkers who have raised this critique, who have suggested that the nation, as a form, is inescapably modern.

The nation as modern

In recent decades, the idea that 'humanity is naturally divided into nations', that 'the nation is a form of community embedded in human history', has seen sustained criticism. At the heart of this, many theorists have contended that the nation is a form of community only made possible by *modernity*. In this section, I chart some of the key thinkers to have argued this. Three broad positions will be traced, each focusing on a different aspect of the 'modernity' of nations. To begin, I discuss the ideas of Elie Kedourie. In Kedourie's thinking, the nation is a form only made possible by the revolutions in European philosophy of the Enlightenment; for Kedourie, the nation is, in essence, an *idea*. Following this, I turn to thinkers – in particular, John Breuilly and Anthony Giddens – who have contended that the modern bureaucratic state is the driving force behind the emergence of nations. Finally, I turn to a variety of thinkers – in particular, Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson – who have seen the development of nations in the advent of the industrial revolution and modern capitalism.

The nation as a development of the Enlightenment

Elie Kedourie began his *Nationalism* with a statement of what is probably the core argument of modernist thought. "Nationalism", suggested Kedourie,

> is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right organization of a society of states (1993: 1).

In essence, Kedourie argued that the 'popular' understanding of nations and nationalism – that "humanity is naturally divided into nations", that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained and that the "only legitimate type of government is national self-government" (1993: 1) – was a *modern* political fabrication: an *idea* crafted at a particular time and place for particular ends.

Kedourie's understanding of the rise of nations and nationalism rested on two pillars: the philosophical developments of the Enlightenment, and a set of particular socio-political conditions within which these philosophical developments were embraced and taken up. At root, Kedourie suggested that the doctrine of nationalism emerged from the thinking, and reaction to the thinking, of Immanuel Kant.

Kant himself was not a nationalist. However, his philosophical work (highlighted by *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) and *Perpetual Peace* (1794)), made important steps that others followed and extrapolated towards the doctrine of nationalism. The key to Kant's philosophical revolution, for Kedourie, was his metaphysical

separation of the external, 'phenomenal world', from an individual's 'inner world'. In this dichotomy, the external world was the source of knowledge, yet this 'phenomenal knowledge' could not make a solid foundation for morality: "if morality were derived from this kind of knowledge", Kedourie suggested of Kant, "then we could never be free but always the slave either of contingency or of blind impersonal laws" (1993: 14). For Kant, this meant that an individual could only be free when he obeyed "the laws of morality which he finds within himself, and not in the external world" (Kedourie 1993: 15). What all this meant, for Kedourie, was that the philosophical revolution that separated Kant from earlier thinkers was that he treated 'the individual' as the sovereign and centre of their own universe; "the idea of self-determination", in implication, became "the highest moral and political good" (Kedourie 1993: 24).

Kant's idea of self-determination was, of course, an inherently *political* philosophy. Though in Kant's work this led to republican preference (see A D Smith 1971: 32), other thinkers extrapolated the idea of self-determination in a different way. Thus, Kedourie argued, after Kant a number of influential thinkers came to argue "that the end of politics and the vocation of all citizens was that absorption into the universal consciousness which hitherto had been the ambition only of a few philosophers and mystics" (1993: 33). In essence, in this 'post-Kantian theory' (represented variously by the works of Fichte (described above), Friedrich Schlegel, Adam Müller, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ernst Moritz Arndt, Friedrich Jahn and others), the idea of 'absorption into the universal consciousness' became, thanks to the ideas of language community offered by Herder, explicitly *nationalist.*

The key to the political rise of the 'post-Kantian theory' of the nation, rested, for Kedourie, in the social climate of the time. In this, a class of writers and thinkers discontented and marginalised from political influence in the German principalities of the early 19th century saw, in the ideas of Fichte, Herder and Arndt, a means of escape and a means to power. As Kedourie suggested, when Fichte, Schleiermacher and the other writers of the 'post-Kantian theory' of the nation talked of what the state ought to be, they were developing a new, powerful form of mass politics. In this form of politics, their philosophical ideas of nation were explicitly naturalised, and explicitly focused on the German nation (Kedourie 1993: 35). In essence, they began – perhaps led by Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* – behaving as if they were members of a nation. In later waves – spreading across Europe and, later, Africa and Asia – similarly marginalised and discontented youths embraced Fichte's ideas of the nation; the doctrine of nationalism gradually built 'a world of nations' (see Kedourie 1971).

As Kedourie admitted, when Fichte delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation* in 1807-8 "there was, politically, no German nation":

> The German-speaking parts of Europe had the most diverse political arrangements, and the fact that Prussians and Bavarians, Bohemians and Silesians all spoke German was not considered of

> great political moment, certainly not enough to warrant the disruption of so many settled institutions (1993: 63).

Indeed, the early German nationalists of the time were forced to resort to *describing* what Germany – what the 'fatherland' – *ought* to be. Here Kedourie (1993: 63) quoted the well-known poem of Ernst Moritz Arndt, *The German Fatherland*:

> Name me the great country!
> Where the German tongue sounds
> and sings *lieder* in God's Praise,
> That's what it ought to be.
> Call that thine, valiant German!...
> That is the fatherland of the German –
> Where anger roots out foreign nonsense,
> Where every Frenchman is called enemy,
> Where every German is called friend –
> That is what it ought to be.
> It ought to be the whole of Germany!

In essence, the territorial 'Germany' was *not*, at this time, a popularly understood concept. Yet throughout his work, Kedourie marginalised the socially constructed nature of the territory 'Germany', and regularly presented it as an already established 'area'. In one passage for example, "Fichte, Schleiermacher, and their fellow-writers" were presented by Kedourie as having "before their eyes the conditions in Prussia and the numerous other states *of Germany*"; in another, Kedourie talked of "eighteenth-century Germany" (1993: 35, 53, emphasis added). This may seem only a minor problem for Kedourie's theory, something not crucial to the core of his argument. Yet it does (to echo Bellamy 1999: 125) highlight the way Kedourie's account stepped into the meta-narrative account of nation formation of the primordialists; as if the 'German people' came naturally to possess the obvious 'German fatherland'. This can be seen most dramatically in a passage where Kedourie recounted the memoirs of Arndt:

> Arndt (1769-1860), in his memoirs published in 1840, recalls with triumphant contempt that in the last decades of the eighteenth century even farmers' daughters *in his small North German town* affected to converse in French: 'Scraps of French were thrown in, too, every now and then, and I remember my amusement when I began to learn the language…' (1993: 53-54, emphasis added).

What I suggest we must ask is what made this – as Kedourie recounted – a 'North German town'? For Arndt (as his poem *The German Fatherland* suggested) a town was 'German' if people spoke German there. This seems to have been the standard method used to define Germany amongst the nationalists of this time (see Fichte 1968 [1807-8]; Kedourie 1993: 63). Yet why should Kedourie accept this, and recount this town's location as 'German'? As recounted in this very story, people were obviously also speaking French there, and perhaps even more regularly than Arndt would admit. So what made the town 'German'? In essence, the town was German because Arndt considered it so. What this means, I suggest, is that Kedourie appears here to have accepted the nationalist writing of territory, something we must strive to do away with.

The nation as produced by the state

The development of the bureaucratic state has been held by many as one of the key developments of 'modernity', one of the key features of the modern world system (see, for example Giddens 1985: 5). It is within this development that a number of thinkers have located the emergence of the phenomena of nations and nationalism. As Anthony Giddens has argued, "the nation and nationalism are distinctive *properties of* modern states"; a 'nation' "*only exists* when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed" (1985: 116; 1994: 34, emphasis added). John Breuilly (in *Nationalism and the State* (1985)) and Anthony Giddens (in *The Nation-State and Violence* (1985) and *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990)) have offered some of the more compelling arguments regarding the irreplaceable role of the state in the development of modern nations.

In Giddens' account, the nation is the necessary and inescapable corollary of the modern state. In essence, Giddens viewed the nation (counter to the variety of thinkers – described in part above – who have argued the nation is some sort of cultural community) as the population which accepts and / or supports a state's claim to the monopoly of violence in the territory in which they live. The nation is, in this light, "a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states" (1985: 116). A 'nation', then, is not possible *prior* to the modern state, but something that emerged *with* it. In more specific terms, Giddens located the emergence of such a 'nation-state' (which is, in truth, the focus of his enquiry in *The Nation-State and Violence*) in the development of the administrative capabilities of surveillance and control of the use of violence (1990: 57-8; 1985: 2). Both these capabilities may have been sought or claimed by pre-modern states, yet it was only in modern nation-states that such claims became successful. Essentially, these new administrative capabilities of surveillance and control of the use of violence offered the production of "a power-container" whose administrative purview corresponded exactly "to its territorial delimitation"; more simply, these capabilities offered 'internal pacification' (1985: 172, 181-192). This 'internal pacification', in Giddens' thinking, was the very essence of the modern nation. In this conceptualisation, nationalism becomes an after-thought: a 'psychological phenomenon', cast as "the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing communality among the members of a political order" (Giddens 1985: 116).

In a conception similar to that offered by Giddens, John Breuilly offered another account of nations and nationalism centred on the emergence of the modern state. Importantly, where Giddens was interested more in the emergence of the *nation* as the necessary corollary of the modern state (or, indeed, in the 'nation-state'), Breuilly was more interested in *nationalism*. In essence, Breuilly argued

that nationalism should be seen as a form of politics which makes sense *only* in the context of a specific world where the power of the state is the focus and goal of politics (1985: 352). That is, beyond the 'psychological phenomenon' that Giddens considered it to be, nationalism, for Breuilly, was the form of politics which has grown ineluctably with the modern state.

Breuilly traced the growth of nationalism to the emergence of the 'modern state', or, more correctly, to the emergence of the clear possession of "sovereignty over a given territory" (1985: 355). This form of state began to appear in the early modern period, when a number of monarchies began to acquire "enough control over matters such as taxation, the church and justice as to be able to conceive of themselves as sovereign" (1985: 359). Crucially for Breuilly's account, these early modern monarchies only arrived at such sovereignty through a process of negotiation, "between the ruler and the political community of the core territory under his sway" (1985: 359). That is, though their power was conceived as sovereign, it only emerged as so through some measure of consent of the governed. It was in this dialogue, between the emerging sovereign state and the emerging political community, that Breuilly has located the early emergence of the nation. Now, necessarily and inherently paralleled with this dialogue was the ability to deny consent: in the possibility of opposition, Breuilly argued, we can find the rise of *nationalism* as a form of politics (1985: 359).

Both Giddens and Breuilly based their conceptualisations of nations and nationalism on the Weberian definition of the state. That is, for both theorists, the development of the state monopoly of violence over a given territory was crucial. Such an argument, I suggest, offers a great deal to understand the production of a national territory. Giddens' discussion of the role of surveillance, for example, offers us much to understand how certain areas become part of the 'territory' of the nation. Importantly however, this use of the Weberian definition of the state blocks both these theorists from exploring some crucial aspects of the spatiality of nations and nationalism.

To begin, neither theory offered a sufficient means to account for the spatial ideas of nationalist ideologies. That is, in neither Breuilly's nor Giddens' pictures can we account for the sites nationalist ideologies make special, for the behaviours which are condemned in particular areas, or for the development of dreams of irredentism. This became particularly problematic for Breuilly when he drew on such 'nationalist' understandings of territory. In this, "the first real nationalist movements", Breuilly argued, "were movements of either unification or separation" (1985: 361). These, he suggested, developed "when the existing state [was] held to have *different boundaries from those of the nation*" (1985: 361, emphasis added). Yet Breuilly's theory, drawing on the *state* production of nations, cannot truly account for such non-state 'boundaries of the nation'. Like Kedourie, Breuilly slipped at such points to accepting the nationalist writing of the world; in a discussion of Herder's early life (in the mid 18th century), Breuilly noted that he

> grew up in an intellectual environment which was putting increasing emphasis on particularity and variety in human affairs and in which history was developing as a critical discipline. *Germany itself was a land* of contrast, with many petty states alongside large and powerful ones (1985: 337, emphasis added).

Again we can ask, what made this Germany? What is most clear is that this 'Germany' was *not* defined by the extent of the monopoly of violence which sat at the heart of Breuilly's conceptualisation of nations and nationalism. Building on this, it is also important to recognise that neither theory offered much to access the understandings that individuals have of their national territory. Certainly, an individual may understand the world around them as under the authority of the sovereign state – but does this make it their home, or a country (to echo Smith (1986: 6)) for which they would die?

The nation as a result of industrial capitalism

At the beginning of his *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, Tom Nairn declared that more than once, "Ernest Gellner remarked that the true subject of all modern philosophy is industrialisation" (1997: 1):

> Modern philosophers (ie since David Hume) may believe they have been ruminating upon universal standards, the Soul, God, Infinity and other capital-letter constructions. In truth, all they have been trying to do is cope with the after-effects of the steam-engine (1997: 1).

Echoing such sentiments, many have argued that industrialisation – "and its prolonged after-shock, 'modernity'" (Nairn 1997: 1) – rests at the very root of the modern nation. In this section, I trace in the works of Ernest Gellner (in particular, in *Thought and Change* (1964) and *Nations and Nationalism* (1983)), Eric Hobsbawm (in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) and *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1992)) and Benedict Anderson (in *Imagined Communities* (1991)) some of the more influential thinkers to have argued such a position.

At the heart of Gellner's work on nations and nationalism was the understanding – drawn directly from Kedourie – that nationalism is "logically contingent": "that it has none of the naturalness attributed to it, that it does not spring from some universal root"; yet at the same time (and contra Kedourie) this same phenomenon is *sociologically necessary* in modern industrial societies (1964: 151, emphasis added). Both *Thought and Change* and *Nations and Nationalism* can be read as attempts to spell out this sociological necessity, and to describe the resultant process of nation formation.

Gellner based his understanding of nationalism in *Thought and Change* on the argument that in any society, an inverse relationship exists between the importance of 'structure' and 'culture' (1964: 154). That is, if a society is rigidly structured, culture is less than crucial; if, on the other hand, a society is

only loosely structured, culture becomes ever more essential. A pre-modern society, for example, holds a system of structural relationships that are known and highly depended upon; as a result, a shared culture is not necessary. "In the stable, repetitive relationship of lord and peasant," suggested Gellner,

> it matters very little whether they both speak (in the literal sense) the same language. They have long ago sized each other up: each knows what the other wants, the tricks he may get up to, the defences and counter-measures which, in the given situation, are available, and so on (1964: 154).

In such a rigidly structured society, communication depends not on mutual language or cultural comprehension; it is, instead, heavily context dependant (see further discussion in Gellner 1987: ch 2). A modern society, however, enjoys a relationship between 'structure' and 'culture' quite the reverse. In essence, the 'wave of modernisation' ushered in by industrialisation saw great numbers of people dragged from agricultural life to the anonymous industrial city. In this new world, the stable and intimate structures of old held little meaning. Without them, the new proletariat were forced to form communities based on shared language and culture; to form what for Gellner would eventually amount to nations.

Building on such an idea of nation formation, Gellner stressed that the 'wave of modernisation' was inherently uneven (1964: 166). Because of this, stratification occurred between the new cultural communities dragged to the industrial city. "Consider the tidal wave of modernisation", suggested Gellner (1964: 166),

> suppose it passes, in succession, territories A and B, where both these are initially under the same sovereignty… The fact that the wave hit A first and B later, means that at the time when dislocation and misery are at their height in B, A is already approaching affluence or … the period of mass consumption. B, politically united with A, is a slum area of the total society comprising both A and B. What happens to the men originating from B?

What happens, suggested Gellner, is – if 'the men from B' can be differentiated by pigmentation, culture or language – the politicisation of their 'nationality': the emergence of nationalism.

Much – though not all – of this theory remained central to Gellner's understanding of nations and nationalism throughout his career. Importantly however, the theory presented in *Thought and Change* offered little to explain the maintenance of literate cultures in the new modern societies, and little to explain why certain 'differentiable' characteristics and not others became the dividing line between nations. To address these problems, Gellner offered an expanded theory in *Nations and Nationalism*.

As with *Thought and Change*, Gellner based his theory in *Nations and Nationalism* on the transformative role of industrialisation. In this case, his argument rested on the premise that "industrial society is the only society ever to live by and rely on *sustained and perpetual growth*, on an expected and continuous improvement" (1983: 22, emphasis added; see also 1997: Ch 4). In essence, where the earlier theory talked of the replacement of traditional 'structures' with linguistic 'culture' as

the basis of modern nations, Gellner's theory in *Nations and Nationalism* stressed that modern growth-orientated economies have *required* specific types of populations. In this population requirement, and its production, Gellner found the modern nation.

The key to this theory was the idea that a modern growth oriented society requires both a "mobile division of labour" and "communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning" (Gellner 1983: 34). Essentially, these two facts allowed the "rapid and continuous change of both the economic role system [and the] occupancy of places within it" (Gellner 1983: 24; 1974: 146). Importantly, it was also, for Gellner, precisely what allowed the production of a modern nation. What this means is that in Gellner's theory, the facilitation of both a mobile labour force and 'precise communication between strangers' were the key to nation formation. Gellner found this facilitation in what he termed 'exo-socialisation'.

At root, the only way an industrial society can maintain a mobile labour force is to ensure a level of 'exo-socialisation': specifically, a process of standardised training outside the home. This exo-socialisation, or schooling, gives two things. First, it ensures that workers have a level of generic training in literacy and numeracy upon which specific role training can be built (Gellner 1983: 27-31; 1974: ch 11). This means that people can be retrained and reassigned within the labour market. This is, of course, one hinge of mobility. Secondly, the process of exo-socialisation also develops a form of communication that is context-free. To elaborate, Gellner suggested that

> In a traditional social order, the languages of the hunt, of harvesting, of various rituals, of the council room, of the kitchen or harem, *all form autonomous systems*: to conjoin statements drawn from these various disparate fields, to probe for inconsistencies between them, to try and unify them all, this would be a social solecism or worse, probably blasphemy or impiety, and the very endeavour would be unintelligible. *By contrast, in our society it is assumed that all referential uses of language ultimately refer to one coherent world*, and can be reduced to a unitary idiom; and that it is legitimate to relate them to each other (1983: 21, emphasis added).

Essentially, Gellner held that only those able to communicate in a comprehensive, context-free language are useful to the modern industrial society. This means that the production method of such people – the large, complex and academy supervised system of public education – is crucial for the functioning of modern society, and crucial to the production of nations. In this theory, nationalism, then is

> about entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which is co-extensive with an entire political unit and its total population, and which must be of this kind if it is to be compatible with the kind of division of labour, the type or mode of production, on which this society is based (Gellner 1983: 95; see also Gellner 1995a: ch 4).

In the work of Eric Hobsbawm, we can find a similar placing of industrialisation at the root of modern nation formation. Like Gellner, Hobsbawm began with the premise that the nation is a construct conceived and produced by the forces of nationalism. As Hobsbawm quoted Gellner:

> Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent… political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality (Gellner, cited in Hobsbawm 1990: 10).

Beyond this, Hobsbawm also drew attention to the economic role of nations, noting that as a form, "nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state… but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development" (1992: 10; see also 1975: 94). This understanding of nations and nationalism clearly echoed Gellner; yet Hobsbawm found some fault with Gellner's focus on the "perspective of modernization from above" (1992: 12). In essence, Hobsbawm suggested that though nations clearly play a crucial role in the industrial economy at large, they "cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" (1992: 10).

In this mode, Hobsbawm suggested in his introduction to collection *The Invention of Tradition* (edited with Terrence Ranger (1983)) that the symbols and practices trumpeted by modern nationalist movements seem to perform a specific role in the modern (industrially generated) nation. The key to this, he suggested, lies in their appearance. As an example, Hobsbawm suggests that "nothing *appears* more ancient, and linked to an immemorial past, than the pageantry which surrounds British monarchy in its public ceremonial manifestations" (1983: 1, emphasis added). Similarly, other British 'traditions' – hunting helmets, judge's wigs and Christmas carols – also *appear* to be ineluctably linked to the past. Yet – and this is crucial to Hobsbawm's argument – no matter how much these institutions and symbols 'of the nation' appear to be ancient, they are often fabrications or distortions instilled through the process of modernisation. They are, in essence, 'invented traditions'. (This 'invented tradition' is, we must stress, is a conception clearly distinct from Benedict Anderson's influential 'imagined communities', to be discussed below). In this argument, the 'invented tradition' (such as the pageantry surrounding the British monarchy), exists to perform a specific function: to instil certain values and norms and imply continuity with the past (1983: 1). The fact that such traditions *need* to be invented to imply continuity with the past sits at the heart of Hobsbawm's understanding of nationalism. In essence, "where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented"; that which is *authentically* 'traditional' needs no nationalist trumpeting (Hobsbawm 1983: 8). For Hobsbawm, that which is understood to be the 'stuff' of the nation – the 'invented traditions' trumpeted by nationalism – sit as a 'substitute for lost dreams'. At heart, the symbols and traditions 'of nation' are crafted to provide emotional substitutes for dissolved pre-modern attachments.

Like Gellner and Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson located modern nation formation in the vast and dramatic changes spurred by industrialisation. However, where Gellner and Hobsbawm sought to explore the *need* modern industrial economies have for nations and nationalism, and the *reason* for

their 'invention' and 'fabrication', Anderson was more interested in the *shape* of the national world itself (1991: 6; compare Hobsbawm 1992: 10; Gellner 1964: 168). At root, Anderson argued, "*all communities* larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity / genuineness, but *by the style in which they are imagined*" (1991: 6, emphasis added). It is this 'style in which it is imagined' that Anderson sought of the nation.

At the very heart of his theory, Anderson suggested that we should understand modernity as marked by the onset of significant changes in the broad, culturally fundamental "modes of apprehending the world" (1991: 22). It is within these dramatic changes in the modes of apprehending the world (for which this thesis has a great affinity) that Anderson suggested we can find what "made it possible to 'think' the nation" (1991: 22).

At the onset of modernity, Anderson argued, three heavily interlinked 'cultural conceptions' of great antiquity, "lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds" (1991: 36). The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language (Latin in western Europe, Chinese and Arabic in other parts of the world) offered privileged access to ontological truth, "precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth" (B Anderson 1991: 36). As Anderson argued, these script-languages were, in pre-modern times, "emanations of reality, *not* randomly fabricated representations of it" (1991: 14). The second of these broad 'cultural conceptions' which lost their grip with modernity was the idea that societies were naturally and inescapably organised around 'high centres'; that societies were ruled by monarchs who derived power from some cosmological or divine power (B Anderson 1991: 36). Finally, the third of these broad 'cultural conceptions' was that cosmology and history were essentially the same thing; that the origins of the world, and the origins of humanity, were essentially identical (B Anderson 1991: 36).

Now, with the economic, political and philosophical revolutions of modernity (Anderson's conception of which will be discussed in greater detail below), these three 'fundamental cultural conceptions' lost their certainty. In essence, a "harsh wedge" was driven "between cosmology and history", and the great cultural systems which had with unshakeable certainty located "man-in-the-cosmos", declined and fell (B Anderson 1991: 36, 10). The key to Anderson's theory was his argument that these three interlinked cultural conceptions – able to locate a particular individual in the grand scheme, to transform "fatality into continuity" (1991: 11) – *had* fulfilled a powerful (and perhaps necessary) purpose. That purpose, essentially, was accounting for the fact of death. What this suggests is that for Anderson, "nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, *but with the large cultural systems that preceded it*, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being" (1991: 12, emphasis added; see discussion in Lerner 1991: 407). Nationalism, in

Anderson's account, is a cultural system able to offer to the people of the modern world what the great pre-modern cultural systems had previously offered. Essentially, like the great religions before it, nationalism (and the nation) offered a place for the necessarily contingent and particular individual in a continuous history; "a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning" (B Anderson 1991: 11). What the nation offered, simply, is time.

Thus for Anderson, the nation is a community imagined *in time*. In one way, the nation is imagined to "always loom out of the immemorial past, and … glide into a limitless future" (1991: 11-12). It is, in this light, some "sociological organism moving through homogeneous, empty time", or "a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (B Anderson 1991: 26). In another way, the nation is also imagined as a community of *simultaneity*: as a community that shares some temporal coincidence, 'across' time (B Anderson 1991: 24). Essentially, the nation in this conception is imagined as a community that shares a temporal place in the grand scheme of things: together, those of the nation travel down though history.

The economic, philosophical and political revolutions of modernity which brought about the dramatic changes in the modes of apprehending the world – and hence the possibility of the nation – were essential to Anderson's theory. Amongst these, the onset of ever-broader travel and exploration (from Marco Polo onwards), the development of secular sciences, and the rejection of the divine right of monarchs (in the English and French revolutions) were all important (B Anderson 1991: 16, 24, 21). Yet perhaps most important for Anderson was the development of the system of 'print-capitalism'. What "made the new communities imaginable", suggested Anderson, "was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity" (1991: 42-3). In this, the industrial print process that grew in western Europe from the 15th century onwards was inherently shaped by a capitalist logic. That is, the initial market for printed books in Europe resided in the "wide but thin stratum of Latin-readers" (B Anderson 1991: 38). This market reached saturation in about one hundred and fifty years. "The logic of capitalism", Anderson suggested then, called for a dramatic turn to the "potentially huge markets represented by the monoglot masses" (1991: 38). Novels and newspapers printed in vernacular languages began to flood western Europe (and, later, the rest of the world). What is most important is that it was in these market formed 'mass reading publics' that the possibility of imagining a simultaneous *national* community truly began to develop. More than anything else, the newspaper sat, for Anderson, at the heart of nation formation:

> In this perspective, the newspaper is merely an 'extreme form' of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity. Might we say: one-day best-sellers? The obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing … creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely *simultaneous* consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction. We know that particular morning and evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that, only this day, not that… The significance of this mass

> ceremony – Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers – is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. *Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion*. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned? At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life (B Anderson 1991: 35-6, emphasis added).

In a move perhaps unique amongst modernist scholars of nations and nationalism, Anderson acknowledged in the preface to the 1991 edition of his *Imagined Communities* that though the 1983 version of the book had discussed much on the "changing apprehensions of time" underscoring nationalism, it "lacked its necessary coordinate: changing apprehensions of space" (1991: xiv). To address this, his revised edition offered an additional chapter, which explored the changing apprehensions of space underscoring nation formation. Now, because Anderson recognised the spatiality of the nation – because Anderson offered a way to start talking about the production and understanding of national territory – his theory cannot be discussed in the same way as those offered by Gellner and Hobsbawm. In essence, because Anderson explicitly offered a way out of the problematic spatial assumptions of the modernist theories, I will not explore the spatial assumptions and ideas of Anderson's theory here; these will, instead, be explored below. Here, I am more interested in the failings and difficulties of Gellner and Hobsbawm.

In contrast to Anderson's recognition, both Gellner and Hobsbawm employed some of the key spatial assumptions that have plagued modernist understandings of nations and nationalism. Gellner's spatial assumptions were most clearly visible in his discussion of the development of nationalism in the fictional 'Ruritania'. "The Ruritanians", began Gellner,

> were a peasant population speaking a group of related and more or less mutually intelligible dialects, and inhabiting a series of discontinuous but not very much separated pockets within the lands of the Empire of Megalomania. The Ruritanian language, or rather the dialects which could be held to compose it, was not really spoken by anyone other than these peasants. The aristocracy and officialdom spoke the language of the Megalomanian court, which happened to belong to a language group different from the one of which the Ruritanian dialects were an offshoot.
>
> Most, but not all, Ruritanian peasants belonged to a church whose liturgy was taken from another linguistic group again, and many of the priests, especially higher up in the hierarchy, spoke a language which was a modern vernacular version of the liturgical language of this creed, and which was also very far removed from Ruritanian. The petty traders of the small towns serving *the Ruritanian countryside* were drawn from a different ethnic group and religion still, and one heartily detested by the Ruritanian peasantry (1983: 58, emphasis added).

What Gellner described in this parable was, in essence, an *ethnie*. The Ruritanians were a population – though they did not, at this stage, know it – who shared some cultural features which would become, when industrialisation began to uproot and distort their world, grounds for a nationalist ideology.

What is important here is that though Gellner went out of his way to describe in the remainder of this parable the ways the modern (industrial) context *made* the national group, the territory in question – the Ruritanian countryside – was treated as a received object. 'Ruritania' was, in essence, an already existing homeland which was transferred *en masse* to the national movement. Indeed, though Gellner himself acknowledged that "Ruritanians had previously thought and felt in terms of family unit and village, at most in terms of a valley" (1983: 62), he persisted with the idea that there existed, *prior to the nationalist movement*, a land known as 'Ruritania'. This was, as the passage on the 'petty traders' suggests, a land which belonged, more than anyone else, to the Ruritanians.

At a different level, we must also recognise that Gellner's theory precluded any real engagement with place, locality and space. That is, if we were to treat nationalism according to Gellner's understanding – as "the general imposition of a high culture on society" and "the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society … *in place of a previous complex structure of local groups*" (1983: 57, emphasis added) – then we would be left divorced from the local, everyday worlds in which people live. Regardless of modernity, we must recognise that people necessarily live in the 'local': in the streets and buildings through which they walk everyday. Yet Gellner's account, which suggested that cultures and understandings of the world are written exclusively via the "school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom" of "bureaucratic and technological communication" (1983: 57) denied just such a world.

Similar criticisms can be levelled at Hobsbawm's understanding of nations and nationalism, though Hobsbawm was (perhaps) more willing to accept that nationalism must be studied from both 'above' (like Gellner), and 'below'. In this, Hobsbawm's suggestion that we must take into account "the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" when studying the nation might offer us a grounding to explore the ways the local is seen *within* the national territory (1992: 10). Yet Hobsbawm was, like Gellner, trapped within what I suggest was a primordialist understanding of land. This can clearly be seen in a passage where Hobsbawm cautioned fellow scholars of nationalism, noting that "no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist… Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so" (1992: 12). These sentiments are standard amongst scholars of nationalism. Yet Hobsbawm went on to flesh out these sentiments in a way that demonstrated an entirely problematic spatial thinking:

> Historians are professionally obliged not to get it wrong, or at least to make an effort not to. *To be Irish and proudly attached to Ireland* – even to be proudly Catholic-Irish or Ulster-Protestant Irish – *is not in itself incompatible with the serious study of Irish history*. To be a Fenian or an Orangeman, I would judge, is not so compatible, any more than being a Zionist is compatible with writing a genuinely serious history of the Jews; unless the historian leaves his or her convictions behind when entering the library or the study (1992: 12-13, emphasis added).

We must reject such a position: to be proudly attached to Ireland – in the way it is understood in the modern world – is, I suggest, impossible without nationalism. Indeed, to even imagine an Ireland in the modern world, is, without nationalism, impossible.

The nation as modern?

A variety of thinkers have made powerful and compelling arguments for the modernity of both nations and nationalism. Though different thinkers have highlighted different aspects of 'modernity' as driving nation formation – such as the philosophical developments of the Enlightenment and German Romanticism (as argued by Kedourie), the growth of the bureaucratic state (as argued by Breuilly and Giddens) or the development of industrial-capitalist modes of production (as argued by Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson) – the central argument of the modernist camp has always been that nations and nationalism are products of the *modern* world. Over the past few decades (particularly since the end of the Second World War) this form of argument has made great inroads into the understanding of nations and nationalism. Most centrally, this modernist camp has significantly undermined the value of the arguments of the primordialist camp described above. This does not mean, however, that the modernist understandings of nations and nationalism are without critique.

Critiques of particular modernist theories of nations and nationalism have been briefly described above. In general, however, we must recognise that all these modernist theories share a significant flaw in that they remain too focused on understanding the nation along one causal chain of analysis. That is, as much as the primordialist theorists of nationalism have offered some grand narrative to explain nation formation, modernist thinkers appear to have fallen into the same trap. All the modernist theories described above locate nation formation in some (modern) grand narrative, some causal development from which nations and nationalism flowed. This can be seen most readily in the spatial assumptions inherent in the theories described above. In each theory, we can see a clear argument that the nation is a development in history *over* territory, as if some key development – such as the development of industrialisation or the emergence of the bureaucratic state – saw the construction of a population which stepped naturally into a national territory which was already, in a sense, *theirs*; as if the national territory was something *prior* to the nationalist movement. To return briefly to the questions driving this research: if we were to follow a modernist account of nations and nationalism – such as, for example, that offered by Gellner – we could readily discuss the construction of the Indian nation, yet we would be unable to discuss the construction of the Indian national territory. In essence we would be left at the position that the Indian nation – once constructed – stepped naturally into the Indian national territory that was lying in waiting.

What we must now recognise is that – against modernist claims – the nation is a concept received in people's daily lives in countless different ways, and theoretical attempts to understand nation formation along one plane of analysis are doomed to miss much of that reception. This broad critique – and the development of a way out of such reductionist thinking – forms a key argument of the postmodern discussion of nation formation, to which I now turn.

The postmodern discussion of nation formation

The discussions above highlight a significant divide in the mainstream theoretical understanding of nations and nationalism. To one side of this 'Great Divide' sit a variety of theorists who have maintained that the nation is a form of community evident throughout human history, who have maintained that "the past matters a great deal"; on the other side sit a variety of 'modernist' thinkers, for whom the national world "was created round the end of the eighteenth century, and nothing before that makes the slightest difference to the issues we face" (Gellner 1995b). The reasons for such a significant divide are numerous; yet perhaps at heart it is because the nation is, as Paul James has suggested, "*lived* as a 'concrete' relationship which each individual takes to his or her grave" and "*experienced* as a 'primordial' relation … traceable deep into the past", yet all the while it is, 'objectively', *modern* (1996: xi, emphasis added).

Various thinkers have observed this division in studies of nationalism, lamenting it as both irresolvable within the terms currently employed and, hence, a significant obstacle to our understanding of the phenomena (Nairn 1997: 11; A D Smith 1986: 13; 1995; James 1996: 3). This, I accept, is probably true of the arguments presented above. In essence, the "courteous difference of emphasis" that Nairn has suggested divides modernist and primordialist accounts will probably remain (1997: 11). This does not mean, however, that we must accept Nairn's conclusion that there exists as yet, "no theoretical framework capable of bearing the argument further" (1997: 11). Instead, I suggest that we can follow a number of interesting recent works on nation formation that have sought to move away from theorisation which seeks to account for the development of nations in all times and all places. In essence, we can follow Bellamy's suggestion that "the nation needs to be ontologically expanded rather than reduced"; we, as students of the phenomenon, must turn "our attention to the multi-layered aspect of nation formation" (1999: 120, 128). It is in the spirit of this 'ontological expansion' that this work will begin to explore the production and meaning of the national territory known to the world as India.

A framework to explore nation formation

A variety of scholars of nations and nationalism have argued that the nation exists as a *subjective* phenomenon. Walker Connor, for example, suggested that in studying the nation "what ultimately matters is not *what is* but *what people believe is*" (1994b: 37). In a similar way, Eric Hobsbawm held that the nation must be "analysed from below", "in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" and the ways they *view* the nation (1992: 10-11). Importantly however, neither of these thinkers – despite their claims to the contrary – made a serious attempt to incorporate such a 'subjectivist' argument into the core of their account of nation. In essence, both these thinkers (and a host of others, in part described above) remained fixated on what Bellamy has termed a 'meta-narrative' account of nation formation: an account which takes the nation as an objective form about which truth can be known (1999). It is, I suggest, in rejecting the possibility of such an account of nation formation, moving away from the ideas of the nation that rest on its purported obviousness, certainty and separateness that we can begin to explore the multi-layered, messy and contradictory ways that the nation sits in the modern world. Throughout this section I trace an elaboration of this theory, drawing particularly from the works of Paul James and Alex Bellamy.

"How can the nation be experienced", Paul James asked at the beginning of his *Nation Formation*,

> as a concrete, gut-felt relation to common souls and a shared landscape, and nevertheless be based upon abstract connections to largely unknown strangers and unvisited places? As part of the 'nation of strangers' we live its connectedness much more through the abstracting mediations of mass communications and the commodity market than we do at the level of the fact-to-face, but we continue to use the metaphors of the face-to-face to explain its cultural power (1996: xii).

In essence – as James suggested – any discussion of nations and nationalism must necessarily encounter the dilemma of the Great Divide, the dilemma that "the contemporary forms of the nation and nation-state are both objectively modern, and yet at the same time… are rooted in long-run, cultural forms of association" (1996: 18). It is by locating the nation within what he termed "intersecting levels" of "abstract integration", James argued that we can begin to overcome the problems of the Great Divide and step away from "dichotomizing the concrete and the abstract" (1996: 121).

For James, the nation must be seen as an abstract community. This argument, in and of itself, is not revolutionary. Indeed, James drew directly on Anderson's argument (quoted above) that "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (Anderson, cited in James 1996: 6), to make the parallel argument that all communities, "both tribal and national" are "constituted abstractly" (1996: 6). What James sought to do in *Nation Formation* was, in part, build on Anderson's work by exploring the very process by which Anderson would say the nation is *imagined*, by exploring how the abstract forms of integration entailed in the modern 'nation of strangers' play out with and draw upon other, putatively concrete, forms of integration. At heart, James suggested that the nation is a particular form of abstract community: one

which only becomes possible through the emerging dominance of what he called the highly abstract form of 'disembodied' integration (1996: 184).

As noted above, James' argument in *Nation Formation* rested on the premise that all human societies, regardless of their complexity, "are formed in the uneven intersection of various overlaying levels of integration" (1996: 22). To draw out the difference between nations and non-national societies, and to illustrate his account of nation formation, James distinguished between three 'levels of integration'. Each of these three levels was treated by James as "an abstraction in relation to 'prior' levels" (1996: 22).

The most local and 'concrete' level in James' account was that of 'face-to-face' integration. Within this level of integration, the "modalities of co-presence" (or the forms of communication between two people in physical co-presence), are central to the maintenance of a continuing association between people (James 1996: 23). Tribal and peasant societies are marked by the dominance of this face-to-face integration; in these societies the very possibilities of fully embodied interaction appear to directly constitute "the boundaries of social existence and thus of social subjectivity" (James 1996: 24). We can find evidence for such a dominance of face-to-face integration in the supreme significance attached in peasant and tribal societies to the facts of birth and kinship relations. Abstracted to the next level in James' schema was 'agency-extended' integration. Within this level of integration, institutions or agencies (such as the church, state, guild or corporation) bind societies "across larger expanses of space than is possible under face-to-face integration" through bodily representation (James 1996: 25). A bureaucrat representing the monarch (and being afforded the monarch's authority) is, of course, a prime example of this. This form of integration saw dominance in feudal Europe and imperial China, when representatives of the central institutions – clerics, soldiers and tax collectors – "came to minister to geographically separated groups of people" (James 1996: 26). Importantly, these 'geographically separated groups of people' to whom the agents of the state 'came to minister' remained largely based on face-to-face integration, and "continued to have few points of connection with other groups" (James 1996: 26). Finally, at the most abstract level in James' schema was 'disembodied' integration. Within this form of integration, people and societies are connected through a variety of systems and coda (such as the mass media, modern telecommunications and the bureaucratic state) which do not rely on their communicants having either a face-to-face or agency-extended form of integration. The technologies that support this disembodied integration are, of course, heavily connected with the industrial, educational and bureaucratic revolutions of modernity.

Crucially for James' argument, the historical development of more abstracted forms of integration does not necessitate or imply the dissolution of the more 'concrete' forms of integration. In this, James drew on Jack Goody's parallel suggestion that "the written word does not replace speech, any

more than speech replaces gesture. But it adds an important dimension to much social action" (cited in James 1996: 32; see Goody 1977: 15). Essentially, the development of more abstracted forms of integration means that the 'more concrete' (face-to-face and agency-extended) forms of integration "tend, unevenly and beset by contradiction, to be *reconstituted in terms of the dominance of the more abstract level*" (James 1996: 32, emphasis added). That is, the development of disembodied integration with the rise of modernity appears to take up and reconstitute prior forms of social integration in terms dictated by the dominant disembodied integration. It is in this uneven and contradictory intersection, when agency-extended and face-to-face forms of integration are taken up and reconstituted by disembodied integration, that James located the nation.

Thus James argued that the formation and framing of the nation occurs at the most abstract level of integration – in his schema that of disembodied integration. This means that the framing of the nation – through the mass media, the bureaucratic state and authoritative forms of written communication – is, essentially, *modern*. Yet to understand the ways that the nation is understood and taken up in people's lives, we cannot remain at this lone plane of analysis. In essence, James suggested that nation formation depends on a simultaneous reproduction and representation of the nation at other levels of integration. Indeed, the nation *depends* on "*intersecting levels of integration*, framed by the most abstract level but never in a way that can resolve the contradictions of that intersection" (James 1996: 121, emphasis added). This means that the way people *understand* the nation must necessarily be within the variety of forms of integration through which it is learned. Children, for example, are taught the stories and behaviours of their nation through *face-to-face* representation. Similarly, other symbols and links of face-to-face integration – such as family, blood, mother and father – become powerful metaphors of nation. Essentially, individuals may well embrace understandings of the nation propagated through concrete levels of integration that fundamentally contradict others seen as 'within' the same nation; yet with James' theory, we can allow for such a variety of subjectivities, and, importantly, a variety of narratives.

This conceptualisation of the nation – as a community found in intersecting levels of integration at a moment when disembodied integration dominates more concrete forms of integration – offers much to the study of nations and nationalism. Importantly, it can offer a way out of the dilemmas of the Great Divide, suggesting an explanation for why nations are felt as concrete, primordial communities, while being, 'objectively', modern. Meanwhile, it can also offer us the means to understand the inherent contradictions found in the popular understanding of national identity. What it also means is that to explore the meaning and production of the nation, we must embrace what Bellamy has called a 'perspectivist epistemology' (1999: 136). In such a 'perspectivist' account, an examination of national identity formation would necessarily include "the identification, comparison and evaluation of different accounts of nation formation, which show that even the same national identity can mean

many different things in different times and places" (Bellamy 1999: 135). It would also include consideration of the "interplay of competing narratives" within the "power-knowledge dominations, resistances and struggles that are constantly at work" (Bellamy 1999: 135). Finally, it must also include recognition of "the narratives which are sometimes excluded violently by the discourses of nation formation" (Bellamy 1999: 135). In essence, with such a framework we can move away from studying what the nation *is*, and towards the study of what the nation is *believed* to be.

Before offering the theoretical standpoint of this thesis, it is worth (briefly) exploring the "opening up of the study of nation" that a perspectivist account calls for (Bellamy 1999: 136). In essence, if we are to better understand the ways national identity (and, of course, the national territory) is *understood* in the modern world, we must recognise the inherent subjectivity and perspective of the individual in question. In this, a variety of accounts of nation, from different perspectives, have been offered in recent years. Though I am unable to offer full accounts of each theory, what I do argue is that we must recognise is that these perspectives should not be treated as isolated or peripheral to the 'main story' of nation formation, but instead placed alongside others as relevant perspectives on the nation.

Examples of such perspectives on the nation include the ever growing work on gender and the nation. In this, authors such as Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (1997; 1989), Cynthia Enloe (1989; 1995), Usha Menon (2003), Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault (2000), Zillah Eisenstein (2000), Urvashi Butalia (2000), Kimberlé Crenshaw (2003), Anne McClintock (1996) Indrani Mitra (1995), and Deniz Kandiyoti (1991) have offered important analyses on the ways national identities and gender intersect, and the ways many mainstream theories of nation have been gender blind. What these accounts have broadly suggested is that nations have always been constructed in gendered ways, in ways that mean different things for men and for women. In a similar way, the locus between globalisation and nation has offered other compelling perspectives on the nation; here Tom Nairn and Paul James' *Global Matrix: Nationalism, Globalism and State-Terrorism* (2005) sits as an obvious example. Other perspectives on the nation that have offered useful analyses include that of literature and the nation (see, for example, Bhabha 1990a; 1990b; 1990c; Gunew 1990; Mitra 1995; Quayum 2004; Hubel 1996; Tickell 2005) and 'small stories' and the nation (Billig 1995a; 1995b).

Where this work sits

In this research I explore the production and understanding of the national territory known to the world as India; within this exploration, a considered stance on the phenomena of nations and nationalism is, of course, crucial. Thus in this work I argue (drawing on the literature described above) that the nation is an inter-subjective community, *framed* at the most abstract, 'disembodied' level of integration, yet *experienced* through forms of integration which may well be more local, personal and concrete. In

essence, I suggest that it is the conditions of modernity that have made this abstract community: it is, that is, the development of modern forms of thinking, print-capitalism, mass public education, industrial modes of production and the bureaucratic state that have made the nation possible. Moreover, it is within the highly abstract forms of integration made possible by these developments, I will suggest later in the thesis, that some of the key work underscoring the production of the Indian national territory has been carried out. *However*; this is not to argue that other understandings of community, self and other – and to follow James, body, space and time (1996: 22) – have not been crucial in this production. Here I stress that the more intimate and concrete forms of integration – and the forms of knowledge of community and land connected with them – have been essential to the formation of national identity.

This argument will be employed and elaborated throughout this thesis. Most importantly, I will in chapter 2 (following a discussion on the production of space), describe in greater detail the theoretical connections between this understanding of nation and the production of national territory. Prior to this discussion however, it is worth briefly elaborating the path this thesis will take in building a spatial theory of nations and nationalism.

Towards a spatial theory of nation

Before turning to a discussion on the production of space in chapter 2, it is worth offering a brief elaboration of what I suggest is needed to build a spatial theory of nations and nationalism. I begin this with short examination of some existing spatial theories of nations and nationalism, before looking at what steps are needed to improve this spatial awareness.

Existing spatial theories of the nation

There exist a great variety of theories which offer some account of the relationship between the physical world and the nation. These include – to offer a brief list – works by Liisa Malkki (1995; 1996), Anssi Paasi (1996; 1997; 2000), Maoz Azaryahu and Rebecca Kook (2002), George W White (2004), Gertjan Dijkink (1996), Christophe Jaffrelot (2004) and Nuala Johnson (1997). There also exists a long tradition of scholarship on the spatial aspect of nations and nationalism in both traditional (see, for example, J Anderson 1988; Helleiner 1999; Hooson 1994; Kallus and Yone 2002; Knight 1982; Mac Laughlin 1986; Williams and Smith 1983) and radical (Hage 1996; Morgan 2003; Mountz 2003) geography. With limited space, however, I cannot offer here an exhaustive review of this diverse body of work. Instead, I examine here three representative works – chosen for their explicit location within the theoretical discussion of nations and nationalism central to this thesis – which have

sought to address the role of space in the understanding of nations and nationalism. These works – Jan Penrose's 'Nations, states and homelands: territory and territoriality in nationalist thought' (2002), Daniele Conversi's 'Reassessing Current Theories of Nationalism: Nationalism as Boundary Maintenance and Creation' (1997; 1999) and Benedict Anderson's 'Census, Map, Museum' (1996; 1991: ch 10) – offer much to understand the production of the national territory, yet each contain significant flaws that require redress.

Penrose began her account of the connections between nation and space with the laudable sentiments (which quite clearly inform this work) that the "general acceptance of the significance of territory to nationalism has not been balanced by an understanding of just what it is that makes territory so significant to this ideology" (2002: 277). To address this gap in understanding, Penrose proposed that we should consider nationalism as a "profoundly territorial phenomenon", as something that "is unimaginable without the application of human territoriality to space" (2002: 294). At heart, Penrose suggested that the power of nationalism rests heavily on its ability to combine pre-modern connections to territory with those engendered by modernity (2002: 284). That is – drawing on a perennialist argument – Penrose argued that the "power of attachments to place" defined prior to modernity, "can be intensified through the identification or *construction* of long historical lineages of territorial occupation" (2002: 292, emphasis added).

This recognition of the construction or creation of territories is an important move, and must be embraced if we are to move beyond a primordialist account of the national territory. However, in Penrose's framing this recognition was significantly weakened by what I suggest was a typical perennialist projection of modern understandings on to the pre-modern world. That is, Penrose argued that the pre-modern *ethnie* would hold understandings of the physical world paralleled in modern nations. This is drawn out in her development of an argument first made by Connor:

> As Walker Connor points out, "the land masses of the world are divided into some three thousand homelands" and these territories retain huge significance to their inhabitants despite having "the political borders of something less than two hundred states superimposed upon them". This, in itself, is a salutary reminder that *territories are* seldom discrete or exclusive (Penrose 2002: 292, emphasis added; citing in part Connor 2001: 56).

The chief problem with this account is that these 'homelands' or 'territories' were viewed by Penrose – despite noting they were seldom discrete or exclusive – as *objective* phenomena; as things that are 'out there' and which states have been 'superimposed upon', and as things that can be quantified and that 'their inhabitants' all understand identically. By treating national territories as an objective entity, Penrose remained trapped in what is, essentially, a nationalist writing of the world. "When people create territories", argued Penrose,

> they create boundaries that both unite and divide space *along with everything that it contains*. By combining some people and certain resources and *separating them* from other people and other

> resources, the creation of territories *gives physical substance* and symbolic meaning to notions of 'us' and 'them' and 'ours' and 'theirs' (2002: 280, emphasis added).

This dichotomised world of 'ours' and 'theirs' – in which boundaries supposedly 'unite and divide space along with everything that it contains' – is *not* a 'physical' reality. Rather, it is how the forces of nationalism would *like* the world to be understood. To better understand the production and meaning of national territories, we must, I suggest, step out of such a nationalist projection.

Paralleling Penrose's suggestion that nationalism is a 'profoundly territorial phenomenon', Daniele Conversi also argued that at root "nationalism is a struggle over the definition of spatial boundaries, that is, over the control of a particular land or soil" (1997: 329). For Conversi, this meant that "the bases of modern nations are *eminently geographical*" (1997: 329, emphasis added).

Conversi's conceptualisation of nation formation drew much from the 'transactionalist' model of boundaries proposed by Frederik Barth (Conversi 1997: 328; see also 1999: 553; Barth 1969; see also the discussion of Armstrong 1982 above). In this, Conversi followed Barth in suggesting that "borders are essential to all human processes, both at the individual and the social level", and that "all processes of identity construction are simultaneously border-generating and border-deriving" (1997: 328). What this meant for Conversi is that if we are to study the formation of nations, we must focus on the history of borders between communities. Now what Conversi argued was that the rise of modernity ushered in a dramatic shift in the very *form* of these boundaries between communities. "In the pre-modern world", suggested Conversi, "the 'space'" which gave a nation definition, "was not necessarily territorial" (1997: 328). Indeed, a variety of groups "intermingled within the same geographical area" (Conversi 1997: 329). In this pre-modern world, the 'space' of each 'nation' or 'group' (Conversi seems to have been happy with the perennialist projection of the term 'nation' onto the communities of the past) was a niche allocation in the overall social system. The boundaries between different groups (and in this Conversi drew on Gellner's arguments discussed above) were fixed 'vertical' boundaries between different social groups: between the peasants, the clerisy and the nobility. Now – with the rise of modernity, "vertical stratification was replaced by spatial segmentation": "boundaries shifted from a more internal and all-encompassing level *to a more external and territorial one*" (Conversi 1997: 329, emphasis added).

Conversi's account (much like the one offered by Penrose) holds the crucial recognition that the onset of modernity drove a dramatic reappraisal in the understanding and meaning of territory. Again, I suggest that this is necessary for the understanding of the production of the national territory. However, the central weakness of Conversi's account is directly connected with this point: if we take the rise of modernity and nationalism as underscoring a shift from *social* (or vertical) boundaries to *territorial* boundaries, we must ask *how*. What was it about modernity that asked for boundaries to be

drawn between territorially defined political communities? How can a border between people who live in the same town suddenly become a border between people living in different towns? The only way that Conversi could account for this shift was by projecting on to the communities of the past some 'overall' social container, as if the people of the pre-modern world – despite the boundaries between social classes; despite the entirely different understandings of space of the peasants, the clerisy and the nobility – already shared some '*same geographical area*'. This, I suggest, merely returns us to a primordial definition of national territory, as something *prior* to the 'awakening' of national consciousness.

In a rather different vein, Benedict Anderson presented in 'Census, Map, Museum' (a chapter added to *Imagined Communities* in the 1991 edition) a theory much more able to discuss the dramatic changes in the understanding of space brought with the onset of modernity. Where Penrose and Conversi might (if grudgingly) admit the creation and construction of national territories, Anderson (in line with the rest of his theoretical picture, discussed above) brought this 'construction' to the very heart of his picture of nations and nationalism.

In 'Census, Map, Museum', Anderson offered a compelling analysis of how the three colonial institutions of the census, the map and the museum "profoundly shaped the way in which *the colonial state imagined its dominion* – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry" (1991: 164, emphasis added). In essence, these three institutions ineluctably shaped the spatial thinking *into which the emerging nationalist elite stepped*. The colonial census, for example, offered the governing state a classificatory grid into which the colonised peoples could be placed: it offered, supposedly, "a human landscape of perfect visibility" (B Anderson 1991: 185). The 1911 Federated Malay States Census, for example, listed the 'Malay Population by Race'. This listing was then divided into the various 'races': 'Malay', 'Javanese', 'Sakai', 'Banjarese', 'Boyanese' and so on (B Anderson 1991: 165). For the state, this was a form of knowledge that gave power *over* the colonised peoples; that could (supposedly) *know* the colonised peoples. Yet as Anderson suggested "it is extremely unlikely that, in 1911, more than a tiny fraction of those categorized and subcategorized would have recognized themselves under such labels" (1991: 165). What is important is that these labels – 'Malay' or 'Javanese' – became, over time, crucial elements of the fabric of these peoples' worlds. In a parallel way, the development of "the Mercatorian map" began, as Anderson argued, to situate the sites of the colonised realm within a "stable geographic context" utterly divorced from that seen (or possible) before (B Anderson 1991: 171, 172).

In essence, Anderson suggested that the colonial states of southeast Asia (the focus of his work) brought a radically new and different system of *seeing the world* to the peoples they ruled. These ways of seeing would, Anderson argued, profoundly influence the nationalist movements that

developed in the colonial environment. Much of Anderson's discussion in this chapter was compelling and useful, and many of the ideas developed in it will be employed and elaborated in later chapters of this thesis. This does not mean, however, that Anderson's spatial theory of nationalism was without critique. Two major problems can be found in this theory. The first is that it offers no insight into the development of non-colonial national territories. Though I doubt Anderson would suggest this means that the English national territory (for example) is some natural entity, we cannot quite transplant the formative functions of the census, the map and the museum to the development of English national identity. At a more substantial level however, Anderson's theory rested overwhelmingly on tracing "the imaginings of the colonial state" (1991: 163); if we are to understand the development of national territories in the parts of the world colonised by European powers (as, of course, this thesis is attempting) then the machinations of the colonial state are crucial. Yet it does, however, leave us with an overwhelmingly 'top-down' perspective, as if the ways various nationalists came to *see* the physical world were entirely formed by the colonial instruments. We can, at this stage, recall Partha Chatterjee's complaint regarding Anderson's work:

> If nationalists 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 they have left to imagine? History, it would seem has decreed that we, in the post-colonial 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 post-colonial misery. *Even our imaginations must remain forever colonised* (1991: 521, emphasis added).

In essence, Anderson's account offers much to understand the *production* of national territories, yet affords little explanation of how those territories are *understood*. This, I suggest, is essential if we are to explore the role the national territory plays in the modern world.

Building a spatial theory of the nation

The works discussed above highlight what I suggest is a serious gap in the theoretical understanding of nations and nationalism. On one hand, a tacit acknowledgement of the *construction* of national territories seems to permeate the literature; yet only rarely have theorists offered any discussion of this construction, and when they have it contains key theoretical weaknesses. On the other hand, a perhaps equally pervasive acknowledgement of the *subjectivity* of national identity can be found in the literature, yet this too remains untranslated to discussions of the national territory. In essence, I suggest that we need to build a spatial theory of nation which can explore the *production* of the national territory *and* the ways this national territory is *understood*. What we must do, in essence, is attempt to understand why the national territory is experienced (to paraphrase James) as a concrete reality, yet is nevertheless based on essentially abstract connections to largely unvisited places; we must explore why those of the nation are able to hold a rich and inalienable relationship to a specifiable, definite territory despite the impossibility of them seeing – having an embodied

engagement with – the totality of this land. To do this, we must take the arguments developed in this chapter and begin to explore the production of space. It is to this discussion I now turn.

2

On the production of national space

I began this thesis with two questions vital to the understanding of modern politics in southern Asia, and vital to the understanding of nations and nationalism in general. How, I asked, has the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean been produced as the national territory of the Indian nation? How, in extension, is this national territory understood?

In the previous chapter, I began to construct an answer to these questions. In that chapter, I examined some of the key theoretical literature on nations and nationalism, and, from that literature, commenced building a framework to investigate the production and understanding of the Indian national territory. Importantly, I also suggested in that chapter that as useful as the contemporary literature on nations and nationalism is for this task, some critical issues remain inadequately addressed. Most centrally, this literature remains only partially able to account for the spatial dimensions of both nations and nationalism.

In this present chapter, I now aim to work towards addressing this theoretical weakness; to complete the construction of a theoretical framework able to investigate the production and understanding of the Indian national territory. In essence, I seek in this chapter to construct a theoretical framework that can tell us *why* the Indian national territory is experienced as a concrete reality, while it is nevertheless based on abstract connections to unvisited places; *why* those of the Indian nation are able to hold a rich and inalienable relationship to a defined, definable territory, despite the impossibility of them seeing – having an embodied engagement with – the totality of that land.

To frame this chapter's discussion, we can return, once again, to arguments raised in both the introduction and chapter 1, and establish three interrelated points regarding the production and understanding of the national territory. These three points will be explored and defended throughout the chapter. For the first of these three, we can return to arguments made by Paul James and Benedict Anderson, beginning with a suggestion raised by Anderson:

> …With a certain ferocity Gellner makes a… point when he rules that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist". The drawback of this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'. In this way he implies that 'true' communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. *In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity / genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined* (1991: 6, emphasis added in part).

James – as I have noted earlier – agreed with these sentiments, yet he did suggest that Anderson's concept of 'imagination' could be usefully elaborated with a metaphor of constitutive levels of abstraction. He suggested, that is, that in extension of Anderson's point, "both tribal and national communities are, at different dominant levels, constituted abstractly" (James 1996: 6). Now, these arguments were (as I suggested in the introduction to this work), raised by Anderson and James to talk specifically about connections between *people*. What I suggest now is that they can be usefully transferred to talking about understandings of the physical world, to talk about connections between *people* and *place*. That is (and here I present the first of the three points we must raise to frame this chapter), we can suggest that all communities, whether tribe or nation, draw imagined – or, perhaps more accurately, abstract – connections between people and place. On this point, we can draw from Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*:

> ... *every society* – and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (ie all those societies which exemplify the general concept) – *produces a space, its own space*. The city of the ancient world cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space; nor can it be visualized solely on the basis of a number of texts and treaties on the subject of space, even though some of these, as for example Plato's *Critias* and *Timaeus* or Aristotle's *Metaphysics A*, may be irreplaceable sources of knowledge. *For the ancient city had its own spatial practice: it forged its own – appropriated – space* (1991: 31, emphasis added in part).

What I wish to draw from Lefebvre's argument at this point – alongside the crucial idea that every society produces its own space – is his suggestion that 'the city of the ancient world cannot be understood as a collection of people and things *in space*', that instead, the city of the ancient world forged '*its own space*'. This can be paralleled directly in conceptualising the national territory. That is, I argue that the national territory (as a general form) cannot be understood as a collection of people and things *in space*. Rather, the national territory is a specific type of space, a space forged in particular ways and for particular ends; it is a space that is – to echo Gellner – "logically contingent" (1964: 151). What this means for this present discussion is that the particularities of this type of space – that is, the difference between the space of the nation and the spaces of non-national societies – becomes crucial to describing the production and understanding of the Indian national territory.

We can start to consider the difference between the space of the nation and the space of non-national societies by following conceptualisations of the nation offered by Anderson and James. We can, at this stage, return briefly to these arguments once again. For Anderson, the nation is

> an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion… The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has *finite*, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations… (1991: 6-7, emphasis added in part).

In a similar way, James argued that

> The nation is at once assumed to be a rich and inalienable relationship of *specifiable* compatriots; at the same time it connects anonymous strangers most of whom will probably never even pass each other in the street (1996: xi, emphasis added).

The idea presented by James and Anderson – that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to specifiable and finite compatriots, despite the impossibility of those of any nation ever personally seeing the majority of their compatriots – can be paralleled directly in considering the national territory. That is, I suggest that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to a defined, definable territory, despite the impossibility of the members of any nation ever personally seeing – ever having, that is, an embodied engagement with – the totality of that land. In essence, the difference between the spaces of nations and the spaces of non-national societies is that nations hold a certainty – an imagined certainty – about the physical world at scales, and in a spread of locales, impossible to personally see or know through an embodied engagement. What this suggestion means is that if we follow James in taking the nation as "an abstract community which only becomes possible within a social formation constituted through the emerging dominance of relations of disembodied extension" (1996: 184, see further discussion in chapter 1), then the national territory only becomes possible with the emerging dominance of relations of disembodied extension, and, I stress, of disembodied knowledge of the physical world.

To this stage in this framing discussion, I have offered only arguments derived, in the main, from our understanding of nations and nationalism (if, perhaps, extended slightly towards spatial thinking). What I suggest now is that the first of the three points to be defended in this chapter – that all societies produce their own space – can be extended by following James' argument in *Nation Formation*. Thus the second of the three points to be defended in this chapter is that the space of a society – the space produced by a society, to use Lefebvre's terms – is related directly to the forms of abstract integration within which that society is constituted. In more simple terms, a society marked by the dominance of face-to-face integration (such as a tribal or a peasant society), forges spaces and understandings of the physical world entirely bound and limited by the possibilities of a fully embodied – face-to-face – interaction. This point I do not seek to support or defend at this present moment; rather, this defence and discussion will form a significant element of the body of the chapter below. What it does bring us to however, is the third of the three points needed to frame this chapter's discussion. In this, we can again return to both James' conceptualisation of the nation as an abstract community possible only with the emerging dominance of relations of disembodied extension, and his argument that the

development of these more abstract forms of integration has not forced the dissolution of more concrete forms of integration. Rather, the development of more abstract forms of social integration has, according to James, meant that more concrete forms "tend, unevenly and beset by contradiction, to be reconstituted in terms of the dominance of the more abstract level" (1996: 32). This point we can again parallel in our conceptualisation of the national territory. That is, the emergence to dominance of more abstract forms of integration – and hence, I suggest, more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical world – has not forced the dissolution of knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate and concrete sources, from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. Indeed, it is in the intersection of these abstract and intimate forms of knowledge of the physical that the national territory is constituted.

To recap: to frame this chapter, I have raised three arguments, drawn (largely) from our understanding of nations and nationalism. These are that all societies produce their own space; that the space of a society is related directly to the forms of abstract integration within which that society is constituted; and that the emergence of more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical has tended not to dissolve but to reconstitute knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate and concrete forms of integration. These three points lead us directly to what we must discuss in this chapter.

At heart, I suggest we can follow in this chapter the sentiments behind Lefebvre's contention that the city of the ancient world (as an example) "cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space" (1991: 31) and conduct here a review of the human understanding of space, framed by the argument that the space of a society is related directly to the forms of abstract integration within which that society is constituted. In more simple terms, we can employ James' three levels of abstract integration – the levels of face-to-face, agency-extended and disembodied integration – and find, in societies framed in the dominance of each level of abstract integration, understandings of space intimately bound with the modalities of that dominant form of integration. What this review allows is a means to understand the national territory: to understand a space *framed* in disembodied knowledge of the physical, yet *experienced* as an intimate, embodied reality. This review allows us, essentially, to step away from discussing the national territory as a physical reality 'out there', and towards discussing it as a subjectively experienced entity.

Before commencing this discussion, we must note a significant caution – that we cannot talk directly about the human *understanding* of space. To phrase it bluntly, an understanding is a subjective phenomenon, out of the reach of an other's gaze. What we can do, however, is discuss the influence an understanding of space had on the world around it. We can discuss, that is, the representations of space, the spatial practices, and the spaces of representation (to employ concepts developed by

Lefebvre (1991: 33) and elaborated by David Harvey (1989: 218)) that I suggest can be taken as indicative of an understanding of space. More will be discussed on these concepts below.

Thus in the sections below, I present a four stage literature review on what we are able to discuss about the human understandings of the space in which they live. In this I seek to demonstrate that the space of a society is related directly to the forms of abstract integration within which that society is constituted, and that the emergence of more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical has tended not to dissolve but to reconstitute knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate and concrete forms of integration. I begin this with a discussion of a representation of the physical emerging from a society characterised by the dominance of face-to-face integration. Quite obviously, a great variety of representations of the physical can be found emerging from such societies: I discuss, for reasons which I will explain below, a Neolithic wall painting found in the fossilised village of Çatal Hüyük in modern Turkey. I follow this with a discussion of a representation of the physical emerging from a society characterised by the dominance of agency-extended integration. Again, a great variety of representations can be found emerging from such societies; I discuss the relatively famous *Geographia* of Ptolemy. Following this, I turn in the third section of this chapter to a discussion of a representation of the physical emerging from a society characterised by the dominance of disembodied integration. In this, I focus on *The Times Atlas of the World: Comprehensive Edition*, of 1990. Following these discussions, I turn finally to a significant critique of the representations of the physical emerging from societies characterised by the dominance of disembodied integration – or, to cast this critique in a different light, a more recent development in the grand historical literature on the human understanding of space. In this, I turn to what can be described as the postmodern critique of the modern representation of the physical. It is with ideas from this literature – ideas which can allow us to explore the *intersection* between knowledge of the physical derived from highly abstract sources and knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate sources – that I suggest we can begin to explore the production and understanding of the Indian national territory.

Throughout this review, I will suggest that we can trace a significant (though gradual) shift in the sources of authority supporting the different representations of the physical world. In this, I suggest the authority of individuals and of an embodied knowledge of the physical saw a gradual subversion under the authority of institutions and, later, disembodied mathematical certainties. This shift in authority – this shift in what we are able to know with an imagined certainty about the physical world, in our understanding of space – has, I suggest, been crucial to the emergence of the Indian national territory.

Representations of the physical in a society of face-to-face integration

We can begin this discussion with a representation of the physical emerging from a society characterised by the dominance of face-to-face integration. To conceptualise such a society, we can, as I suggested above, follow James' argument in *Nation Formation*. According to James, societies marked by the dominance of face-to-face integration are those in which "the limitations and possibilities of fully embodied interaction constitute the boundaries of social existence and thus of social subjectivity" (1996: 24). Quite simply, the "modalities of being in the presence of the other", of engaging with the other in a bodily way, are dominant and central in shaping the community (James 1996: 24). This is not to suggest, as James stressed in his argument, that such societies are constituted solely in face-to-face *interaction*. Rather, it is the 'modalities of co-presence', the *possibilities* of having a face-to-face interaction that form the integrative dynamic. As James argued, integration in face-to-face societies does not, then, "depend upon individuals constantly standing toe-to-toe, nor after a particular interaction does it, in the modern sense, fade away. In this sense the modalities of co-presence bind absence" (James 1996: 24). As general forms, we can view tribal or peasant societies as archetypical of those cast in the dominance of face-to-face integration.

Societies based on the dominance of face-to-face integration can be found throughout the historical and archaeological record, and throughout the world today. Moreover, integration along face-to-face lines remains a crucial (though not dominant) element of the social integration of the modern national world (see further discussion of this point in both chapter 1 and below). What I seek to demonstrate in this section is that a certain understanding of space – a certain way of representing and behaving in the physical world – lies intimately bound with this face-to-face form of society. At heart, I suggest that the understanding of space of a society marked by the dominance of face-to-face integration rests overwhelmingly on an embodied knowledge of the physical; and because of this, the representations of the physical indicative of such an understanding draw authority and meaning directly from the individual author and the place of the representative activity. More simply, the space of a society based on face-to-face integration is derived from and dependent upon the *people* and *places* that can be known through an embodied engagement.

A great variety of forms of representation and spatial practice can, of course, be found in societies characterised by the dominance of face-to-face integration. Myth-telling, 'mud maps', pointing and dance (see discussion variously in Chatwin 1987; Lawrence 1993; Pickles 2004: 3, 14) all offer powerful examples; yet these, perhaps, are somewhat difficult to provide demonstrations of here. Perhaps most usefully – because we can infer a number of details about its creation (though our conclusions must, of course, remain tentative and careful) – one particular Neolithic wall painting found in the fossilised village of Çatal Hüyük in modern Turkey offers a clear example of a spatial representation cast by a society framed in the dominance of face-to-face integration. To explore this

example, I discuss first what can be known about the society from which the representation emerged, the details of the representation itself, and then finally a number of contextual points which suggest that the understanding of space held in this society was related directly to the face-to-face integration within which that society was constituted.

The fossilised village of Çatal Hüyük offers some of the earliest evidence of the emergence of settled human societies. The builders of Çatal Hüyük appear to have settled in the early 7th millennium BCE with the development of agricultural cultivation, particularly the cultivation of peas, lentils and tubers (Hodder 1995). There exists in the site some evidence that the inhabitants knew of animal husbandry, yet it is also clear that throughout its occupation the inhabitants of the village still relied on hunting. Perhaps most importantly for this discussion, the village appears to have formed at the cusp of the development of complex social organisation: there exists in the village no evidence of a literate culture, and very little division of labour amongst its ancient inhabitants (Hodder 1993; 1995). As Ian Hodder suggested in his 1995 report on the Çatal Hüyük survey,

> We have encountered no evidence for the existence of large-scale public buildings. The site as a whole appears to consist of two main elements: houses, with varying degrees of elaboration of interior features, and open spaces, generally covered by spreads of rubbish. This simple settlement constitution, and the evidence for crop processing, animal tending and obsidian processing interspersed amongst houses, all supports an interpretation of the site as an elaborate village rather than as an urban settlement with differentiated functions (1995: 16).

What this suggests is that there existed in ancient Çatal Hüyük little possibility of a diverse social or institutional organisation; in essence, little possibility of a social integration abstracted beyond that of face-to-face integration. What is important for this present discussion, is that many of the walls of the mud-brick houses at Çatal Hüyük were decorated, by their ancient inhabitants, with murals. One in particular holds great interest for historians of cartography (Delano Smith 1987), and suggests much of interest for this work.

The mural of interest here offers what I suggest is a clear example of a representation of the physical cast by a society framed in the dominance of face-to-face integration. The mural itself (a photograph of which can be seen in figure 1, while a clearer reconstruction is offered in figure 2) is almost three metres long, and consists in the main of about eighty closely packed rectangles. Each of the rectangles contains a dot in the angles and a hollow in the interior. Sitting above the closely packed rectangles is (to use James Mellaart's terms, given in his early reports on the site), a "strange double-peaked object" (1964: 55).

Figure 1 A photograph of the Neolithic wall painting (dated through radiocarbon techniques to 6200 BCE ± 97 years) found in Çatal Hüyük (image drawn from http://www.henry-davis.com/MAPS/Ancientimages/100B.jpeg, accessed 31 Jan 2006); (see similar in Mellaart 1964: plate Vb; 1967: plates 59, 60) see also a reconstruction of the mural in figure 2.

Figure 2 A reconstruction of the Neolithic wall painting found in Çatal Hüyük, photographed in figure 1 (image drawn from Delano Smith 1987: 74).

The Çatal Hüyük painting lacks a legend or any of the other context providing coda common to modern spatial representation (though some important clues regarding its production will be discussed below), yet it has been suggested the painting represents a plan of a Neolithic town, perhaps of ancient Çatal Hüyük itself (Mellaart 1964: 55). With this suggestion we must, of course, remain wary; indeed, as Catherine Delano Smith suggested, "it would be difficult to see in this rectangular pattern anything of cartographic relevance were it not for the extraordinary resemblance of the rectangles in the wall painting to those drawn by the archaeologists as part of their excavation plan" (1987: 73). In this, we can usefully compare figures 2 and 3: the modern reconstruction of the mural, and the modern archaeological dig plan of Çatal Hüyük.

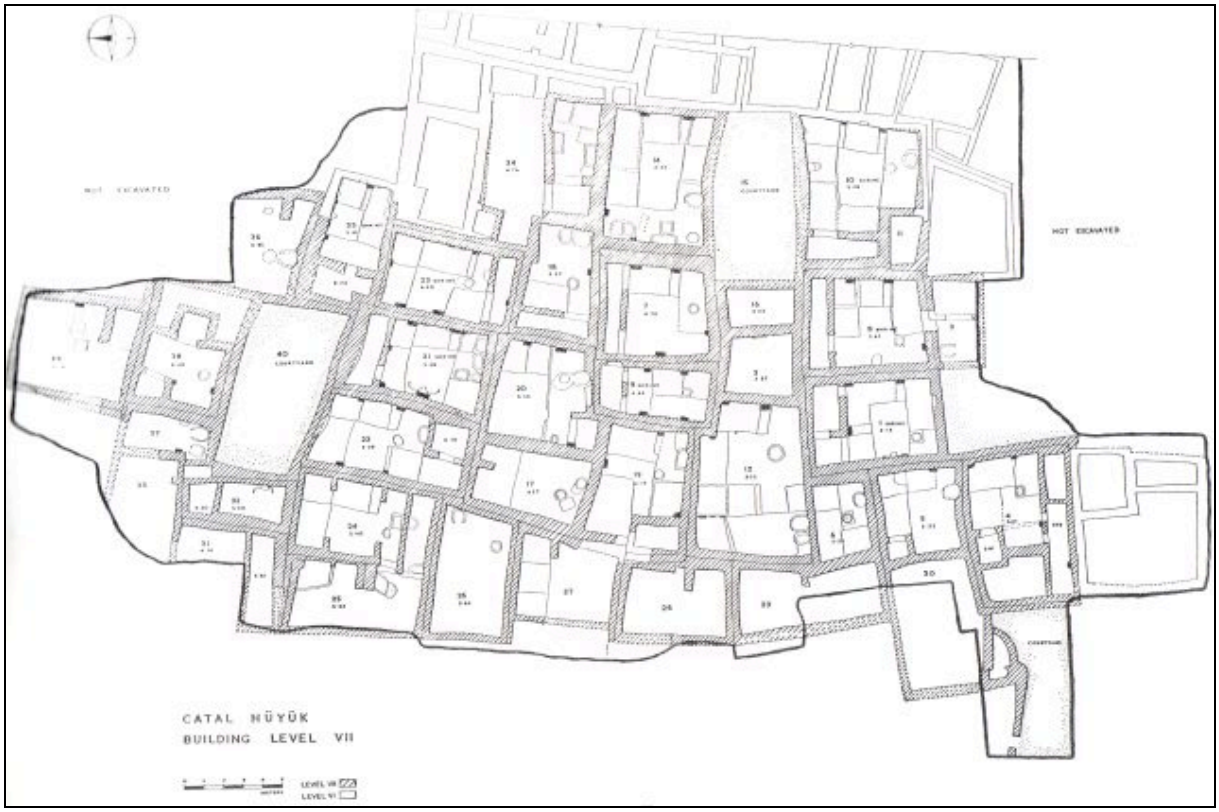

Figure 3 Mellaart's archaeological plan of Çatal Hüyük. "One only has to compare [this plan] with [figure 2]", suggested Mellaart, to see that the original wall painting (figure 1) "represent[s] a view of a town" (1964: 55, image facing 52).

The differences between these two images are, of course, great. Yet the dominance in each of a series of closely packed rectangles with a hollow interior clearly unites the pictures; as if the features marked as important in Mellaart's dig plan – the still standing walls of the village – echoed features important to the painters of the mural. Again, we must of course be careful with these inferences, as the projection of modern ways of viewing the world into the past is a clear danger here. Yet we can, however, mitigate these concerns to some degree with the knowledge that the ancient inhabitants of Çatal Hüyük entered their houses (almost exclusively) through entryway-holes in the ceilings (Mellaart 1964; 1967; see discussion of this point in Hodder 1995: 7), making them perhaps more willing to view the buildings of their town from *above*; to view their town in ways that were echoed in the modern dig plan. In essence, I suggest that with a measure of caution, we can follow Mellaart in inferring that the painting is in some way a representation of the town in which it was painted, while the 'strange double-peaked object' above the rectangles might well be that of the nearby – and visible – volcano, Hasan Dağ (1964: 55).

The wall painting at Çatal Hüyük cannot, of course, be taken as emblematic of all prehistoric spatial representation, nor as emblematic of all spatial representation emerging from societies formed in the dominance of face-to-face integration. However, with knowledge of some of the contextual facts of the site, we can infer some crucial points about the spatial understandings of the society from which it emerged, and, in turn, infer from these points some crucial ideas about the understandings of space in

societies in which "the limitations and possibilities of fully embodied interaction constitute the boundaries of social existence" (James 1996: 24). That is, we can infer some crucial points about the understanding of space of societies marked by the dominance of face-to-face integration. In essence, I suggest we can see in the mural a clear demonstration that the authority and meaning of the representation sat directly with the *painter*(s) and the *place* in which the image was painted. What this suggests in turn is that the space of this society was formed overwhelmingly through an embodied knowledge of the physical.

Three specific contextual elements surrounding the Çatal Hüyük painting provide crucial clues to the society that crafted the image. The first is that the very site of the image appears to have been important. In this, the arrangement of the room, and the fact that it was used for burial, suggests that it was in some way a site shaped by (and for) ritual or spiritual practice (see discussion in Mellaart 1964: 55; Delano Smith 1987: 58). The second contextual element (and this parallels Delano Smith's suggestion that "one of the crucial features of prehistoric art of any date" is the fact that "certain surfaces were used over and over again while neighboring rocks, to our eyes as suitable and as attractive, remain pristine" (1987: 57)) is the fact that the painting itself was regularly plastered over and repainted (Mellaart 1967: 132; Delano Smith 1987: 73). The third contextual element is the very absence of explanatory coda (in this we can compare figures 2 and 3). Together, these three points suggest a way of representing the physical entirely different from that seen in the modern world.

What these points suggest is that regardless of whether it was intended as a representation of the village or not, the Çatal Hüyük mural derived its meaning and authority – its ability to represent – from the individual painter(s) and the place of representation; from an embodied knowledge that was prior. We can explain: the fact that the image was repeatedly erased and repainted in a particular spot (a spot which may have held ritual significance) suggests that the place itself was a crucial element of the reason for – and hence played a significant role in determining the meaning of – the representation. Quite simply, the place where the mural was painted appears to have held for the painter(s) at least as much, if not more importance, than the content of the mural itself. This may seem peculiar to modern eyes. After all, this image is now a unique piece of knowledge, (perhaps) an invaluable example of early cartography (see Delano Smith 1987). Moreover, maps in modern society are treated as highly valued and powerful objects (this point will be discussed in greater detail below). Yet we must not let it escape our attention that the *content* of the Çatal Hüyük image was, for its author(s), not necessarily so valuable. Indeed, the fact that it was repeatedly painted over suggests that the content of the mural became, at some point, worthless. In a similar way, the absence of explanatory coda suggests that the image was not designed to transmit or store information to those who were temporally or spatially removed (we can compare here figure 3, which was expressly designed to transmit information to

those lacking an embodied knowledge of Çatal Hüyük). In this way we can, I suggest, assume that the painting was intended as a representation for those who *already knew* that which was being depicted.

If the image was intended to in some way represent the village of Çatal Hüyük, these points mean that its ability to do so – to be taken as a meaningful depiction of the village – depended on (and was subsequent to) those who painted it and the place of its painting. We can consider, here, the role of such a representation in the ancient Çatal Hüyük society. That is, if the image was intended to represent the village, the fact that it was erased and painted over suggests that the information it contained was inessential to the continued functioning of the society. (We might juxtapose here a modern cadastral map marking property ownership. This, we might imagine, would never be totally erased and re-drawn from the memory of the author). At heart, this representation of the physical – this abstract depiction of the physical world that surrounded its authors – derived meaning from that which was more concrete, from the *author* and *place* which could be known through an embodied engagement. What this means is that the understanding of space held by the authors of the Çatal Hüyük mural was tied directly to the level of abstraction within which their society was constituted. Their understanding of space rested, quite simply, on an embodied, face-to-face knowledge of the physical; the mural – the *abstraction* – was secondary.

Representations of the physical in a society of agency-extended integration

In contrast to societies formed primarily in face-to-face integration, the gradual development of networks of agency extension ushered in – to follow James' argument – a social integration "abstracted beyond being based predominantly on the directly embodied":

> At this level, institutions (agencies) such as the church or state, guild or corporation, and structuring practices of extension such as commodity exchange through merchants, traders, pedlars and the like (agents and mediators), come to bind people across larger expanses of space than is possible under face-to-face integration (1996: 25).

The change that facilitated this agency-extended integration can, in part, be described using James' conceptualisation of the intellectual. We can explain: for James, intellectuals are those who are lifted by virtue of their work "into an abstract relation to locale and time", "who work at a level more abstract than the dominant mode(s) of integration" (1996: 9, 43).

> Even in oral, tribal societies, interpreters of the passing particulars of social life have to *abstract* generalized explanations. The practices of reading signs from nature, storing memories of seasonal cycles, ritualizing knowledge of things in place, telling stories down the generations, all allow tribal interpreters to 'transcend' the immediacy of what Braudel distinguishes as day-to-day time and life-time. It provides the basis for their understanding of things *out of place* (James 1996: 42-43, emphasis added).

With the increasing social stratification that was afforded by the development of agriculture and settled urbanisation, this intellectual 'understanding of things out of place' gradually permitted a variety of networks of people – of 'institutions', such as the church or the military – to operate at a level more abstract than that which was possible with a purely embodied engagement with community and land. Quite simply, in a social formation framed by agency-extended integration,

> representatives or agents of the central institutions including clerics, soldiers and tax collectors came to minister to geographically separated groups of people who, at the level of the face-to-face, continued to have few points of connection with other groups (James 1996: 26).

Classical examples of societies marked by the dominance of agency-extended integration include "the polities of feudal Europe or late-imperial China", or what can be thought of as the 'traditional' (or pre-modern) empires, such as the Assyrian, Carolingian, Han or Mughal empires (James 1996: 25-26, 134). In essence, any society formed in the dominance of representatives of the institutional centre (such as soldiers, clerics and tax collectors) over more local face-to-face communities can be characterised as one formed in the dominance of agency-extended integration.

What I seek to demonstrate now is that a certain understanding of space – a certain way of representing and behaving in the physical world – lies intimately bound with this agency-extended form of society. At heart, the understanding of space of a society marked by the dominance of agency-extended integration rests on an institutional knowledge of the physical world; and because of this, the representations of the physical indicative of such an understanding of space draw authority and meaning from institutions, and show evidence of a move away from the particularities of place towards a putatively objective 'whole'. More simply, the space of a society framed in agency-extended integration is derived from and dependent upon an abstracted, institutional knowledge of the physical world.

A great variety of forms of representation and spatial practice can, of course, be witnessed in societies characterised by the dominance of agency-extended integration. Early bureaucratic writing, military campaign maps and narratives, pilgrimage guides and travelogues all provide some access to the spatial understandings of such societies. However, thanks largely to the explicit theory underscoring his work – which provides clues to the context from which it emerged – Ptolemy's second century text the *Geographia* offers a particularly useful example of a representation of the physical derived from a society dominated by agency-extended integration. To explore this spatial representation, I discuss first the social environment within which Ptolemy offered his representation of 'the known world', the details of the representation itself, and then finally a number of contextual points which suggest that the understanding of space normal in Ptolemy's society was related directly to the agency-extended integration within which that society was constituted.

Little is known of the life of Claudius Ptolemaeus – Ptolemy – except that he lived in the city of Alexandria in the early second century, that he wrote in Greek, and that he was (probably) a citizen of the Roman Empire. What we do know, however, is that the social environment that shaped Ptolemy's life was radically different from that which shaped the painters of the Çatal Hüyük mural. Most centrally, Ptolemy was a well connected public intellectual who lived in a city that was, as Gibbon suggested, closely connected by agency-extended pathways to the other cities and towns of what was an enormous and powerful empire:

> …all these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which issuing from the forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire…. [These roads] united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions... The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institutions of posts. Houses were everywhere erected at a distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of these relays it was easy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads… Nor was the communication of the Roman Empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and inclosed the Mediterranean; and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake… From [the port of Ostia], which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt… (1983 [1776-1788]: 70-71).

Though we cannot entirely accept Gibbon's claim that "the obedience of the Roman world" in the 2nd century "was uniform, voluntary, and permanent" (1983 [1776-1788]: 65), we can assume that the inhabitants of the Roman Empire – united, as the passage above suggests, from Britannia to Aegyptus via an epic spatial network – shared a situation within a vast society cast in the dominance of agency-extended integration. It was in this environment that Ptolemy composed his *Geographia*.

The *Geographia* of Ptolemy is a clear example of a representation of the physical world derived from a society marked by the dominance of agency-extended integration. Though the work is not directly available to modern scholarship (the earliest surviving manuscript of the text dates from the early 14th century (Berggren and Jones 2000a: 43)), what is available tells us much about the forms of spatial representation – and hence the understandings of space of which they are indicative – of a society marked by the dominance of agency-extended integration.

We can begin with a description of the work. The *Geographia* is composed of two distinct sections. The first is an elaborate treatise on cartography, while the second is a detailed catalogue of localities of the known world, given according to a coordinates system largely comparable with modern latitude and longitude. In essence, Ptolemy offered (to follow Berggren and Jones' translation of his Greek title *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*) a "guide to drawing a world map" (2000a: 4).

The theoretical aspects of Ptolemy's *Geographia* emerged directly from a failing (which Ptolemy noted at the end of his earlier work *Almagest*, as well as at the beginning of the *Geographia*), in the available geographical literature. In this, Ptolemy offered in the first book of the *Geographia* a detailed critique of the most recent author "to have undertaken this subject", Marinus of Tyre (2000: 63). Ptolemy argued that Marinus' work was plagued with flawed information gathering techniques and an "especially unsuitable" system of cartographic representation (cited in Dilke 1987a: 179). At root, Ptolemy considered that Marinus' attempts to represent the globe on a plane sheet showed no concern for either "proper proportionality [or] for a spherical appearance" (2000: 82), and hence forced the cartographer to use a disjointed and disproportionate rectangular projection system. To resolve this, Ptolemy proposed a series of projections (see 2000: 85-93, book 1, section 24) in which the lines of latitude (and, in some cases, of longitude) were curved. This, Ptolemy suggested, offered a much more 'proportionate' means of representing a sphere on a two-dimensional sheet (see figure 4 below, drawn using Ptolemy's 'first projection').

Following this cartographic discussion, Ptolemy offered in the remainder of the *Geographia* a long series of detailed coordinates on the locations of places in the known world, expressed in degrees of east of the Fortunate Isles (probably the modern Canary Islands (Berggren and Jones 2000b: 170)) and degrees north or south of the equator. "This method of exposition", suggested Ptolemy, would "make it possible for anyone who wishes, to draw the parts of the *oikoumenē* [known world] on planar surfaces" (2000: 95). A brief example of Ptolemy's extensive catalogue is worth repeating here; this text comes from book 2, section 7 of the *Geographia*, and describes the coastline of the province of Aquitania in Gaul:

> *The disposition of Celtogalatia Aquitanica* [Gaul Aquitania]
> Celtogalatia [Gaul] is divided into four provinces: Aquitania, Lugdunensis, Beltica [Belgica], and Narbonensis.
> Aquitania is bounded on the west by the Aquitanian Ocean with the following outline of coast:
>
> | After Oiasso Promontory in the Pyrenees: | [ºE] | [ºN] |
> |---|---|---|
> | Mouth of the R. Aturis [Adour] | 16¾ | 44¾ |
> | Mouth of R. Sigmatis [Leyre] | 17 | 45⅓ |
> | Cape Curianum | 16½ | 46 |
> | Mouth of R. Garuna [Garonne] | 17½ | 46½ |
> | The middle of its extent | 18 | 45⅓ |
> | The river's source | 19½ | 44¼ |
> | Harbor of the Santones | 16½ | 46¾ |
> | Cape of the Santones | 16½ | 47¼ |
> | Mouth of R. Canentellus [Charente] | 17¼ | 47¾ |
> | Cape Pictonium | 17 | 48 |
> | Sicor harbor | 17½ | 48¼ |
> | Mouths of R. Liger [Loire] | 17⅔ | 48½ |
>
> (Ptolemy 2000: 96).

In this way, Ptolemy's *Geographia* offered a compelling representation of a large swathe of the physical world 'known' in the 2nd century Roman Empire; this was, indeed, one which proved influential for many centuries to follow (see chapter 4, and discussion in Pickles 2004: 83). Though

we have no maps from Ptolemy's time, and indeed debate rages as to whether Ptolemy himself composed such a map (see discussion in Dilke 1987a: 177), the instructions of the *Geographia* were elaborate enough for later cartographers to construct detailed and exacting maps of the Ptolemaic world. Here figure 4 offers one of the earliest known reconstructions.

Figure 4 A map of the *oikoumenē* – the 'known world' – drawn *c.*1300 using Ptolemy's 'first projection' (this projection used curved lines of latitude and straight lines of longitude) and the coordinates catalogued in the *Geographia* (image available at http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/23/PtolemyWorldMap.jpg, accessed 2 Feb 2006); (see similar in Berggren and Jones 2000b: Plate 1).

Like the wall painting at Çatal Hüyük, Ptolemy's *Geographia* cannot, of course, be taken as emblematic of all pre-modern spatial representation, nor of all spatial representation emerging from societies cast in the dominance of agency-extended integration. However, by taking Ptolemy's own words and the known social environment of the 2nd century Roman Empire into account, we can infer some crucial points about the spatial representations – and, hence, the understandings of space of which they are indicative – emerging from the Classical world and from agency-extended societies in general. At root, we can see in Ptolemy's *Geographia* a crucial shift: away from an authority based on individual and place, and towards an authority derived from abstract *institutions* and 'the world' as a *whole*. At heart, one's location 'in the world' was, in Ptolemy's thinking, beginning to define the space within which one lived.

Three specific contextual elements surrounding and contained within Ptolemy's *Geographia* provide some crucial clues to the forms representation of the physical – and the understandings of space of

which they are indicative – dominant in the agency-extended society of the 2nd century Roman Empire. We can briefly note these contextual elements first, and then turn to what I suggest they indicate about the framing of the Ptolemaic world. Firstly, we can clearly see in the *Geographia* explicit use of abstract coda to locate the places of Ptolemy's known world; in particular, Ptolemy's account of the physical relied on the use of coordinates, titles (*hypographē*) and a mathematical schema for projecting this information. In example, this recourse to coda is evident in both the numerical description of the coastline of Aquitania noted above, and the lines of latitude and longitude evident in the projection of figure 4. Secondly, we can also find in the *Geographia* clear evidence of a particular type of source material: Marinus' work was clearly (though critically) embraced (Ptolemy 2000: 63-4), as were accounts of travellers and military expeditions (Dilke 1987a: 178). As Ptolemy argued, "the numbers of degrees of longitude and latitude of well-trodden places" were "to be considered as quite close to the truth because more or less consistent accounts of them [had] been passed down without interruption" (2000: 94). Finally, thanks to the great volumes of information included and the specialised skills in literacy and numeracy required to follow Ptolemy's guide, we must assume that the costs of embarking on such an enterprise would have been, in the 2nd century Roman world, enormous (see Berggren and Jones 2000a: 43). Together, these contextual elements suggest a way of representing the physical, and a way of understanding space, entirely different from that seen in the modern world or from that underscoring the wall painting at Çatal Hüyük.

We can see in Ptolemy's account of the physical world a key movement away from the need to situate spatial representations in a specific *place*. That is, the long lists of coordinates and the detailed description of cartographic technique provided what Dilke has described as a "digital rather than graphic" form of knowledge transmission; these lists and techniques would allow Ptolemy's readers "to recreate the images he so clearly envisaged" regardless of *where* they happened to be (1987a: 180). Quite simply, Ptolemy's coordinates and method should – if followed correctly – produce an image somewhat like that of figure 4 regardless of where the drawing was made, or, indeed, who did the drawing. In this move, the highly abstract category of 'the world' – as opposed to the intimacy of place – began to become the reason *for* cartographic knowledge. Thus as Ptolemy argued, "the goal of regional cartography",

> is an impression of a part, as when one makes an image of just an ear or an eye; *but* [*the goal*] *of world cartography is a general view*, analogous to making a portrait of the whole head. That is, whenever a portrait is to be made, one has to fit in the main parts [of the body] in a determined pattern and an order of priority. Furthermore the [surfaces] that are going to hold the drawings ought to be of a suitable size for the space of the visual rays at an appropriate distance [from the spectator], whether the drawing be of whole or part, *so that everything will be grasped by the sense* [*of sight*] (2000: 57, emphasis added).

What Ptolemy claimed was that his cartography offered a path to *objectivity*: a movement towards a 'view of everything', a 'view from nowhere'. Grandiose though these claims were, Ptolemy's *Geographia* did not, entirely, step towards the ontological priority of 'the world' that his argument

called for. That is, though he partially prioritised the abstraction of a mathematical methodology (see Ptolemy 2000: 58, in this foreshadowing Descartes and the other modern thinkers who would truly embrace such a methodology - this will be discussed below), the authority of his representation was entirely the product of an agency-extended society. That is, Ptolemy's claim to authority for his depiction of the physical world – his ability to represent the physical – was based directly on the fact that consistent accounts had been passed down; his major research in the coordinates section of the *Geographia* was in collecting information from his predecessors (Dilke 1987a: 183). Thus "were we to find nothing lacking from [Marinus'] last arrangement," Ptolemy offered, "it would have been sufficient for us to construct a map of the inhabited world *just from these commentaries*, and waste no time on anything else" (cited in Dilke 1987a: 185, emphasis added). This fact explicitly framed the list of coordinates Ptolemy gave: though they were supposedly based on disembodied systems of latitude and longitude, they were overwhelmingly derived from human and institutional accounts of travel between each point. This is why it clearly made sense to Ptolemy to order the list according to the proximity of each location to the next; Cape Pictonium, for example, was listed immediately prior to Sicor harbour. This ordering was radically different from that which is visible in modern compendia of geographical coordinates (as will be discussed below). In essence, Ptolemy trusted – and expected his followers to trust – the authority of an agency-extended institution.

The conceptions of authority and world in Ptolemy's *Geographia* were entirely consistent with a society marked by the dominance of agency-extended integration. In this, institutions were treated as more authoritative than individuals, while 'the world' was considered in some ways more meaningful than place. Quite simply, one's location 'in the world' was beginning to define the space within which one lived. What must be recognised at this stage is that such an understanding was, in the Classical world, highly privileged; within the grasp of only the powerful institutions able to afford it (see discussion in Dilke 1987b). Great swathes of the population of such a society – of the Roman Empire, in Ptolemy's case – "continued", to draw from James, "to have few points of connection with other groups" (1996: 26). Face-to-face integration remained, for many, the norm. In essence, this suggests that the Ptolemaic representation of the world was not terribly important (nor relevant) to most of the population living in an agency-extended society. It was both a product *of*, and a product *for*, the agencies and institutions that governed such a society 'from above'.

Representations of the physical in a society of disembodied integration

To continue this discussion, we can return, once more, to James' schema of constitutive levels of abstraction. In contrast to societies framed in the dominance of either face-to-face or agency-extended integration, societies marked by the dominance of disembodied integration are those in which "the full

modalities of face-to-face interaction and the continuing practices of intermediating agency are not the salient features of the social relation" (1996: 31). At this level of social integration, "the constraints on communication, exchange, organization and production entailed in the deceptively complex fact that human beings have bodies, are qualitatively attenuated"; the social formation "transcends time and space quite apart from any personal intermediation" (James 1996: 31). In essence, societies marked by the dominance of disembodied integration are framed at an abstract level in which embodiment is irrelevant; in which the members of a social formation need neither face-to-face nor agency-extended contact to be connected with the other members of their society. On this point, we can turn to the means which have facilitated this disembodied extension. These, according to James, are "multifarious":

> Examples taken just from the sphere of communication (though they cannot be divorced from their uses in exchange, production and organization) range from the illuminated manuscript to the daily newspaper, from the telegraph wire to the national and international 'telecom' system, the satellite-connected television grid, and the network which bleeps the passage of capital across the globe to on-line personal computers (1996: 32).

What is important about these various facilitative media is that none rely on either their one-to-one communicants, or the individuals who compose their mass audiences, having a pre-existent face-to-face or agency-extended relationship with each other. The contact they facilitate transcends any personal, embodied, intermediation.

Yet – and this point returns us briefly to the argument running through this work – in the classical example of a society framed in the dominance of this disembodied integration – the modern nation – the disembodied contact fostered by these facilitative media is consummated as if there existed between the communicants the possibility of an embodied continuity (James 1996: 32). That is,

> ...even the electronic media depend, both for the meaning of their content and for the depth of their constitutive hold, upon the assumption of an ontological continuity from the embodied to the disembodied (James 1996: 33).

This continuity-in-discontinuity can be explained by returning to the argument that the emergence to dominance of networks of disembodied extension has not forced the erasure of more concrete agency-extended and face-to-face forms of integration; that instead, these 'prior' levels have been reconstituted according to the terms dictated by the dominance of the more abstract level (1996: 32). What this argument suggests, at heart, is that it is in the *intersection* of these various levels of integration, dominated by the disembodied, that the modern nation comes into being (see further discussion of this point in chapter 1). This, I have stressed throughout this chapter, can be directly paralleled in the national territory. That is, the emergence to dominance of more abstract forms of integration – and hence more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical world – has tended not to dissolve but to reconstitute knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate sources, from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. It is in the intersection of these various forms of

knowledge that we can find the national territory. This intersection, crucial to the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, will be discussed in greater detail below.

What we must demonstrate now, however, is that a certain understanding of space – a certain way of representing and behaving in the physical world – lies intimately bound with societies framed in the dominance of disembodied integration. Representations of the physical emerging from societies cast in the dominance of disembodied integration draw their authority – their ability to represent – from highly abstract 'universal' and 'objective' codes, and show a rejection of the particularities of place in favour of a claim to totality. What this suggests – to return to Lefebvre – is that the understanding of space of a society cast in the dominance of disembodied integration has "entered the realm of the absolute. As Object opposed to Subject, as *res extensa* opposed to, and present to, *res cogitans*, space [comes] to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies" (1991: 1). More simply, the space of a society framed in disembodied integration is *prior to*, and *enveloping of*, that which can be known through an embodied engagement.

A great variety of forms of spatial representation can, of course, be witnessed in societies characterised by the dominance of disembodied integration. Guide books such as *The Lonely Planet*, magazines such as the *National Geographic* and the *Reader's Digest* (see discussion in Lutz and Collins 1993; Sharp 1996; Dodds 1996), and a great host of school geography texts (see Morgan 2003) offer clear evidence of representations of the physical emerging from societies integrated at a disembodied level. However, thanks to its status in modern society and the thinking upon which it is based (more will be discussed on these points below), the institution of the 'world atlas' – and, in example, *The Times Atlas of the World: Comprehensive Edition* of 1990 (hereafter *TAW* 1990) – offers a compelling example of a representation of the physical world cast by a society framed in disembodied extension. To explore this example, I discuss first the social environment within which this particular representation of the physical was crafted, the details of the representation itself, and, finally, a number of contextual points which indicate that the understanding of space held by the authors of *The Times Atlas of the World* was related directly to the dominant disembodied integration within which their society was constituted.

To begin, we can describe the social milieu within which the publishers of *The Times Atlas of the World* offered their representation of the physical. Now, though less might be known about the social environments of ancient Çatal Hüyük or 2nd century Alexandria than might be known about the London of the late 20th century (within which the authors of *The Times Atlas of the World* offered their representation of the physical), this does not mean a brief description of this environment is simple. Indeed, describing what we do know about this modern social environment forms a significant element of the discussion within which this present work is located. What we can state briefly – and, I

suggest, safely – is that the authors and publishers of *The Times Atlas of the World* were, in 1990 (the year in which the particular, somewhat arbitrarily chosen edition under consideration was published), deeply embedded in complicated disembodied, agency-extended and face-to-face networks that permitted them connections with people and knowledge spread far and wide. If we draw from James' description of the means of disembodied social integration which were noted above – that is, in which

> examples taken from just the sphere of communication… range from the illuminated manuscript to the daily newspaper, from the telegraph wire to the national and international 'telecom' system, the satellite-connected television grid, and the network which bleeps the passage of capital across the globe to on-line personal computers (1996: 32)

– we can assume that most of these means formed elements of the social fabric surrounding the publishers and authors of *The Times Atlas of the World* in 1990. They were, simply, enmeshed in the socially dominant networks of disembodied extension. It was in this environment that they offered their *Atlas*.

The Times Atlas of the World is a clear example of a representation of the physical derived from a society marked by the dominance of disembodied integration. We can begin with a brief description of the work. The atlas itself is composed of three broad sections. The first section contextualises the remainder of the volume by offering variously a dedication to Queen Elizabeth II, a foreword from the publishers, some 'geographical comparisons', a list of symbols and abbreviations used later in the volume, and some theoretical and historical discussions on cartography (*TAW* 1990: i-xlvii). This first section also includes a detailed discussion on the 'Creation' and 'Structure of the Universe', as well as that of the 'Solar System' (*TAW* 1990: xvi-xvii, xx-xxiii). More will be discussed on this below. The second section is made up of just over three hundred maps (a detail of one of these maps is offered in example in figure 5) depicting various regions, continents, states and cities of the planet Earth. These maps vary in their specific focus, yet most display a variety of factors about the region of the Earth's surface they focus on, including its topography, water features, major roads and rail lines, international and inter-provincial boundaries, and a great host of named sites, such as towns, villages, cities, rivers, lakes and peaks. All the data presented is explicitly located within an overlaid grid of longitude east or west of Greenwich, and latitude north or south of the Equator.

Figure 5 A detail of Plate 42 of *The Times Atlas of the World*, 'USSR, Siberia, South: Altay' (*TAW* 1990: Plate 42). The map of which this is a detail – which in the original form was offered at a scale of 1:5 000 000 – depicted the Altai / Altay mountain range and surrounds, where (at the time of publication) the territorial claims of the Soviet Union, China and Mongolia met.

The third and final section of the *Atlas* is a long index-gazetteer. In this, the state, latitude and longitude of over two hundred thousand geographical sites is listed (Lewis 1990; *TAW* 1990). A short example of this index – to which we will return later – is worth offering here:

… …
32 K7 **Sa'īdī** Iran 27.50N 62.20E
73 F9 **Saïdia** Morocco 35.04N 2.15W
15 J6 **Saidor** Papua New Guinea 5.38S 146.28E
28 G3 **Saidpur** Bangladesh 25.48N 89.00E
30 A4 **Saidpur** Bulandshahr, Uttar Prad, India 28.37N 77.54E
30 G7 **Saidpur** Ghazipur, Uttar Prad, India 25.33N 83.13E
31 G3 **Saidu** Pakistan 34.43N 72.24E
66 E2 **Saignelégier** Switzerland 47.16N 7.01E
72 J5 **Saignes** France 45.20N 2.28E
20 G5 **Saigō** Japan 36.12N 133.19E
… … (*TAW* 1990: 171).

Like the wall painting at Çatal Hüyük and Ptolemy's *Geographia*, *The Times Atlas of the World: Comprehensive Edition* cannot, of course, be taken as emblematic of all modern spatial representation, nor as emblematic of all spatial representation emerging from societies cast in the dominance of disembodied integration. However, with some knowledge of the social environment within which the work was framed, and knowledge of the claims of the *Atlas* itself, we can infer some points about the forms of spatial representation – and the understandings of space of which they are indicative – of a

society cast in the dominance of disembodied integration. What I suggest is that we can see in *The Times Atlas of the World* a clear rejection of the particularities of place and individual – a clear rejection, that is, of an embodied knowledge of the physical – in favour of a depiction that prioritises 'the world' and draws authority from highly abstract 'universal' concepts. It is a representation indicative, quite simply, of an understanding of space in which objective knowledge is (supposedly) attainable through a rejection of an embodied engagement with the physical. To digress briefly, the importance of this is that it is in this form of disembodied knowledge, I argue, that the national territory becomes possible. In this, we can return to the argument raised above: that the idea that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to specifiable and finite compatriots – despite the impossibility of those of a nation ever personally seeing the majority of their specifiable compatriots (see James 1996: xi; B Anderson 1991: 6-7) – can be paralleled directly in the national territory. That is, I suggest that the nation is assumed to incorporate a rich and inalienable relationship to a defined, definable territory, despite the impossibility of the members of that nation ever personally seeing – ever having an embodied engagement with – the totality of that land. In essence, I suggest that the difference between the space of the nation and the spaces of non-national societies is that nations hold in their knowledge of the physical an imagined certainty – at scales and in a spread of locales – simply impossible with an embodied engagement. This is what is supposedly offered in the disembodied spatial representations of *The Times Atlas of the World*.

Three specific contextual elements surrounding and contained within *The Times Atlas of the World: Comprehensive Edition* provide us with crucial clues to the forms of representation of the physical – and the understandings of space of which they are indicative – dominant in the modern world. Firstly, the volume under consideration here (the 1990 edition) is, as its publishers stressed, but the latest in a long line of modern depictions of the physical. As H A G Lewis suggested in the foreword to the volume (1990: viii), *The Times Atlas of the World* was but the latest in a long line stretching back to 'first modern atlases', the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of Abraham Ortelius (1570) and the *Atlas, or Cosmographical Meditations on the Frame for the World and its Form* of Mercator (1594). Beyond this, the *Comprehensive Edition* was the fourth effort in *The Times*' long cartographical catalogue, and the 1990 version was the eighth of the *Comprehensive Edition*s (Lewis 1990: viii). Meanwhile, the knowledge contained within the *Atlas* was recognised by the publishers as being far from unique. In this, a variety of competitors (such as the *National Geographic Atlas of the World* (Grosvenor et al. 1975) and the Oxford University Press *Atlas of the World* (*OUPAW* 1993)) offered largely the same "compendium of geographical knowledge" with "the aim… to inform, to strive for accuracy and to be as up to date as possible" (Lewis 1990: viii). Quite simply, the publishers recognised their place in a long history of modern geographical representation, admitting that their 1990 version would only be 'accurate' up to the date of publication. After this, the 'discoveries' and 'disclosures' of 'advancing' science would gradually render the particular *Atlas* obsolete (Lewis 1990: viii). The inference of this,

of course, was that 'total' and 'accurate' knowledge of the physical world was possible; that the physical world could be 'known'. More will be discussed on this important inference below.

Secondly, we can see in the *Atlas* an ordering in which highly abstract 'universal' spatial concepts were presented by the publishers *prior* to those which were more 'particular' and 'local'. In this, the publishers offered within the first few pages of the *Atlas* (as I suggested above) a discussion on the 'Structure of the Universe'. In this it was suggested that "on the largest scale we inhabit a universe of galaxies, numbering perhaps a hundred billion" and that "the heart of our own galaxy lies thirty thousand light years away far beyond the star clouds of Sagittarius" (*TAW* 1990: xvi). Following this, the publishers turned to a discussion of the 'Solar system', in which the planet Earth was situated amongst a collection of planets "which continue to orbit the Sun" (*TAW* 1990: xx). After this, the publishers presented large scale maps (entitled as simply 'Physical Earth') of great hemispheres of the planet, mimicking a view from a high orbit. Only *after* these wide views did the publishers of *The Times Atlas of the World* turn to the core focus of the volume, 'the maps of the world'. The final section the publishers presented was, then, the index; only within this section did it become possible to find what Lewis termed in the foreword to the volume 'places' (Lewis 1990: viii). That is, only at the very close of the book could an interested reader begin to locate what was presented by the *Atlas* as their village or town, their 'place'. This ordering could only suggest to the reader that the physical environment that they might know intimately – their Saïdia, to draw an example from the index excerpt listed above – was defined not by their family, friends and the streets and buildings they knew through an intimate, embodied knowledge, but by its place in the universe at large. Thus in the universal postal address afforded by *The Times Atlas* – in which Saïdia was effectively given as

The Universe
The Milky Way
The Solar System
Earth
North of the Equator 35.04º
West of Greenwich 2.15º
Saïdia

– the Saïdia that might be known through an embodied knowledge was irrelevant. The authority here rested clearly with 'the whole'.

In a different way, it is also worth observing that the index of *The Times Atlas of the World* (as shown above) was ordered alphabetically. Alphabetical ordering is, of course, standard in modern publications; yet this ordering must be recognised as radically different from that which is evident in Ptolemy's *Geographia* (as shown above). That is, where Ptolemy listed the co-ordinates of a site, he appeared keenly interested in its relationship to the other sites which neighboured it in the physical world; Cape Pictonium, for example, was listed by Ptolemy directly before Sicor Habour (2000: 96). This could, of course, have been because Ptolemy sought to provide instructions for drawing a map,

and considered it most plausible to draw points in succession on a page; it could also be because Ptolemy derived his information from reports of journeys between cities. Yet beyond this, it does appear to herald a key difference in thinking. In Ptolemy's account there would have been no reason to 'locate a place' except in relationship to the local area around it; the coordinates were merely a device to aid map making. In *The Times Atlas of the World*, however, it was presented as perfectly normal that one might wish – regardless of where one was – to know where Sa'īdī or Saignelégier or Saigō was 'in the world'. The disappearance of the body – of an embodied knowledge of the physical – in such a move is glaring.

Finally, the descriptions of the *Atlas* offered by Lewis in his foreword to the volume included a number of claims which I suggest are crucial to the modern, disembodied representation of the physical. These claims were that the work was a natural step in the onward march to completeness ("the blank areas of the world [are] becoming filled"); that the work was in and of itself authoritative ("the Index-Gazetteer was widely acclaimed and became a standard and authoritative work of reference"); that the maps were ontologically prior to place ("the latitudes and longitudes have been retained so that locations may be more precisely defined"); and, finally, that the work was not a representation of the Earth, but – somehow – the Earth itself:

> The surface of a spherical Earth cannot be transferred to a flat sheet of paper without some modification of shape or direction any more than it is possible to remove the peel from an orange and lay it out flat and unbroken. The reverse is equally impossible: an orange cannot be wrapped in a flat sheet of paper without cuts and folds. Map projections are the means by which *the round Earth is converted into a flat map* (Lewis 1990: viii, emphasis added; see discussion of such claims in Pickles 2004: 13; Gregory 1994: 75).

We must stress: the round Earth has *not* been *converted* into anything; the round Earth, the physical entity upon which we walk has *not* been changed by any discursive exercise. One might, of course, argue that this is then but a slip; that the writer intended to use the word 'depicted' or 'represented' rather than 'converted'. Yet such a slip is, I suggest, very much at the heart of the claims of the modern disembodied representation of the physical (see discussion in Gregory 1994: 75-76). In essence, *The Times Atlas of the World* demonstrates a clear rejection of any authority derived from an embodied knowledge, any authority afforded to place or individual: places were *defined* 'from afar' by the abstract concepts of latitude and longitude, or in their relationship to the world (or universe) at large. In doing this, the representation was presented as ontologically identical with the world, somehow *as* the round Earth. Quite simply, the fundamental gap between discourse and the physical, between representation and represented, between Subject and Object, was negated (see discussion in Pickles 2004: 13). In this way, "space" – no longer an understanding, but an absolute – came "to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies" (Lefebvre 1991: 1). In this, the particularities of physicality, of an embodied knowledge, became meaningless.

It must finally be observed, before turning to a discussion of the thinking underscoring the disembodied representations of *The Times Atlas of the World*, that the depictions of the physical offered in such a volume sit clearly distinct from those offered by Ptolemy in their relationship to society at large. That is, where Ptolemy's map remained a treasured artefact of the privileged few, *The Times Atlas of the World*'s maps are marked only by their ubiquity. Such maps are not, thanks to print-capitalism and modern state sponsored education, rare or unseen artefacts. They are – to turn the geographical dream on its head – everywhere (see Cosgrove 1989; Pickles 2004: 13).

Modernity, postmodernity, and the intersection in knowledge of the physical world

Earlier in this chapter I raised three points which I suggested were needed to frame this discussion on the production of national space, and which would be defended and discussed throughout this chapter. These three were that all societies produce their own space, that the space of a society is related directly to the forms of abstract integration within which that society is constituted, and that the emergence of more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical has tended not to dissolve but to reconstitute knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate and concrete forms of integration. To this stage in this chapter, I have sought largely to demonstrate and defend the first two of these points. That is, in the above discussions I have endeavoured to show that representations of the physical – and hence the understandings of space of which they are indicative – are related directly to the dominant forms of abstract integration within which a society is constituted; and that we can trace, with the development of more abstract forms of integration, a shift in the understanding of space from that which is dependent on an embodied knowledge, to that in which space is prior and enveloping.

We must turn now to the third of the three points raised to frame this chapter: to the argument that the emergence of more abstract forms of knowledge of the physical has tended not to dissolve but to reconstitute knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate forms of integration. In this, we can return to the argument framing this chapter (and, indeed, this thesis): that though the national territory is a particular kind of space which only becomes possible with the emerging dominance of disembodied knowledge of the physical world, we must stress that it is in the *intersection* between highly abstract and more intimate forms of knowledge of the physical that the national territory is constituted. What we must do now is begin to describe this intersection. To do this, I take in this section two steps. Firstly, we must explore in greater detail the thinking which has underscored the disembodied knowledge of the physical within which the national territory (as a general form) has emerged. Following this, we must then discuss a significant and useful critique of this thinking. It is with this final discussion that we gain tools able to explore the intersection between the abstract and intimate forms of knowledge of the physical; the intersection, I will suggest in later chapters, within

which the Indian national territory has been brought into being. To begin this section, I follow Lefebvre's argument that "the thinking of Descartes" represents – for the writers of modern geography and "most historians of Western thought" – "the decisive point in the working-out of the concept of space, and the key to its mature form" (1991: 1; see also Jay 1993: 69; Gregory 1994: 70).

Descartes, geography, and modernity

In the discussion above, I argued that the representations of the physical visible in *The Times Atlas of the World* (and all other works of what Soja (1989: 35) might label as 'Modern Geography'; of what Lefebvre might describe as the 'science of space' (1991: 2; Gregory 1994: 70)) drew their authority not from their individual author(s) (as we can, perhaps, assume the wall painting at Çatal Hüyük did), nor from various agencies or institutions (as did Ptolemy in his *Geographia*). Instead, the publishers of *The Times Atlas* drew directly on highly abstract 'universal' concepts to claim that the pictures they were publishing were truthful mappings of the 'world as it is'. Most centrally, the publishers of the *Atlas* drew directly on a Cartesian epistemology: on a mode of thinking in which "immutable", "eternal" and "certain" truths of "arithmetic and geometry, and in general… the pure mathematics" could be employed to *know* the physical world (Descartes 1912 [1641]: 121; see discussion in Pickles 2004: 80).

In this section I explore the thinking of René Descartes (looking, in particular, at his *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1912 [1637]) and *Meditations on the First Philosophy* (1993 [1641])), before turning briefly to how such Cartesian thinking directly underpins the claims to authority of Modern Geography. In this I do not seek to suggest that Descartes *drove* any shift in the understanding of the physical world; rather, I seek to show that a disembodied mode of thinking – such as that offered by Descartes – and a disembodied depiction of the physical world, are fundamentally intertwined. What I suggest is that in exploring this thinking, we gain, when turning to its critique, an ability to discuss the intersection between the disembodied and more intimate knowledge of the physical that is crucial to the emergence of the national territory.

We can begin our discussion of Descartes' thinking where he began. "Several years have now elapsed", Descartes offered to open his *Meditations on the First Philosophy*,

> since I first became aware that I had accepted, even from my youth, many false opinions for true, and that consequently what I afterwards based on such principles was highly doubtful; and from that time I was convinced of the necessity of undertaking once in my life to rid myself of all the opinions I had adopted, and of commencing anew the work of building from the foundation, if I desired to establish *a firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences*. But as this enterprise appeared to me to be one of great magnitude, I waited until I had attained an age so mature as to leave me no hope that at any stage of life more advanced I should be better able to execute my

> design… To-day, then, since I have opportunely *freed my mind from all cares* (and am happily disturbed by no passions), and since I am in the secure possession of leisure in a peaceable retirement, I will at length apply myself earnestly and freely to the general overthrow of all my former opinions (1912 [1641]: 79-80, emphasis added).

Thus to rid himself of 'false opinions' and to 'establish a firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences' Descartes *freed himself* of 'passions and cares' and 'peacefully retired'. This behaviour was echoed in his *Discourse on Method*, which he began by noting the 'fortunate occurrence' of finding "no society to interest me", such that he could remain "the whole day in seclusion, with full opportunity to occupy my attention with my own thoughts" (1912 [1637]: 10). In essence, in both the *Meditations* and the *Discourse*, Descartes *began* with a drawing away from the world, with a rejection of an embodied engagement with the physical. This beginning reverberated throughout his thinking.

The core of Descartes' thinking rested in the argument that in the search for truth, one "ought to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which [one] *could* suppose the least ground for doubt" (1912 [1637]: 26, emphasis added). In doing this, one could truly ascertain if there existed anything *certain*, anything "wholly indubitable":

> Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations (Descartes 1912 [1637]: 26).

"But immediately upon this", Descartes argued – leading his readers directly to his grounding for a 'firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences' – that whilst he wished to think that "all was false",

> it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, *I think, hence I am*, was so certain and of such evidence, that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search (1912 [1637]: 26-27, emphasis in original).

At heart, Descartes placed at the very base of his epistemology the argument that the indubitable, undoubtable 'I' was a *certain substance*, a substance whose whole essence consisted only in thinking. Moreover, that it might exists, this 'thinking essence' had "no need of place", and was not "dependent on any material thing" (Descartes 1912 [1637]: 27). Hence

> 'I,' that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is *wholly distinct from the body*, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is (1912 [1637]: 27, emphasis added; see also 1912 [1641]: 133).

In essence, Descartes drew a clear separation between the mind and the body, with the thinking, rational mind treated as the only thing known, with certainty, to exist.

The implication of Descartes mind / body separation was that the physical world could not be known with any certainty through the body or the senses. That is, because Descartes "discovered error in judgments founded on the external senses" and, more importantly, could doubt the evidence from the

external senses, then certain knowledge must be derived from "the office of the mind alone" (1912 [1641]: 131, 136). Quite simply, the physical world could only be known, with certainty, through the application of the rational mind. Thus finally, to discover what could be "known with certainty regarding material objects" (1912 [1641]: 120), Descartes turned to what he – as 'a substance whose whole essence consisted in thinking' – could know with certainty:

> And what I here find of most importance is, that I discover in my mind innumerable ideas of certain objects, which cannot be esteemed pure negations, although perhaps they possess no reality beyond my thought, and which are not framed by me though it may be in my power to think, or not to think them, *but possess true and immutable natures of their own*. As, for example, when I imagine a triangle, although there is not perhaps and never was in any place in the universe apart from my thought one such figure, it remains true nevertheless that this figure possesses *a certain determinate nature*, form or essence, which is *immutable and eternal*, *and not framed by me, nor in any degree dependent on my thought* (1912 [1641]: 120-21, emphasis added).

At heart, Descartes suggested that the only things we can know with certainty are those to which the rational mind has applied the certainties of pure mathematics (see discussion in Lefebvre 1991: 2-3; Pippin 1996: 253). This argument was elaborated throughout the remainder of Descartes philosophical and scientific works (see, for example, 1912 [1642]: 199-200), and contributed heavily to his work on optics, geometry and the functioning of the human body (see Descartes 1998). Most importantly, however, Descartes' contention that the world could be known through the rational application of mathematical principles contributed directly to the thinking and claims to authority of modern science, and, as a part of this project, Modern Geography.

What we must suggest now is that we can find in classical works of modern, scientific Geography a clear approach to the physical based on the Cartesian epistemology. In this, we can return briefly to *The Times Atlas of the World*. In essence, the representations of the physical offered in this volume (and, of course, similar volumes) have rested on a system of disembodied knowledge, on a system which has called for a stepping away from an embodied engagement with the physical. Quite simply, the truth of the representations seen in *The Times Atlas* has depended not on how the physical world is *experienced*, but on how accurately it can be *measured*; how accurately it can be subjected to the *rationality* of the 'Geographical Author'. This, of course, is clearly in line with the Cartesian way to knowledge (see similar discussion in Ó Tuathail 1996a: 23). What is also important is that this Cartesian method has allowed *The Times Atlas* to sit in modern society as an unproblematic, natural and, indeed, commonsense revealing of 'the world as it is'. That is, in its own claims, the *Atlas* is an objective conversion of the physical Earth into a flat map, an element of an ongoing movement towards ever more accurate, ever more complete knowledge of the physical world (see discussion in Gregory 1994: 7, 75; Harvey 2001: 220). This, as I will suggest below, we must reject. This connection between Descartes and Modern Geography – between the disembodied way to knowledge and the disembodied representation of the physical – will be returned to in chapters to come. Of more importance for the discussion now, however, is to turn to a significant critique of this Cartesian

epistemology. In this critique we can, I suggest, begin to discuss the intersection between disembodied and intimate knowledge of the physical that is crucial to the emergence of the Indian national territory.

The critical turn

If, in Descartes, we can find the birth of the 'science of space', of Modern Geography (Lefebvre 1991: 2; Gregory 1994: 70; Soja 1989: 35), of – to employ terms central to this work – the disembodied knowledge of the physical, then in Friedrich Nietzsche we can, perhaps, find the beginnings of its postmodern critique (see discussion in Pippin 1996: 252-3). Where Descartes and his followers argued that the 'certain' and 'eternal' truths of mathematics could be applied by the rational mind to gain "perfect knowledge" of the world (1912 [1641]: 126), Nietzsche offered a rejection of the very core of this thinking. Quite simply, against Descartes' claim that the figures of mathematics possessed "true and immutable natures" independent of place (1912 [1641]: 120-1), Nietzsche reasserted the intimacy of 'things in themselves':

> …the invention of the laws of numbers was made on the basis of the error, dominant even from the earliest times, *that there are identical things* (but in fact nothing is identical with anything else); at least that there are things (but there is no 'thing') (1977: 56; see similar in Heidegger 1977: 118-119).

What we can draw from this argument here is a rejection of the core of the Cartesian epistemology; a rejection, more precisely, of the priority Descartes and his followers afforded to abstraction *over* the physical, to abstraction *over* the intimate, to abstraction *over* things in themselves. This Cartesian epistemology has been described (in part) above; what we must now trace are some of the contours of its postmodern critique. To do this, I argue that the term 'priority' – as in the *priority* Descartes suggested for abstraction over an embodied, intimate knowledge of things in themselves – offers a crucial entryway. That is, we can find in a variety of thinkers a compelling argument that the Cartesian spatial science – the modern disembodied knowledge of the physical – is a radical assertion in priority: a radical assertion of abstraction, signs, images, discourse, labour and its products – an assertion of that which Lefebvre termed 'anti-nature' (1991: 71) – in the determination of the physical. We can, at this point, draw a useful and important argument from Ó Tuathail: that "geography was not something already possessed by the earth but *an active writing of the earth* by an expanding, centralizing imperial state. It was not a noun but a verb" (1996a: 2, emphasis added). It is this assertion in priority that has allowed space (to follow Lefebvre) to enter "the realm of the absolute"; that has allowed space to dominate and define – by containing them – all senses and all bodies (1991: 1).

The radical assertion in priority that sits at the heart of the modern spatial science can be explored through the elaboration of three interrelated critiques offered by Derek Gregory in his *Ideology,*

Science and Human Geography (1978) and *Geographical Imaginations* (1994). (These critiques are paralleled throughout the rapidly growing literature of 'critical geography'. Significant works of this literature include those of David Harvey (1989; 1993; 2001), John Agnew (1993; 1994; 1998; 2002), Denis Cosgrove (1989), Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1994; 1996b; 1998; Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998), and David Livingstone (1992). Meanwhile, a long and eminently useful discussion of the thinking underscoring modern space – including works by Michel Foucault (1979; 1980; 1984; 1986), Martin Heidegger (1977), Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), Fredric Jameson (1984), John Berger (1972; 1991), Michel de Certeau (1984) and Gaston Bachelard (1994) – has offered much in parallel). Gregory's three critiques all centred on what I suggest are untenable claims to *priority* made by the modern spatial science.

The first of Gregory's critiques was that "a critical human geography ought to reject those strategies of representation that treat discourse as an unproblematic reflection of the world" (1994: 75; see similar in Black 1997: 11; George 1996: 51). That is, the mode of thinking in which the 'concept' can refer in unproblematic equivalence to the 'thing' (see discussion in Pickles 2004: 4), in which discourse can directly mirror nature (see discussion in Rorty 1979) ought, suggested Gregory, to be rejected as a negation of the "conditions and consequences of human action" (1994: 76). In more simple terms, the assertion that discourse can directly mirror nature (which, we can suggest, is something clearly evident in *The Times Atlas of the World* discussed above) claims for the social technology of representation the possibility of an equivalence with that which is necessarily outside – and prior to – human action. This assertion is a claim that the modern spatial science can accurately mirror – and hence sit ontologically equivalent to – that which is *necessarily prior* to the representational process.

In extension of this first point, Gregory's second proposal was that "reflexivity", or a recognition of the mutual interdependence between the knower and the known, "is an inescapable moment in any critical human geography" (1994: 76). In essence, "it is vital", Gregory argued, "to overcome that estrangement from people, places and landscapes that spatial science imposed upon the discipline" (1994: 76). What this critique suggests is that the assertion that 'the world' is "a reality that exists 'out there', separate from the consciousness of the intellectual" (to draw from Ó Tuathail 1996a: 23) – an assertion which is, as I have stressed in different ways above, central to the Cartesian spatial science – is a claim that the 'rational Geographical author' can somehow exist prior to, and divided from, the world. This, we must stress, is untenable.

In elaboration of this point, Gregory argued that the denial of the necessary mutual interdependence between the knower and the known, the deliberate estrangement from people and places characteristic of Modern Geography, has meant that relations of meaning and power have been woven into and hidden within the supposedly innocent depiction of the world (1994: 76). That is, while the authors of

the Modern Geographical world have claimed to offer objectivity and truth about the physical, they have masked their inescapably particular, political nature. To draw again from Ó Tuathail (1996a: 1), this means that "the geography of the world" – as depicted in *The Times Atlas of the World* discussed above – "is not a product of nature" as its cartographers would claim. Rather, it is "a product of histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to organize, occupy, and administer space" (Ó Tuathail 1996a: 1). This, we must stress, is a critique that must be applied not only to the so-called 'political map' of borders and boundaries, but also to the supposedly innocent and apolitical maps which chart 'natural phenomena' such as soil types, foliage and geology. *All* these representations, we must stress, necessarily incorporate hidden decisions about the types of soil or foliage represented, about the division between these different types, and about the framing of the representation. Quite literally, there cannot be (to return to the first point noted above) any direct representation of 'nature' (see Lefebvre 1991: 70-71).

Finally, the third of Gregory's three proposals was that geography is "an irredeemably situated, positioned system of knowledge" (1994: 76); that "mapping" – despite the claims of the practitioners of the Cartesian spatial science – "is necessarily situated, embodied, partial: like all other practices of representation" (1994: 7; see Solomon 1996: 195). At heart, the Cartesian assertion that objective knowledge of the physical is possible, that there exists the possibility of a knowledge that can situate and contain all other knowledge, is an untenable claim to ontological priority.

We can recap briefly: in the Cartesian spatial science, in the modern disembodied knowledge of the physical, we can find three interrelated – and untenable – assertions in priority. These are that the Cartesian spatial science can gain, in its representations, an equivalence with the necessarily prior 'thing' being represented; that the Cartesian spatial science can remove itself from the necessarily prior world upon which it is dependent; and that the Cartesian spatial science can gain an ability to represent 'objectively': that the place of representation is somehow irrelevant – or, more precisely, subsequent – to the representation itself.

What can we take from these proposals? What is crucial for this discussion is that these three assertions in priority inherent to the modern spatial science are all claims that permit the assertion of particular interests within what is presented as an objective frame. We can phrase this differently: these three assertions in priority inherent to the modern spatial science all permit an uneven, always fluctuating *intersection* between intimate, particular forms of knowledge of the physical, and highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical. To return to the argument running through this chapter, this intersection is, as I have suggested many times, the realm in which the national territory is constituted. What is important to stress now is that this intersection – this assertion of the particular within the supposedly objective – must, inherently, be uneven. That is, only some will ever

be able to assert their particular, intimate knowledge of the physical – their knowledge of the physical derived from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration – within the disembodied frame.

What does this mean? For some – in particular, for those in positions able to influence the disembodied representation of the physical – there will always exist the appearance of an ontological continuity between their more intimate and more abstract knowledge of the physical world. Quite simply, the stories of the physical derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended communities (from their family and their church, for example) will fit unproblematically and normally into the disembodied, supposedly objective picture of the world. For others however, the match will not be so cohesive. That is, because any disembodied representation of the physical (indeed, any representation) will, as I have argued above, always be somehow reflective of particular interests, competing interests will, in turn, necessarily be marginalised and rejected from the 'objective' picture of the world. To phrase it more simply, there will always exist knowledge of the physical derived from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration that will be marginalised from the supposedly objective picture of the world. There will always exist, quite simply, knowledge of the physical derived from family and religious institutions that will be, in the face of the dominant, disembodied picture of the world, *wrong*. In this uneven intersection, this uneven relationship between the intimate and the abstract, we come to an argument crucial for this work: that in the attempts to renegotiate the disembodied world, to normalise understandings of the physical derived from intimate (face-to-face and agency-extended) communities within the highly abstract world, we can find the emergence of the national territory. This argument will be employed in later chapters of this work to describe the specifics of the production and understanding of the Indian national territory. What remains in this discussion, however, is a means to discuss this normalisation; to discuss the production of space.

The discussion presented in this chapter has been guided, in part, by an argument of Henri Lefebvre's: that "every society… produces a space, its own space"; that "the city of the ancient world [as an example] cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space… for the ancient city had its own spatial practice: it forged its own – appropriated – space" (1991: 31). In a direct parallel, I have sought to show throughout this chapter that the national territory, as a general form, is a specific type of space, a space forged in particular ways and for particular ends. In this, I have suggested that the national territory is a form only possible with the emerging dominance of disembodied knowledge of the physical, and, moreover, that it is in the intersection between this disembodied knowledge of the physical and knowledge of the physical derived from more intimate sources, that the national territory is constituted. What we must turn to now is a means to describe the shaping of this intersection, to describe the production, I suggest, of national space. To do this, we can draw, once again, on an argument of Lefebvre's which has significantly framed this chapter.

I suggested above that an 'understanding of space' could be explored through the influence that 'understanding' had on the world around it. I suggested that representations of space, spatial practices and spaces of representation could, in some way, be taken as indicative of an understanding of space. What I now suggest is that these concepts can also be usefully employed to talk about the production of space. That is, to explore the specifics of the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, we can employ (following some precedent in the critical geography literature, see for example Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 7; Harvey 1993: 17; McCann 1999; Merrifield 1993; Gatrell and Worsham 2002) what has been labelled the 'Lefebvrian matrix' (Harvey 1989: 218). The Lefebvrian matrix is a conceptual triad developed by Lefebvre and elaborated by David Harvey, which suggests that the spaces of people's lives are constituted through the influence of power in three interlinked domains. Lefebvre himself suggested a division between 'spatial practice', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces' (1991: 33); Harvey translated this to a division between 'material spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation' (1989: 218). Employing either, the suggestion of this triad is that the space in which anyone lives is produced through the influence of power in three interlinked domains: the *material* world of physical bodies and buildings; the discursive *representation* of that material world; and the *symbolic* or *imagined* landscape within which those representations are understood. As Harvey suggested, the production of space occurs through all of these levels; it can, therefore,

> be of blood, sweat, tears and *labour*… or it can be the *discursive* construction of affective loyalties through preservation of particular qualities of place and vernacular traditions; or [it can be] new works of *art* which celebrate or… become symbolic of place. And it is precisely in this realm that the intertwining with place of all those other political values of community, of nation and the like, begins its work (1993: 24, emphasis added).

Quite simply, spatial production plays out – and, of course, is resisted – within all three levels; within the material world, within representations of the material world, and within the imagined landscape in which such representations are understood.

What this suggests, finally, is that the national territory is produced through the influence of power in each of the three domains of the Lefebvrian triad in the effort to foster an ontological continuity between highly abstract and more intimate forms of knowledge of the physical world. More simply, the national territory is, I argue, produced through the attempts to manipulate the material environment, the discursive representation of that material environment, and the symbolic realm within which those representations are understood, to make the highly abstract 'world' look like that which is intimate, and that which is intimate look like the highly abstract 'world'. It is to the specifics of this influence of power – the specifics of the effort to make the highly abstract India look like that which is known intimately, to make that which is known intimately look like the highly abstract India – to which I now turn.

3

To India

In introducing this thesis, I posed two questions vital to the understanding of both modern politics in southern Asia and nations and nationalism in general. How, I asked, has the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean been produced as the national territory of the Indian nation? How, to continue, is this national territory understood?

In the first two chapters of this thesis, I developed a theoretical framework which can offer a way to answer these questions. In this, I argued that the production of the national territory – as a general form – has rested on two interrelated developments: the emergence of societies framed through highly abstract disembodied forms of integration – yet experienced through forms of integration which may well be more local, personal and concrete (see discussion in chapter 1); and the parallel rise to dominance of disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical world (see discussion in chapter 2). In essence, I have argued that the emergence of the national territory has depended on the modern rise to dominance of disembodied abstractions – and the simultaneous reconstitution, within the frame dictated by the disembodied abstraction, of more intimate abstractions – of community and land.

Over the next four chapters, I aim to employ this theoretical framework to investigate in more specific terms how the particular stretch of land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean has been produced as the national territory of those who consider themselves Indian, and how this national territory is understood. This particular chapter will introduce the arguments which will be explored in greater detail in the three chapters to follow. In this, I aim to translate here the theoretical ideas discussed in chapters 1 and 2 to a framework which can give us access to the particularities of modern Indian nationalism. To do this, I sketch in the first section of this chapter the forms of knowledge required to explore the modern nationalist understanding of India. Following this, I draw on these methodological suggestions to present a brief historical overview of the developments, thinkers, activists and politicians significant to the formation of this modern, nationalist India.

Exploring the production of the national territory

The national territory, I argue, is a specifically modern phenomenon: a function and outcome of modern forms of politics, thinking and technology. In earlier chapters, I argued (following Paul James and, in a different way, Henri Lefebvre) that this 'modernity', crucial to the formation of the national territory, is located specifically in the gradual emergence to dominance of a disembodied epistemology; that is, in the gradual increase in social dominance of ways of understanding community and land that deny "the deceptively complex fact that human beings have bodies" (James 1996: 31). What is crucial to stress at this point, however, is that this emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction did not (and, indeed, does not) necessitate the erasure of more concrete forms of integration and spatial representation. That is, as much as the societies of the modern world – and hence the modern nation – are *framed* in disembodied integration, people everywhere still draw meaning and relevancy from what James described as face-to-face and agency-extended integration (see further discussion in chapters 1 and 2). Indeed, it is in the *intersection* of these highly abstract and these more intimate forms of integration that the nation – and, crucially, the national territory – arise.

In the most broad terms, this argument suggests that any attempt to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory must chart both the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and, simultaneously, the response to this emerging from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. One aspect of this – the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction – is readily traceable. That is, the emergence in southern Asia of the modern bureaucratic state, the modern mass media and modern forms of communication and transport (and, of course, the modern forms of spatial representation intertwined with these institutions) can be readily traced through historical analysis. We can, for instance, trace the emergence and growth of the modern mass media in southern Asia (beginning with the early newspapers, and developing through radio, television and the internet) with some degree of certainty. Similarly, we can also isolate with some precision the earliest Cartesian – disembodied – mappings of the area.

Meanwhile however, the other key aspect any attempt to explore the production and understanding of the Indian national territory must chart – the response to the growing dominance of disembodied abstraction – is not so readily traceable. At a simple level, there are alive today perhaps one billion people who might readily identify themselves as Indian, as members of the rightful political community in the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. To trace the response of each and every one of these people to the emergence of disembodied integration – or to even seek some

'representative' sample – is, of course, unfeasible. Yet meanwhile, we cannot assume that the response to the arrival of modernity amongst the peoples of southern Asia has been monolithic. That is, we cannot assume that every person who has identified as Indian has understood their 'Indian nation' and their 'Indian national territory' in some identical, standard, fashion. Such an assumption is, of course, one of the key problems of what Bellamy (1999) has termed the 'meta-narrative' approaches to nation formation (see discussion in chapter 1). In essence, as close as we can get to exploring the response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction is to recognise our inherent limitations – and the impossibility of some 'true' access to the modern nationalist India – and study this national identity from deliberately chosen perspectives. In this, gender, caste, class, religion, region, language and family (and countless other forms of identity) *all* offer compelling perspectives from which we might gain some understanding of the response to the dominance of disembodied abstraction, some understanding of the Indian national territory.

Thus in the three chapters to follow, I will trace – with a recognition of our inherent limitations – both the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and some perspective derived response to this. Through this, I suggest, we can gain some access to the production and understanding of the Indian national territory.

In chapter 4, I will chart the first emergence of modern forms of thinking, technology and politics in southern Asia under the British Empire. In this chapter I will suggest that the European colonial powers (and specifically, the British) brought technologies and structures of power to southern Asia that ushered in the dominance of a disembodied form of integration, unseen in the area before. Importantly, I also seek to demonstrate in this chapter that the British imperial dominance in this area was based on an inherently unsustainable logic, on ways of thinking that suggested their own demise. In this, the British dominance of the Indian subcontinent depended on the political marginalisation of 'native' abstractions of community and land. That is, understandings of community and land derived from non-British face-to-face and agency-extended communities were treated as irrelevant to the exercise of political power, irrelevant to the British India. For the earliest 'native' thinkers inducted into the arcana of modern disembodied abstraction, this marginalisation – of their face-to-face and agency-extended forms of knowledge – sat as a glaring inconsistency. Quite simply, their parents' and their religious institutions' stories of the physical sat entirely contradictory to those authoritative disembodied depictions of the physical propagated by the British Empire. In the attempts of these thinkers to reconcile this contradiction, to foster an ontological continuity between their face-to-face and agency-extended worlds, and those presented in the disembodied depiction, we can find the first emergence of an Indian nationalist consciousness.

In the chapters that follow this – chapters 5 and 6 – I will then trace the response to the dominance of disembodied abstraction offered by two significant political perspectives. In this, I will explore in chapter 5 the stance of 'secular Indian nationalism': the argument raised by Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore (and others) that the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean is the rightful territory of all who call this area *home*. In chapter 6, I will explore the stance of 'Hindu nationalism': the argument raised by V D Savarkar, M S Golwalkar and L K Advani (and, of course, others) that this same patch of land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean is the rightful territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this area. These two perspectives on India, it must be stressed once again, do not (and cannot) be treated as composing an 'exhaustive' picture of the contemporary nationalist imagination, of the contemporary response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction. Rather, I discuss these two perspectives for the relatively simple reasons that both are significant in the contemporary Indian political scene (see Khilnani 1999: xv-xvi); both have been discussed in significant bodies of literature (see chapters 5 and 6); and between these camps we can locate much of the contemporary political dynamic in modern India (see Ramachandra Guha 2004a; 2004b; 2004c).

What I will suggest in chapters 5 and 6 is that in both the secular nationalist and Hindu nationalist stances on India we can find significant efforts to resolve the contradiction between the modern disembodied abstractions first offered by the British, and the more intimate understandings derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration of the nationalist leaders. That is, both secular nationalist and Hindu nationalist actors have expended considerable political energy attempting to produce space: to make people see the physical world according to the dictates of their ideology, to make people see the spaces of their everyday lives as within their abstract India. This production will form a key element of the discussions in both chapters 5 and 6.

With this schema in mind, I now offer a brief historical overview of the developments to be discussed in greater detail in chapters 4, 5 and 6. In this, I seek to historically situate, in relation to each other, the significant developments, thinkers, activists and politicians to have contributed to the formation of the modern nationalist India.

The emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction in southern Asia

As I have argued in both chapters 1 and 2, the dominance of disembodied forms of integration – and disembodied forms of spatial representation – is a peculiarly modern phenomenon. To once again draw on James' argument in *Nation Formation*: this dominance of 'disembodied integration' exists when

> people are part of a network of connections where the full modalities of face-to-face integration and the continuing practices of intermediating agency are not the salient features of the social relation. At this level the social relation transcends time and space quite apart from any personal intermediation (1996: 31).

This form of social integration – as I will demonstrate briefly below and in greater detail in chapter 4 – emerged to dominance in southern Asia under the auspices of European colonialism, and, in particular, under the British Empire. This section will offer a brief historical overview of this emergence.

In the 15th century, a variety of European powers – spurred by myths of fabulous foreign wealth and a shortage of labour following the Black Death (Livingstone 1992: 38) – began to undertake maritime voyages of exploration, discovery and conquest. These voyages, as we are all aware, ushered in dramatic changes throughout the world. On the one hand, peoples throughout the world were gradually brought into a vast capitalist system, into trading and extractive economies that radically altered the livelihoods of countless millions of people. On the other, these voyages inspired (if not *drove*) a dramatic epistemological shift (see Livingstone 1992: ch 2). In the words of Francis Bacon:

> Men have been kept back as by a kind of enchantment from progress in the sciences by reverence for antiquity, by the authority of men accounted great in philosophy, and then by general consent… [Yet] by the distant voyages and travels which have become frequent in our times many things in nature have been laid open and discovered which may let in new light upon philosophy. And surely it would be disgraceful if, while the regions of the material globe – that is, of the earth, of the sea, and of the stars – have been in our times laid widely open and revealed, the intellectual globe should remain shut up within the narrow limits of old discoveries (2005 [1620]: Book 1, 84).

This crucial epistemological shift has been described (in part) in chapter 2; some of its consequences will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters. What I seek to describe briefly here is the other dramatic change brought by the European 'age of discovery': the emergence and development of systems of European capitalist imperialism in lands throughout the world, and in particular, in the lands of southern Asia. In this development, I suggest we can find the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration. Here I focus chiefly (because of their central role in the colonisation of the area between the Himalayas and the seas) on the British. Key elements of this discussion will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4.

Until the 15th century, India had resided in the European spatial imagination as a vaguely mythical land 'beyond the Muslim world', a 'heathen' country of fabulous wealth (see Datta 1978a: 623; Livingstone 1992: 42; Mitter 1977: vii). This understanding changed dramatically in 1498, when the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama with his crew landed at Calicut, on the southwest coast of modern India (see da Gama 1998 [1497-98]). What changed was, essentially, the spatial dynamic: when da Gama returned home to Lisbon loaded with an outlandishly lucrative cargo of pepper and cloves – and a detailed spatial description of how to get them – the concept 'India' became, in the European imagination, a *known*, *locatable* entity. Immediately, as Livingstone has suggested, "the Portuguese…

sent every available ship and man to India" (1992: 43); they were soon followed by the other maritime powers of Europe. Amongst these, the British – under the auspices of the British East India Company – sought profit in the 'East Indies' in the trade of Gujarati calico and Persian silk, Indigo and saltpetre from Bihar, and pepper and cloves from the Dutch Spice Islands (Wolpert 1993: 144-5; Lawson 1993). For the first few centuries of this engagement, the British merchants – perhaps recognising their tenuous existence in the port towns of Surat, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta – eschewed territorial acquisition; trade alone brought large enough profits. Until the middle of the 18th century, the British remained at the margins of politics in southern Asia.

The political marginality of the British East India Company changed in 1757. In the previous year, the meagre British garrison staffing the trading post at Calcutta had been violently attacked, and ejected, by the *nawab* of Bengal, Siraj-ud-duala. The British returned in 1757 with a military force – and some useful local allies – and defeated the *nawab*'s army on the field at Plassey (Gupta 1966: 78). With this victory, the British merchants and soldiers gained unprecedented access to the bountiful resources and economy of Bengal and the neighbouring regions of the Ganges plane (Porter 1991: 38). The company merchants raced into the hinterland, where they 'traded' at great personal profit without paying a rupee in tax. (This period has, indeed, regularly been described as one of 'rapacious plunder'; I use the term 'trade' in the loosest possible sense (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 102; Wolpert 1993: 184)). Meanwhile – in a development that flagged much subsequent British policy in southern Asia – the *nawab*s following Siraj-ud-duala (Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim) found themselves powerless: bankrupted by the British, reviled by those loyal to the Mughal Empire and (most importantly) beholden to the Company for their throne (Wolpert 1993: 181). Over years following their victory in 1757, British military successes continued: against the French at Wandiwash (1760), and against the remnants of Mughal power at Buxar (1764). Meanwhile, the only significant rival powers in southern Asia – the Maratha and the Afghan armies – exchanged militarily ruinous losses at Panipat in 1761. By 1765, the British were firmly ensconced in Bengal with *diwani* (revenue management) rights; perhaps more importantly, they were, from this point on, perhaps the pre-eminent military power in southern Asia.

Over the following ninety years, British power and influence expanded dramatically from the three Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Some regions of the growing empire were militarily conquered and brought directly under British administration, while others were made dependent as subservient allies. By 1823 the only significant areas between the Himalayas and the seas independent of British power were the Punjab, Bahawalpur and Sindh. In 1849 Sikh power in the Punjab was broken, and this area was annexed to the empire (Joppen 1914: 54). At this moment, the British had conquered – under the guise of a decrepit Mughal facade – a vast swathe of southern Asia that remained largely in place – largely theirs – until 1947.

In 1857 – driven by mounting resentment at British governance (particularly the passing of laws hostile to 'traditional' cultural practices, such as the abolition of widow immolation, or *sati*) – 'native' troops of the British army mutinied (Datta 1978c: 766). Resentment towards British rule sparked violence in many areas; indeed, the British lost control in the Punjab, the Deccan and the Ganges plane, as well as Delhi, Lucknow and Cawnpore. Yet the lack of common feeling amongst the various 'native' leaders resulted in little united effort to remove the British. As Wolpert suggested, this 'first war of independence' (as it has been described in nationalist discourse (see V D Savarkar 1970 [1909])) or 'mutiny' (as it has been described by the British (see Forbes-Mitchell 1894)) is perhaps better understood as a 'postpacification' revolt, an attempt to return to the parochial feudal kingdoms of earlier times (1993: 237; see also Vanaik 1997: 13). It was, ultimately, unsuccessful. By 1858, the British had regained control of all the areas lost. What the 1857-58 war did signal, however, was the final end of the Mughal Empire, the final end of any thoughts of feudal sovereignty in the area between the Himalayas and the seas independent of the British. In the wash up, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act of 1858: "all rights" the East India Company had enjoyed in their India were transferred to the Crown (Wolpert 1993: 239). This was the beginning of 'Raj rule'. More will be discussed on this in chapter 4.

Over the one hundred and ninety years between the Battle of Plassey and the British withdrawal, the British mission in their Indian empire underwent significant evolution. At its most simple, the desire to make a profit (which was clearly a key motivation of the earliest traders) gradually became just one element of a broader campaign. Most importantly, alongside the desire to make money, the British came to see themselves performing a supposedly selfless 'civilising mission' (see discussion in Metcalf 1994). Though this was not embraced by all the British, nor understood identically by those who did embrace it, this mission became a crucial element of the British justification for empire. Broadly, the civilising mission meant bringing the 'natives of India' closer to the heights of civilisation the British saw in themselves. For some – such as the 18th century missionary William Carey – this meant proselytising Christianity (Majumdar 1978b: 810-11); for others – such as Thomas Babington Macaulay or John Stuart Mill – it meant bringing rationalism, liberalism and the other values of the Enlightenment (Macaulay 1958 [1835]; J S Mill 1982 [1834]: 216). Many have criticised this 'civilising mission' as merely a cover for the plunderous nature of the empire, as a justification the British wrote for themselves (see discussion in chapters 5 and 6); yet we can be certain that the instillation of 'British values' amongst the people of their Indian empire was an important element of the British imperial policy.

British rule in southern Asia has regularly been described as of a character fundamentally different from all other empires and kingdoms seen previously in the area (see, for example, Nehru 1981

[1946]: 302; Marx 1930 [1853]: 4; J Mill 1975 [1817]: 582-4). This is certainly true; yet we must be very careful in describing this 'fundamental difference'. We must be careful, I suggest, because there were clearly elements of British administrative behaviour and thinking in their India that paralleled earlier structures of power. Firstly, though Jawaharlal Nehru suggested that between the British "and the average Indian there was a vast and unbridgeable gulf – a difference in tradition, in outlook, in income and ways of living" (1981 [1946]: 303), it is doubtful that this 'unbridgeable gulf' first emerged with the British. That is, in many pre-modern – pre-nationalist – societies, a culture shared by elites and masses was unlikely; indeed, as Gellner has suggested, it was neither necessary nor desired (1964: 154, see discussion in chapter 1). Thus though discussions of mass culture prior to European contact are rare (Datta 1978e: 559), it can, I suggest, be assumed that the outlook, income and ways of living of the emperor Aśoka (emperor *c*. 273–232 BCE) were markedly different from those of his subjects. Secondly, though the British were castigated by a variety of 19th and 20th century nationalists for their 'civilising mission' (see discussion in chapters 5 and 6), attempts by elites to influence mass culture in southern Asia were also not new. For example, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (emperor 1658–1707) – whom Datta described as "above all a zealous Sunnī Muslim" (1978b: 488) – certainly attempted to improve the "general morality" of his empire as defined by his view of culture. In a direct parallel with British rule, an official 'guide-book' of Aurangzeb's time recorded, for example, that he forbade *sati* (Datta 1978b: 489).

What *does* differentiate British rule from the many earlier empires and kingdoms seen in southern Asia was its *modernity*: in the three essentially modern facts of industrialisation, communications and British nationalism, the British Empire can be separated from all the previous structures of rule in southern Asia. Firstly, the British were the first industrial-capitalist power to rule this area of the world. This meant that rather than merely taxing the governed society (as previous rulers had), India was treated by the British as both an enormous market for British goods and a subservient resource rich hinterland. In essence, the British could – thanks to discriminatory trade rules and the overwhelming economies of machine production – exploit their Indian empire in ways not seen previously (see Dutt 1970 [1940]; Chand 1961: 388; Rai 1967). Secondly, the British employed modern communications technology as a means of entrenching their dominance of the lands they ruled. In this, the control of the seas and the printing press were early advantages; later, these were bolstered by the telegraph, the railways and, eventually, radio and aeroplanes (Bayly 1996; Dimeo 2002: 77). In essence, where earlier empires, such as Muhammad bin Tughluq's in the 14th century, had been crippled by communications difficulties, the British used their dominance in abilities to communicate over long distances to strengthen their empire. Finally (and perhaps most importantly), the British Empire can be separated from all previous by the fact of British nationalism. At heart, it must be recognised that throughout their rule in southern Asia, the British saw community and land in *nationalist* ways. On the one hand, this meant that the British saw themselves as a national

community; a community which the 'natives' were, by implication, not members of. On the other, the British also saw the physical world in ways which I suggest were – at least partially – nationalist. That is, an island many thousands of leagues distant from their Indian empire was always seen as home for an entire community living in British India. All of these points – as I will show in later chapters – had a significant effect on the understandings of community and land of the 'native' population the British ruled; a significant effect on the understandings of community and land of Indian nationalism.

Responding to the dominance of disembodied abstraction

I noted above that the British dominance of the Indian subcontinent depended on the political marginalisation of 'native' abstractions of community and land; that non-British face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land were made irrelevant to the exercise of political power in British India. For the British administrators and governors, this of course presented few problems. Yet for the 'native elite' – the small (but always growing) group of 'native' individuals afforded English education in the British Empire (see further discussion in chapter 4) – this struck an unsettling discord. Most centrally (as I shall show in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6), the stories of community and land offered by these individuals' parents and religious institutions – stories derived from forms of social integration which, we can assume, had previously held great authority – were directly contradicted by the newly authoritative disembodied depictions offered by the British. As Geoffrey Moorhouse recounted,

> a scandalized parent complained [of his English educated child *c*. 1830] that his boy now had his hair cut, wore European shoes, ate food without bathing, didn't know how to write bazaar bills, uttered unintelligible Bengali *and could tell of any mountain or river in Russia but could give no account of his own country* (1994: 70-71, emphasis added).

In essence, the scandalised parent was complaining that his English educated child had been taught a new picture of the world in disembodied spatial representation, and that as part of this, the 'traditional' stories – the face-to-face and agency-extended representations normal to the parent – had been made *wrong*.

The attempts to reconcile this contradiction – to make the spaces propagated through face-to-face and agency-extended integration ontologically continuous with the modern disembodied portrayal of the world – have been diverse. In this thesis I discuss two. This first is an ideology which has argued that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful national territory of those who consider it their *home*; this we can usefully label as 'secular Indian nationalism'. The second is an ideology which has argued that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful national territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this area; this we can usefully label 'Hindu

nationalism'. In the section below, I chart briefly the historical evolution of these two positions; more detailed coverage of these ideologies will be offered in chapters 5 and 6.

The nationalist movement in British India

The earliest stirrings of nationalist thought in British India came from portions of the English educated 'native elite' of Calcutta society in the early 19th century. In this, a number of men from this group began to think and act in the imperial public sphere – within the disembodied administrative logic of the British Empire – on behalf of what they considered to be their community. Some petitioned the British parliament on social matters. This can be seen in those of the Calcutta Dharma Sabha, who opposed Governor-General Bentinck's prohibition of *sati* (the practice of widow immolation) (Zavos 2004: 44). Others, such as Rammohan Roy (1772–1833) and Henry Derozio (1809–1831), petitioned the Governor-General for education for their community. Thus "for the improvement of the native population", Roy argued, the government should "promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences" (cited in Majumdar 1978b: 811; see also Susobhan Chandra Sarkar 1958: 16). In *both* these positions, I suggest, we can detect the emergence of a nationalist imagination: the emergence of a desire to speak on behalf of a community these thinkers imagined to exist (Zavos 2004: 45). What is also important to recognise is that, even at this early stage, a significant difference in the shape of this nationalist imagination was starting to take place. One group – shown here by Roy – was beginning to imagine the Indian nation as the community of all the non-British residents of the Indian empire; of all those who called India home. This position (which of course continued to evolve over the next two centuries) can, as I suggested above, be usefully labelled as 'secular Indian nationalism'. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5. The other – shown here by the Calcutta Dharma Sabha – was beginning to imagine the nation in more entho-religious terms. In this conception, the Indian nation was made up of those whose culture and ancestry were indigenous to the subcontinent, who were grounded in millennia of 'native' culture and tradition. This position (which also continued to evolve) can, as I also suggested above, be usefully labelled as 'Hindu nationalism'. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

The following half century saw a gradual evolution of these ideas, and the emergence of various nationalist activists and organisations reflective of these positions. Some of the nationalist organisations that emerged in this period sought the erasure of the caste system, some sought to defend 'Hindu tradition'; still others sought to drag their India to modernity, while others again sought to destroy the irrationalism of Hindu practice. The more influential of these groups – such as the Indian National Congress (which first met in 1885) and the Arya Samaj (which launched in 1875) – went on to define much of the Indian nationalist agenda. What is important to recognise here is that although

this was certainly an era of rising nationalist consciousness in British India, it was also an era characterised by 'moderation'. That is, though the goals expressed in this period were clearly centred on what they considered the Indian nation, most nationalist thinkers saw no explicit problem with their status as subjects of the British Empire. Similarly, most action took the form of either 'public sphere' agitation *within* the organisational logic of the colonial state (such as the Indian National Congress petitioning the government, or members of the Congress standing for election in the British Parliament (*The Times* 1892)) or focused on cultural reform within nation (such as the Arya Samaj's drive to purify Hinduism). Only rare voices called for the immediate withdrawal of the British.

The tone and goals of the nationalist movement in British India began to change at the beginning of the 20th century. Perhaps catalytic of this change was the administrative partition of the province of Bengal in 1905. As the Congress president Gopal Krishna Gokhale argued at the time,

> A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengalee brethren, and the whole country has been stirred to its deepest depths in sorrow and resentment, as had never been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half-a-century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule – its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretentions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of Service interests to those of the governed (cited in Wolpert 1993: 273, emphasis added; *The Times* 1906b).

In response to the partition, many in the nationalist movement launched a campaign for *swadeshi*, or 'of our own country' (Wolpert 1993: 274). Marking this movement, the burning of British made clothing – an action protesting both economic exploitation and the cultural power of British definitions of sartorial elegance and civilisation – scarred the skies of the major colonial cities. At the same time, various Muslim leaders in British India began to agitate for separate representation to the Viceroy (see Rahman 1970). This Muslim nationalist movement (afterwards lead by the Muslim League) was, in a very real sense, symbiotic with the emerging Hindu nationalists, whose leading thinkers and activists – V D Savarkar, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, B S Moonje and, eventually, M S Golwalkar – also began to offer their central ideas in this period. *Both* these groups sought to entrench what has been called a 'two-nation' theory of the political communities of British India (see V D Savarkar 1949: 26; Jinnah in *The Times* 1940; J Narayan 1964; Khurshid 2004). Many secular nationalist leaders of the Indian National Congress railed against this 'two-nation' theory, asserting that in British India there was just one 'Indian' nation, yet in attempting to entrench this argument they would – at least partially – fail.

In the 1920s, the nationalist movement in British India – spurred by a variety of developments during and soon after the First World War – underwent another transition. In this, new methods of representing India began to emerge; these methods gathered together the economic critique and culturally inclusive ideas of the secular nationalists, with ideas of religious morality, anti-modernism and peasant virtue. These methods were most clearly developed by Mohandas (or Mahatma, 'Great

Soul') Gandhi, whose *satyagraha* (or 'truth struggle') offered a way to bring the hitherto elite nationalism to the countless millions of 'village India'. After the First World War, Gandhi used his popularity amongst the mass of peasants living in British India – and the broad discontent with the British Empire – to gain control of the Indian National Congress and turn it into a mass movement (Wolpert 1993: 301). During the next two decades – thanks largely to Gandhi's embrace of inclusivity and emphasis on non-violence (*ahimsa*) – the Congress was able to draw in great swathes of the regional and sectional interest groups of British India. The Gandhi led campaign of non-violent action eventually wore down the British Empire, making their India, after an interlude in the Second World War, an ungovernable territory.

Despite the concerted efforts of British India's leading secular nationalists, the two ethno-religious fringes of the anti-colonial movement became increasingly polarised over the years leading to 1947. On one extreme, Hindu nationalists insisted that India should throw off *all* foreign influence, and that the future independent India should be a 'Hindu Raj', or a state dominated by what they considered the majority culture. On the other extreme, voices from the Muslim League saw the Hindu nationalist calls as a direct threat to their community (*The Times* 1940). Importantly, in Muslim League eyes, the secular nationalist forces were as threatening as those of the Hindu nationalists: being a broad church, the Congress could easily include voices sympathetic to what Hindu nationalists would term the majority community. While each extreme antagonised the other, the secular centrists attempted to hold the polity together. By 1940 however, the two-nation theory, the suggestion that in British India two distinct nations lived, was directly supported by a number of influential communal voices. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, declared this to his followers. "The problem in India", Jinnah argued,

> is not of an intercommunal character but manifestly of an *international* one… If the British Government is really in earnest and sincere to secure peace and happiness of the people of the subcontinent, the only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into autonomous national states (cited in Wolpert 1993: 330, emphasis added; *The Times* 1940).

In the closing days of the Second World War, following years of terse negotiations and vocal nationalist agitation, elections to provincial assemblies confirmed acceptance of the two-nation theory in crucial segments of the polity. Not long after the war, Indian soldiers and sailors of the Royal Indian Navy and Royal Indian Air Force mutinied. The British response to this mutiny was to seek to resolve British India's constitutional problems in favour of independence (*The Times* 1946a; Wolpert 1993: 341). At this stage – perhaps contrary to earlier policy – the British sought desperately to transfer their remaining power to a single union government. "It would be a great mistake", British Prime Minister Clement Attlee argued, "to stake out the claims of rival communities" (*The Times* 1946b). Yet the final year of the Raj was, despite the efforts of leaders from various parties, a year of violence. Across the cities and towns of British India, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs lined up against

each other in countless riots; at the elite level, the division of British India (and Bengal and Punjab) was seen by everyone except Gandhi as inevitable (*The Times* 1947c). On the passing of the 14th of August 1947, the two Dominions of India and Pakistan gained independence from the former British India: this partition of land, people and assets – its practicality long ignored by all who called for it – was a bloody and turbulent event, scarring the communal memories of India and Pakistan for generations to come. Refugees flowed from the newly created areas of Pakistan and India, where people no longer felt included. Ten million people changed moved that summer; one million, killed in orgies of violence across the plains of the Indus and Ganges valleys, never reached their new homeland (Wolpert 1993: 348; *The Times* 1947a; *The Times* 1947d).

Post-colonial India

From this point on, this brief history follows the political evolution of the Republic of India, leaving Pakistan and Bangladesh as *international* neighbours: lodged close to – yet *outside* – the Indian sphere of politics. This section sketches the important ideas and developments in the past half century of Indian politics from the attainment of independence in 1947 to the present. These ideas and developments will be elaborated in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6.

Despite the heightened communal sentiment of Partition, the years after independence saw a significant consolidation and entrenchment of the secular nationalist understanding of India. A number of issues contributed to this: most centrally, Gandhi's assassination in 1948 by Nathuram Godse (an activist closely linked to leading Hindu nationalist organisations and thinkers) occasioned widespread revulsion at Hindu nationalist thought (Varshney 2002: 70). Meanwhile, stories of the hardships suffered by the *muhajirs* (refugees moving from India to Pakistan following Partition) filtered back to Indian Muslims and diluted pro-Pakistani thought (see *The Times* 1948j; *The Times* 1948g). Thanks to these factors (and others to be described greater detail in chapters 5 and 6), the secular nationalist understanding of India became widely accepted in Indian politics (see Aiyar 2004). This dominance was reflected in both the Constitution (framed between 1947 and 1950), and in many of the decisions of the long Nehruvian premiership (1947–1964). In this, the system of social segregation of 'untouchability' was banned, and the incorporation of the former 'princely states' and the smaller European colonies (Portuguese Goa and French Pondicherry) was conducted largely within the framework of secular, democratic nationalism (see Patel 1949; Fernandes 2000). (The standout here was Kashmir; thanks to its importance in many understandings of both India and Pakistan, it remained a site of tension in the decades that followed). Indeed, throughout the first few decades of independence, the conflicts over political identity in India – of which there were many – were conducted largely *within* the secular nationalist framework. That is, the disputes connected to linguistic, caste, tribal or religious forms of identity were largely argued and resolved *within* the

constitution and the secular nationalist dynamic; only rarely was independence from India the goal of a politicised identity.

India was led by Nehru from independence until his death in 1964. In 1966 – following the short premiership of Lal Bahadur Shastri – Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi stepped into the office. Though she was initially chosen by Congress powerbrokers to be a puppet leader (Wolpert 1993: 377), Indira ruled India for a total of almost fifteen years. Throughout this period, Indira consolidated the secular nationalist picture of India, yet she also took it in directions not considered by her father. In this, the similarities between the father and the daughter are apparent: both embraced an architectural and philosophical modernism that sought to 'escape' the 'traditions of the past'. For Nehru this meant attempting to build new ways – such as the city of Chandigarh – which might invite the people of India to see their world differently. In this, Chandigarh offered an architecturally modernist cityscape, "unfettered by the traditions of the past" that the people of India might see as a template for a new modes of being in the world (Narayanan, cited in Perera 2004: 180; see also Jackson 2002; Sagar 2002). Yet in Indira's rule, this meant the destruction of elements of the built environment – such as the slums of New Delhi – that did not fit in her modernist vision (see Tarlo 2003). In a similar way, where Nehru had attempted to use diplomacy and persuasion to carry his vision (Ramachandra Guha 2004a), Indira used force and bullying tactics. The high point of this came during the 'Emergency', when Indira responded to a High Court challenge to her 1971 election campaign and asked the President to declare a State of Emergency: democratic processes, civil liberties and parliamentary opposition were suspended, and the press came under stringent censorship (I Gandhi 1975; Tarlo 2003: 24-6; 2000). Though the rhetoric of the Emergency certainly won Indira some supporters, when it was repealed the voters of India wasted no time in removing Indira from office. Indira returned to office in 1980, following almost three years of fairly unstable coalition rule. Indira's second period of premiership again saw constant recourse to populism and force, demonstrated most dramatically by the army's storming of the Sikh *Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple), in which militant Sikh nationalists were ensconced. This defilement of Sikh sacred space led directly to Indira's assassination on the 31st of October 1984 (*The Times* 1984).

Over the years between independence and the 1980s, the secular nationalist ideology provided the dominant – though not unchallenged – understanding of India. To a large extent, this can be said to be still true today. However, since the 1970s, a number of crucial elements of this understanding of the nation, of India, have been increasingly questioned. As Achin Vanaik has suggested, an "ideological vacuum" has gradually opened in the centre of Indian politics (1997: 296). In this, the commitments to secularism and to democracy (at the heart of Nehru's and Gandhi's vision of India) have seen steady erosion at the centre through favouritism and corruption (see discussion in Ramachandra Guha 2004c; 2004a; 2004b). One ideology that has attempted to fill this vacuum is Hindu nationalism.

For most of the early period of Indian independence, Hindu nationalism lay dormant, somewhat removed from the centre of Indian politics. The stigma attached to the ideology following the assassination of Gandhi meant that few were willing to openly espouse a militant Hindutva ('Hinduness', a common label for Hindu nationalism) agenda at the national level. This did not mean, however, that the organs and ideas of Hindu nationalism were non-existent. Instead, their most potent forms were operating at the 'grassroots' level. In this, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (or National Volunteers Association, RSS) engaged in community building work and personal development, following their founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar's goal of a shift in society 'from the ground up'. Part of this attempt to reconstruct society on the Indian subcontinent included the dissemination of RSS members and ideology into a variety of affiliated organisations, with various social goals (see discussion in S Sarkar 1993: 164). These affiliated organisations have included political parties (such as the Jan Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP) and socio-religious groups (such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP, or World Hindu Council) and the Bajrang Dal). Together these organisations are known as the *Sangh Parivar*, the 'family' of Hindu nationalist groups.

In the 1980s, the various organs of the *Sangh Parivar* began a series of highly visible actions that catapulted their ideology and politics to national (and international) prominence. Perhaps the earliest of these was the *Ekatmata Yatra* (or *Ekatmata Yajna* – either 'pilgrimage' or 'sacrifice' for unity) of 1983, a series of processions that covered large swathes of modern India (Assayag 1998: 135). These processions displayed a variety of Hindu religious symbols in explicitly political framings. One (particularly potent) example can be seen in the processions which carried symbols of the deity Ram (the hero of the epic *Rāmāyana*) imprisoned in a cage, the bars of which were styled in an obviously Islamic pattern (Assayag 1998: 136). This, we can suggest, was a direct reference to the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, a site claimed by both Muslims and Hindus, and at the fault lines of religious identity in modern India. Essentially, the site represented, for Hindu nationalists, a prime symbol of the Muslim dispossession of their Hindu India. Following the *Ekatmata Yatra*, a number of other Hindu nationalist pilgrimages marched across modern India, touching ever greater numbers of people. When L K Advani's *Ram Rath Yatra* edged towards Ayodhya in 1992, a mob of Hindu nationalist volunteers gathered and tore down the centuries old Babri mosque. This event changed the fortunes of the leading Hindu nationalist political party, and the political face of India.

The political stocks of the BJP rose dramatically following the destruction of the Babri mosque. In the 1996 elections, the BJP emerged as the single biggest party in the *Lok Sabha* (the lower house of the Parliament of India), though without a clear majority. Though they were unable to form a coalition in this session, the 1998 and 1999 elections again returned the largest share of seats to the BJP. In this period they were able to form moderately stable coalition governments. This period of government,

led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani, ended with the return of the Congress to power in May 2004.

Towards the modern nationalist India

The onset of modernity – that is, the emergence of *modern* forms of politics, thinking and technology – has driven dramatic changes throughout the world. As I aim to demonstrate over the next three chapters, one of the more significant of these changes has been the development of the *national territory*: of the idea that certain people, because of innate, intimate features particular to their community, deserve political power in certain patches of the Earth's surface. In the sections above, I have briefly sketched the history of the arrival of modernity amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and two important – yet by no means exhaustive – responses to this. In the chapters to follow, I will elaborate these developments in greater detail. In this – in exploration of the *emergence* to dominance of disembodied abstraction, and the *response* to this – we can, I suggest, gain some understanding of the Indian national territory. I begin this more detailed exploration with a discussion of the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation under the British Empire. It is to this discussion I now turn.

4

British India, and the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction

In the previous chapter, I argued that any attempt to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory must chart both the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and the response to this emerging from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. This chapter begins this exploration. In this, I chart here the first emergence and the rise to dominance of highly abstract, disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia. In the chapters that follow (5 and 6), I will expand on this by exploring two significant responses to this emergence.

We can begin this discussion with the argument that disembodied integration – the modern form of social integration crucial, as I have suggested in chapters 1 and 2, to the emergence of the national territory – first emerged to dominance in large swathes of southern Asia under the influence of European colonialism. In more specific terms, the great bulk of the people living on the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean saw the first dominance of a disembodied form of social integration under the British Empire. To describe this emergence to dominance, I will explore in this chapter two interrelated aspects of the British imperial engagement with the lands and peoples of their Indian empire. In the first section of the chapter, I offer a spatial history of the growth of disembodied abstraction in southern Asia. In this section I will outline the ways in which European maritime exploration, British military expansion, the industrial revolution and the instigation of a knowledge intensive imperial state gradually gathered ever greater numbers of people in southern Asia into a disembodied form of social integration. Following this, I turn in the second section of the chapter to the ways in which the British rulers employed this disembodied social integration – and, of course, the disembodied spatial representation with which it was intimately bound – to shape their empire in particular ways. What I will suggest in this section is that throughout the colonial enterprise, the

British administrators worked to normalise their intimate understandings of the world around them within the disembodied framework; to make, in more explicit terms, the understandings of community and land derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended networks congruent with (and hence hidden within) the supposedly objective, disembodied frame.

In essence, I seek in this chapter to chart both the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of disembodied forms of social integration and spatial representation, and the British imperial use of these forms. What I aim to demonstrate is that the British brought to southern Asia ways of understanding the physical – understandings of space – fundamentally different from those prevalent prior to the European contact. What is crucial to stress is that though these ways of understanding the physical have received sustained criticism from various Indian nationalists (as will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6), the modern forms of abstraction instituted in southern Asia by the British Empire remain, in many ways, core components of the contemporary nationalist understandings of the land between the Himalayas and the seas. Quite simply, the various responses to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation in southern Asia have remained within the framework instituted by the disembodied integration itself.

The march of disembodied abstraction across southern Asia

In 1498, India became known, with a putative certainty, in a disembodied representation of space. This, perhaps, was a development that was entirely unprecedented. When the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut in the May of that year, the concept 'India' – a concept which had long been but a vague, indeterminate notion in European discourse (see Mitter 1977: vii) – gained a fixed location in a highly abstract, disembodied representation of the physical world. At the same time, an area of the Earth's physical surface gained – in circles perhaps entirely independent of the people who lived there, perhaps entirely independent of the institutions which ruled there – the name India. This twin development, we must stress, was limited. Quite simply, da Gama's "sea-route to India" (Datta 1978a: 623; S C Sarkar and Datta 1942: 42) was only ever received directly by a small number people; by people shaped by the particularities of wealth, Portuguese social standing and a mathematical education. Yet as limited as it was initially, this disembodied representation of India gained, throughout the centuries that followed da Gama's momentous arrival, an ever wider audience.

In this section I offer a spatial history of the rise to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation in southern Asia. In this, I suggest that disembodied abstractions of community and land first emerged at the margins of society on the Indian subcontinent, in the thinking of the European navigators and traders working in southern Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries who

trusted da Gama's (and others') accounts of the relationship between India and their home ports. This changed dramatically, however, with three interrelated developments which began in the middle of the 18th century and gathered pace throughout the 19th: the British military conquest of great patches of southern Asia; the industrial revolution; and the development, in the British Empire, of an educational, knowledge gathering state. With each of these developments, the lives and spaces of increasing numbers of people in southern Asia became ever more guided by structures and forms of integration external to their face-to-face communities and their agency-extended institutions. To draw from Anthony Giddens, in the "conditions of modernity" – characterised by disembodied integration – "place becomes increasingly *phantasmagoric*: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them" (1990: 18-19). To translate to southern Asia, in the conditions of British imperial modernity, people's day-to-day worlds became, over the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, increasingly penetrated and shaped by social influences both distant and, perhaps more importantly, disembodied.

Disembodied abstraction at the margins – 1498 to 1757

"India", Kalikinkar Datta has suggested,

> had commercial relations with the countries of the West from time immemorial. But from the seventh century AD her sea-borne trade passed into the hands of the Arabs, who began to dominate the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. It was from them that the enterprising merchants of Venice and Genoa purchased Indian goods. The geographical discoveries of the last quarter of the fifteenth century deeply affected the commercial relations of the different countries of the world and produced far-reaching consequences in their history. Bartholomew Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope, or the Stormy Cape, as he called it, in 1487; and Vasco da Gama found out a new route to India and reached the famous port of Calicut on the 17th May, 1498. 'Perhaps no event during the Middle Ages had such far-reaching repercussions on the civilised world as the opening of the sea-route to India' (1978a: 623).

The people of Calicut who watched da Gama's small fleet pull into their harbour in 1498 cannot, of course, have known of the momentous and 'far-reaching repercussions' heralded by the arrival of the two Portuguese boats. Datta, of course, did not suggest they did. Yet a deeper question must be asked of his discussion. Did the people of Calicut know, when da Gama's ships entered their port, that they were living in India? Did they know that da Gama's "historic arrival" was – to use Stanley Wolpert's description of the event (1993: 135) – not just an arrival in their town, but also "in India"? Perhaps they did. This, of course, we cannot know with any certainty. Yet what we can know with some certainty is that even if these people did think of themselves as living in India, this 'India' was necessarily and radically different from that imagined by da Gama. For da Gama, 'India' had been a somewhat mythical land of opulent riches where (it was imagined) the utopian Christian kingdom of Prester John might reside; a land lying at the very outer limits of his conception of the world (see da Gama 1998 [1497-98]; Livingstone 1992: 36, see also the discussion of Ptolemy's *Geographia* in chapter 2, important to the framing of the early Portuguese exploration). More importantly, once he

had landed, this 'India' became, for da Gama, an entity he could fix at the end of a long disembodied representation of the physical world. For the people of Calicut however, this 'India' – if it was a concept known of at all – must have been differently understood. It might, perhaps, have been the soil they farmed, or the lands where their ruler's agents held sway, or the sacred landscapes 'Bhāratavarşa' or 'Jambudvipa' (see discussion of these concepts in S M Ali 1966; Schwartzberg 1992a). Regardless, if the people of Calicut considered anything to be 'India', we can be sure that it was radically different from that imagined by da Gama.

We can turn this discussion around. When da Gama looked at the lands surrounding Calicut, he saw he saw himself, first and foremost, standing in India. Yet when the people of Calicut looked at the lands surrounding their town, it is highly doubtful that what came first to their mind was India. For these people, the lands surrounding Calicut must have been defined primarily in much more intimate terms. This was, perhaps, family x's field in which they stood to watch the arrival of the unfamiliar boats; that was, maybe, the temple of the followers of sect y that sat in the middle of their town; those were, possibly, the troops of ruler z who marched to meet the unfamiliar travellers. These understandings, it must be stressed, would necessarily have been the product of face-to-face and agency-extended integration, of face-to-face and agency-extended forms of spatial representation.

When da Gama looked at the lands surrounding Calicut he *saw* an 'India' defined by its relationship to that which was absent, to that which was abstract. For da Gama, the India in which he stood was a certain distance from Lisbon, or bore a certain longitude and latitude. Quite simply, the land on which da Gama stood was defined, for him, through a highly abstract, disembodied understanding of space. Yet when the people of Calicut looked at the lands surrounding their town, they saw something radically different. For them, the lands were defined by more concrete agencies and face-to-face connections, by embodied social systems which might have said which fields were theirs, or which temples they could use. The lands they saw, I suggest, had no ontological existence outside the social relations of face-to-face and agency-extended integration within which those individuals lived.

In essence, when da Gama arrived in Calicut in 1498, only very small numbers of people understood India to be a land with a fixed location in the 'world'; only very small numbers of people had their behaviour in southern Asia influenced by such an understanding. In the two and a half centuries that followed da Gama's landing, these numbers grew – perhaps even dramatically. Yet almost exclusively, those who understood the land between the Himalayas and the seas thanks to a disembodied spatial representation remained European; that is, those who had sailed to get there. In this way, the disembodied understanding of the land between the Himalayas and the seas – the understanding in which this land was India – emerged first in southern Asia amongst the trading class who had sailed from Europe. Though these traders came to influence the behaviour of small numbers

of people who lived near their ports – occasioning some distortion to the production of the traded commodities of cotton, spices and silks (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 100; Robins 2002: 80) – their effect was, I suggest, minimal. Very few people living in southern Asia had their livelihoods, their 'worlds', radically redefined by the influence of European power. This changed dramatically, however, with the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

The expansion of disembodied abstraction through military conquest – 1757 to 1858

As R Palme Dutt has suggested, the European trading companies operating in southern Asia in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries began with the "typical aim of the monopolist companies of Merchant Capital": "to make a profit by securing a monopoly trade in the goods and products of an overseas country" (1970 [1940]: 99). In extension, "the governing objective" of the British East India Company

> was not the hunt for a market for British manufactures, but the endeavour to secure a supply of the products of India and the East Indies (especially spices, cotton goods and silk goods), which found a ready market in England and Europe, and could thus yield a rich profit on every successful expedition that could return with a supply (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 99-100).

This system contained, however, a fatal flaw:

> The problem, however, which faced the Company from the outset was that, in order to secure these goods from India by way of trade, it was necessary to offer India something in exchange. England, at the stage of development reached in the early seventeenth century, had nothing of value to offer India in the way of products comparable in quality or technical standard with Indian products, the only important industry then developed [in England] being the manufacture of woollen goods, which were no use for India. Therefore precious metals had to be taken out to buy the goods in India (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 100).

This system of exchange, of precious metals for the manufactures and commodities of southern Asia, was "most painful and repugnant to the whole system of Mercantile Capitalism," as precious metals were regarded then as the only real wealth a country could possess (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 100; see also Datta 1978f: 569). Accordingly, the traders and adventurers of the European companies operating in southern Asia worked perpetually under a pressure to find a new system to rebalance the payments; to make trade more favourable. An early solution to this problem was found in a system of 'roundabout trade', in which commodities gathered from other parts of the colonial system were used to put the traders in a more favourable position (see Robins 2002: 81). A radical, and much more favourable alternative, however, was found in territorial conquest. What is important for the present discussion is that with this new system of territorial conquest, ever greater numbers of people in southern Asia found their lives and everyday worlds defined externally to their face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration; defined by a disembodied integration.

The British military expansion across southern Asia began in earnest with victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The extension of British military power beyond this – stretching out from Bengal to

eventually dominate an enormous expanse of southern Asia, including areas to the west of the Indus river, to the east of the Ganges delta and south to the Indian Ocean – has been briefly described in chapter 3. Further coverage is unnecessary here. What is of more importance at this stage is a description of the influence the British military conquest had on the lives of the people living in southern Asia. In this, I suggest that the conquest of these enormous expanses of southern Asia ushered in the first dominance of a disembodied integration. This early dominance of networks of disembodied integration may well have been shallow – in the sense that peoples' behaviours may have become influenced by a disembodied integration, without necessarily embracing the disembodied abstractions of community and land themselves – yet it directly foreshadowed an ever deeper role for disembodied integration amongst the peoples of southern Asia.

Following their victory at Plassey, the soldiers and traders of the British East India Company spread rapidly into Bengal's village hinterland, 'trading' at enormous personal profit without paying a rupee in tax (Wolpert 1993: 181). For Dutt, this behaviour was not 'trade' but 'plunder' (1970 [1940]: 102). Indeed, the powerless *nawab* of Bengal complained of the Company's agents, arguing that

> they forcibly take away the goods and commodities of the Ryots (peasants), merchants, etc., for a fourth part of their value; and by ways of violence and oppression they oblige the Ryots, etc., to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee (Mir Kasim, cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 101).

At one level, this behaviour was nothing new. Conquering armies have, of course, plundered the areas of their conquest for centuries (see discussion in Gibbon 1932 [1776-1788]: chapters 2, 10, 30). At another level however, it must be observed that the British soldiers and traders necessarily thought – and behaved – in an at least partially disembodied fashion. This is clearly observable in the way they considered their 'acquisition' in Bengal. As the victorious general at Plassey, Robert Clive, stated to the British House of Commons in 1772:

> The Company had acquired an Empire more extensive than any kingdom in Europe, France and Russia excepted. They had acquired a Revenue of four million sterling, and a Trade in Proportion. It was natural to suppose that such an object would merit the most serious attention of the Administration… Did they take it into consideration? No, they did not. *They treated it rather as a South Sea Bubble than as anything solid and substantial*. *They thought of nothing but the present time, regardless of the future*: they said, let us get what we can today, let tomorrow take care of itself; they thought of nothing but the immediate division of the loaves and fishes (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 103, emphasis added).

In essence, the Company had attained governmental power in Bengal, yet saw no inclination towards responsible government. A letter sent by Clive in 1765 to the Company directors in London is telling:

> Your revenues, by means of this acquisition [Bengal], will, as near as I can judge, not fall far short for the ensuing year of 250 lakhs [25 million] of Sicca Rupees, including your former possessions of Burdwan, etc. Hereafter they will at least amount to 20 or 30 lakhs more. Your civil and military expenses in time of peace can never exceed 60 lakhs of Rupees; the Nabob's allowances are already reduced to 42 lakhs, and the tribute to the King (the Great Mogul) at 26; so that there will be remaining *a clear gain to the company of 122 lakhs of Sicca Rupees or £1,650,000 sterling* (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 104, emphasis added).

Quite simply, after being granted *diwani* (revenue management) rights in Bengal, Clive suggested that just one quarter of the revenue extracted from the population was right for the activity of government; a further quarter right to "square the claims" of the 'Nabob' and the 'Great Mogul' (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 104); and the rest – half of the taxation revenue – was 'clear gain'. At heart, the East India Company appeared to be in a position of power, yet it was still driven by the overarching drive for profit (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 104-05; see discussion in A Smith 1893 [1776] book IV ch VII: 501). This, we must realise, was a motive entirely external to the embodied engagement the East India Company traders might have had with those with whom they traded; a motive that was, essentially, disembodied.

We can extend this discussion by asking *why* the Company merchants felt no responsibility for their new 'acquisition', *why* they treated it as 'a South Sea Bubble' and not 'as anything solid and substantial'. The answer was clearly offered by Clive. Not only did Clive himself suggest that the traders 'thought of nothing but the present time, regardless of the future', he also (as Wolpert has suggested), "took full advantage [in his own dealings] of India's caste, class, and communal divisions" (1993: 181). These two points may seem, at casual reading, to be unrelated. Yet together, they point directly to a disembodied understanding of the India the East India Company traders imagined themselves to be in. That is, the very idea of 'taking advantage' of 'caste, class and communal divisions' suggests an ability to look at these divisions dispassionately; to look at these embodied forms of identity as if one is not really included. This, of course, was in a very real sense true: Clive (and the East India Company traders) did not bear the forms of identity derived from agency-extended and face-to-face integration already existent in southern Asia. This is not to suggest that Clive held no particular and intimate forms of identity, that he held no understandings derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration. Rather, Clive and his traders found themselves in a position where *their* personal and intimate identities – understandings of themselves, community and land derived from their families, parish communities or guilds – became ever more irrelevant, ever more hidden. They felt no responsibility for their new 'acquisition' because in a very real sense, the Bengal they imagined themselves to be in – the Bengal defined first and foremost by disembodied charts and a journey from places that mattered to them intimately – contained no people.

The British military expansion in southern Asia continued, as I have suggested above and in chapter 3, after the Battle of Plassey. Though their behaviour with later conquests saw fewer of the excesses of the first seizure of Bengal (this perhaps largely for reasons of profit and (to echo Clive) a consideration 'of the future') other changes were also set in motion by Plassey. In this, the industrial revolution drove the expansion of disembodied integration ever further into southern Asia.

The expansion of disembodied abstraction through industrial capitalism – 1757 to 1914

If the Battle of Plassey dramatically altered the strategic balance on the Indian subcontinent, its impact in England was, perhaps, only more dramatic. To explain why, we can turn to William Cunningham's *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce*. "Inventions and discoveries", Cunningham asserted,

> often seem to be merely fortuitous; men are apt to regard the new machinery as the outcome of a special and unaccountable burst of inventive genius in the eighteenth century. But to point out that Arkwright and Watt were fortunate in the fact that the times were ripe for them, is not to detract from their merits. There had been many ingenious men from the time of William Lee and Dodo Dudley, but the conditions of the day were unfavourable to their success.
>
> The introduction of expensive implements or processes involves a large outlay; it is not worth while for any man, however energetic, to make the attempt, unless he has a considerable command of capital, and has access to large markets. *In the eighteenth century, these conditions were being more and more realised* (1912: 610, emphasis added).

As a host of scholars have asserted (see for example Marx 1954 [1867]: ch 31; Chand 1961: 388-389; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 109; Robins 2002), the 'considerable command of capital' that made favourable the conditions needed to support the inventions of Arkwright and Watt – that made favourable the industrial revolution – was a direct outcome of the Battle of Plassey. Brooks Adams, for example, has suggested that

> *the influx of the Indian treasure*, by adding considerably to the nation's [England's] cash capital, *not only increased its stock of energy, but added much to its flexibility and rapidity of its movement*. Very soon after Plassey, the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the affect appears to have been instantaneous, for all the authorities agree that the 'industrial revolution', the event which has divided the nineteenth century from all antecedent time, began with the year 1760… Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760, the flying shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, in 1779 Crompton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power-loom, and, chief of all, in 1768 Watt matured the steam engine (1975 [1895]: 313-4, emphasis added).

The impact of this industrial revolution on the peoples of the world has, of course, been large. What I suggest must be recognised here is that for the peoples of the newly conquered British Empire in southern Asia, its immediate effect was a dramatic – and ever growing – dominance of disembodied integration.

The British East India Company had, with Plassey and the other military victories that followed, secured a powerful governing control in great swathes of southern Asia. As noted above, this governing control was guided largely by the drive to profit, by a desire to make money through the securing of a monopoly trade in the goods produced in the areas they ruled. At the same time however, the very outcome of Plassey ushered in changes in the political climate in England against the East India Company. In this, the industrial revolution – spurred, as Adams suggested, by the treasure plundered from Bengal – gradually brought new capitalist interests to power, interests directly opposed to the monopoly held by the British East India Company (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 113). These new industrialists (as flagged above by Cunningham) were uninterested in a monopoly trade as held by the East India Company; their goal was 'access to large markets'. The newly conquered Indian Empire, in this light, beckoned as one of the largest.

The machinations leading to the dramatic ending of the East India Company's trade monopoly in 1813 (discussed in *The Times* 1813a; 1813b; 1813c) are unnecessary for this discussion. Of vastly more importance are the consequences. Before 1813, Dutt has suggested, British trade "with India had been relatively small" (1970 [1940]: 117). As evidence, Dutt cited J R Seeley's *Expansion of England* (1883):

> McCulloch, in the Note on India in his edition of Adam Smith, speaks of the trade between England and India about 1811 – that is, in the days of the monopoly – as being utterly insignificant, of little more importance than that between England and Jersey or the Isle of Man… But now [1883] instead of Jersey or the Isle of Man we compare our trade with India to that with the United States or France… India heads France and all other nations except the United States as an importer from England (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 117).

In essence, in a very few short years a dramatic reversal – spurred by British industrial development and the instigation of highly favourable trade rules (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 118) – occurred in the economic relationship between the people of Britain and the people of southern Asia. Between 1814 and 1835, for example, cotton goods exported from the mills in England to British India leapt from under one million to over fifty one million yards. At the same time, cotton goods exported from British India to Britain fell from one and a quarter million to just over three hundred thousand pieces (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 119). This trend continued until at least the First World War. Other industries – metal work, iron smelting, pottery, ship-building, paper and glass manufactures – were similarly dominated by the industrialised British. All this, as many Indian nationalists have repeatedly argued (see for example Nehru 1981 [1946]: 298; Rai 1967; M K Gandhi 1962: 131; see discussion in Chandra 1966, see also discussion in chapters 5 and 6), had a profound effect on the economies and lifestyles of the people of British India. Whereas in Britain the development of machine weaving (and, of course, other industrial technologies) had both destroyed and created jobs, in British India, massive groups of workers were put out of work with no replacement employment (Marx 1930 [1853]: 4; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 119). This forced millions 'back to the land', and many to produce cash crops (Nehru 1981 [1946]: 299; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 202; P Chatterjee 1997: 40). The agricultural economy – as years of famine would later demonstrate (see *The Times* 1861; 1866; 1874; 1877; 1896) – could not sustain such a population influx. Overall, in this period the lands of the British Empire in India were, as Dutt has argued, "forcibly transformed" into an inefficient agricultural colony of British industrial capitalism (1970 [1940]: 122; see also Nehru 1981 [1946]: 299).

This dramatic change in the lives of the people of southern Asia was a dramatic influx of a disembodied social integration. Quite simply, the day-to-day lives of enormous numbers of people living in British India were, thanks to the industrial revolution, no longer meaningfully structured by face-to-face and agency-extended integration alone. In the famous words of Viceroy Bentinck and Marx,

> The English cotton machinery *produced an acute effect in India*. The Governor-General [Bentinck] reported in 1834-5: 'The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton-weavers are bleaching the plains of India' (Marx 1954 [1867]: ch 15 section 5, emphasis added, citing in part Bentinck).

The 'bones of the cotton-weavers' that were 'bleaching the plains' were those of an enormous class living in British India who had their livelihoods dramatically – and permanently – changed because of a new disembodied economic integration.

What must be stressed at this stage is that the rise to dominance of the British industrialised economy – in essence, the rise to dominance of a disembodied form of integration – was not even across the lands the British had conquered in southern Asia. That is, where the lands surrounding the major ports of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had seen the first alteration of their economies following the onset of European trade – and the lands of Bengal had seen the first dominance of a disembodied military rule – these areas also saw the first dominance of the British industrialised economy. Other areas of British India felt this dominance in much later times. Indeed, as we can find in the 1909 *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, "the native iron-smelting industry [had] been practically stamped out by cheap imported iron and steel within range of the railways; but it still [persisted] in the more remote parts of the peninsula" (Hunter et al. 1909: Vol 3: 145). It is important to ask what was it about these areas surrounding Calcutta, Bombay and Madras that facilitated the earliest dominance of a disembodied economic relationship. At a simple level, we could say they were the easiest for the British to travel to – they were the ports the British could get to with a minimum of hassle, the areas where the Company traders could operate with little hindrance. This picture – though it certainly tells us much – does, however, pose a problematic causality. That is, we must ask what *made* these ports and lands the 'easiest to get to'. I suggest that this 'ease of access' was (at least in part) produced in their representation – with a putative certainty – in disembodied understandings of the physical: in abstract nautical charts and in the maps of the Bengal hinterland (more will be discussed on this below). This supposed certainty of knowledge not only allowed the British to know where they were and what lands they owned, it allowed them to travel – to send an expensive boat to Calcutta – with a predictable risk. Quite simply, these areas saw the earliest dominance of the British industrialised economy because their fixed existence in disembodied representations of the physical directly shaped the British engagement with the lands and peoples they encountered in southern Asia. The British were, it must be suggested, guided overwhelmingly in their actions in their Indian empire by the disembodied spatial representations in which India was gaining a certain existence. This will be discussed in greater detail below. What is also worth noting is that this disembodied representation of India also directly foreshadowed the first major British modification of the material world in southern Asia, the first major attempt to produce space through material measures: the manufacture of the railways.

Where the British dominance of the seas in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (see D W Allen 2002: 204-6; J Allen 1842: 148-9; Risso 2001) had drawn many coastal towns and their hinterlands into their globe spanning empire, rail technology offered the British a means to transform the interior of their empire. In this, the British had conquered much of the Indian subcontinent by the early 19th century (see discussion in chapter 3) – yet to this stage, many areas of this newly conquered Indian empire remained perhaps as difficult to reach from the seats of British power *on* the subcontinent (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras) as these colonial cities were to reach from London. Dacca, for example was only 250 kilometres from Calcutta – yet in the first half of the 19th century it took well over a month of travelling to reach (Moorhouse 1994: 63; see also Herber 1846). Thus with the development of rail technology, the British rulers gained a means of rapid – and vastly more certain – communication within their Indian empire. This in turn offered a means of exploiting and organising the lands of their empire in ways radically different from anything seen previously (Marx 1930 [1853]: 21; Majumdar 1978d: 863). The first sections of track in British India stretched out from Bombay in 1853. Over the decades that followed, thousands of miles were laid, eventually spanning British India from Cape Comorin in the south to the Khyber Pass in the north (Morris 1983: 124; Majumdar 1978d: 863) (see figure 6).

Figure 6 Railways in British India to 1947. Note the expansion of railways over time, gradually forcing British rule – and hence a disembodied integration – further into the subcontinent (drawn from Schmidt 1995: 107).

What this massive growth of railways did was bring great swathes of southern Asia into a known spatial relationship with other areas of British India and, indeed, the empire at large. Madras and Bombay, for example, were placed at opposite ends of a known line that joined them; placed in a known abstract relationship to each other. In this, the railways played an enormous role in bringing an increasingly dominant disembodied integration to the people of southern Asia.

The expansion of disembodied abstraction through the knowledge intensive state – 1784 onwards

While both the military conquest and the expansion of industrial-capitalist economic linkages had been instrumental in bringing ever greater swathes of southern Asia into a disembodied form of social integration, the gradual transformation of the British imperial state into a knowledge intensive organ heralded only more dramatic changes. In this, the twin developments of imperial knowledge-gathering apparatus and forms of colonial education brought disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation to dominance in southern Asia in ever more powerful ways. With this development, the disembodied spatial representations (as opposed to just disembodied forms of integration) began to truly reach the minds of the people of southern Asia.

The knowledge-gathering state

From the moment of their very earliest arrival in southern Asia in 1498, various European agents began to collect and record information about the people and lands they were encountering. Over time, this effort developed into a variety of fully fledged scientific pursuits, intimately bound to the way the colonial state engaged with the lands and peoples they ruled. What this knowledge gathering did was begin a process of *situating* – in an explicitly Cartesian, disembodied fashion – ever greater detail about the people and lands of southern Asia in the disembodied picture of India. In this, colonial forms of ethnography, history and geography were perhaps the most influential. What is crucial to stress is that rather than acquiring knowledge of the 'India' that was already 'out there', these various bodies of knowledge were instrumental in bringing that India into being.

Prototypical forms of ethnography can be observed in the attempts of the early European missionaries, traders and soldiers to learn the manners, languages, customs and strategies of the people they came in contact with (Wolpert 1993: 209). Though the knowledge gained in this early period (to perhaps the close of the 18th century) was patchy and shallow, we can find the same motives here as evident in the later scientific ethnography. That is, though Henry Bornford's 1639 report on the cotton trade (for example), offered little more than a glorified travel narrative (Bayly 1996: 45-7), the desire to know (and have power over) the people with whom the European traders dealt appears constant throughout the European contact with southern Asia. The beginnings of a modern scientific approach to

ethnography can be found at the close of the 18th century, in the early period of the East India Company's governance of Bengal. In particular, the 1784 establishment of The Asiatic Society (lead initially by the Sanskrit scholar Sir William Jones (Majumdar 1978b: 810)) heralded a clear shift to a scientific methodology. In this, The Asiatic Society embraced a broad scientific ethnographic research agenda, charting the literature, languages, customs and manners of the 'people of India'. Here Jones' initial plan of study included

> the laws of the Hindus and Mahomedans; the history of the ancient world; proofs and illustrations of scripture, traditions concerning the deluge; modern politics and geography of Hindusthan; Arithmatic and Geometry and mixed sciences of Asiaticks; Medicine, Chemistry, Surgery and Anatomy of the Indians; natural products of India; poetry, rhetoric and morality of Asia; music of the Eastern nations; the best accounts of Tibet and Kashmir; trade, manufactures, agriculture and commerce of India: Mughal constitution, Marhatta constitution etc (William Jones, cited in The Asiatic Society 2004).

Nearly all of these topics are, of course, traditions of concern for modern scientific ethnographic research. What is crucial is that this information, charted and discussed in modern academic ways (largely in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*), was directly passed to the administrators and traders of the East India Company. For the Company, this scientific approach offered a means to short cut any 'native intermediaries', to bypass the 'professors of the *shastra*' (scholars of Hindu religious law) on whom they had previously relied. In essence, the Company administrators were offered, in the imperial ethnography, the chance to take up the agency-extended and face-to-face knowledge of those whom they governed in a disembodied frame that denied non-British voices; to frame that knowledge in a way that denied the 'native' population a role in shaping that framing (Zavos 2004: 32; Metcalf 1994: 11). This, as I will discuss in greater detail below, was crucial to the structuring of the empire in ways that benefited the British rulers.

Over the years of British colonisation, the ethnographic encounter with the peoples living in British India grew, continually informing policy. We can, for example, find ethnographic research in the early 19th century which described the so-called 'criminal tribes' and which led directly to policy and punishment (see discussion in M Brown 2003; *The Times* 1870). Mark Brown has suggested that in this the colonial state sought to 'enter' "the world of the thugs" in order to undo their system of crime (2003: 210). One attempt to do this – W H Sleeman's 1836 volume *Ramaseeana, or a Vocabulary of the Peculiar Language used by the Thugs, with an Introduction and Appendix, Descriptive of the System Pursued by that Fraternity and of the Measures which have been Adopted by the Supreme Government of India for its Suppression* – sought to chart the language of the group for explicitly governmental processes. Meanwhile, various secondary technologies – such as the census (see for example Hunter et al. 1909: 284; Cust 1886: 27), craniometry (see for example Risley 1969 [1915]: 27) and photography (see for example Thomas 1992; Ollman 1983; Sampson 1992; Falconer 1997; Rajan 2003) contributed to the growing colonial ethnographic encounter with the people and lands of the empire.

Alongside the colonial desire to know the 'people of India', we can clearly find an attempt to situate that knowledge in a hierarchy of British power. In this, the British state's knowledge-gathering technologies included (perhaps necessarily) the ability to resituate the 'stuff' of colonised cultures in museums (see discussion in B Anderson 1996; Edney 1997: 39) and private collections (see Jasanoff 2005). These could display cultural information of the 'people of India', as trophies and markers of the British triumph (Jasanoff 2005). The enormous public and private collections of ethnographic 'facts' demonstrated to the colonised (and the colonisers) that the British were able to attain the elements and symbols of *their* culture – meaningful elements of their agency-extended and face-to-face worlds – and strip them of their cultural worth; housing them in a disembodied frame as examples of their subject status.

Directly paired with the ethnographic encounter with the peoples of their Indian empire, we can also clearly find a consistent attempt made by the British state to situate the dateable facts and information of the 'people of India' in a unitary temporal narrative, in a 'history of India'. In this, the colonial state sought to explore the history of the people of their empire for exactly the same reasons as they sought to explore their ethnography: to understand, to know – to situate – and to have power over (Ranajit Guha 1997: 2-3; P Chatterjee 1993: 77). Importantly, the founding assumptions of the 19th century British historical research were (as I will discuss in greater detail below) *nationalist*. That is, by the 19th century, the members of the colonial establishment gathering historical knowledge about the peoples of southern Asia were working with the assumption that nations had histories, that nations were the central pivots of history, and that national histories could be observed in the ways of living of that community (see discussion in chapter 1). What is also important to recognise is that, in parallel with the colonial ethnography, rather than acquiring knowledge of the 'India' that was already 'out there', these works were bringing that India into being.

The East India Company and British agents, fuelled with a desire to the know the peoples with whom they traded and whom they gradually came to rule, began to compose histories of India in the early 19th century. Initially, writers drew on Puranic (that is, knowledge derived from the sacred texts known collectively as the *Puranas*) and Persian / Islamic sources to situate the ethnographic work their colleagues were conducting (P Chatterjee 1993: 80; Hardy 1958: 519-20). Over time, other technologies added to and developed the sources upon which the historians working in British India could draw. Here linguistic archaeology – found in the pioneering work of William Jones – offered the chance to speculate about ancient migrations in southern Asia. Later, physical archaeology, including the investigation of the ancient cities found at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, further developed the colonial historiography (see discussion in Kenoyer 1998).

The histories of India produced in the British Empire clearly reflect their colonial origins. Some, such as Mrityunjay Vidalankar's *Rājābali* (1808) were composed in order to give the officials of the East India Company a greater knowledge of the people and society they governed and traded with (P Chatterjee 1993: 77). Others, such as James Mill's influential *History of British India* (1975 [1817]) and Mountstuart Elphinstone's *The History of India* (1849) sought to provide the people of Britain a better understanding of India from a rationalist or a utilitarian perspective. Mill, for example, suggested (to great effect) that the British government should be involved in a 'civilising mission' to bring the people of British India to the level where they could govern themselves (see discussion in Bearce 1961: 70; Macaulay 1888: 497). Still others, such as John Malcolm's *Political History of India* (1826) argued that social reform was not a role for the British, and that the government should follow a conservative agenda (see discussion in Bearce 1961: 264). Despite the differences between these various works however, we should remember that the numerous pre-nationalist histories of India had one goal in common: the development of ever greater knowledge of the 'people of India'.

Finally (and again, a project directly matched with the colonial ethnography and history), we can find in British imperial geography a knowledge gathering effort crucial to the shaping of the British Empire in India. What the geographical tradition offered to the early traders and the colonial state was a means to know (with an imagined certainty) where, on the physical earth, the peoples, armies, ports and production facilities of India were. To stress once again, this knowledge gathering was, rather than acquiring knowledge of the pre-existent 'India' that was 'out there', instrumental in bringing that India into being.

Geographical knowledge-gathering sat – of course – at the heart of the voyage which brought the first modern European contact with the peoples of southern Asia in 1498. In this, Vasco da Gama's charting of a sea-route 'to the riches of India' clearly placed this 'India' within the rapidly developing nautical vision of renaissance Europe (Datta 1978a: 623). What must be recognised is that in this early period, the geographical knowledge gathered about the area of southern Asia that would become India was overwhelmingly nautical: the winds, currents, stars and ports seen by the navigators became the 'stuff' of the abstract spatial representation connecting 'India' and 'Europe'. In this vein, John Seller's 1690 *Chart of the Eastermost part of the East Indies* offers a typical example from this period (see figure 7). Noteworthy in Seller's chart is the overwhelming focus on coastlines, as if the most important detail about the lands represented were their edges and their placing in an abstract world.

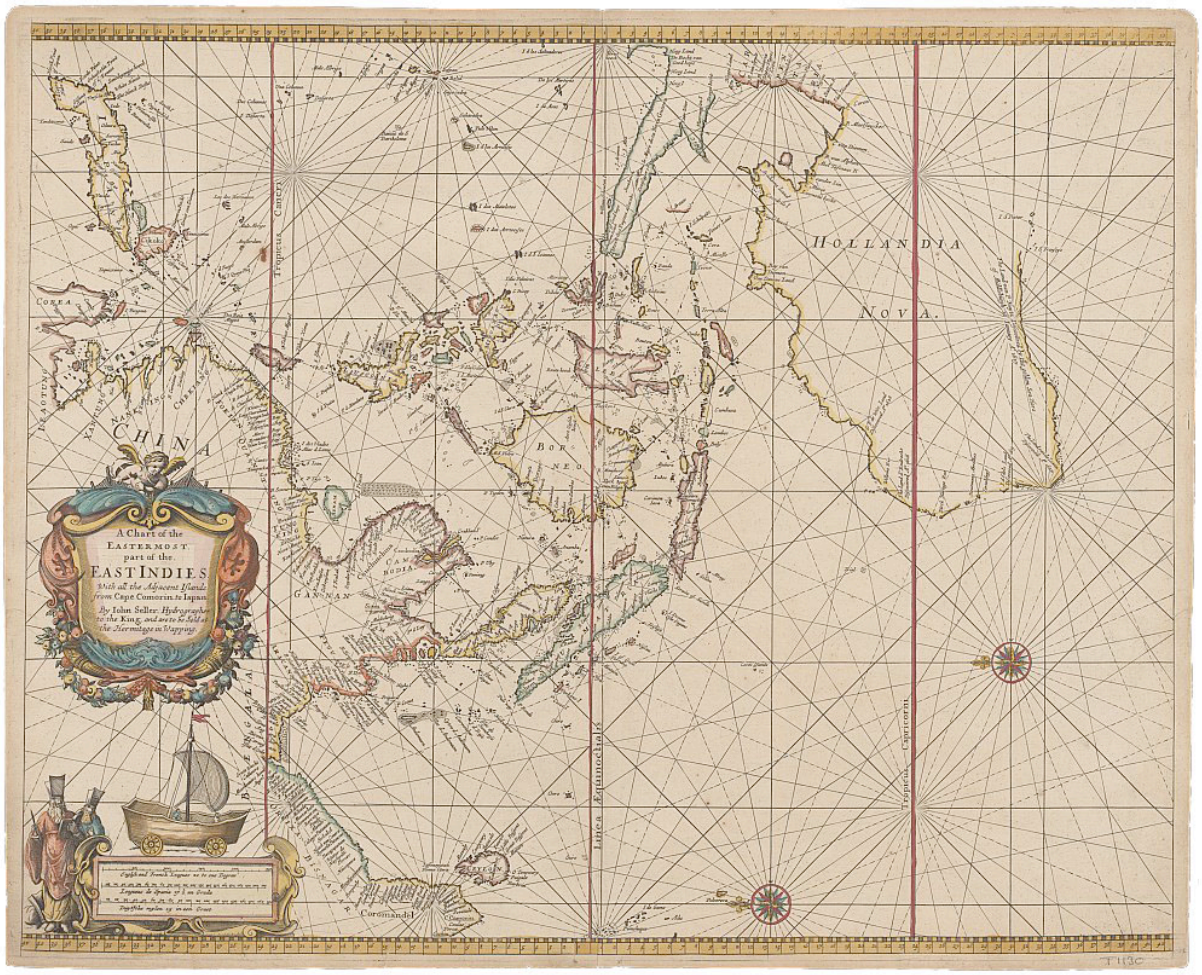

Figure 7 *A Chart of the eastermost part of the East Indies with all the adjacent islands from Cape Comorin to Iapan*, by John Seller (1690, available at http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.map-t1130-e, accessed 27 Feb 2006). What would be thought of as modern India is in the lower left of the image; note that the information about each of the areas does not extend inland beyond their coastline and various ports.

Following da Gama, the navies of Portugal, Britain, France and Holland added considerably to this geographical knowledge, surveying with ever greater description the physical world between their capitals and southern Asia. It is worth recognising that at the same time, a long standing tradition of what can be called narrative geography continued to offer details for the European placement of India. Here travelogues filled with pictures and descriptions of India, such as Donald Campbell's *A Journey over land to India* (1796) and Eusebius Renaudot's *Ancient Accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan travellers who went to these parts in the 9th century* (1733) increasingly filtered into European consciousness. Though these were not works of scientific or Cartesian geography (with their authority clearly located, like Ptolemy's *Geographia*, in personal and agency-extended accounts of the physical; see discussion in chapter 2), they certainly contributed to the ways European traders, politicians and missionaries understood the physical area they came to know as India.

Once the trading companies of Europe had established port facilities at Madras, Pondicherry, Goa and Calcutta, the knowledge-gathering technology of geography was turned increasingly towards the interior of the subcontinent. Thus from the middle of the 18th century, the European trading companies began to produce great volumes of geographical information about the lands they were exploring. Leading the way in this was the British East India Company. Armed with Cartesian surveying equipment – that is, equipment (such as the plane table (from 1793), the prismatic compass (1815) the theodolite (1819) and the technique of triangulation) able to mathematically abstract from the physical – the British East India Company's Survey department began in this period to chart and register the ownership of as much land as possible (Edney 1997; Carens 2003; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 227; *The Times* 1850). The goal in this task was, we can suggest, to render *visible* the earth they had conquered; to know, in supposedly perfect detail, that which they had won (Edney 1997: 39). In example of this goal, we can turn to the annual report on the progress of the Survey of India in 1887. The Survey's authors claimed, in this, that

> The work done by this department is of permanent value. Whatever changes occur in India, the scientific survey of its different provinces, including the smallest village and exhibiting the slightest variation of its surface, can never be superseded and need never be repeated. Whether for purposes of revenue or sanitation, of strategy or trade, the work of this department assists the labours of the Government intrusted with the administration of India, and at the same time, it exhibits the enlightened spirit in which its functions are discharged by the present masters of the peninsula (reported in *The Times* 1887).

It is important to note that the idea of a cohesive spatial India was not immediately obvious to the European navigators and geographers. Da Gama had, in this sense, merely begun the situating of India in the modern disembodied representation of the world. In this way, early maps of the landscape of southern Asia concentrated on smaller regions, such as the area around the Madras Presidency, or, alternatively, on areas of the Mughal Empire. These were not, we should remember, presented as obviously or naturally elements of one overarching region; they were not seen, that is, as portions of the 'India' that might now be seen as obvious (Edney 1997: 4-5). In essence, the maps produced in this early period show no common consensus on the geographical extent of India (see for example figure 7). Early maps that focussed on what might now be considered India – the region between the Himalayas and the seas – began to be produced in the second half of the 18th century. These were (perhaps) spurred by the earlier growth of Mughal power (under Aurangzeb) into the southern areas of the subcontinent (Edney 1997: 5). These early depictions of the modern shape of India include J B B d'Anville's *Carte de l'Inde* (1752), which covered the area from the Indus to as far east as the China Sea (Edney 1997: 5), and Hermann Moll's *The West Part of India, or the Empire of the Great Mogul* (1717), which covered what is now usually considered India, though differently labelled (see figure 8).

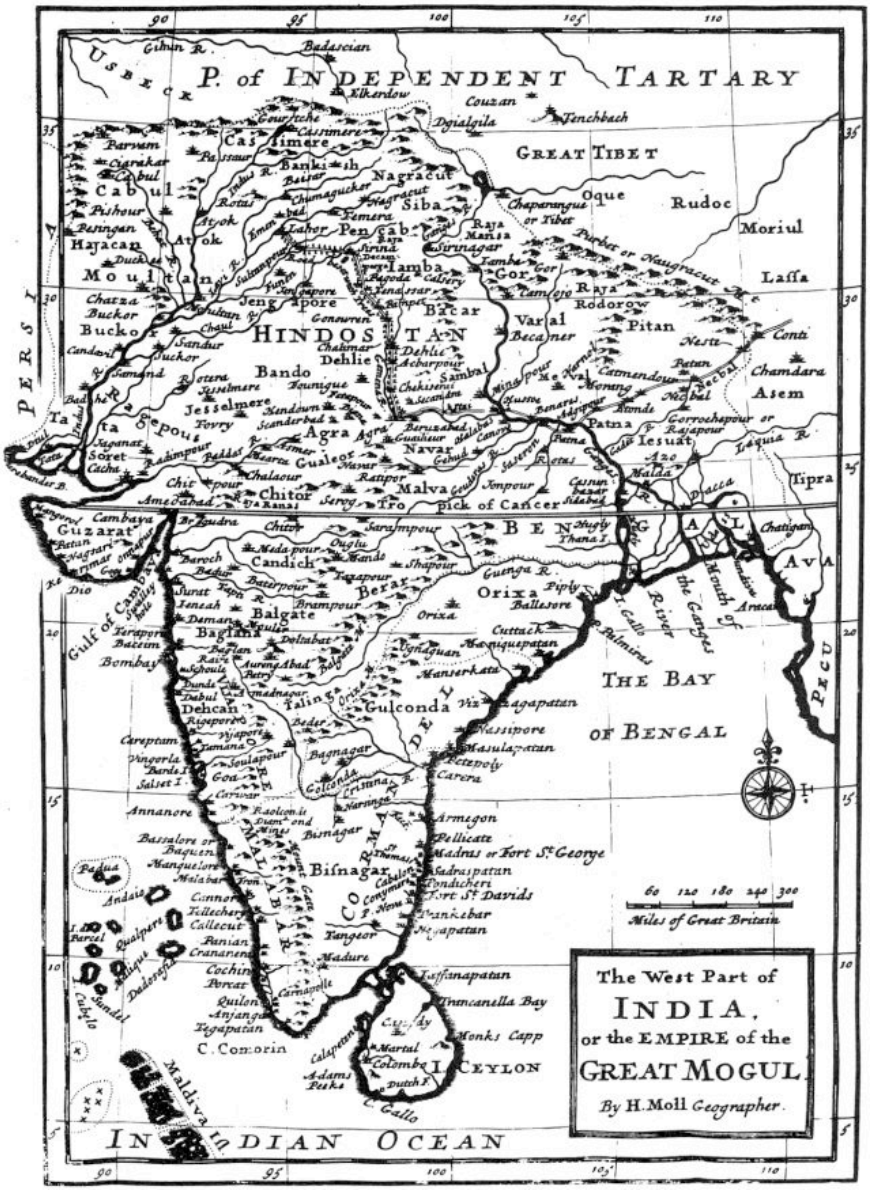

Figure 8 Hermann Moll's *The West Part of India, or the Empire of the Great Mogul* (1717). This is perhaps the earliest modern map to represent the area of the earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas as one cohesive region, though it is not named 'India' in the modern fashion. We should note that Moll's inspiration – 'the Empire of the Great Mogul' – could well be formative in modern understandings of India (drawn from Edney 1997: 7).

Finally, the East India Company officer James Rennell offered his *Map of Hindoostan* in 1788 (Kapur 2004: 4191) (see figure 9). It was Rennell's map – thanks largely to his proximity to the paramount power on the subcontinent and his explicit sourcing of a Cartesian authority (see Rennell 1804) – that the definitive 'geography of India' began to take shape.

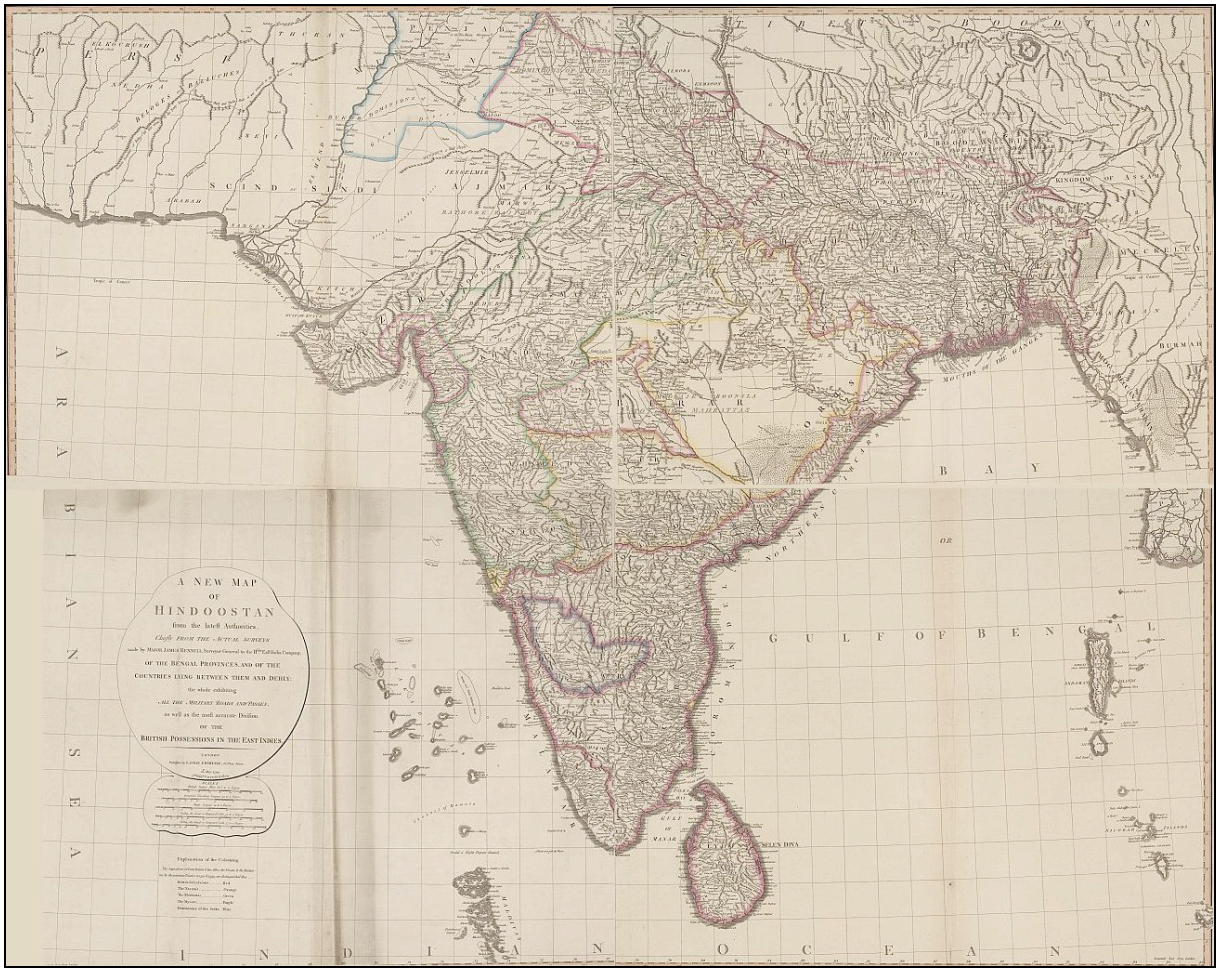

Figure 9 *A New Map of Hindoostan*, by James Rennell. Note Rennell both presented the area between the Himalayas and the seas as one unit ('Hindoostan'), and (as distinct from Herman Moll, see figure 8) explicitly noted his map was "from the latest Authorities, *chiefly from the Actual Surveys*" (drawn from Rennell 1804, available at the National Library of Australia website, image edited - original in four plates). We should note, as Edney suggests, that though Rennell established India as a meaningful entity, it remained, in this portrayal at least, somewhat ambiguous in extent (Edney 1997: 9).

Rennell's map was crucial to the framing of the spatial understandings of the British Empire. In essence, the portrayal offered by Rennell (and taken up by those who followed in his footsteps) provided throughout the following centuries the overarching framework within which all other elements of imperial knowledge were placed. Quite simply, his map became, as Edney has argued, the founding scientific plank of empire, the core element in the empire's natural order of things (1997: 11, 18). The reasons for the exaltation of Rennell's representation were bound directly to the ontology and practice of empire. In this, the crucial ontological assumption that rational scientific truth regarding the physical world could be attained (see the discussion of Descartes in chapter 2) lent enormous weight to the British imperial belief that India could be conclusively known. As Edney has argued, the British surveyors believed that the system by which the geographical data was arranged "was not artificial but was a true replication of South Asia's actual geography" (1997: 39, see discussion of such claims in chapter 2). As Thomas Holdich – one of the crafters of the imperial representation – argued in 1916,

> [The Great Trigonometrical Survey of India] has given us the framework, or anatomy, of India, and on this framework an enormous series of maps, geographical, political, military, and cadastral, has been based. Whatever may be the destiny of India in the future, it must stand as an everlasting testimony to the scientific industry of the British nation. It can never be effaced so long as stone walls can contain the records (cited in Edney 1997: 37).

Beyond this, the communications technologies available to the British Empire – the printing press and the school (which I will discuss below) – permitted the British imperial map of India to become not only the supposedly true representation of the land between the Himalayas and the seas, but one only ever more ubiquitous.

In the exaltation of the imperial map of India, countless other elements of imperial knowledge – such as census data or the zoology of the India – were framed in reference to the imperial geography. The *Imperial Gazetteer of India* for example (a serious attempt at a conclusive description of the Indian empire) began – literally and metaphorically – with the authoritative map 'The Indian Empire' inside the front cover of each volume (see figure 10). In a similar way, the very first portion of text of the series expanded on this, as if the key fact about India was its geographical / physical nature. Thus "The Indian Empire: Volume 1: Descriptive; Chapter 1: Physical Aspects" opened with this descriptive passage:

> No one who travels through *the length and breadth of the continent of India* can fail to be struck with the extraordinary variety of its physical aspects. In the north rise magnificent mountain altitudes, bound by snowfield and glacier in eternal solitude. At their feet lie smooth wide spaces of depressed river basins; either sandy, dry, and sun-scorched, or cultivated and water-logged under a steamy moisture-laden atmosphere. To the south spreads a great central plateau, where indigenous forest still hides the scattered clans of aboriginal tribes; flanked on the west by the broken crags and castellated outlines of the ridges overlooking the Indian Ocean, and on the south by gentle, smooth, rounded slopes of green upland (Hunter et al. 1909: 1, emphasis added).

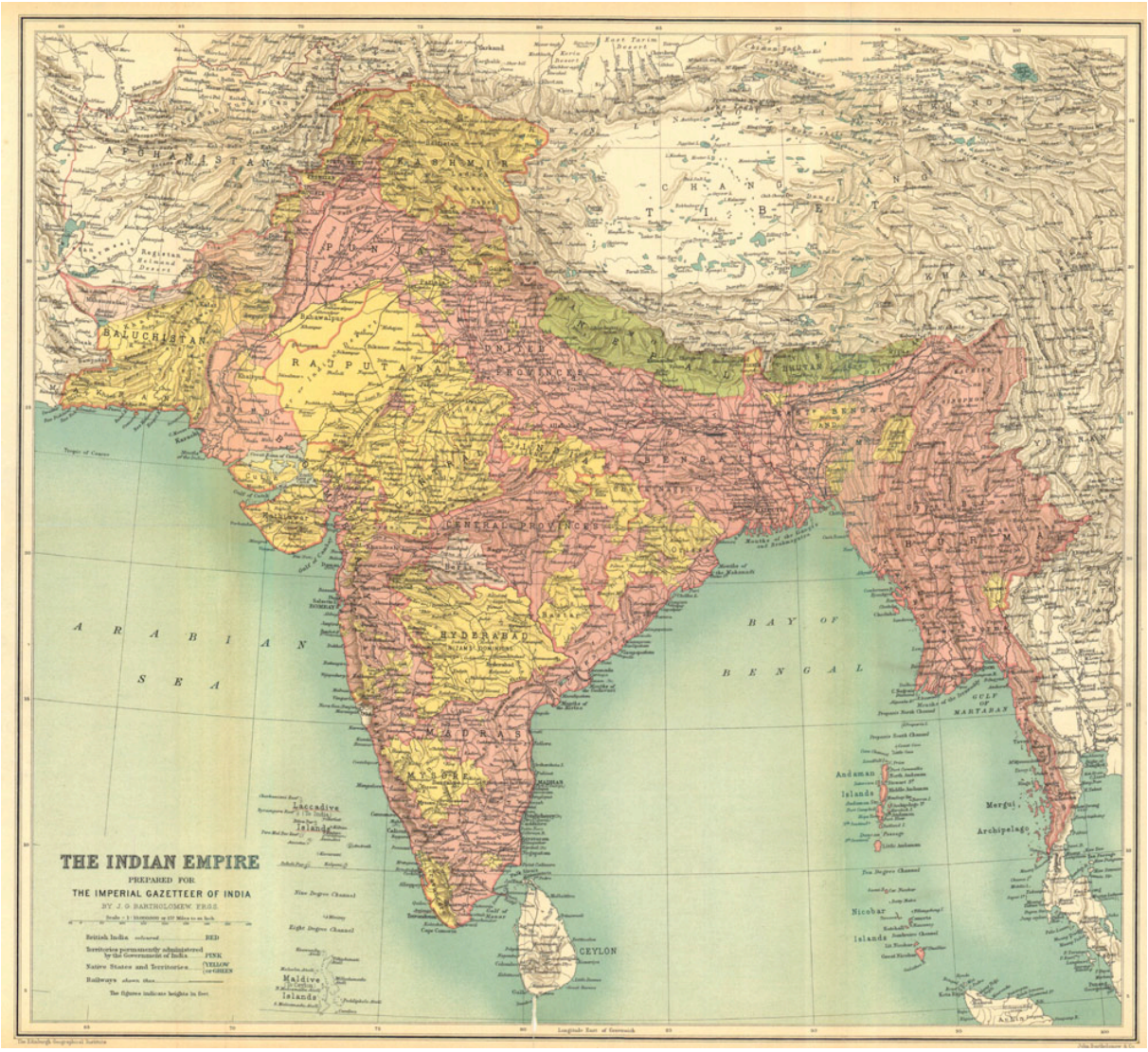

Figure 10 'The Indian Empire' presented at the beginning of each volume of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Bartholomew 1907); drawn from the Digital South Asia Library at http://dsal.uchicago.edu/

What all this suggests is that in the Cartesian abstraction of the physical conducted by the British imperial state – a form of abstraction in which truth and certainty about the physical were supposedly on offer – India became, over the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, an entity ever more certain. Quite simply, the India which had begun life as a mythical land of opulent riches beckoning da Gama and the other early European navigators had become, by the 18th century, a defined, definable land. This, as I will demonstrate in chapters 5 and 6, was to hold great influence on the thinking and politics of the various Indian nationalists.

Colonial education

Beyond even the development of the ever more elaborate imperial knowledge gathering apparatus, the emergence in British India of a colonial education system heralded perhaps the most emphatic

expansion of a disembodied integration into the lives of the people of southern Asia. In this development, the disembodied spatial representations crafted by the British state – beyond the disembodied integration forced upon the people of southern Asia without their knowing – became crucial elements of the lives of ever greater numbers of people living in British India; crucial elements of the ways these people would see the world. What the colonial education system offered the British state was a means to communicate their disembodied spatial representations – their arguments about the people and geography of India – to large numbers of people and to hierarchically judge, reward and display the acceptance of that communication. This system was as crucial in entrenching and shaping the empire as it was in bringing its demise.

The colonial education system rested on both an hierarchical assessment of civilisation and the coercive powers of the state. The hierarchical assessment was that British liberalism and modern scientific rationalism sat at the very apex of human civilisation (Walsh 1983: 5); that (in the famous words of Thomas Macaulay) "the whole native literature of India and Arabia" was not worth "a single shelf of a good European library" (1958 [1835]: 597; see also Metcalf 1994: 34). This assessment, a crucial ontological element of the empire, will be discussed in greater detail below. Meanwhile, the coercive power supporting the colonial education system was the quite simple ability to selectively appoint people to the powerful and much sought after public service positions. In this, all public service positions were filled (from 1853) through an open competitive examination, with preference given to knowledge of English (Majumdar 1978b: 812; Wolpert 1993: 238). As Majumdar has suggested, an English education (indeed, Western degrees) became in this move "the only passport to higher appointments available to the Indians" (1978b: 812).

The British used this educational technology to communicate a variety of ideas to those who would become the elite of the 'native' society. Their goal in this – part altruism and part self interest – was to form (to repeat the oft-cited words of Macaulay) "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (1958 [1835]: 601). In this goal, the colonial education system can be read as both a crucial element of the 'civilising mission' (attempting to bring 'the natives' closer to the 'heights' of British civilisation) and a self interested attempt to ideologically entrench the empire. This was recognised from early on. In 1853 for example, the young official George Campbell observed that

> the classes most advanced in English education, and who talk like newspapers, are not yet those from whom we have anything to fear; but on the contrary they are those who have gained everything by our rule, and whom neither interest nor inclination leads to deeds of daring involving any personal risk (cited in Metcalf 1994: 49).

Though only limited numbers passed through the English language schools (perhaps fifty thousand between the 1830s and the 1880s (Walsh 1983: 4)), the colonial state operated with what was known

as the 'filtration theory' (Majumdar 1978b: 812). This suggested that eventually, the ideas – and understandings of the world – taught to the British educated elite would filter through to the masses.

The core elements of the colonial education (which was not, we should recognise, a direct importation of 19th century British education, as many differences – particularly the emphasis on Shakespeare rather than Christian teachings – arose for local political consideration (see Metcalf 1994: 40-42)) were British enlightenment liberalism and scientific rationalism. We can find, for example, questions in exams which asked students to list "some of the chief of our liberties established by the Magna Carta" (Madras University Calendar, 1886: 84, cited in Walsh 1983: 4). Similarly, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* became, soon after its publication in 1859, a standard text in the colleges of British India (Jha 2003: 104).

What is important to recognise at this stage is that despite the stated intention of building a native elite who would be the 'champions of empire', the system of education in British India implied its own downfall. That is, the British system of education offered values and ways of looking at the world which were antithetical to the founding notions of the empire. More simply, the ideas they taught – of individual merit, of secular depoliticisation of personal identity and of a *national* political community – inherently contradicted the empire's founding assumption that British civilisation was better, that British people deserved political power in India. Some of the most powerful responses to this contradiction – some of the most powerful attempts to resolve the difference found between the intimate stories of community and land of the native elite, and the more abstract, disembodied narratives taught by the colonial education system – can, of course, be found in the various Indian nationalist movements. These will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6. Before that, however, we must first explore the source of this contradiction. In this, we must turn now to the ways the British imperial state worked to normalise certain face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions of community and land within the supposedly objective, disembodied frame, while marginalising others.

The ontology of empire, and the intersection of face-to-face and agency-extended abstraction with the disembodied

"As they extended their rule across the face of India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries", "the British", suggested Thomas Metcalf in his *Ideologies of the Raj*,

> drew upon a range of ideas that had for a long time shaped their views of themselves and, more generally, of the world outside their island home. As products at once of Britain's own history of overseas expansion and its participation in the larger intellectual currents of Europe, these ideas included settled expectations of how a 'proper' society ought to be organized, and the values, above all those of the right to property and the rule of law, that for the English defined a 'civilized' people (1994: 1).

The ‘rule of law’ is, we can suggest, a peculiarly *modern* organising principle. We can follow here A V Dicey’s definition of the concept:

> In England *the idea of legal equality*, or of the *universal subjection of all classes to one law* administered by the ordinary Courts, has been pushed to its utmost limit. With us every official, from the Prime Minister down to a constable or a collector of taxes, *is under the same responsibility* for every act done without legal justification as any other citizen… A colonial governor, a secretary of state, a military officer, and all subordinates, though carrying out the commands of their official superiors, are *as responsible for any act which the law does not authorise as is any private and unofficial person* (1915 [1885]: 194, emphasis added).

Dicey’s words are apt. What I wish to draw from them is the idea that the ‘rule of law’ is a ‘universal subjection’; a *placing* of all people ‘under the same responsibility’. We can elaborate this in terms useful for this thesis. The ‘rule of law’ is, we can suggest, a specific placing of people under an abstract ‘responsibility’, a specific placing of people under what is necessarily a disembodied organising principle. By way of a contrast, societies organised through face-to-face integration can place people only ‘under’ people, in hierarchies and forms organised directly through embodiment. Societies organised at an agency-extended level of integration, to continue, can place people only ‘under’ institutions, in hierarchies and forms that remain – at least partially – embodied. In neither of these types of societies can people be socially located in relationship to anything other than human beings. Yet the placing of people ‘under a responsibility’ – as Dicey suggested the ‘rule of law’ does – suggests that people in such a society are ultimately located in relationship to a disembodied abstraction, that people are integrated according to a disembodied principle.

This was a powerful concept. What it means is that as the British carried their ideas about how a ‘proper’ society ought to be organised across the face of their new Indian empire, they gathered ever greater numbers into a form of integration in which ‘all classes’ were, supposedly, under the same rule of law. To follow Dicey’s argument, this meant that everyone – from the Prime Minister to the collector of taxes, from the Viceroy to the peasants working the fields – was, in British belief, under the same rule. They weren’t. In the British Empire, different individuals were routinely ascribed different status under the law because of factors intimate and embodied. I will provide evidence for this argument in greater detail below. More importantly at the moment, we can extend this argument. Carrying their ‘rule of law’ across the land between the Himalayas and the seas, the British imagined that everyone they saw in that area – again, from the Viceroy to the peasants working the fields – considered themselves in India. They didn’t. Though the land between the Himalayas and the seas came increasingly to be defined in the British Empire by a disembodied, Cartesian representation (such as that of figure 10), it was never (and, indeed, will never be) understood entirely through such a depiction. For some people, these lands – or portions of them – will always be understood through an intimate, embodied engagement. There will always be, I suggest, some who will understand portions of the land between the Himalayas and the seas according primarily to that which can be felt and seen

and heard. Meanwhile, those who do understand the lands between the Himalayas and the seas to be India have necessarily understood this India – at least partially – though face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. The peasant working the fields and the Viceroy (even in the unlikely circumstance that both were equipped to make a 'standard' reading of a Cartesian map of India) must have understood that India in different ways. These ways, I suggest, must have been at least partially guided by their face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. At this point, we can return briefly to a discussion raised in chapter 2: that all representations of space are necessarily situated, necessarily reflective of the particular. For this present discussion, this means that the disembodied depictions of the physical presented by the British throughout their imperial rule were offered as truthful and authoritative mappings of the 'world as it is' – yet all the while they were inherently guided by the particularities of their British authors.

In the previous section, I explored the gradual emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation in southern Asia. Building on this, I now examine the ways the British used this disembodied integration to sustain and shape an empire in their favour. In this, I aim to highlight below the inherent and inescapable – though always denied – role of the particular in the supposedly objective disembodied representations offered by the British. What I suggest is that throughout the imperial project, the abstractions of community and land derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended communities of the British administrators were politically normalised, treated as unproblematically congruent with the disembodied abstractions. Meanwhile, the equally particular face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions of community and land held by the non-British – by the 'natives' – were politically marginalised, treated as entirely at odds with the dominant disembodied depiction. This normalisation / marginalisation, as I will explore in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6, contributed directly to the formation of modern Indian nationalism.

Below, I trace the political normalisation of the British administrators' face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions – and the concurrent marginalisation of non-British face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions – of community and land.

Community

As Metcalf argued, the British imperial ideology was never informed by a single set of coherent ideas, by one understanding of the peoples to be found in British India (1994: x). However, despite some assertions that a commonality was shared by *all* the people who could be found in British India (see Edmund Burke, discussed in Metcalf 1994: 19), we can frequently find in the supposedly objective, disembodied discourse an understanding that two fundamentally different 'societies' could be found in British India; and that each of these societies – the 'British' and the 'natives' – deserved different

access to political power (see Sen 1993: 28). In this understanding, the British society was cast as intrinsically modern, organised and rational. Against this, the native society was almost always seen as traditional, disorganised, irrational and backwards, as a corruption of former glories (see discussion in Metcalf 1994: ch 3; Zavos 2004: 26-30; P Chatterjee 1993: 16-18; Ballhatchet 1980). This imperial understanding was based, I suggest, on a normalisation within the supposedly objective disembodied discourse of the British administrators' intimate understandings of community. In essence, the British administrators were able – because of the particular power structures of their empire – to pretend that their vision of the 'two entirely distinct communities' to be found in British India, a vision influenced always by their face-to-face and agency-extended communities, was an objective view of all the people to be found in British India. We can observe this dichotomous understanding in a number of areas. I trace here its existence in elite discourse, imperial practice and popular sentiment.

In various elements of elite discourse in the British Empire, we can clearly find British administrators who disparaged the administrative and social structures of the native society as entirely 'disorganised', while the equivalent British systems were understood as inherently 'organised'. At a governmental level for example, the so-called 'wandering tribes' of *sannyasin*, vagrants, traders and (perhaps) criminal gangs were portrayed as inherently threatening; as dangerous and disorderly groups who "do not lead a settled life" (Zavos 2004: 27; see also Major 1999; M Brown 2003). One Commissioner from East Berar in the 1870s, for example, argued that a number of 'criminal tribes' roamed his district:

> when a man tells you he is a Badhak, or a Sonoria, he tells you (what few Europeans comprehend thoroughly) that he is an offender against the law, has been so from the beginning, and will be so to the end; that reform is impossible, for it is his trade, his caste, I may almost say his religion, to commit crime (Nembhard, cited in *The Times* 1870).

This, for the British, was typical of native social 'disorganisation'. Against this, the British systems were readily cast as organised and rational. The railways, for example, were highlighted as an obvious and natural example of 'organised' British society (Zavos 2004: 27). Here J A Baynes suggested, in his 1873 report on the progress of the railways in British India, that

> to the people of India railways have brought new ideas and intelligence. They have served to scatter prejudices and helped to break down caste. They have taught the benefit of interchange, not only of commodities but of thought and sentiment. They have helped to mitigate the privations of famine and to save life by the transmission of food supplies, and they are certainly helping forward that time foretold in the Sacred Record, 'when many shall run to and fro in the earth, and knowledge shall be increased' (1873: 12).

Meanwhile, the dichotomisation of native and British communities in elite discourse ran heavily through the colonial ethnography. What is most important here is the stance taken by this field; in this, the various ethnographic works (discussed briefly above) gathered knowledge only about the 'native' community. We can look, here, at Herbert Risley's *The People of India*. Risley's work

presented a discussion not of all the people who could be found in British India, but only of the customs and manners of the 'native' society (1969 [1915]; see similar in Gilbert 1944). That is, though Risley's work attempted a scientific description of the 'people of India', Risley relied on and reinforced the prior ontological claim that the British and native societies were fundamentally distinct. This is clearly observable in the conspicuous absence of British clothing, bodies and cultures in Risley's discussion, excepting, that is, for the one magisterial portrait of the author. Interestingly, the very framing of the one British body is telling: Risley's author photograph was offered at the very start of the work, his body turned from the camera, and the subject was not discussed (see figure 11). Risley himself was presented in this as the very exemplar of the organised, authoritative British society.

Figure 11 'Sir Herbert Hope Risley, KCIE, CSI'. This portrait was offered at the very beginning of Risley's *The People of India*, and sought to emphasise – through the pose, clothes and attitude – the author's authoritative standing and proximity to the colonial power. This body was clearly presented as utterly distinct from the 'natives of India' illustrated at the end of the volume (see figure 12) (drawn from Risley 1969 [1915]: facing xi).

Meanwhile, the photographs Risley offered to illustrate the 'people of India' (see for example figure 12) were almost explicitly 'captured': the subjects faced the camera and were not posing. Moreover, the subjects in Risley's illustrations were explicitly discussed as the objects of knowledge. The observer, in this case, was master. In Risley's portrait, the observer was (at best) an equal. It is also worth noting that the very people Risley discussed as most typical of India were only those he thought most 'authentic' and 'traditional'. No person photographed or discussed in Risley's account showed

any body or cultural hybridity. The difference between the two societies was, in Risley's mind, clear and absolute.

Figure 12 'A Group of Dom basket-makers from Bihār: mixed Dravidian type'. One example of Risley's illustrative pictures: note that the subjects were arranged as if captured in their work, and were forced into submission by the photographer (note the bowed heads and seated posture – one could not imagine Risley's own picture (see figure 11) similarly shot). Meanwhile, the facing page offered a short, totalising description: "The Doms are a semi-nomadic tribe found in Bihār and the adjoining districts of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. One group of them, known as Maghaiya, are habitual thieves and burglars. Other sections are more or less settled, and live mainly by making mats and baskets out of slips of bamboo. Their social status is very low, because they eat beef, pork, horse-flesh, field-rats, and even the flesh of animals which have died a natural death – all abominations to orthodox Hindus. They act as executioners, and at holy places lord it at the burning ground, because they alone can supply fire to light the funeral pyre, and they must be heavily bribed before they will permit the corpse to be cremated" (drawn from Risley 1969 [1915]: Plate XXXV, and facing). All this presented a clear divide between British and native societies.

In imperial practice we can trace a similar dichotomisation of the British and native communities. In this, the British Indian Army relied, from the days of the East India Company onwards, on large numbers of native enlisted troops (known as sepoys), led by a combination of native and British officers. Importantly, the key positions of this imperial army were always held by British officers. That is, above the battalion level, all officers were British; thanks to battalion power structures, British officers also retained control at that level (Cohen 1971: 8). Further to this, following the 1857 revolt, all native personnel were removed from the strategically important artillery companies (Heathcoate 1974: 42). This structuring relied on, and served to reinforce, an order in which British men were held as legitimately and naturally deserving of power. A similar practice can also be seen in the legal system. In this, British administrators were consistently ascribed different levels of responsibility to the native officials. This was perhaps most notable in the judiciary. In this, only European (in this case, British) judges held jurisdiction over the British or European citizens of British India. Essentially, this held that British men were the only trusted and responsible individuals; the norm against which others were implicitly *not* trustworthy (see discussion in Gopal 1965: 150).

Finally, it must be recognised that the division of British and native societies at the core of the colonial project was not just an element of the administrators' imaginations, it also formed a crucial aspect of the more popular British understanding of the societies of British India. We can find, for example, a significant approval of this difference in the so-called 'Ilbert Bill Affair'. In 1882, a native member of the civil service suggested that there was no sufficient reason "why Covenanted native Civilians, with the position and training of District Magistrate or Sessions Judge, should not exercise the same jurisdiction over Europeans as is exercised by other members of the service" (Gupta, cited in P Chatterjee 1993: 20). That is, the standing position, in which the native judicial officers were not permitted to try European citizens, was an anomaly at odds with the project of liberal universalism the British saw themselves conducting in their empire in India. In response, the British government (represented by Prime Minister William Gladstone's liberal viceroy Lord Ripon) attempted to enact the Ilbert Bill, which would have removed this discrimination. The reaction of the British community to the proposed Bill was rapid and angry. One commentator has described it as "almost mutinous" (Gopal 1965: 150); *The Times* of the era noted the 'unprecedented coldness' between the Viceroy and the British community in British India (*The Times* 1883a; 1883b). In the end, the Viceroy was forced to back down (see further discussion in chapter 5). In simple terms, the campaign demonstrates that overwhelmingly, the British living in British India *did* see themselves as a separate community. For them, the special rights they enjoyed were hard fought and a natural reflection of the worth of the two groups.

What I wish to suggest now is that the understanding that in British India two fundamentally distinct communities could be found was *not* a product of the disembodied integration alone. That is, it was not something necessitated by the industrial revolution's fostering of disembodied economic linkages; nor was it necessitated by the use of Cartesian techniques to chart and produce the geography of India. Rather, this dichotomisation emerged through a taking up of certain face-to-face and agency-extended understandings within the framework of the disembodied integration; a structuring of the disembodied integration along particular face-to-face and agency-extended lines. We can consider here Risley's *The People of India*. Risley could have charted the behaviours, languages and customs of all the people he found in British India, yet he chose not to. He left out a significant and powerful group of people. Why? If an objective view of the people of India was his goal, why did he leave out the British community, a community certainly evident and visible in British India? Risley did so, we might suggest, because he knew the British community in British India through face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. This community, the community with whom Risley had dined, prayed and sailed from England with, were (in a direct echo of Clive's thinking a century and a half earlier) simply not *in* the disembodied India that Risley charted.

Land

The imperial understanding of the communities of British India was matched directly by a similar understanding of the land. That is, we can quite regularly find the argument in British imperial discourse that there existed a 'rational' and 'correct' way of engaging with the physical world and that, by implication, there existed other ways which were 'irrational' and 'incorrect'. In this understanding, the British way of engaging with the physical was held as intrinsically modern, organised and rational. Against this, the native way of engaging with the physical was almost always cast as traditional, disorganised, irrational and backwards. Again, this imperial understanding was based, I suggest, on a normalisation within the disembodied frame of the British administrators' face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of land. We can observe this dichotomous understanding in a number of areas. I trace here its existence in arguments about private property and the relationship between societies and the physical earth.

As Metcalf suggested (1994: 1, 17, see above), the British came to their empire in India with the understanding that individuals had the right to private property. This understanding was held by the British administrators as entirely rational, as the key to the 'proper' organisation of society (see also discussion in Marx 1858). In this, the British behaved as if private property, and, in particular, a class of landed gentry, was necessary for an ordered social existence. This meant in the early period of their rule that the British began to search, as Vera Anstey has argued, "for the landlord", assuming such a class existed in "the complicated Indian system" (1952: 98; see, for example, *The Times* 1794). Alternately, it meant the creation of such a class if one could not be found. Here Lord Cornwallis justified the Permanent Settlement of 1793 (in which such a class was created), stating that he was "convinced that, failing the claim of right of the Zamindars, it would be necessary *for the public good* to grant the right of property in the soil to them, or to persons of other descriptions" (cited in 232Dutt 1970 [1940]).

The system of private property instituted by the British in their Indian empire was radically different from that previously in existence in southern Asia. As Marx argued in his discussion of the land tenure in British India, "the property of the land" prior to the Permanent Settlement, resided "in the village corporations, in which resided the power of allotting it out to individuals for cultivation" (1858). In a similar way, Radhakamal Mukherjee asserted that "the soil in India [prior to British rule] belonged to the tribe or its sub-division – the village community, the clan or the brotherhood settled in the village – and never was considered the property of the king" (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 222). In this difference, the British instituted system of private property – that is, the Permanent Settlement – was portrayed by the British as a purely rational institution, as the product of some 'ordered', 'objective' assessment of society. Yet what we must stress is that it was not a purely rational

assessment. Rather, it was an idea that the British brought to their empire in India; an idea that was, for the British administrators, already 'settled' (Metcalf 1994: 1). Quite simply, the institution of private property, which perhaps took some centuries to evolve in England (see discussion in Marx 2006 [1844]), was a system that necessarily pre-dated the emergence of a disembodied integration in British India.

While the British clearly brought to their empire in India a belief in the fundamental right to private property, they also came with the (perhaps entirely contradictory) understanding that societies were intimately and inextricably connected to portions of the Earth's surface; that peoples – nations – had homelands. This understanding can be found in two different forms in British imperial discourse. One of these forms was largely in relationship to the native society, while the other was largely in relationship to the British.

The British often argued that groups of people were formed by their geographical situation, that climate and topography – 'land' – were constitutive of their being. This can be seen in the colonial knowledge-gathering technologies discussed above, and was applied occasionally to regions of British India, or, alternately, to India as a whole. We can, for example, find imperial suggestions that the people of Bengal, "the land of the mighty rivers" were "smart, intelligent" and "effeminate", or that Punjabis, living on "the cross-roads of many invasions" were "a fighting class" (R Singh 1963: 261, 277; Dimeo 2002). Alternatively, we can find suggestions that the entirety of the Indian people were 'indolent', 'passive' or 'effeminate', because of the 'enervating effects' of the climate (Dow 2003 [1772]: i-iii; Metcalf 1994: 27; Gilbert 1944: 19-20). What these arguments suggest is that for the British administrators, the people they encountered in their Indian empire were fundamentally bound to and form by that India the British themselves were bringing into being.

In a direct contrast to this, we can find in British imperial discourse the rather different – though related – argument that a society could love a patch of earth, and consider it naturally theirs. This argument employed the same ontology as the one described above – that societies were inextricably connected to patches of earth – yet the implications were entirely different. Most importantly, this argument implied that the love of homeland was, in some ways, a choice: a rational decision. The reason for this difference was simple: the British employed this argument in reference to themselves. Thus 'the British', it was regularly claimed, 'stood out' for their 'love of the homeland' (Dawson 1886b; 1886a). We can find just such an argument in the *Calcutta Review* of 1886, in which J E Dawson raised two points crucial to the imperial project. "It is the fashion now-a-days", began Dawson,

> to talk of the luxurious lives of Indian officials. Has it ever occurred to those who thus indulge in such cheap and cruel reflections on some of Her Majesty's most conscientious and laborious

> subjects, at what expense to them the work of the great Empire of India is carried on? It is said, and said truly, *that an Englishman is pre-eminent among the nations of the earth for his love of home!* Let it be remembered, then, that it is at the sacrifice of his home-life that the Englishman in India earns his, by no means, immoderate and ever-decreasing income (1886b: 349, emphasis added).

Dawson expanded on this 'English love of home' in his next article. In this, he connected it explicitly to the imperial claim to superiority. "There are", Dawson offered,

> points on which we think we [the English] are fairly entitled to claim indisputable superiority: and among these we place in distinct relief our domestic institutions. When we find on a great occasion that a picked élite of ten thousand of our countrymen and women are moved to tears at the sympathetic rendering by one woman's voice of the popular little song 'Home, Sweet Home,' [at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London, in May 1886] we must feel convinced that both the sentiment and music appealed to one of the *strongest and most deep rooted of our national passions.* Must not such a spectacle have offered a profound problem to foreign visitors – especially strangers from this country? [British India] We pride ourselves much, as Teutons, that to us alone belongs that sweet and magic word – '*Home – Heim!*' On no other race can it exert so potent a spell! Thus looking out on our Hindoo friends, we draw a contrast wholly to our advantage (1886a: 359-60, emphasis added in part; see also Blunt 1999).

The meaning in Dawson's writing was clear. The British were superior because of their love of homeland, a sentiment he suggested was absent in the native subjects. Beyond this, Dawson continued his argument (the very next sentence), by connecting the 'lack of love for homeland' amongst 'our Hindoo friends' with a 'lack of civilisation':

> Our highest sensibilities are shocked by the thought that two young lives should be irrevocably united [in an arranged marriage] long before they are, or can be, capable of appreciating the gravity of the event. We feel … that thus *manhood is robbed of one of its most sacred rights – the right of choice* (1886a: 359-60, emphasis added).

As with the imperial understanding that two fundamentally distinct communities could be found in British India, the imperial understanding of land was *not* produced by disembodied integration alone. That is, the understanding that peoples were intimately and inextricably connected with patches of the Earth's surface was not something necessitated by the industrial revolution's fostering of disembodied economic linkages; nor was it necessitated by the Cartesian charting of the geography of India. Rather, this idea emerged through a taking up of understandings of the physical derived from certain face-to-face and agency-extended linkages within the framework of the disembodied integration, a structuring of the disembodied integration along certain face-to-face and agency-extended lines. In sum, the emergence of disembodied integration made possible the idea that nations had homelands, yet it did not necessitate it. In this, we could quite easily conceive of a Cartesian geography of southern Asia that saw no need to connect this land to a certain people; that saw no need to say that the people 'of this land' shared certain national characteristics. In essence, the reason the supposedly objective imperial understandings of land included ideas of both a right to private property and that people were intimately connected with their homelands was because the British administrators saw the land – at least partially – through face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration they brought from their homes; through their knowledge that 'Britain', the land they had come from, was fundamentally

different from where they were. This difference, it must be stressed, was not simply that 'Britain' was their 'homeland', or that 'Britain' was a land that looked like 'this' and 'India' a land that looked like 'that', or even that 'Britain' sat a certain distance away. Rather, the difference was that this 'Britain' contained, for all the British administrators, physical sites which they had come to know, first and foremost, through agency-extended and face-to-face forms of social integration, through an intimate, embodied engagement with the physical.

Towards an Indian modernity

"Even more important than the actual increase in the burden of the assessments in the initial period", R Palme Dutt argued in his influential *India Today*,

> was the *revolution in the land system effected by the British conquest*. The first step in this revolution was in the system of assessments and the registration of the ownership of the land, in which the English economic and legal conceptions were made to replace, or superimposed on the entirely different conceptions and institutions of the traditional Indian economy…
>
> In this way the characteristic process of the colonial system was in fact carried out with ruthless completeness in India – *the expropriation of the Indian people from their land*, even though this process was partially concealed under an ever-more complicated maze of legal forms, which after a century and a half has grown into an impenetrable thicket of intermixed systems, tenures, customs and rights. From being owners of the soil, the peasants have become tenants… (1970 [1940]: 227, 229, emphasis added).

The 'expropriation of the Indian people from their land' was, for Dutt, the very heart of the British imperial system. In essence, the British imperial system, Dutt argued, enacted a radical transformation of the land system in southern Asia, a radical transformation in the dominant ways of seeing the physical world. This transformation, which allowed the expropriation of the land of the 'Indian people', occurred, I argue, through the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of social integration, and disembodied forms of spatial representation.

When Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut in 1498, the 'peasant ownership of the soil' was, in southern Asia, as complete as it perhaps ever would be. I am not sure we can entirely accept Marx's contention that "the property of the land" prior to the European conquest resided solely "in the village corporations" (1858); yet we can be somewhat certain that the dominant understanding of the land in southern Asia prior to the European conquest – the 'ownership of the soil' – was formed through agency-extended and face-to-face forms of integration. In this, we can consider the networks of integration – and the understandings of space – crucial to a pre-modern peasant farmer. What we can stress is that the understanding that allowed any such farmer to farm a patch of soil and to claim the crops grown as their own can only have come from some situated knowledge of that patch of soil. This must be true of any farmer, in any epoch. What is important is that prior to the Cartesian revolution, this knowledge can only have come through a shared understanding with neighbours – in

face-to-face integration; or through some shared understanding with the ruling institutions – in agency-extended integration. There simply did not exist, prior to the Cartesian revolution, any highly abstract disembodied knowledge of the physical certain enough for any farmer to claim a patch of land on its authority. Gradually, this changed. When da Gama landed at Calicut, India became, for the first time, an entity known, with at least a partial certainty, in a disembodied representation of the physical. This disembodied knowledge of the physical earth of southern Asia, it must be stressed, was shallow and thin on details, and was received directly by only a few people. Yet it was, however, certain enough for the Portuguese – and then the Dutch, the French and the British – to send great quantities of men and treasure out from their ports in the hope of a return on investment. Over the centuries that followed, this disembodied understanding of the land between the Himalayas and the seas – of the land which gradually came to be known as India – came to influence the lives of ever more people.

In the second half of the 18th century, the disembodied understandings of the land between the Himalayas and the seas became dominant. Above, I have described how the Battle of Plassey, the industrial revolution and the development of a knowledge intensive state led directly to this dominance; here we can unite these developments. To do this, we can consider once again a peasant farmer. Prior to the drama of the Battle of Plassey, a farmer (in perhaps any part of southern Asia) was taxed according to produce (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 223; see discussion in P Chatterjee 1997: 4-5). According to the Code of Manu, for example:

> As leech, calf and bee take their food, so must a King draw from his kingdom moderate taxes. A fifth part of the increment of cattle and gold is to be taken by the King, and one-eighth, one-sixth or one-twelfth part of the crops, though a Khastriya King who in time of war takes even one-fourth part of the crops is free from blame if he protects his subjects to the best of his ability (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 223);

according to the Statute of Akbar,

> In former times the Monarchs of Hindustan exacted the sixth of the produce of the land as tribute and tax. One-third part of the produce of medium cultivated land is the revenue settled by His Majesty (cited in Dutt 1970 [1940]: 223).

In 1793, the Governor of Bengal, Lord Cornwallis, enacted what became known as the Permanent Land Settlement. In this settlement, instead of being taxed on their produce (which would, of course, change from year to year), peasant farmers were charged a flat tax – a rent – on the lands they farmed. This rent was collected by the *zamindars*, a class who became the owners of that land in perpetuity. To secure their tenure, the imperial state began to compile cadastral records of land ownership. Meanwhile, regulations were enacted to define the rights of the various classes of tenants (Majumdar 1978a: 792). These developments – land ownership recorded by the state; peasants' rights defined in governmental code; and farmers taxed on a basis irrelevant to all their circumstances except the size of the area they farmed – meant that the dominant knowledge of that parcel of land, the knowledge that

shaped its meaning in the peasant's life, became defined externally, in a disembodied, highly abstract manner. This, more than anything else, was the expropriation of the 'Indian' people from their land.

In essence, the British brought to their empire radically new ways of seeing the physical world, ways that were defined through a highly abstract, disembodied, framework. In this, a peasant farmer's right to farm a certain patch of land – crucial, of course, to their very livelihood – became defined by neither the relationship they had with the other people of the village, with the neighbours that made up their community of face-to-face integration; nor by the relationship they had with the agents of the monarch, with the agency-extended institutions that had previously ruled. Instead, the peasant's right to farm a certain patch of land became defined by a variety of codes kept in an office in Calcutta; by highly abstract, disembodied, understandings of space.

What is crucial to recognise is that this disembodied knowledge of the physical, fundamental to the expropriation of the 'Indian people' from their land, was always shaped by particular interests, by those who first seized the power offered by a disembodied knowledge of the physical. For the peoples of southern Asia, this meant that the disembodied integration in which they were placed was crafted and shaped by British voices; that the particularities of the British aristocracy and the industrialists who came to rule the British Empire in India fundamentally shaped the disembodied integration. In essence, throughout the colonial era the British administrators were able to normalise their particular understandings of the world around them within the disembodied framework. They were able, I suggest, to make the abstractions of community and land derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended networks congruent with – and hence hidden within – the supposedly objective disembodied frame. What this meant, of course, was that other particular understandings of the world, other understandings of the world shaped by face-to-face and agency-extended integration, were marginalised. For the very earliest people of southern Asia to feel the effects of disembodied integration, this marginalisation was felt 'externally'. In this, their ways of understanding the land – their 'ownership of the soil' derived from 'village corporations' (Marx 1858; Dutt 1970 [1940]: 222) – were erased. Their face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions of land made redundant by a disembodied abstraction they could not truly comprehend. Later however, a class of native thinkers educated by the British state began to feel this marginalisation 'internally'. In this, their face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions were cast as irrational, backwards and wrong by the disembodied abstractions they themselves were learning in the English language schools. At heart, these people were welcomed to a world of disembodied abstraction, to a world in which certain knowledge of the physical was offered, yet this world had long been structured in favour of other people's face-to-face and agency-extended abstractions. In their attempts to reconcile the contradiction these thinkers felt between their face-to-face and disembodied abstractions – between their parents' and the imperial state's stories of the physical – we can find the first emergence of an Indian nationalist consciousness.

To return, finally, to Dutt's argument:

> …In this way the characteristic process of the colonial system was in fact carried out with ruthless completeness in India – *the expropriation of the Indian people from their land*, even though this process was partially concealed under an ever-more complicated maze of legal forms, which after a century and a half has grown into an impenetrable thicket of intermixed systems, tenures, customs and rights. From being owners of the soil, the peasants have become tenants…(1970 [1940]: 229, emphasis added).

The peasants of southern Asia were expropriated from lands that were theirs; they were expropriated from soil they had known intimately through face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. Yet they were *not*, I stress, expropriated from India. 'India', a land that could be known with certainty, a land about which ownership could be authoritatively ascribed, did not exist until it was made in disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical. In essence, the peasants were expropriated *by* the emergence of the modern Cartesian India. In the attempts to reconcile this expropriation, to respond to the marginalisation of their face-to-face and agency-extended forms of abstraction, we can find the development of a nationalist understanding of this modern Cartesian India, the development of, in essence, an 'Indian national territory'. It is to two influential responses to the emergence to dominance of disembodied abstraction – to the emergence of the modern Cartesian India – that I now turn.

5

A secular nationalist India

In chapter 3, I argued that to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, we must chart two things: the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and the response to this emerging from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. This chapter continues this exploration. In this, I build on the discussion offered in the previous chapter (on the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation in southern Asia) by charting here a significant response to the initial emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation emerging from the intimate forms of integration marginalised by this emergence. In particular, I explore here the influential argument that India, the land between the Himalayas and the seas, is the rightful territory of those who call it *home*. This response can be usefully labelled as 'secular Indian nationalism'.

We must begin this chapter with a restatement of an argument raised earlier in this work: that the response offered by the intimate forms of integration marginalised by the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia – or, indeed, anywhere – cannot be traced with any hope of completion. As I argued in chapter 3 (drawing there on arguments discussed in chapter 1 and in Bellamy 1999) we cannot pretend that there has existed some 'universal response' which all 'Indian people' had to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration. We cannot pretend, that is, that there has existed some 'universal response' that would afford us 'true' access to the Indian nation and the Indian national territory. To do so, I suggest, would be to make the mistake of assuming that there has existed 'out there' an 'Indian national territory' waiting to be seized by the 'reawakening Indian nation'; an 'Indian national territory' waiting to be charted by the rational gaze. This, I argue, cannot be accepted.

This position means that any discussion of the formation and understanding of the Indian national territory must acknowledge and work according to this limitation. That is, all we are able to do is

deliberately choose perspectives to explore the Indian national territory from. In this, we can return briefly to the argument running through this work. What I argue is that the national territory (as a general form) is produced in understanding. The Indian national territory, that is, emerges not from the ground, but from the subjective, human understanding of that ground. Our attempt to trace the production of this national territory must, then, avoid any claim to knowledge of the Indian national territory as some real entity 'out there'. Instead, we must search for both the ways people have understood it, and the ways that these understandings have been produced. This chapter explores one – particularly influential – way of understanding the Indian national territory. In particular, I explore here the highly influential argument that the land between the Himalayas and the seas – the land known as India – is the rightful political territory of those who call it *home*. In the next chapter, I will contrast this with a rival perspective. In this I will explore the argument that the land between the Himalayas and the seas – the land known as India – is the rightful political territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this land. As influential as these arguments have been, I again stress that these two perspectives on India – these two responses offered by the intimate forms of integration marginalised by the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation – do not (and, indeed, cannot) present an 'exhaustive' picture of the contemporary nationalist India.

The secular nationalist understanding of India represents a significant response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia; a significant attempt to reconcile the key ontological contradiction felt between the disembodied representations of the physical that emerged to dominance with the British Empire, and representations of the physical derived from more intimate – face-to-face and agency-extended – forms of integration. To explain, we can return briefly to an argument raised in the previous chapter. During the British imperial dominance of southern Asia, a significant normalisation of particular intimate understandings of the physical world – those of the British administrators – occurred within the emergent framework of disembodied abstraction. In this, the British administrators treated their own particular understandings of community and land – understandings at least in part derived from family, guild and church – as normal elements of the 'objective', disembodied picture of the world. For the administrators themselves, this of course presented few problems. Yet for others – for the 'native elite' educated in the British schools and universities – the supposedly objective, disembodied stories of the world they were taught marginalised and negated the understandings of the physical offered by their parents and their religious institutions. In essence, this native elite found in their minds radically contradictory ways to see the world around them.

To attempt to resolve this contradiction, a great number of activists, thinkers and politicians have engaged in an elaborate campaign to achieve two interrelated goals: to renegotiate the terms of the

supposedly objective disembodied representations of the physical to make them more congruent with the understandings derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended communities; and to renegotiate the spatial representations employed in their more intimate (face-to-face and agency-extended) forms of integration to match those of the disembodied. More simply, these activists and thinkers have attempted to make the highly abstract India *look* like their intimate day-to-day spaces, and their intimate day-to-day spaces *look* like their understanding of the highly abstract India. For secular Indian nationalists, this campaign has revolved around the concept of *home*: around the idea that at a highly abstract, disembodied level, India should be defined first and foremost by the highly intimate notion of home. It is the goal of this chapter to trace the development, shape and success of this campaign.

To trace the development, shape and success of the secular nationalist campaign, I begin this chapter with a brief statement of the principles and claims central to the secular nationalist ideology. These principles will be employed and elaborated upon throughout the remainder of the chapter. Following this, I offer in the second section a political history of the ideology. Here I chart the debates and changes in emphasis that have characterised its evolution. In the third and fourth sections of the chapter, I turn more directly to an exploration of the spatial campaign of the secular nationalist ideology. I begin this with a brief statement of the ways leading secular nationalists have seen and understood the world around them; this section will mirror the 'key principles' discussed in the first section of the chapter. I follow this with a more detailed study of the central ways secular Indian nationalists have produced their India: how they have worked to normalise their intimate ideas of community and land within the supposedly objective, disembodied picture of India. With this in mind, I begin with the key principles of the secular nationalist ideology.

The key principles of the secular nationalist ideology

There are alive today perhaps a billion people who might claim to be members of the Indian nation; to be members of the rightful political community in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. Not a single one of these people, it must be stressed, understands this India in a fashion identical to any other. Quite simply, despite the powerful belief that the Indian nation is some objectively definable entity, some community that can be seen by the rational gaze, it is, instead, a subjectively experienced phenomenon. It is, I suggest, a form of political community embraced and understood in innumerably different, personal ways (see discussion in chapter 1). Yet despite this clearly diffuse understanding of India – despite the fact that we, as students of the phenomenon of nationalism must reject the possibility of some 'true' access to the Indian nation – we can find a number of principles which can be considered (thanks to the political success of their champions, or their inclusion in state discourses)

to coalesce into a potent nationalist ideology. We can, that is, find a potent response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia emergent from the more intimate forms of integration marginalised by this emergence in the ideology of *secular Indian nationalism*.

Secular Indian nationalism is the ideology built in the writings and actions of Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Gandhi, B R Ambedkar and others. It is the ideology which (as Sunil Khilnani has argued) has seen India as an "arena of cultural encounters"; which has "celebrate[d] the mongrel character of India's peoples":

> instead of hankering for purity, it sees the moments of mixture as those that have been the most creative and imaginative. It is a view that insists that what was distinctive about India's past was its ability to transform invasion into accommodation, rupture into continuity, division into diversity (1999: xvi).

This section offers a brief statement of the key principles of the ideology of secular Indian nationalism. These principles will be expanded upon, explained and employed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

At the very heart of the secular nationalist ideology is a simple argument: that all those who consider the broad stretch of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas home – that all those who call India home – are members of the Indian nation. This may seem a simple, even tautological argument. However, we must remember that this claim has long had a tremendous power to unite people of otherwise diverse backgrounds and to exclude others; we must also remember that it has taken many years of political work to reach such acceptance. Three points implied in this secular nationalist understanding of the nation are worth brief elaboration here.

Firstly, the secular nationalist argument has directly and explicitly maintained that those who do not consider India home – those who consider their home to lie elsewhere – do not deserve political power in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. This (as I will show below) explicitly separated the 'British' and the 'native' communities of British India, without resorting to a race based definition. In this, the British community living in British India always thought and behaved as if 'home' and 'India' were different places; as if 'home' was always an island thousands of miles distant from 'India' (see Dawson 1886a; 1886b, and discussion in chapter 4). This, as I will show throughout this chapter, had a dramatic effect on the development of nationalist sentiment in southern Asia.

Secondly, the secular nationalist argument has stressed that membership of the Indian nation is *not* determined by culture; that matters of religion, ethnicity or language are irrelevant to the definition of the nation (see for example Tagore 1931: 170; M K Gandhi 1921c). Most directly, where Hindu nationalists (as I will show in chapter 6) have argued that the Muslim and Christian communities of southern Asia became 'denationalised' through their embrace of 'non-national', 'non-indigenous'

cultures – and the early 20th century Muslim nationalists saw two entirely distinct nations in British India – secular nationalists have seen no problem. For secular nationalist thinkers, one's faith (or any other cultural matter) is a private concern, irrelevant to the definition of the nation.

Thirdly, the secular nationalist argument has stressed that as people have been calling the land between the Himalayas and the seas home for countless generations, the Indian nation holds a great historical continuity. That is, all who have ever called this land home have been, by secular nationalist definition, members of a great trans-historical community; members of a nation with a history (see discussion in chapter 1).

All three of these points are crucial to the secular nationalist argument. What must be stressed at this stage however is that the key secular nationalist argument – the argument that has united all three of these points – has always relied on and maintained the fundamental priority of India. That is, the argument that those who are at home in India deserve political power in the land between the Himalayas and the seas has relied on the ontological existence of a defined, definable India: an 'India' in which 'Indian history' can happen, an 'India' in which 'Indian people' can be at home. This, I argue, means that the production of this India has been crucial to the production of the Indian nation. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the production of this secular nationalist India – and hence, the secular nationalist ideology – has occurred (and occurs) through the response to the dominant, disembodied integration and spatial representation first fostered by the British Empire. In essence, the secular nationalist ideology is a powerful ideological renegotiation of the disembodied depictions of the physical along the lines of certain individuals' intimate understandings of home; a normalisation of particular intimate understandings of community and land (that is, the understandings derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended communities of the secular nationalist leaders) within the framework of disembodied abstraction. More will be discussed on this below. In the meantime however, with these principles in hand I now offer a political history of the ideology. Here I explore the debates and political contexts that have characterised the evolution of secular Indian nationalism.

A political history of secular Indian nationalism

The ideas at the heart of the secular nationalist ideology have been guided and influenced by thinkers, activists and organisations for much of the past century and a half. This section traces this historical development. I break discussion here into four periods significant to the development of the ideology: early nationalist thought to 1885; the so-called 'moderate' era between 1885 and 1905; the anti-colonial movement between 1905 and 1947; and the independent era, from 1947 onwards.

The early nationalist period

The earliest stirrings of modern nationalist thought in southern Asia – the first responses to the dominance of a marginalising disembodied integration – came, as I suggested in chapter 3, in the early years of the 19th century. In this section I chart the thinkers, ideas and projects of this early period, from the late 1820s to the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. During this time, nationalist activity in British India was characterised by two broad projects – one a political attempt to persuade the colonial state to be mindful of the people it governed, the other a scholarly attempt to situate the 'natives' of British India in the modern chain of history. In both, I suggest we can find a developing secular nationalist argument that the natives of the Indian empire – those who called British India home – shared a political community. I begin this section with a brief description of the political climate that facilitated the emergence of this early nationalist thought.

By the late 18th century, the British were beginning to drive significant changes amongst the peoples and lands of their Indian empire. Some of the more important of these have been described in chapter 4. Of particular importance at this stage, however, was their deliberate creation of a 'native elite'; of a class of 'native' individuals who would benefit from, support and learn from the imperial rulers (see Majumdar 1978b: 812). What is important about this native elite is that they not only had their daily lives altered by the disembodied integration of the British Empire, but they actually incorporated the disembodied representations of community and land offered by the British into their own lives. They were the first, I suggest, to *see* the physical world in the ways suggested by the modern imperial state.

In the main, this native elite were composed of native families who had grown wealthy on the proceeds of British imperial capitalism. Most were *zamindari*, the class of 'landed gentry' created by the colonial state through Lord Cornwallis' Permanent Land Settlement of 1793 (Majumdar 1978a: 792); (see further discussion in chapter 4). As a class, the *zamindari* were beholden to the colonial state: their wealth (and the richest of them were inordinately wealthy) was derived directly from the British reorganisation of land ownership in the areas they governed (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 228-30). What is important for this discussion is that not long after their cooption into the imperial capitalist project, a number of the wealthy *zamindari* families began to embrace other elements of the British imperial rule. In this, the sons of *zamindari* began to receive English education, to aspire to join the ranks of the colonial administration, and to behave as 'rational', politically aware individuals (see Majumdar 1978b; Wolpert 1993: 210). It was from this class – conversant in the language, structures and (importantly) ways of seeing of the colonial power – that the earliest proponents of an Indian nationalism emerged. Though these early proponents employed neither a consistent nationalist ideology, nor considered the India of today their national territory, we can find in their political campaigns and thoughts a clear consciousness of 'nation'. What must also be recognised at this stage

is that from this early period of nationalist consciousness in British India, a diffusion in national imagination was occurring. That is, some of these early nationalist thinkers were imagining their nation to be made up of those adhering to the indigenous cultures of British India – this position will be discussed in chapter 6. Others, however, were imagining their nation to be made up of everyone who called British India home.

From the 1820s, members of this new native elite began to attempt to persuade the colonial state to be mindful of the people it governed as an entire community, as a nation. (This, we must stress, was a political project entirely unconnected with the military resistance to British expansion waged by the latent feudal powers of southern Asia (see discussion in Vanaik 1997: 13)). In essence, these early nationalist thinkers – such as Rammohan Roy, Henry Derozio, David Hare, Callynath Roy Choudhury, Dwarakanath Tagore, Prossanno Comar Tagore and, of course, others – employed the disembodied logic and technologies of the imperial state on behalf of 'the native community'.

The most influential of these early activists was Rammohan Roy. In his short career, Roy championed a number of liberal ideas 'on behalf' of the natives of British India. In this, Roy argued against press censorship, against the Jury Act of 1827 (this Act proposed the introduction of religious discrimination in the judicial system), for English language education and for the prohibition of *sati* (the practice of widow immolation) (R Roy 1962 [1823]; Majumdar 1978b: 808; *The Times* 1833). In Roy's work we can see two elements crucial to later secular Indian nationalism. Firstly, Roy used methods to argue and convince – tabling petitions, writing in newspapers, launching newspapers (Sonwalkar 2001: 749; Priolkar 1958) and attempting to personally lobby the British Parliament – that were very much in line with the disembodied organisational logic of the British administration. Roy had, as Majumdar has suggested, a "clear grasp of the political machinery by which India was ruled" (1978b: 809). Secondly, Roy appears to have imagined the nation in a *secular* way: throughout his work, Roy sought to represent and work on behalf of all the natives of British India, regardless of their religion. This can be seen, for example, in his argument against the Jury Act of 1827:

> In his famous Jury Bill, Mr Wynn, the late President of the Board of Control, has, by introducing religious distinctions into the judicial system of this country, not only afforded just grounds for dissatisfaction among *the natives in general*, but has excited much alarm in the breast of every one conversant with political principles. *Any natives, either Hindu or Muhammadan*, are rendered by this Bill subject to judicial trial by Christians either European or native, while Christians, including *native* converts, are exempted from the degradation of being tried either by a Hindu or Mussulman juror, however high he may stand in the estimation of society. This Bill also denies both to Hindus and Muhammadans the honour of a seat on the Grand Jury even in the trial of fellow Hindus or Mussulmans. This is the sum total of Mr Wynn's late Jury Bill, of which we bitterly complain (cited in Majumdar 1978b: 808, emphasis added; see also Banerjee 1958: 140).

In Roy's mind, the natives of British India formed a single political community, equally harmed or helped by the colonial state. Roy may have noted a religious distinction, yet for him it was 'the natives in general' who were disadvantaged by any biased policies of the colonial state.

Meanwhile, other members of the native elite were, from perhaps the middle of the 19th century, beginning another crucial political project: the development of what they would call an Indian national history. To this period, histories concerned (in a very broad sense) with India had taken two rough forms. One form were what Partha Chatterjee has called 'Puranic histories' (1993: ch 4). These Puranic histories emerged from a long tradition in southern Asia, and told the political stories of kings and their relationship with the divine will (*dharma*). Though some of these – such as Mrityunjay Vidyalankar's *Rājābali* (1808) – have been labelled as histories of India (*Rājābali* was a history of "the Rajas and Badshahs and Nawabs who have occupied the throne in Delhi and Bengal" (P Chatterjee 1993: 77)), they were not, it must be stressed, histories of the *nation*. The only subjects of interest in the Puranic histories were kings and gods: 'the people' never rated a mention. Alternately, we can find a second significant form of history in the British imperial histories of India. These (as discussed in chapter 4) were radically different from the Puranic histories, in that they conformed to a rationalist epistemology and, importantly, situated the 'people of India' within the framework of the history (see discussion in P Chatterjee 1993: ch 4). Yet – as I argued in chapter 4 – these histories remained embedded in the colonial framework, and their function appears to have been – as Ranajit Guha has suggested – "to erect [the] past as a pedestal on which the triumphs and glories of the colonizers and their instrument, the colonial state, could be displayed to best advantage" (1997: 2-3). In essence, these British colonial histories performed a significant normalisation of the particular understandings of community and land of their British authors within the supposedly objective, disembodied framework. The response to this – the development of Indian national histories – was a crucial element of the early nationalist period.

The call for a specifically nationalist historiography (and the subsequent writing of national histories) grew in the second half of the 19th century. Again, this call emerged from the native elite, the group of native individuals schooled in English language and British methods of writing history. Perhaps most famously, the call for a nationalist historiography can be seen in the writing of Bankimchandra Chatterjee, who argued in 1880 that

> Bengal must have her own history. Otherwise there is no hope for Bengal. Who is to write it? You have to write it. I have to write it. All of us have to write it. Anyone who is a Bengali has to write it. Come, let us join our efforts in investigating the history of Bengal… It is not a task that can be done by any one person alone; it is a task for all of us to do together (cited in Ranajit Guha 1997: 153).

What Chatterjee called for was a nationalist historiography; a writing of the national history from 'the national perspective', connecting the 'national past' to the 'national future'. This, it was widely

assumed, would restore agency to the natives of British India. What is important to recognise is that the nationalist historiography called for by Chatterjee, and embraced by many writers, represented a direct translation of the British historical epistemology (though, of course, re-orienting the perspective). In this, the founding assumptions of the 19th century British historical research were (as I suggested in chapter 4) *nationalist*: that nations had histories, that nations were the central pivots of history, and that national histories could be observed in ways of living of that community (see discussion in chapter 1). These assumptions were explicitly incorporated in the late 19th century Indian nationalist histories. The specifics of these will be discussed in greater detail below.

The 'moderate' era – 1885 to 1905

In the closing decades of the 19th century, nationalist thought and organisation in British India underwent significant change. In this section I chart these changes, from the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 to the dramas of the Curzon viceroyalty in 1905.

In the years leading to the close of the 19th century, a more explicit and aggressive racism permeated the ideology of the British Empire in India (Ballhatchet 1980: 6; P Chatterjee 1993: 20). A racist ideology was, of course, crucial to the very foundation of the Raj (see discussion in chapter 4) – yet where in earlier times the belief in separate and hierarchically arranged British and native communities had merely been implied in British governance and behaviour, developments in the 1880s saw a more overt attempt to sure up the racial boundaries. At the front of this was a concerted attempt by the non-administrative British community in British India to retain their privileges. This can be seen most clearly in the response to the proposed Ilbert Bill of 1883 (see discussion of this in chapter 4). In this, the British community launched a concerted campaign against the Ilbert Bill's proposed changes to the structures of British power, including newspaper advertisement and argument, vilification of the viceroy and petition signing (Wolpert 1993: 257; *The Times* 1883b). This campaign was successful; the Viceroy Lord Ripon was forced to back down. What is important for the present discussion is that this episode – and the rise in British racism – demonstrated a number of crucial things to the native elite: that the native elite – despite their education, wealth and embrace of British liberalism – could never be truly equal citizens of the empire; that the British Empire – despite claims of liberalism – was fundamentally based on race privilege and British nationalism; and finally, that change could be fought for (and gained) through the abstract political devices of the British. That is (as Wolpert has suggested), that the British community's "shouting, ranting, signing petitions, and printing newspaper notices had achieved something that most of the Bengal Army, the Great Mughal, Burma, and the *peshwas* [Maratha leaders] all failed to accomplish – defeating the government of India" (1993: 257). Thus where earlier in the 19th century small groups of native individuals argued for the betterment of the native community, nationalist thinkers at the close of the 19th century came to the rather different

conclusion that it was only united, broad based agitation that would lead to change. This recognition lead directly to the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

The Indian National Congress (or, more simply, the Congress) met for the first time in Bombay in December 1885. Though similar organisations of British India's nationalist minded native elite had been seen (Surendranath Banerjea's Indian Association, for example, formed in 1876; the Indian National Conference formed in 1883; and Mahadev Govind Ranade's Sarvajanik Sabha formed in 1870 (see Wolpert 1993: 252, 258; S Sarkar 1989: 88)), the Congress, over its long and varied career, became the leading organisational vehicle for much of the anti-colonial struggle. What is important for this discussion is that though its membership was never perfectly 'representative' (if, indeed, such a thing was possible) and ideological position never cohesive, the Congress went to great lengths to foster a secular nationalist understanding of the Indian nation and the Indian national territory. In this, the Congress incorporated from its very inception an explicit attempt to gather volunteers / delegates from the regions across British India (Majumdar 1978c: 881). In part, this wide appeal was a lesson learned from the success of the British community's response to the Ilbert Bill: that change could be forced by broad based action. Yet it is also crucial to note that the gathering of delegates from across British India was clearly based on the secular nationalist thinking: that the natives of all of British India shared a political community. In a similar way, the Congress refused to take up certain issues (such as the deplorable conditions of indentured labour in Assam tea plantations in the late 1880s (see *The Times* 1883c)) on the grounds that they were *local* – hence not national – issues (S Sarkar 1989: 91). Meanwhile, attempts were also made to include delegates from across the different castes, communities, cultures and faiths of British India. This position was explicitly endorsed by Dadabhai Naoroji (Congress President in 1886), who declared that the Congress, as "a political body representing the political aspirations of the Indian people" must "confine itself to questions in which the entire nation had a direct interest" (cited in Nanda 1998: xx). "Religious and social controversies" were, as Nanda has suggested, deliberately kept "off the agenda" (1998: xx). Thus in the 1888 Congress session at Allahabad it was resolved that any subject objected to unanimously (or nearly unanimously) by Hindu or Muslim delegates as a body should be dropped (Ghosh 1960: 4). This was a clear argument about the definition of the nation.

Yet despite strong appeals to a secular definition of the nation, the early Congress was never entirely successful at broad social inclusion. In this, the Congress in this era was dominated by the educated native elite, by the urbanised population and by 'high' caste Hindus and Parsis (S Sarkar 1989: 90; Wolpert 1993: 258). Most importantly, though Muslim delegates attended Congress sessions, their incorporation never matched their demographic weight in British India (S Sarkar 1989: 94). This may have been because the British relied more heavily on Muslim cooperation (Wolpert 1993: 264), or it may have been that many politically aware Muslims in British India saw the Congress as a Hindu

dominated organ (Rahman 1970: 85). Either way, this low inclusion of British India's Muslims contributed heavily to the later rise of the Muslim League and Muslim / Pakistani nationalism.

Throughout the first twenty years of its existence (dubbed by later nationalists as the 'moderate era' for its loyalty to the empire (see *The Times* 1908; S Sarkar 1989: 111)), the Congress regularly made demands on the British, calling for the betterment of their nation *within* the British Empire. In each of their key demands in this period we can detect a strong affinity with a secular nationalist understanding of the nation. Firstly, the Congress called for political reform of the Supreme and Local Legislative Councils (bodies supposedly offering 'native opinion' to the British government) to make them more representative of the 'natural leadership' of the Indian people. In this, the Congress called for the inclusion of some members on the Legislative Councils to be elected by chambers of commerce and universities (S Sarkar 1989: 89-90). This, of course, clearly reflected the middle class interests of the Congress membership. Secondly, the Congress called for administrative reforms – for the 'Indianisation' – of the Indian Civil Service and Army. This, as Sarkar has suggested, was clearly a demand for racial equality and civil rights (1989: 90), yet we cannot forget that the barriers in the civil service and the army most clearly hindered the educated native elite. Finally, the Congress regularly called for economic reform: for a reversal of the British drain of 'Indian wealth', for amendments to the salt tax, and for greater famine relief (S Sarkar 1989: 90; *The Times* 1900; Ghosh 1960: 1). It was on these economic issues (which grew only more potent in secular nationalist eyes) that the moderate era Congress showed most clearly an interest in the sufferings of the working class and peasantry of British India. In all of these projects we can detect the victory (though not unanimously) of a secular nationalist idea of the nation: that all the natives of British India shared a political community.

The anti-colonial movement – 1905 to 1947

In the years between Rammohan Roy's first political forays and the beginning of the 20th century, great shifts occurred in the nationalist consciousness in British India. Between 1905 and 1947, another series of dramatic shifts occurred, propelling a collection of elite ideologies to wide acceptance amongst the peoples of the Indian subcontinent. In this section I chart the developments of this period, when the thinkers and activists of secular Indian nationalism rose to hold great political influence and, eventually, control of the state. Importantly, this period was also characterised by increasing polarisation of political consciousness in British India. While leading secular nationalists – Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad – drove a powerful secular understanding of political community, the two ethno-religious fringes of the anti-colonial era – Hindu nationalism and Muslim / Pakistani nationalism – became increasingly antagonistic in the years

leading towards 1947. This polarisation directly contributed to the shaping of post-colonial politics in modern southern Asia.

By 1905, the "great province of Bengal" had grown, in the minds of the British administrators, "too unwieldy for administration by a single local government"; *The Times* argued that its vast size and population (twice that of England, Scotland and Wales, at eighty five million) had rendered it "the heaviest of the Indian lieutenant-governorships" (*The Times* 1905). The solution to this 'problem' executed by Viceroy Lord Curzon, was simple – the partition of Bengal into two smaller provinces. In Curzon's mind, the division was a simple administrative change, a clearly more efficient – and hence better – arrangement. Perhaps. Others saw the 'problem' and the 'solution' in rather different terms. In the minds of some in the native population, the partition of Bengal was a cruel and deliberate vivisection of the Hindu *bhadralok*, the class at the heart of much nationalist thought in that province; a clear demonstration of the wholly arrogant and ignorant British administration. That year's Congress president, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, summed up the feeling amongst the Congress:

> A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengalee brethren, and the whole country has been stirred to its deepest depths in sorrow and resentment, as had never been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half-a-century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule – its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretentions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of Service interests to those of the governed (cited in Wolpert 1993: 273; *The Times* 1906b).

The response to the partition was dramatic and widespread. Long petitions were signed, mass protest rallies filled the fields of Calcutta, bonfires burned with British made clothing and some turned their hand to the assassination of British officials (*The Times* 1907b; Datta 1978d: 914; Wolpert 1993: 274). As Sarkar has suggested, this period saw a dramatic move from the 'moderate era' methods of political agitation (petitions and meetings) towards new political tactics; most potently, boycott (1989: 111). In this, the cry of '*swadeshi*' – 'of our own country' – could be heard throughout British India as clothing and other British imports were boycotted and burned. Bal Gangadhar Tilak gave support in Poona, while Lala Lajpat Rai brought the Arya Samaj to task in Punjab (Wolpert 1993: 277) (see discussion in chapter 6). Importantly, the response was explicitly nationalist: throughout British India, activists considered themselves part of a cohesive political community defined by their nativeness. As Gokhale claimed in his presidential speech, the wrong was felt not just by the Bengali community, but by all who suffered under the 'present system of bureaucratic rule' (*The Times* 1906b).

The British government responded to the agitation with violence and coercion. Protests were broken up by *lathi* (truncheon) wielding police, while students caught protesting faced the withdrawal of tuition grants and scholarships (S Sarkar 1989: 112). Agitators were regularly locked up for "reasons of state", and the proprietors of nationalist newspapers were charged with sedition (Wolpert 1993:

280). All this, predictably, served only as further demonstration of the repressiveness and arrogance of the colonial government. Though the arrival of the new Viceroy (Lord Hardinge), a succession of Legislative Council reforms and the reunification of Bengal in 1911 placated many in the *swadeshi* movement (Wolpert 1993: 285), the division between a variety of the nationalist activists and the colonial government produced in this first decade of the 20th century was not easily reversed. Many of the nationalist ideas and actions seen in this period were echoed throughout the following decades.

Importantly, though secular nationalist and Hindu nationalist thinkers saw a common cause in the partition of Bengal, Muslim nationalists in British India saw things quite differently. For them, the partition offered a new, Muslim-majority province in East Bengal, free from the dominance of the Hindu *bhadralok*. Yet perhaps more importantly, leading Muslim nationalist thinkers saw, in the resultant protest movement, a clear link between the Congress and Hindu nationalist forces (see for example Fuller and Hassan 1909). It was in this environment that the Muslim League formed. From its very inception, the leaders of this group asked for separate representation for the Muslim community on official councils, "not only on the basis of their numerical proportion but also on consideration of their political importance in the country" (Rahman 1970: 85; see also M N Das 1964: 228; Fusfeld 1982: 181). The reasons for the emergence of the Muslim League can, perhaps, be attributed to the shape of the *swadeshi* protests. What is clear, however, is that the emerging native polity in British India was becoming divided in many minds along religious lines. This failure on the behalf of British India's secular nationalists – to unequivocally hold to their secular credentials, to see that the partition of Bengal was in many respects a local, particular issue – shaped much of the political dynamic in British India for decades to follow.

In the years during and after the First World War, a new generation of nationalists began to rise to the top of the Congress and the Muslim League. With this new generation came new directions and forms of nationalist agitation. In this, Mohammad Ali Jinnah began in the Congress with a secular, liberal philosophy before moving towards the Muslim nationalist thought of the Muslim League (Majumdar 1978e: 973). It was, however, in the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in the Congress that some of the most significant changes in the nationalist movement began to occur. Most importantly, Gandhi – purportedly dressed in the clothes and steeped in the thinking of the peasants of British India – brought the hitherto elite Congress nationalism to the masses of 'village India'. Further, though his thinking evolved and differed from other secular nationalists on many issues, on the core principle of secular Indian nationalism – that *all* the natives of British India, regardless of religion, shared a political community – Gandhi remained unequivocal.

In the aftermath of the First World War, the relationship between the nationalists and the Government of British India reached a new low. At one level, the British government began to move towards the

forms of political representation asked for by the leading nationalists. Here the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms offered "substantial steps" towards "responsible government in India", "complete popular control" as far as possible in local government, and an increased control for the native community at the provincial level (*The Times* 1918a; 1918b). While this was not the independence many had called for, this was a substantial step towards what secular nationalists would describe as Indian control of Indian affairs (Wolpert 1993: 297). Yet at the same time, the British government proved only more repressive in other areas. In this, the Rowlatt Acts of 1919 continued the martial law enacted during the war, while restrictions on the press were toughened (*The Times* 1919). As part of the enforcement of the Rowlatt Acts, the British military turned to increasingly brutal suppression of any protest against them. In this, the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919 – in which four hundred unarmed demonstrators were killed by British troops in Amritsar – proved for many nationalist thinkers the ultimate mark of imperial rule (Wolpert 1993: 298). After this massacre, even the most liberal and loyal of the politically aware native elite could no longer look on the British Raj as an empire of good. As Rabindranath Tagore offered when resigning his knighthood,

> The enormity of the measures taken by the Government of the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India… The universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of the people has been ignored by our rulers – possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons… The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation (cited in Wolpert 1993: 300).

In the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Gandhi brought the Congress (others had, of course, previously called for it) to its first explicit statement of the desire for independence. The aim of the Congress henceforth became "the attainment of *Swārajya* [home rule] by all legitimate and peaceful means" (Majumdar 1978e: 971).

For the next twenty years, the Congress employed Gandhi's strategy of non-violent (*ahimsa*) *satyagraha* ('holding fast to the truth') to fight against British rule. Including non-cooperation campaigns, boycotts, civil disobedience (such as Gandhi's famous 1930 campaign against the Salt Tax) and constructive efforts at self-sufficiency (such as the *khadi* campaign, in which the people of India were asked by the nationalist leaders to wear (and create) locally made fabrics), this campaign gradually built a powerful rejection of the British imperial world. More will be discussed on this below. Meanwhile, in this period Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar began to shed light on the iniquities of the caste system, taking numerous *satyagraha* campaigns against it (Wolpert 1993: 310). Though it took some decades for untouchability to be outlawed, Gandhi and Ambedkar's work in this area was crucial to laying the groundwork. This campaign also relied on the secular nationalist understanding of the nation and the Indian national territory. Importantly however, despite this expansion of the secular nationalist ideology, in the years after the First World War, the Hindu nationalist and the Muslim nationalist fringes of Indian politics increasingly antagonised one another,

sparking some of the worst inter-communal riots in south Asian history (Majumdar 1978e: 971); (this antagonism will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6).

Throughout the 1930s, the nationalists of British India – variously secular, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, 'untouchable' / 'depressed classes' and communist – jostled for power and ideological penetration. With the increasing success of various nationalist agitations, the British government lurched towards ever great acceptance of localised forms of autonomy. In this, the Government of India Act of 1935 entrenched some provincial autonomy in the form of locally elected legislative assemblies (*The Times* 1935). While many nationalists decried this arrangement for the 'certifying' and 'safeguard' powers retained by the British appointed governors (*The Times* 1936; Wolpert 1993: 323), the opening of the franchise did offer them a significant chance to demonstrate their political strengths. Thus in the provincial polls of 1937 and 1938, the Congress won a commanding seventy per cent of the popular vote, and formed ministries in seven of the eleven provincial assemblies (*The Times* 1937; Majumdar 1978e: 975). Importantly, the next largest party – the Muslim League – secured only 109 seats, fewer than a quarter of the 482 seats reserved for the Muslim electorate. This victory for the secular nationalist forces was not, however, long lasting. At the heart of this, the Congress failed, after the 1937 victories, to mitigate the fears of 'majoritarian domination' held by many in the Muslim community. As Jinnah declared, "Muslims can expect neither justice nor fair play under Congress Government" (cited in Majumdar 1978e: 975). Everywhere Jinnah went, the signs of the Congress were equated in his mind with Hindu dominance: the singing of the Congress anthem *Vande Mataram* in schools was seen as an affront to Muslim children (see discussion in chapter 6), while the hoisting of the Congress flag emblazoned with Gandhi's *charka* (spinning wheel) 'proved' Hindu bias (Wolpert 1993: 325). With perhaps a final summation, Jinnah declared that the Congress political victories were a clear danger to the Muslim community; that with even the "little power and responsibility" the British had given, "the majority community have clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindus" (cited in Wolpert 1993: 325; *The Times* 1938). In essence, though they had been polarising for some decades, it was during this period that the final cleavage between the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress solidified.

The onset of the Second World War exacerbated the divisions in British India between the Congress and the Government, and between the Congress and the Muslim League. Angered at the forced enlistment of British Indian Army troops in the Allied forces, the leaders of the Congress began a renewed non-cooperation effort. In this, the Congress Working Committee declared that "a free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation… [but] co-operation must be between equals and by mutual consent" (cited in Wolpert 1993: 329; see also *The Times* 1939c). With this declaration, the Congress leaders resigned from all the provincial governments. For Jinnah and the Muslim League, this was an

incredible stroke of luck, 'deliverance' from the past two years of Congress 'tyranny' (*The Times* 1939a). In this climate, any hopes for Hindu / Muslim unity were fast evaporating (*The Times* 1939b). In the March 1940 Lahore session of the Muslim League, "the division of India into autonomous States" became Jinnah's – and the Muslim League's – explicit goal (*The Times* 1940). This was, in essence, the call for Pakistan. Gandhi and the Congress argued stridently against the Muslim League's 'two-nation' theory – holding to the secular nationalist 'single-nation' argument – yet throughout the war no peace was made.

At the close of the Second World War, the British were no longer either capable, or willing, to hold on to their Indian empire. In this climate, they began serious moves to extricate themselves; starting with elections held throughout British India in 1945–46 (*The Times* 1945a). Confirming the division in political sentiment in British India, the Congress gained ninety per cent of the general electorate seats (the remainder were won by Sikhs, Europeans and independents), while the Muslim League gained the vast bulk of the seats reserved for the Muslim electorate (Wolpert 1993: 340; *The Times* 1946c). Meanwhile, a number of soldiers who had fought in Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army (an army of nationalist troops armed by the Japanese forces) were brought to trial in Delhi (*The Times* 1945b). The case quickly became one of national attention. Here, in a time of widespread national consciousness, were Indian soldiers who had actively fought against the British. All those convicted received (perhaps in light of their national stature), suspended sentences. The outcome of this rippled through the other serving troops; after all, where did their loyalties lie: to the empire, or to the nation? In February 1946, Navy and Air Force troops mutinied. In reaction, the British sent a delegation to resolve 'India's constitutional problems' in favour of independence, trying desperately to transfer authority to one national government (*The Times* 1946a; 1946b; 1947b). Importantly, however, the Congress–League deadlock remained intractable. The 'Pakistan', which for the past decade had been but an abstract political dream, began to take shape.

On the streets of British India, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities lined up to mark in violence the abstract partition of their nations, the partition of their national territories. From August 16th 1946 – when Jinnah and the Muslim League declared a 'Direct Action Day' – and throughout the final year of the Raj, violence racked the cities of British India. Finally, on July 15th 1947, the British House of Commons resolved that in one month's time, two independent dominions of India and Pakistan would be established from the former British India (*The Times* 1947b). With their shapes etched by the painstaking cartography of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the leaders of the Muslim League and the leaders of the Congress gained control of the states of Pakistan and India on the 14th and 15th of August 1947. With this partitioned independence, the long significant other to the Indian National Congress' secular nationalism – the Muslim League's Muslim / Pakistani nationalism – became an ideology *outside* the Indian sphere of politics. For forty years, the Muslim League had been a domestic rival; suddenly –

making solid Jinnah's beliefs in the 'two-nation' theory – it became *foreign*. Thus though modern India was indelibly shaped by the rivalry between the Congress and the Muslim League, from this moment on, the facts of Indian politics were changed and other rivalries came to the fore.

Independent India – 1947 to the present

On the 15th of August 1947, the leaders of the Indian National Congress inherited control of the Indian state partitioned out of British India. Speaking on the precipice of this momentous event, Jawaharlal Nehru announced to the world that

> at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance (1947).

This, of course, was a nationalist argument: a description of the political community *imagined* by those who were about to gain control of the state. What it meant, in essence, was that the secular nationalist ideology – long a protest and activist force running counter to the colonial state – became an understanding bound directly to the state. It also meant that from this moment on, the leading proponents of the secular nationalist ideology gained radically different powers and a modified political agenda. In this section I chart the evolution of secular nationalist thinking from this development in 1947 to the present. Throughout this period, the secular nationalist ideology enjoyed long stretches of almost unchallenged acceptance amongst the population of modern India. In fact, for much of this time, some of the core arguments of the secular nationalist ideology became removed from political contestation, accepted as fact by nearly all. This dominance did not last. In recent years, other ideological competitors have emerged as rivals to the secular nationalist idea of India. One of the most potent, of course, has been Hindu nationalism; this will be discussed in chapter 6.

In the years immediately after independence, a significant consolidation and entrenchment of the secular nationalist ideology occurred in Indian politics. A number of different issues contributed to this. Firstly, it is worth explicitly recognising that the removal of the Muslim League and the significant numbers of pro-Pakistan Muslims – the major opposition to the Congress throughout the independence struggle – strengthened the Congress dominance. In essence, Partition had enacted a grand *fait accompli* on many of the key debates driving politics in early 20th century British India; arguments about the definition of the nation were (for a time at least) settled. Secondly, the other great claim to national definition in India – Hindu nationalism – was, in the early years of independence, politically bankrupt (see further discussion in chapter 6). Within the Congress, Nehru vanquished the so-called 'soft-Hindu' school (Aiyar 2004: 3), while outside the Congress, the leading Hindu nationalist organs were popularly rejected. This rejection can be clearly attributed to the widespread revulsion felt towards various Hindu nationalist organs and thinkers following the assassination of

Gandhi by Nathuram Godse (Varshney 2002: 70); (see further discussion in chapter 6). In this climate, the elections of February 1952 – the first in southern Asia held with universal adult suffrage, and the first since the pre-independence elections of 1945 – offered a clear demonstration of the broad support for secular nationalist thought (Aiyar 2004: 3; Ramachandra Guha 2004a). As Aiyar has argued, the Congress victories in this election "established beyond argument that public opinion favoured a composite Indian nationhood… the vote was as decisive an endorsement of secular nationalism as it was a rejection of an alternative religion- or community-based majoritarian Hindu nationhood" (2004: 3-4).

With this political dominance, the proponents of secular Indian nationalism used the organs of the state to drive the secular nationalist idea of India deep into the imaginations of the people of the Indian subcontinent. This included the framing of the Constitution (between 1947 and 1950), which clearly reflected a secular nationalist understanding. In this, all citizens were guaranteed "freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peaceably, and freedom of conscience and worship, subject to general considerations of public security and morality" (cited in Majumdar et al. 1978: 992); "irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth" these citizens were to "enjoy equality before the law and no disability shall be imposed on them in any respect. 'Untouchability' is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden" (cited in Majumdar et al. 1978: 992). Similarly, the incorporation of the former 'princely states' (such as Mysore, Hyderabad and the Great Rann of Kachchh / Cutch, see figure 10) and the smaller European colonies (Portuguese Goa, Daman and Diu, and French Chandernagore, Pondicherry, Karikal, Mahé and Yanaon) was conducted within the framework of the secular nationalist ideology (Fernandes 2000; *The Times* 1951; Patel 1949). This incorporation relied on the understanding that these territories – whether princely or colonial – were inherently in India. This incorporation will be discussed in greater detail below.

The secular nationalist ideology remained a clear element of state thinking for many years after independence. In Nehru's long administration (lasting until his death in 1964), we can clearly detect the influence of secular nationalism; in fact, even in the numerous disputes over identity issues during his leadership, Nehru held a secular nationalist aloofness. In this, the disputes over official languages for example (such as the agitation in the Telugu-speaking region of northern Madras for a 'linguistic province'; this was granted – as Andhra Pradesh – in 1953 (Wolpert 1993: 368)) were framed as disputes within the secular nationalist settlement. Quite simply, these disputes called for a reorganisation, rather than a rejection, of the secular nationalist India. Similarly, the successors to Nehru – Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi – also guided governments heavily influenced by the secular nationalist ideology.

Importantly however, over the decades since independence, the dominance of the secular nationalist ideology has, to some degree, slipped. As Achin Vanaik has suggested, the last quarter of the 20th century has seen an increasing failure of 'the Nehruvian consensus'; an increasing failure of the loose acceptance of the principles of "socialism, democracy, secularism and non-alignment" at the 'centre' of Indian politics (1997: 301). Thus where the Congress was once able to represent great swathes of the population of India (including a solid bloc of upper-caste Hindus, alongside the 'core' minorities of Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Vanaik 1997: 298)) various groups have found new ways and reasons to assert their identity in a political form. Only the commitment to democracy remains central to modern Indian politics. For Vanaik, this failure of the 'Nehruvian consensus' has meant that an "ideological vacuum" has opened up at the centre of Indian politics, with (as yet) no clear successor to Congress centrism (1997: 296). This may be partially true, yet while a broad challenger to the secular nationalist hegemony has not conclusively emerged, we must recognise that the founding ideas of modern national India remain largely in place.

The first significant challenge to the secular national consensus came, as many have suggested (and I echo in this work), in the 1980s, when Hindu nationalist forces began to strike a resonant chord with many in modern India (Aiyar 2004: 4; Khilnani 1999). This challenge forms the focus of chapter 6.

With this history and central principles of the ideology, I now turn to an exploration of the spatiality of secular Indian nationalism. In the two sections below, I examine how the protagonists of this ideology have *seen* and *produced* their Indian nation in the physical world. What I will suggest is that throughout the many years of secular nationalist agitation, a variety of political actors have engaged in a complicated political campaign to normalise particular understandings of community and land within the framework of disembodied abstraction. Quite simply, these actors have attempted to renegotiate the terms of the abstract, disembodied India first defined by the British Empire so that they correspond more readily with their intimate understandings of home.

The spatial understandings of secular Indian nationalism

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, we must chart both the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and the response to this emerging from the face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration marginalised by this development. So far in this chapter, I have offered a brief description and a political history of what can be called the 'secular nationalist' response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration. I turn now, with a more specific focus, to the spatial campaign of this ideology; to the efforts that secular

nationalist thinkers, activists and politicians have made to situate the spaces of people's everyday lives within a particular abstract national territory; to persuade people to see the bodies, buildings and behaviours of their everyday lives as within an abstract India. I begin this discussion in this section with an examination of the ways leading secular nationalists have seen the physical world around them, how they have understood this physical world to be fundamentally connected to a certain, abstract, India. In the section to follow, I explore the methods secular nationalists have used to produce this world, to politically normalise their own understandings and persuade other people to see the physical world around them as within the Indian national territory.

In the above discussion of the key principles of secular Indian nationalism, I suggested that the ideology rested on a clear and simple argument about Indian national identity. To reiterate: secular Indian nationalists have, I suggest, consistently argued that all those who consider the broad stretch of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas – the land known as India – to be home, are members of the Indian nation. What must be recognised is that this is fundamentally a spatial claim; a claim that a certain group of people should be understood in reference to a certain patch of the physical world; that this certain patch of the physical world should be understood in reference to the intimate concept of home.

In this section I examine the ways that leading secular nationalists have understood the world around them. In essence, I expand here on some of the key principles of the ideology discussed briefly above. Two broad aspects of the secular nationalist understanding of the physical will be explored here. Firstly, I look at the ideology's understanding of highly abstract geopolitics, the 'scale' (to use the Cartesian language essential to this understanding; see discussion in chapter 2) abstracted beyond the perception of the human senses. Following this, I turn to the secular nationalist stance on the everyday, looking at how the bodies, buildings and behaviours visible in the physical world have been understood through secular nationalist eyes. What is crucial to remember is that it is a clear and consistent desire of the nationalist ideology (and this, I suggest, applies to any nationalist ideology) to situate the abstract ideas of the disembodied geopolitics within a nationalist's everyday life, and, crucially, the nationalist's intimate everyday life within that abstract geopolitics. That is, secular Indian nationalists have long understood the streets, buildings, bodies and behaviours of their day-to-day lives in the light of a highly abstract geopolitical narrative, and that abstract geopolitical narrative in terms offered by their more intimate face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of the physical. These two 'scales' are, in the nationalist's eyes, fundamentally intertwined.

The abstract India of secular Indian nationalism

At the heart of the secular nationalist understanding of community and land is the belief that all those who call the broad physical area between the Himalayas and the seas home are members of the Indian nation, and that this group deserve political power in this area. This argument has rested on two key spatial claims; both lie at the heart of the secular nationalist geopolitical narrative. Firstly, the argument has required the understanding that the portion of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas is a cohesive area; that the entirety of the landmass between the Himalayas and the seas is India. Secondly, it has also required an acceptance that certain people, thanks to their relationship to each other and that land, deserve political power in this India, and that others should not share this political power. Put together, these two understandings have suggested that the great stretch of land between the Himalayas and the seas should be understood as the Indian national territory, the rightful home of the Indian nation. Both of these spatial claims can be observed in secular nationalist discourse.

Secular nationalists, have from perhaps the very first emergence of their ideology, understood a certain portion of the Earth's surface as a cohesive unit; as their India. Over the last century, this has taken two broad forms. During the independence struggle of the first half of the 20th century, secular nationalists usually saw their India as the entirety of the land between the frontiers of Burma in the east (at the Arakan mountains), the Himalayas in the north, the borders of Afghanistan and Persia / Iran in the west (usually at the Hindu Kush mountains), and the Indian Ocean in the south. Figure 13 offers here an orographical representation centred on this India.

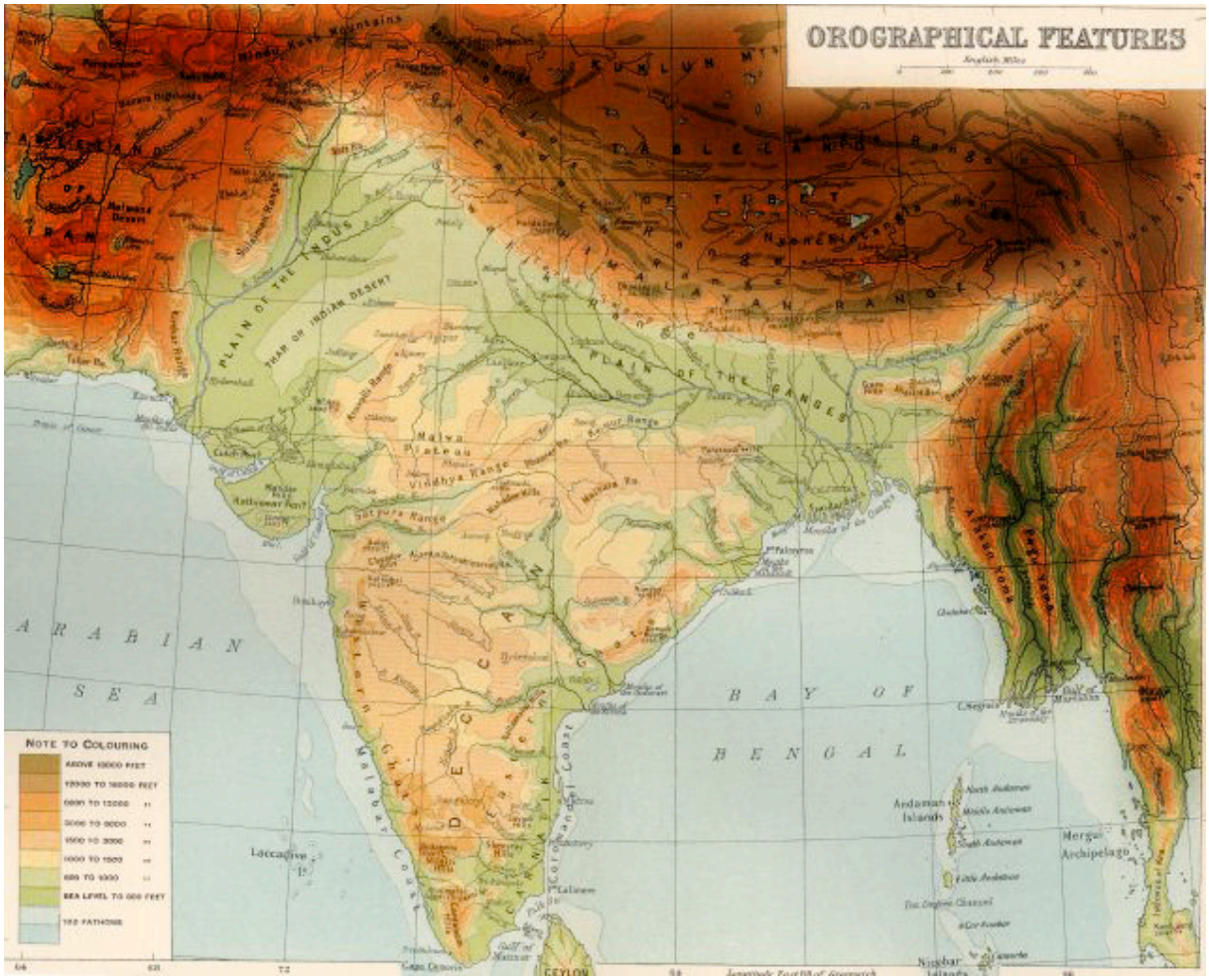

Figure 13 The secular nationalist understanding of the Indian national territory prior to Partition (unshaded area) (drawn from *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* 1931: plate 4, imaged edited).

This, importantly, included the areas of British India, the 'native' or 'princely' states (such as Mysore, Hyderabad and Kashmir) bound to the British as subservient allies, and the small Portuguese and French possessions (such as Goa and Pondicherry) adjacent to British India (see figure 10). We can regularly find this argument in the influential writings and arguments of Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru. Tagore, for example, considered (in his poems, essays and novels) "this land of India" to be "our country", or "one geographical receptacle" with "natural boundaries" (1919: 225; 1917: 136; 1964: 325). In his poem 'The Morning Song of India' (1964: 403), we can find an explicit list of some of the physical areas within this India:

> Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people
> Thou Dispenser of India's destiny.
> Thy name rouses the hearts
> of the Punjab, Sind, Gujrat and Maratha,
> of Dravid, Orissa and Bengal.
> It echoes in the hills of the Vindhyas and Himalayas,
> mingles in the music of Jumna and Ganges,
> and is chanted by the waves of the Indian sea.
> They pray for thy blessing and sing Thy praise,
> Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
> Victory, Victory, Victory to Thee.

Gandhi, similarly, considered India a cohesive spatial unit. In his autobiography for example he described the entirety of India as "home" or "the homeland" (see for example 1927: 331). Matching Tagore's list in 'The Morning Song of India', we can also find in Gandhi's writings explicit arguments that India included certain physical areas. "Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province", as well as "Bengal and Assam" were, for example, explicitly described by Gandhi as 'zones of India' (1944: 126). Similarly, Gandhi argued that the Portuguese colony of Goa, though "outside British India", was "within geographical India as a whole" (1946: 305; see also 1964: 6). In this vein, the cover of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* explicitly portrayed the area between the Himalayas and the seas as one land, a land where the Indian nation was at home (see figure 14).

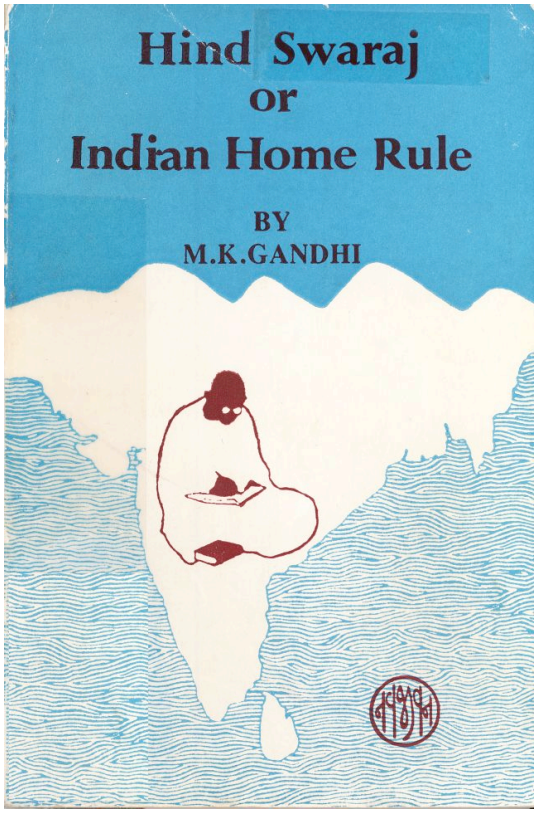

Figure 14 The front cover of M K Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (1938); note the symbolic use of a putatively Cartesian map of India (compare the outline with figure 13, for example), to display the region in which Gandhi considered the Indian nation as at home. Note also the explicit attempt to suggest that Gandhi himself – as thinker and as a body – was in some way the *embodiment* of that national territory.

Finally, the view of India as one physical territory can be seen clearly in Nehru's writing. In *The Discovery of India* for example, he explicitly noted the broad and diverse – but nonetheless cohesive – physicality of India:

> When I think of India, I think of many things: of broad fields dotted with innumerable small villages; of towns and cities I have visited; of the magic of the rainy season which pours life into the dry parched-up land and converts it suddenly into a glistening expanse of beauty and greenery, of great rivers and flowing water; of the Khyber Pass in all its bleak surroundings; of the southern tip of India; of people, individually and in the mass; and, above all, of the Himalayas, snow-capped, or some mountain valley in Kashmir in the spring, covered with new flowers, and with a brook bubbling and gurgling through it. We make and preserve the pictures

> of our choice, and so I have chosen this mountain background rather than the more normal picture of a hot, sub-tropical country. Both pictures would be correct, *for India stretches from the tropics right up to the temperate regions, from near the equator to the cold heart of Asia* (1981 [1946]: 62-3, emphasis added).

Following Partition, and the significant decision of large numbers of the people living in the land between the Himalayas and the seas to understand their home and their national territory differently – that is, as not part of India – secular nationalists came to understand the cohesive area of the Indian national territory as the same area as previously, minus the areas of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Thus though secular nationalists long fought against Partition, once it was set in (Cartesian) stone, the areas taken by Pakistan could no longer be thought of as home in the minds of secular Indian nationalists.

While secular nationalists have argued that the broad area between the Himalayas and the seas is a cohesive portion of the Earth's surface, they have also held to a second spatial argument: that certain people – and not others – deserve political power in that area. In secular nationalist minds, the people that deserve political power in the area between the Himalayas and the seas are only those that consider this area home. This position, as I will show in chapter 6, is distinctly different from the Hindu nationalist position, that those whose culture and ancestry are indigenous to India deserve political power in this area.

Many secular nationalists have raised the argument that those who called India home deserve political power in the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas. Nehru, for example, consistently argued that "the people of India" deserved *Swaraj*, or 'home rule' (1981 [1946]: 60). Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule* was, likewise, a clear statement of the principle (1938 [1909]). In this vein we can also find an argument raised by Sardar Patel (a long time Congress power broker and post-independence Deputy Prime Minister) that "this country, with its institutions, is the proud heritage of the people who *inhabit* it" (1949: 4, emphasis added). All these claims, of course, ascribed an enhanced political power to a certain population because of their relationship to a patch of the Earth's surface; because of their *intimate knowledge* – as their home – of the highly abstract, disembodied India.

While arguing that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the rightful Indian national territory, secular nationalists have also suggested that this land – this abstract India – can be seen in people's everyday lives. That is, while the ideology has always been concerned with the highly abstract geopolitics of the 'world', it has also been very much an ideology concerned with the day-to-day spaces of the street.

The intimate India of secular Indian nationalism

For secular Indian nationalists, the land between the Himalayas and the seas is, as I have suggested above, the Indian national territory; the portion of the Earth's surface where the Indian nation is rightfully at home. This highly abstract geopolitical understanding rests at the very heart of the ideology; it is something which all secular nationalists would agree is an unproblematic accepted fact, a consensus amongst their community (see, for example Nehru 1981 [1946]: 60; M K Gandhi 1927: 331). Now, what is crucial to recognise at this stage (and something I have stressed in different ways in earlier chapters), is that this supposed consensus is (to draw from Anderson) imagined. That is, though all secular Indian nationalists might be able to point to an abstract Cartesian map and be able to see their India, their understanding of that India – as a space – is necessarily particular. Quite simply, each person who considers themself a secular Indian nationalist has, necessarily, lived in and experienced the physical world in vastly different – and subjective – ways. Each person who considers themself a secular Indian nationalist has experienced the physical world in ways shaped, at least partially, by their own face-to-face and agency-extended communities. Yet – and this is a crucial point – all who consider themselves to be followers of secular Indian nationalism imagine that their India, their Indian national territory, is a certain entity, something all secular nationalists know is 'in the world' and can be seen in their everyday lives.

What I suggest here is that this way of seeing – this setting up of the belief that India can be seen in the physical world – has depended on the normalisation of particular intimate ideas of community and land within the abstract representation of India. Below, I will describe the campaign to normalise these particular understandings; here I describe these understandings themselves. Three broad arguments appear common in the ways secular Indian nationalists have seen the Indian national territory in the buildings, bodies and (perhaps most importantly) behaviours of the physical world around them. These three, as I have suggested throughout this chapter, centre on the concept of home. What I aim to show here is that this understanding of home – and this is radically different from the Hindu nationalists to be discussed in chapter 6 – centres on certain visible behaviours. That is, of chief importance for secular Indian nationalists has been how a person behaves towards the physical world around them. The first of these three arguments is that if a person behaves as if they are at home in India then the buildings and bodies associated with their intimate lives have been considered by secular nationalists to be natural and normal in India. This argument, extrapolated, has held that if a person behaves as if they are *not* at home in India – then the bodies and buildings associated with them have been considered abnormal, as a rejection of the Indian national territory. Secondly, secular nationalists have also maintained that other intimate understandings of the physical world, other ways of behaving, should be treated as normal and not of national significance. Thirdly, secular nationalists have made a clearly liberal argument about behaviour: that for the most part, the behaviours Indian nationals exhibit are of private concern. Yet if those behaviours contribute to harming other Indian

nationals, they are explicitly taken as an affront to the nation, as an affront to the national territory. This argument has focused most clearly on caste prejudice.

Perhaps the clearest argument that there exist ways of behaving that are at home in the secular nationalist India can be found in Nehru's *The Discovery of India*. On the one hand, Nehru clearly held that those who 'settled down' in India – those who treated it was their home – were essentially and obviously Indian. "I think", Nehru argued,

> that at almost any time in recorded history, an Indian would have felt more or less at home in any part of India, and would have felt as a stranger and alien in any other country. He would certainly have felt less of a stranger in countries which had partly adopted his culture or religion. Those who professed a religion of non-Indian origin or, coming to India, settled down there, became distinctively Indian in the course of a few generations, such as Christians, Jews, Parsees, Moslems. Indian converts to some of these religions never ceased to be Indians on account of a change of faith (1981 [1946]: 62).

Importantly, while secular Indian nationalists clearly saw themselves at home in India, the British were explicitly seen as behaving in ways that were *not* at home. This was, of course, a common refrain in British discourse (driven, I suggest, by British nationalism – see discussion in chapter 4); yet it was also recognised and trumpeted by secular Indian nationalists. Nehru, for example, argued that the British "with their base [that is, home] elsewhere" remained a class "permanently alien in origin and character" and at odds with "the world of India's millions" (1981 [1946]: 302-3). "There were two worlds", Nehru suggested, "the world of British officials and the world of India's millions, and there was nothing in common between them except a common dislike for each other" (Nehru 1981 [1946]: 303). In extrapolation, the buildings and bodies in British India most associated with (and intimate to) the British were seen as rejections of the natural India. In this, the day-to-day world of the British ruling class, seen in the exclusive clubs, cantonments, hill stations, and reserved railway carriages, park benches and station retiring rooms "walled off from the larger Indian world outside" (Metcalf 1994: 177; Arnold 1986: 138) was held as a world "aloof, exclusive, apart from Indians" and not at home in India:

> railway carriages, station retiring-rooms, benches in parks, etc., are marked 'For Europeans Only.' This is bad enough in South Africa or elsewhere, but to have to put up with it in one's own country is a humiliating and exasperating reminder of one's enslaved condition (Nehru 1981 [1946]: 294, 295, 303).

This behaving as not at home in India was also observed by Gandhi on British bodies. In particular, their decision to "retain their English style [of dress] in India, even though they admit that it is most uncomfortable for this climate" was clearly a marker of "their insularity", or their behaviour according to spaces not at home in India (1921h: 194).

Meanwhile, while secular nationalists have claimed that the observable buildings, bodies and behaviours between the Himalayas and the seas have shared a common relationship to the secular nationalist India, they have also been at pains to suggest that other understandings of the physical –

other ways of behaving – are private and of no concern to the nation. That is, in the minds of secular nationalists, a particular physical site or a particular way of behaving could well be sacred in the eyes of some Indians, yet this should not be taken as of national significance. This argument has been pitted directly against Hindu nationalist claims (upon which more will be discussed in chapter 6). In this vein, Nehru's secular stance on the physical was a clear element of much of his work. In his will for example, Nehru requested that when he died, he would like his body to be cremated;

> If I die in a foreign country [Nehru continued], my body should be cremated there and my ashes sent to Allahabad. A small handful of these ashes should be thrown in the Ganga … My desire to have a handful of my ashes thrown in the Ganga at Allahabad has *no religious significance, so far as I am concerned*. I have no religious sentiment in the matter (1954, emphasis added).

Nehru's *personal* understanding of the Ganga – a river of great spiritual significance for many Hindus – was clearly rationalist. That is, though he noted in other works that it was a "noble river", or even that it was a river "which has held India's heart captive and drawn uncounted millions to her banks since the dawn of history" (1981 [1946]: 48, 51), *holiness* was not a factor in Nehru's personal understanding. Yet what is crucial is that he clearly did not expect other Indian people to share his understanding. His understanding was private; his desire to have his ashes thrown in the Ganga had 'no religious significance *so far as I am concerned*'. Thus, by implication, so too were the understandings of those who saw the river as sacred.

A similar position can be found in Gandhi's thought. Personally, Gandhi embraced a rather different understanding of the physical from Nehru. In this he saw a clear spiritual element throughout the physical world (see, for example M K Gandhi 1928; as well as his stance in *The Times* 1934a; *The Times* 1934b; and discussion in Sen 1997). Importantly however, though Gandhi cherished all religious faith, he did not expect (so long as they did no harm to others) the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians of India to see the buildings and bodies of India in his manner. In a passage on image worship for example, Gandhi's secularism can be clearly seen:

> I am both a supporter and opponent of image worship. When image worship degenerates into idolatry and becomes encrusted with false beliefs and doctrines, it becomes a necessity to combat it as a gross social evil. On the other hand image worship in the sense of investing one's ideal with a concrete shape is inherent in man's nature, and even valuable as an aid to devotion. Thus we worship an image when we offer homage to a book which we regard as holy or sacred. We worship an image when we visit a temple or a mosque with a feeling of sanctity or reverence. Nor do I see any harm in all this. On the contrary *endowed as man is with a finite, limited understanding,* he can hardly do otherwise. Even so, far from seeing anything inherently evil or harmful in tree worship, I find in it a thing instinct with a deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolises true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom, which with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declares to us as it were with a million tongues the greatness and glory of God (1929: 320, emphasis added)

In Gandhi's mind, the various faiths held by the people of India (indeed, by people anywhere) were all legitimate ways to access the world, and were all inherently limited by a necessarily partial access to truth (see 1938: 44-45). Thus in Gandhi's conception, where total knowledge was impossible, *all*

forms of personal access to the world were equivalent: neither temple nor mosque held greater access to truth. Thus Gandhi concluded his essay on image worship with a clearly secular argument:

> Let no one, however, from this understand me to mean, that I advocate tree worship in general. I do not defend tree worship because I consider it to be a necessary aid to devotion, *but only because I recognise, that God manifests himself in innumerable forms in this universe, and every such manifestation commands my spontaneous reverence* (1929: 320, emphasis added).

The key component of Gandhi's argument was that "those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion" (1938: 45): no cultural, personal understanding of the objects of the physical world should have any special relationship to the nation.

Finally, the secular nationalist understanding of the bodies, buildings and behaviours of the Indian national territory has held a crucial qualifier to the second argument noted above: that all personal understandings of the physical and ways of behaving within the Indian national territory are only private if they do no harm to others. If, however, these ways of behaving, these personal understandings of bodies and buildings within the Indian national territory do harm others, then they have been taken as corruptions of the public Indian national territory. The cultural knowledge – the form of visible behaviour – that has been most clearly labelled as not private in secular nationalist discourse has been that of caste oppression, particularly the practice of 'untouchability'. In secular nationalist minds, this practice – which denied people of certain castes access to temples and water facilities, and forced a variety of other social stigmas (see discussion in Desai 1973; 1976; Ambedkar 1917; Klostermaier 1989: 326) – was not only an affront to people's common humanity, it was an affront to the nation and the national territory. In essence, all Indian people should, according to secular nationalist thinkers, be able to live in a harmonious and tolerant India; no Indian should be denied access to that which is public in India. We can clearly find this argument in Gandhi's castigation of the denial of temple entry:

> A simple cleanly dressed *Panchama* [a member of the so-called 'fifth caste': in the early twentieth century 'untouchable' or 'Harijan'; later 'Dalit' or those of the Scheduled Castes] entered a temple in a perfectly devotional spirit without the slightest intention of hurting anybody's feeling or insulting any religion. He had been in the habit of paying his respects at this temple every year though he did not enter it. But last year in his ecstatic mood he forgot himself and entered the temple. The priest in charge could not distinguish him from the others and, therefore, accepted his offering. But when he regained self-possession, he was terrified to find himself in a prohibited place and ran away from the temple. But some who knew him caught him and handed him to the police. The temple authorities, when they discovered the crime, had the temple purified. Then followed a trial. A Hindu Magistrate convicted him and imposed a fine of Rs. 75 or one month's rigorous imprisonment for insulting his own religion! (1965: 91-92).

In Gandhi's thinking, temples were clearly public realm (see 1965: 95) and hence must be accessible to all. A denial of this fact – through the harmful ideology of 'untouchability' – was a blight on the Indian national territory.

The secular nationalist India

Some centuries ago, India became known – as I suggested in chapter 4 – with a putative certainty in a disembodied representation of the physical. Over the centuries of British imperial dominance in southern Asia, this disembodied knowledge became gradually more dominant, gradually more influential in the lives of the people of the land between the Himalayas and the seas. At heart, this dominance remains: the dominant definition of India in secular nationalist discourse, the definition to which supreme authority is ascribed, remains that of a land defined in a disembodied manner. We can consider here the cover of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* offered above in figure 14. Of all the possible images which could have been used to represent his complicated argument about the political problems he saw around his home, a disembodied, putatively Cartesian map of the land between the Himalayas and the seas was displayed – as if the simplest and clearest way of representing India was a meandering line and some shaded areas. We can quite readily admit that the decision to use this image may have been arbitrary, and may not have been made by Gandhi himself. Yet what must be stressed is that this disembodied map was displayed to deliberately and unequivocally evoke India, to capture and symbolise the political problems described within the volume. In essence, it treated this India that deserved 'home rule' as if it could be seen with the rational gaze – as if it could be seen with certainty – and that the way to see it rested in the Cartesian map. In this way, Gandhi's cover drew directly on the authority of the imperial map of India (see figure 10) crucial to the British Empire.

Yet while accepting the dominant authority of the disembodied Cartesian map of India, secular nationalists have also stressed that this India was defined in a radically different spatial context: in the visible bodies, buildings and behaviours of their everyday lives. Here we can again look at the cover of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. The alternate image used to represent India (or, perhaps more accurately, to represent that which ought to be visible in India), was of Gandhi's body. In essence, the suggestion here was that there existed another visible India, another way of seeing India. At heart, secular Indian nationalists have argued that their India is a certain presence in both the highly abstract 'world' *and* the streets of southern Asia; a definable object in both the disembodied and the face-to-face representations of the physical.

This secular nationalist understanding of the physical has united around the concept of home. In essence, secular nationalists have suggested that the abstract, disembodied India displayed on the cover of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* and in the Cartesian maps of the world – see figure 10 – should be seen through the intimate notion of home; that those who consider it their home should have political power in that realm. This position, in sum, is a response to the disembodied integration fostered by the British Empire, a renegotiation of the disembodied spatial representations in terms of certain nationalists' intimate understandings.

At this stage, all I have presented is the secular nationalist ideology, the secular nationalist understandings of space. Of crucial importance now are the efforts to which secular nationalists have gone to propagate these understandings: to produce a world with the Indian national territory in it. It is to this I now turn.

Producing the secular nationalist India

In chapter 4, I argued that a disembodied form of spatial representation – the form of spatial representation, that is, in which India first gained a certain location in the world – emerged to dominance in southern Asia with the British Empire. What I also argued in chapter 4 (drawing there on arguments raised in chapter 2) was that this disembodied form of spatial representation, brought to southern Asia by the British, was, despite its claims, never objective. That is, despite the powerful Cartesian rhetoric that the British geographers were charting the real world of India 'out there', their enterprise was always framed by other understandings of community and land; by the British administrators' and geographers' face-to-face and agency-extended communities. What this suggests is that the ways of seeing in which India first gained a certain location in the highly abstract world were always guided by particular interests. These interests were, however, for a long time carefully hidden. At heart, I argue that this hiding of particular interests within the supposedly objective frame occurred through a process of normalisation; through making the British administrators' face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land normal in the disembodied depictions.

What is crucial at this point in the discussion is that this normalisation of British understandings marginalised the face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land held by those distant from the British power. In the earliest period of imperial rule, this meant that many people's day-to-day worlds became defined 'externally', by forms of economic and military integration driven by distant machines and ships. Later, it meant that certain natives – those to first learn the disembodied spatial representations offered by the Empire – found their face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land marginalised 'internally', by the disembodied depiction of world they came to know. In essence, their parents' and their religious institutions' depictions of the physical became *wrong*. This, of course, proved an unsettling contradiction. In a complicated and drawn out campaign, a variety of these native thinkers attempted to reconcile this contradiction, to seek ways to politically normalise their own intimate understandings of community and land. In this normalisation, I suggest, we can find the production of the nationalist India, of the Indian national territory. In this section I discuss the attempts of secular nationalist actors to normalise

their own particular understandings of community and land, to make their understanding of home the key to the normal disembodied depiction of India.

To explore the political normalisation of the secular nationalist understanding of the physical world – to explore, in essence, the secular nationalist production of space – I employ in this section the ideas of the 'Lefebvrian matrix' discussed in chapter 2. To reiterate briefly: the 'Lefebvrian matrix' is the conceptual triad suggested in Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991: 33; see also Harvey 1989: 218-221) which suggests that the spaces in which people live are constituted through the influence of power in three interlinked domains: 'material spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation' (Harvey 1989: 218). In essence, the space we live in is produced through the influence of power in the always interlinked *material* world of physical bodies and buildings; the discursive *representation of* that material world; and the *symbolic* or *imagined* landscape within which those representations are understood. To explore the specific production of the secular nationalist India – to explore the normalisation of the leading nationalists' intimate ideas of community and land – I trace over the next two subsections the political work conducted by secular nationalists in the material and representational realms of the Lefebvrian triad. More will be discussed on the symbolic realm in the conclusion. I break this discussion into two different periods. To begin, I look at the era when secular nationalists reacted against the spatial understandings of the British Empire. Following this, I look at the period when secular nationalists gained control of the state.

The secular nationalist response to the spatial understandings of the British Empire

Secular Indian nationalists have expended great energy in a long political campaign attempting to persuade people to see the Indian nation as at home – and therefore the rights bearing political community – in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. This section explores the evolution of this political campaign during the years of British rule in southern Asia, when secular Indian nationalists sought to normalise their intimate understandings of community and land within the disembodied framework against those of the British. The key to this campaign has been a twin effort to represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to the secular nationalist narrative described above and, simultaneously, to modify the physical environment through material spatial practice to make it look like their abstract India.

Representations of space

A great variety of ways of representing the physical world – ways of representing their India – were used by secular Indian nationalists against the British Empire. Some, as I will show below, sought a direct renegotiation of the highly authoritative disembodied portrayal of India. The secular nationalist

histories provide a compelling example here. Others, as I will also show below, sought to communicate that new disembodied picture of India to as wide an audience as possible; forms of literature, journalism and speech making provide compelling examples of this. In all, I suggest we can find a key argument that India existed as a *certain* physical entity in both the highly abstract world, and the intimate spaces people could see.

Histories have been crucial to the secular nationalist representation of community and land. As I noted briefly above, members of the native elite in British India began to think seriously about writing what they would consider Indian histories of India in the middle of the 19th century, inspired in part by their abject status in imperial histories (see discussion in chapter 4) and the lack of 'factual' accounts in the 'Puranic' tradition (see P Chatterjee 1993: ch 4). Early prototypes of this include Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay's *Bhāratbarşer itihās* ('The History of India') of 1858, Nilmani Basak's *Bharatbarsher Itihas* (1857-8), and various essays on Bengali history by Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1872-1884) (see discussion in Mukherji 1958). Though these works offered a clearly *nationalist* historiography (see P Chatterjee 1993: 97), they did not offer what would now be thought of as a secular nationalist picture of India (see discussion of these works in chapter 6). This secular nationalist picture emerged most clearly in the early 20th century (see discussion in Ranajit Guha 1997: 211; Thapar 2000: 31), in works like A Yusuf Ali's *The Making of India* (1925), S C Sarkar and K K Datta's *Modern Indian History* (1942) and Nehru's *The Discovery of India* (1981 [1946]) and *Glimpses of World History* (1962 [1934]). We can begin this discussion with Ali's work.

"I want my countrymen to understand," Ali offered in the preface to his history,

> *India as a whole – a living and growing reality that must command our devotion*. I want them further to understand their historic relations to the outside world; for their *position in the world* will depend on what they make it… And in these days of world solidarity I want the world to realize India; to think of it not as a vague and remote abstraction, but as a living reality whose history touches the world's history at so many points (1925: v, emphasis added).

With this goal, Ali offered what I suggest is clearly a secular nationalist history of India, an explicitly secular nationalist representation of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas. Though his history covered variously (amongst other topics) the ancient "Indo-Aryan Civilization", the moment when "Alexander invaded India", the "Establishment of the Muslim Empire in India" and "India under Lord Auckland" (1925: 41, 76, 262), it was in its *framing* that Ali's understandings of community and land were most apparent. In this, Ali's second chapter explicitly described the people, languages and political divisions of India. A short passage of this is worth quoting:

> It will thus be seen that ethnically *the Indian population is a vast admixture*. So far as modern India is concerned, the chief factors that count are the Dravidians in Southern India and the mixed Aryan races of Northern India. The vast majority of the people of India conform to Aryan civilization as developed in India, and modified by Muslim and British civilizations, as we shall see in the course of this history. The Muslims, though in the mass they are not racially different from the Hindus, are sharply divided from the rest of the inhabitants on account of their religion,

> and as they number 69 millions out of a total population of 319 millions (by the census of 1921), they may be reckoned as one of the main *subdivisions* among the people of India (A Y Ali 1925: 15, emphasis added).

We must mark carefully Ali's language. The people of India were understood by Ali (using clearly standard secular nationalist lines) as a 'vast admixture'; divisions were noticed between the Muslims and the Hindus, yet these were explicitly held as '*subdivisions among* the people of India'. Such a position is, of course, radically different from a two-nation theory as espoused by Muslim or Hindu nationalists (see chapter 6). What is more important here is that this discussion (the second chapter of Ali's history) was offered *after* a discussion of India's geography. Indeed, Ali commenced his history with a geographical statement:

> *India's Central Position*. – In the Map of Asia India occupies a central position. If we take a map of the Eastern Hemisphere, including the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, India again occupies a central position. Ancient Indian civilization was in touch with the other civilizations of Asia and Egypt. Greek influences can be traced in Indian art and science after a certain period. Buddhism linked India to Central and Eastern Asia. Islam gave her a fresh Western orientation. Her membership of the British Empire gives her a place in world politics. It is probable that in the new unity of the world India may occupy a yet more important place, commensurate with her geographical position (1925: 1).

Ali continued over the next few pages, describing "India's boundaries" in the North, North-West, North-East, East and West. Here he used phrases like "cut off" ("the northern barrier of India, therefore, *shuts her off* almost completely from other parts of Asia") to isolate what he considered a cohesive geographical unit (1925: 2-3, emphasis added). Ali also offered a "General Map of India" to situate his historical discussion (see figure 15).

Figure 15 A Yusuf Ali's 'General Map of India', in the rear cover of his history, *The Making of India* (1925).

Ali's India was clearly informed by the spatiality of the British Empire. Indeed, the geographical position he offered was identical to that presented by the British (see chapter 4 and figure 10). What is crucial to stress, however, is that this India sat in Ali's portrayal *prior* to the various historical developments he discussed: as if India existed *before* the invasion of Alexander the Great, before the Mughals, before the British:

> In the first century of the Christian era Buddhism was the prevailing religion *in India*, and it probably continued to be so till the fourth or fifth century AD. A stream of Chinese pilgrims poured *into India*, the sacred land of Buddhism, beginning with Fa-Hien (AD 405-411), and a counter-stream of Buddhist Hindu teachers flowed into Eastern Asia… *When the Muslims first invaded India* (Sindh) early in the eighth century, Buddhism was still a power in the land, but it gradually waned, and it was absorbed into Brahmanism by the eleventh century (1925: 39, emphasis added).

What we must recognise is that neither the 'first Muslim invaders', nor the feudal powers they conquered in Sindh, can have thought of themselves as 'in India' in the modern Cartesian sense. There simply was no certain disembodied line in the eighth century which these 'invaders' could imagine themselves crossing to arrive 'in India'. Quite simply, Ali projected in his history modern understandings into the past. In essence, Ali suggested – in the authoritative tones of modern,

disembodied scholarship – that there existed an India, and hence a people of India, since the earliest times.

Directly echoing Ali, Nehru recognised in his history *The Discovery of India* an explicitly nationalist goal:

> As I grew up and became engaged in activities which promised to lead to India's freedom, I became obsessed with the thought of India. *What was this India that possessed me and beckoned to me continually*, urging me to action so that we might realize some vague but deeply-felt desire of our hearts? The initial urge came to me, I suppose, through pride, both individual and national, and the desire, common to all men, to resist another's domination and have freedom to live the life of our choice… The future that took shape in my mind was one of intimate co-operation, politically, economically, and culturally, between India and the other countries of the world. *But before the future came there was the present, and behind the present lay the long and tangled past, out of which the present has grown. So to the past I looked for understanding* (1981 [1946]: 49-50, emphasis added).

With this goal in mind, Nehru offered a clearly secular nationalist history of India, a clearly secular nationalist representation of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas. In this, Nehru again paralleled Ali, discussing various elements of what he portrayed as Indian history, such as "The Indus Valley Civilization", "The Coming of the Aryans", the settling of "the Afghans… in India" and "The Destruction of India's Industry" (1981 [1946]: 69, 72, 257, 298). Again, like Ali, it was in the *framing* of this history that Nehru's understandings of community and land were most clearly placed. In this, Nehru stressed that an essential – secular nationalist – unity could be found within the people of India:

> …I think that at almost any time in recorded history an Indian would have felt more or less at home in any part of India, and would have felt as a stranger and alien in any other country. He would certainly have felt less of a stranger in countries which had partly adopted his culture or religion. Those who professed a religion of non-Indian origin or, coming to India, settled down there, became distinctively Indian in the course of a few generations, such as Christians, Jews, Parsees, Moslems. Indian converts to some of these religions never ceased to be Indians on account of a change of faith (1981 [1946]: 62).

Meanwhile, Nehru argued throughout his work that India existed as a certain geographical area; that India had "physical and geographical aspects" (1981 [1946]: 49). In one passage Nehru described his attempts to get his audiences to "think of India as a whole":

> The task was not easy; yet it was not so difficult as I had imagined, for our ancient epics and myths and legends, which they knew so well, had made them familiar with the conception of their country, and some there were always who had travelled far and wide to the great places of pilgrimage *situated at the four corners of India* (1981 [1946]: 60).

What we must stress is that the idea of India having 'corners' is a peculiarly modern, peculiarly disembodied notion. That is, it is only with a highly abstract geographical vision of India – as provided by a disembodied Cartesian map – that we can assume that India has fixed and definite spatial limits: that one can know when one is in one of the 'corners of India'. This idea was, of course, true for Nehru – the British India he lived in *was* defined by a disembodied Cartesian map. He could, in a sense, imagine when he was in one of those 'corners of India'. Yet crucially, Nehru projected this

certainty into the past. India was, in Nehru's thinking, *prior* to the history that happened in it. Here Nehru's discussion of the conquest of Alexander the Great clearly placed India as prior to historical development:

> Alexander's *invasion of India* in the fourth century BC was, from a military point of view, a minor affair. It was more of a raid across the border, and not a very successful raid for him. He met with such stout resistance from a border chieftain that the contemplated advance into the heart of India had to be reconsidered. If a small ruler on the frontier could fight thus, what of the larger and more powerful kingdoms further south? Probably it was the main reason why his army refused to march further and insisted on returning (1981 [1946]: 114, emphasis added; see similar in 1962 [1934]: 50).

Could Alexander really have known he was at the 'border of India'? Could he have known that the 'heart of India' lay further to the south? He may, indeed, have heard of some 'India', and he may even have imagined himself to be, at some point, in it. Yet Alexander could not have imagined 'India' as some *certain* spatial area, some area that he was at the precise border of, and which continued for a certain distance in certain directions. These, in essence, are modern – Cartesian – ways of thinking. In essence, Nehru suggested in his *The Discovery of India* – drawing on the marshalled and authoritative 'facts' of history – that there existed a certain territorial India *prior* to the history that happened in it.

Both these works (and a host of others, like Sarkar and Datta's *Modern Indian History* (1942)) offered a particular representation of the land between the Himalayas and the seas in which India was presented as prior to the historical developments that happened in it. In essence, India existed for these authors, before the developments that happened to it, in it. They did this to make their secular nationalist India – the India in which those who called it home deserved political power – normal in the most authoritative, disembodied portrayal. At heart, these works made a direct claim to the chief authority of the disembodied historical portrayal of India. They could not, however, propagate this claim on their own: these histories of India offered their representation of the physical world to only the historically minded native elite of British India. To propagate the secular nationalist India, other forms of representation were required.

Thus following the growth of the secular nationalist histories in the 19th and early 20th centuries, various thinkers and activists in British India began to represent their India in other forms of literature and communication. Some brought new forms of authority to support the secular nationalist representation of the land between the Himalayas and the seas, others offered the central understanding in new forms. I look briefly here at autobiography, the growth of nationalist newspapers, and the growth of nationalist speech making.

If, in the development of secular nationalist histories, we can find a direct claim to the dominant, scholarly portrayal of India, then in the genre of autobiography we can (in parallel with suggestions

made by Philip Holden (2005: 89)) find perhaps the clearest expression that this India was not just a "vague and remote abstraction" (to use Ali's rather useful terms (1925: v)) but "a living reality". That is, though they were certainly not alone in this, I suggest that in significant secular nationalist autobiographies – Gandhi's *An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with the truth* (1927), Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1962), Nirad Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1964) and *swadeshi* campaign leader Bipin Chandra Pal's *Memories of my life and times* (1973 [1932-1951]) – we can find a key locating of the abstract India in the intimate and personal spaces of peoples' lives. In this, Gandhi's *Autobiography* offers a compelling example. What is important is that Gandhi – like Ali and Nehru – clearly accepted that India was a certain geographical entity: a definite place to which one could sail (1927: 154, 330), within which one could travel about (1927: 205), and which (as this passage demonstrates), had certain 'ends'

> …but who knows how it all came about? The whole of India *from one end to the other*, towns as well as villages, observed a complete hartal on that day. It was a most wonderful spectacle (1927: 423, emphasis added).

Such an understanding was, of course, entirely normal amongst the British educated native elite in Gandhi's day, and was directly based on the dominant disembodied spatial knowledge of the British Empire. In essence, Gandhi could say that 'the whole of India from one end to the other' participated in the *hartal*, because India had, for Gandhi, a defined, definable footprint. All Gandhi has done, to this stage, was use the disembodied India defined by the British. What is crucial however is that Gandhi also suggested that this abstraction – India – was visible in the intimate spaces between the Himalayas and the seas. In one passage of his *Autobiography*, Gandhi suggested, for example, that an 'Indian style' of domestic living existed. "I had stayed in English houses during my days in England," offered Gandhi,

> but there I conformed to their ways of living, and it was more or less like living in a boarding house. Here it was quite the contrary. The English friends became members of the family. *They adopted the Indian style* in many matters. Though the appointments in the house were in the Western fashion, the internal life was mostly Indian (1927: 259, emphasis added).

Similarly, in another passage Gandhi described his time spent living as "a strict fruitarian":

> all the fruits and nuts available in Calcutta were ordered for me. The ladies of the house kept awake all night skinning various nuts. Every possible care was taken in dressing fruit *in the Indian style* (1927: 355-6, emphasis added).

These points may seem trivial. Yet what must be stressed is that Gandhi clearly displayed throughout his *Autobiography* the belief that India was both an abstract entity, visible in the geographical world, and an entity visible in people's day-to-day lives. This idea was, I suggest, crucial to the secular nationalist representation of the physical world.

Histories and autobiography – as well as a variety of other forms of literature (see discussion in S K Das 1995; R K Dasgupta 2001; Hubel 1996; Mitra 1995; Sanyal 1998) – were crucial to the development and explanation of the secular nationalist argument, yet we must at least flag that the

communication of these ideas to great swathes of the people of the land between the Himalayas and the seas (that is, those who would become the people of India) only became possible with the development of mass broadcast technologies. In this, the development of nationalist newspapers in the 19th century offered secular nationalist thinkers a powerful means of such communication. Many early nationalist leaders launched or purchased newspapers; prominent examples include Rammohan Roy's *Sambad Kaumidi* and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (in Bengali and Persian respectively, both were launched in 1821), Surendranath Banerjea's *The Bengalee* (purchased in 1881), Motilal and Shishir Ghosh's *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (in Bengali, launched in 1868) and Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Kesari* (in Marathi, launched in 1881) (see discussion in Priolkar 1958; Sonwalkar 2001). Perhaps most influential however were the various newspapers of Gandhi. In particular, *Young India* (1919-1931) and *Harijan* (1933-1955) both contributed enormously to the secular nationalist campaign, to the representation of the secular nationalist India (see Bondurant 1972: 5).

In a similar way, secular nationalist leaders also used political speeches as a powerful means of communicating their understandings of the physical world. This, in particular, grew in potence following the organisational development of the Congress in the 1920s and the rise of provincial election campaigns in the 1930s. At the forefront of this was Nehru who, in the years before independence, travelled widely over British India speaking to a variety of different audiences. His mission, he noted, was "to make" the people "think of India as a whole" (1981 [1946]: 60); indeed (in an interesting spatialisation), to "*move* the masses" (Nehru cited in Narasimhaiah 1960: 141, emphasis added). In *The Discovery of India*, Nehru offered a description of the rhetoric he used to 'move' these masses. To begin, he would offer a clear argument about the cohesive Indian national territory:

> Often, as I wandered from meeting to meeting, I spoke to my audience of this India of ours, of Hindustan and *Bharata* … I spoke of this great country for whose freedom we were struggling, of how each part differed from the other *and yet was India*, of common problems of the peasants from north to south and east to west, of the *Swaraj* that could only be for all and every part and not for some. I told them of my journeying from the Khyber Pass in the far north-west to *Kanya Kumari* or Cape Comorin in the distant south, and how everywhere the peasants put me identical questions, for their troubles were the same (1981 [1946]: 60, emphasis added).

Following, this Nehru would explicitly portray the local area – the soil, village, fields and forests that those villagers could see – as inherently embedded in the national territory:

> Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me: *Bharat Mata kī Jai* – 'Victory to Mother India.' I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this *Bharat Mata*, Mother India, whose victory they wanted? My question would amuse them and surprise them, and then, not knowing exactly what to answer, they would look at each other and at me. I persisted in my questioning. At last a vigorous Jat, wedded to the soil from immemorial generations, would say that it was the *dharti*, the good earth of India, that they meant. What earth? Their particular village patch, or all the patches in the district or province, or in the whole of India? And so question and answer went on, till they would ask me impatiently to tell them all about it. I would endeavour to do so and explain that India was all this that they had thought, but it was much more. The mountains and the rivers of India, and the forests and the broad fields, which gave us food, were all dear to us, but what counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me, who were spread out all over this vast land (1981 [1946]: 60).

It was with the political power of the speech – a form not limited by literacy or language – that secular nationalists could really begin to reach great swathes of the population of British India.

These various forms of communication – histories, literature, autobiographies, newspapers and speeches – were used to great effect in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to offer the secular nationalist ideology to an ever wider audience. At heart, these representations of the physical world operated in the same disembodied realm in which the British had defined their India, yet they were explicit in drawing on both disembodied *and* more intimate sources of authority. We can return here to Nehru's *The Discovery of India*. On the one hand the work operated in a highly abstract realm, in which certain historical facts were joined in an abstract – disembodied – narrative. In the section on "The Contrast between Asia and Europe in Mechanical Advance and Creative Energy" for example, Nehru suggested that "the Renaissance had… released *the mind of Europe* from many of its old fetters and destroyed many an idol that it had cherished" (1981 [1946]: 260, 262, emphasis added). The suggestion that Europe had a 'mind' was, of course, based on a disembodied way of thinking. In a continuation of this, India was considered by Nehru a geographical entity *before* anything else. "What is this India," asked Nehru, "*apart from her physical and geographical aspects?*" (1981 [1946]: 49, emphasis added). Yet in a radical departure from the British histories of India Nehru also drew on more intimate sources of knowledge, more intimate forms of authority. Indeed, in his efforts to understand this India, Nehru – partially – rejected the disembodied knowledge offered by the British:

> During these years of thought and activity my mind has been full of India, trying to understand her and to analyse my own reactions to her. *I went back to my childhood days* and tried to remember what I felt like then, what vague shape this conception took in my growing mind, and how it was moulded by fresh experience. Sometimes it receded into the background, but *it was always there*, slowly changing, a queer mixture derived from *old story and legend and modern fact* (1981 [1946]: 49, emphasis added).

In essence, Nehru offered that India could be known prior to the embrace of disembodied knowledge; known in childhood. Yet not entirely. In elaboration of his efforts to 'know India', Nehru suggested that he

> *read her history* and read also a part of her abundant ancient literature, and was powerfully impressed by the vigour of the thought, the clarity of the language, and the richness of the mind that lay behind it. I journeyed through India… These journeys and visits of mine, *with the background of my reading*, gave me an insight into the past. *To a somewhat bare intellectual understanding was added an emotional appreciation, and gradually a sense of reality began to creep into my mental picture of India, and the land of my forefathers became peopled with living beings* (1981 [1946]: 50-51, emphasis added).

Nehru was clear. His understanding of India was *framed* through his 'background reading', through his abstract intellectual knowledge – yet it only became '*real*', became populated with people, when he had known it through what he would consider a face-to-face integration.

Nehru and the other secular nationalist actors were not rejecting either disembodied integration or the disembodied representation of the physical first offered by the British. What Nehru was rejecting was

the normalisation of the British administrators' particular knowledge in the dominant understanding of India. By situating his own particular knowledge, derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration, within the disembodied framework, Nehru was offering a new – secular nationalist – India.

While representing the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas as the Indian national territory, secular nationalist activists also instigated a dedicated campaign of material spatial practice: a campaign to make the land between the Himalayas and the seas look like their India.

Material spatial practices

I suggested above (and in chapter 2), that the production of space occurs through the influence of power in three interlinked domains – that of 'material spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation' (Harvey 1989: 218). Above, I have explored how secular Indian nationalists worked to renegotiate the dominant representations of India. What I now suggest is that simultaneously, these same activists and thinkers engaged in an elaborate campaign of material spatial practice: modifying the physical environment around them to make it look like their abstract India. This effort has involved a number of campaigns, perhaps stretching back to the early 19th century work of Rammohan Roy (Ganguli 1958: 15), the Brahmo Samaj (see Susobhan Chandra Sarkar 1958: 30; Jones 1976: 16-18; J Das 1958: 485) and the followers of Henry Derozio in Young Bengal (see Moorhouse 1994: 70, 72; Banerjee 1958: 144; Susobhan Chandra Sarkar 1958: 20). Some of the more potent, however – such as the *khadi* campaign and the civil disobedience campaign – emerged in the 20th century.

The *khadi* campaign – the long winded attempt to get those who would be Indian to reject foreign clothes and cloth in favour of locally made *khadi* – has often been described as central to the independence struggle (Bean 1989: 355; see discussion in Tarlo 1996: ch 4). This campaign involved the burning of 'foreign' clothes (M K Gandhi 1921f), elaborate attempts to ridicule those 'natives' seen in 'English' clothes (Tarlo 1996: 95), drives to demonstrate the moral benefit of 'Indian' clothes and, crucially, the wearing of locally made and locally styled *khadi* (see figures 16 and 17). In essence, the *khadi* campaign revolved around a manipulation of the physical environment – the wearing of what were presented as specifically Indian clothes – in one of the few ways open to the early 20th century nationalists.

The *khadi* campaign did not begin with Gandhi, yet it was under him it that became a centrepiece in the struggle for 'home' rule. In Gandhi's words, "to achieve Swaraj", we must enact "a complete boycott of foreign cloth". To do this, he suggested, "it is necessary"

1. For the mill-owners to regulate their profits and to manufacture principally for the Indian market,
2. For importers to cease to buy foreign goods …
3. For consumers to refuse to buy any foreign cloth and to buy *Khadi* wherever possible,
4. *For the consumers to wear only Khadi cloth*, mill cloth being retained for the poor who do not know the distinction between Swadeshi and Pardeshi [foreign],
5. For the consumers to use, till Swaraj is established and *Khadi* manufacture increased, *Khadi* just enough for covering the body,
6. *For the consumers to destroy Pardeshi cloth … or to sell it for use abroad, or to wear it out for all dirty work or during private hours*.

It is to be hoped that all the parties referred to in the foregoing clauses will respond well and simultaneously. But in the end success depends upon the persistent determination of the consumer. He has simply to decline to wear the badge of his slavery (1921a; 1921d, emphasis added).

The *khadi* campaign – as Gandhi's description shows – combined the economic and political critiques of British imperialism crucial to the secular nationalist ideology with a means to embody that argument. That is, the complicated arguments about what was 'foreign' and what was 'home' made in the countless discursive representations described above were abbreviated by the *khadi* campaign to a symbolic form that could be placed in the physical environment by human actors. Gandhi himself was, of course, at the forefront of this. His body, clad always in *khadi*, became a key symbol for the entire nationalist campaign (see figures 14 and 16).

Figure 16 Gandhi during the Salt march to the coast at Dandi; images from this march became symbolic touchstones for many secular Indian nationalists (image drawn from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Marche_sel.jpg; accessed 21 Oct 2005).

Yet importantly, this campaign extended – as Gandhi hoped – to every secular nationalist, "from one end of India to the other" (1921f; Bean 1989). That is, wearing *khadi* (gradually) became a way for great numbers to manipulate the physical environment – to manipulate their embodied, intimate worlds – so that they looked that little bit more like their abstract India. People could look at the streets of British India – spaces known at least partially through an intimate, embodied engagement –

and see people who considered themselves as living in the Indian national territory; and see the world that bit more like their India (see, for example, figure 17) (Bean 1989).

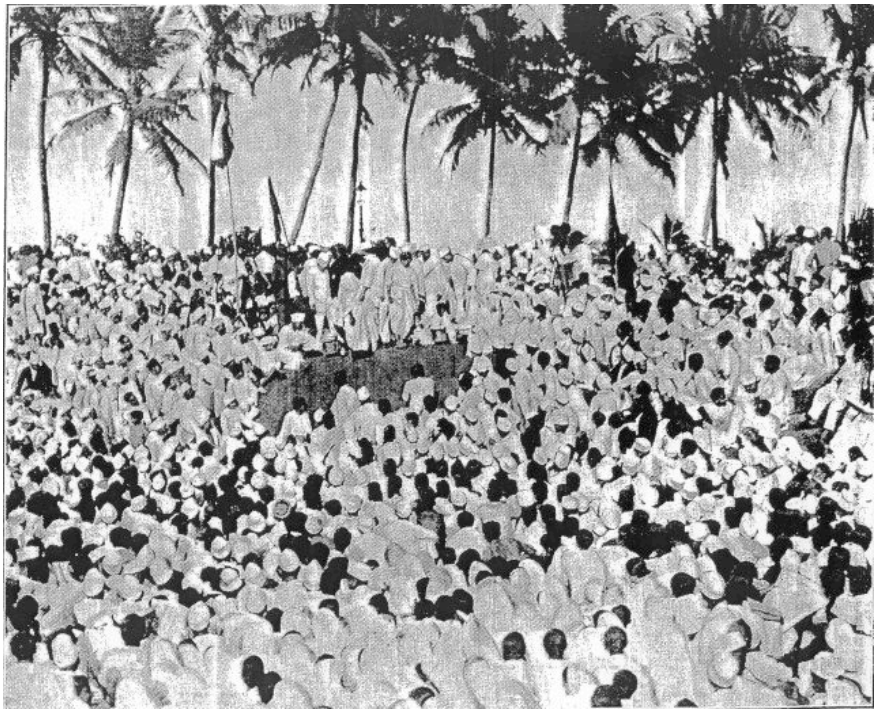

Figure 17 'A Salt Tax Demonstration in Bombay'. A large crowd of *khadi* wearing people gather to watch the manufacture of 'unofficial' salt – and each other. This demonstration took place the day after Gandhi first collected salt from the sea at Dandi (image drawn from *The Times* 1930).

Alongside the *khadi* campaign, secular Indian nationalists also employed a long campaign of non-violent civil disobedience (or *satyagraha*) as a means of performing their abstract India in intimate, material, settings. In particular, during the non-cooperation boycotts of the early 1920s, the salt *satyagraha* of the early 1930s and the Quit India movement of the Second World War, secular nationalists took a variety of deliberate actions in their local communities. These included boycotts of British institutions and products – such as the Post Office, schools, courts, trains and clothes; deliberate contraventions of British laws – such as the law forbidding 'unofficial' manufacture of salt (*The Times* 1930) (see figures 16 and 17), or the law of trespass (M K Gandhi 1921e); strikes (or *hartals*); and the crafting of obstructions to the movement of the colonial state (see for example figure 18) (Majumdar 1978e: 974). At one point in the non-cooperation campaign, the British Government, as Majumdar has recounted, "brought the Prince of Wales to India in the vain hope of rousing the traditional feeling of loyalty among the masses":

> But a *hartāl* was observed all over India on the day (17th November, 1921) the Prince landed in Bombay, and he had to pass for the most part through deserted streets when he visited the provincial capitals of India (1978e: 972; see also M K Gandhi 1921b).

Figure 18 A human blockade of Indian nationalists stop a railway train (drawn from J D Brown 1961: 74).

These acts of civil disobedience were explicitly *material* productions of space. We can consider here the human blockade shown in figure 18. In this photograph a number of *khadi* clad nationalists sit on the railway line, blocking the progress of a train. In essence, these were explicitly Indian bodies manipulating the material environment in one of the few ways open to them – by placing their bodies. This act of course relied on – and was shaped by – the abstract representations of space running through the secular nationalist ideology (that the railways, as a general form, were brought to British India "with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expenses the cotton and other raw materials for their manufactures" (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 94; Marx 1930 [1853]; see also M K Gandhi 1938 [1909]: ch 9; 1921i); yet this act of material spatial practice brought that abstract understanding into the physical world. Quite simply, these nationalists saw around them a physical environment that had been made – thanks to the placing of their bodies – to look like their abstract India.

It is important to recognise at this stage that these material productions of space – seen in the *khadi* and civil disobedience campaigns – were explicitly and deliberately reincorporated back into the abstract representations of the physical. That is, the stories of the trains blocked, and the pictures of *khadi* clad nationalists living 'in the Indian national territory', were retold and broadcast throughout British India. As an example of this, Gandhi began a 1921 issue of his newspaper *Young India* with the story of "an employee of the British India Steam Navigation Company… discharged for the effrontery to wear the Khadi cap" (1921g). This seemingly minor story was deliberately framed by Gandhi as something of national importance: "this is", he suggested, "an insult the enormity of which we have not yet realised".

> The two firms dismissed their poor clerks, because they had the manliness to wear their national dress or the insignia of their faith if you like. The proud firms could not brook an exhibition of manliness on the part of their clerks. The moment the men of India realise their manhood, and the women their womanhood, India becomes free (M K Gandhi 1921g).

By the middle of the 1940s enough people had seen, understood and embraced this secular nationalist India that, as far as the British were concerned, the imperial understanding of the land between the Himalayas and the seas was at an end.

The spatial productions of the secular nationalist state

In 1947, following their long political campaign, secular nationalist actors gained control of the Indian state. From this moment, they gained a new set of powerful tools and technologies capable of producing and propagating the secular nationalist understanding of the physical world; capable of normalising the intimate understandings of community and land of the leading nationalists within the disembodied depiction of India. This section charts the secular nationalist uses of state power to represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to the secular nationalist narrative and, simultaneously, to modify the physical environment through material spatial practice to make it look like their abstract India.

Representations of space

Following independence, secular Indian nationalists gained control of a number of powerful state held communication technologies. Most importantly, the powerful tools of the public education system, the monetary currency and state controlled media have been used to propagate and entrench the secular nationalist understandings of India developed over the preceding century.

Mass public education has, deservedly, been recognised as a plank central to the state led production of nations (see Gellner 1983: ch 4; 1973, see discussion in chapter 1). Central to this, a mass education system is (amongst other things) clearly a technology able to propagate understandings of

the physical world in an authoritative manner; to present a supposedly objective view of the 'world as it is', while hiding the influence of particular interests. In this vein, secular Indian nationalists have, since 1947, employed the public education system in India as a means of propagating their understandings of community and land (Chaturvedi 2002: 149; Kapur 2004; S Sinha 2005; Desai 1973: 11; Bhattacharya 2003). Most importantly, geography and history subjects have been taught with an explicit emphasis on the secular Indian nationalist understandings of the physical world. We can trace three techniques used in school textbooks to do this. I trace these techniques in the three school textbooks *School Atlas* (published by Dreamland (Prakash et al. 2004)), *Social Science: Geography (Land and People) Class 8* (published by the Chhattisgarh Government (SCERTCG 2005)) and the *Ultimate School Atlas for Primary Classes* (Kashyap 2004). All of these works conform, explicitly, to Government of India standards.

Firstly, we can find in these state guided textbooks and atlases (particularly those designed for the earlier school years) a framing of their portrayal of the world along nationalist – indeed, specifically secular Indian nationalist – lines: as if the world is naturally divided into national territories, as if national territories are prior. In this, both the Dreamland *Atlas* and the *Ultimate School Atlas* framed the great bulk of their information within what are labelled as the 'countries of the world'. Of the fifty-eight maps in the Dreamland *Atlas* for example, only six do not mark such divisions (see Prakash et al. 2004). This, in itself, is not directly reflective of nationalist interests. There is, of course, spatial information about the physical world – such as the sites were specific currencies have value, or the sites where certain laws apply – which can be usefully displayed in a country wide framework. Yet it must be acknowledged that there does exist other types of spatial information which need not be presented in such a way. Here we can look at the *Ultimate School Atlas*' map, 'India Soils' (see figure 19).

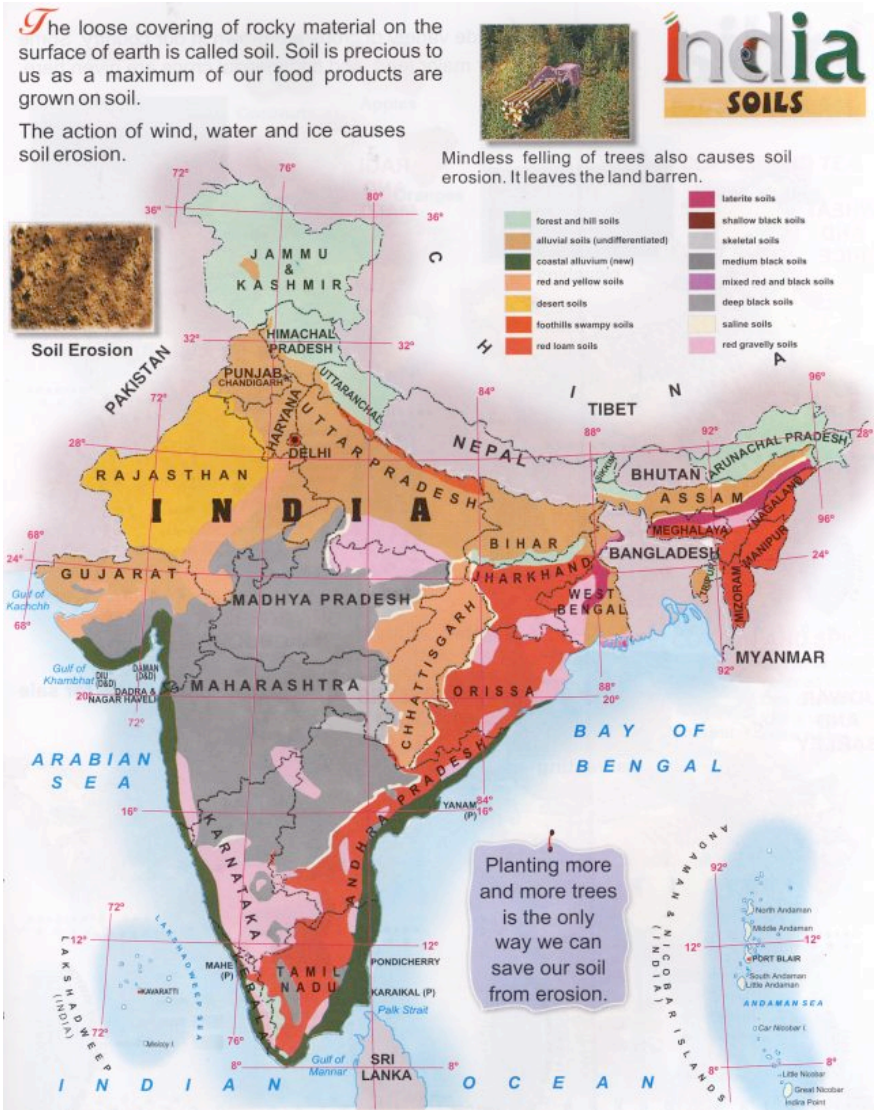

Figure 19 'India Soils'. Note the clear distinction between the soils of India, and those of neighbouring 'countries': one would assume that Pakistan and Nepal have soil types, probably similar to those of India – yet the information is presented as if the 'Indian soils' (and hence the Indian national territory) are fundamentally divorced from those of the neighbouring 'countries' (drawn from Kashyap 2004: 17).

Information about rainfall or soil types can, of course, be usefully framed within state or national territories. That is, we can clearly accept that there exists a powerful state claim – based, of course, on a secular nationalist argument – to a specific portion of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas, and that this portion of the Earth's surface has definable types of soil. Indeed, we can recognise that the Indian state would, for reasons of agricultural policy, be quite interested in such information. However, in the map 'India Soils', the framing is *prior* to the physical information that is presented. In essence, the map of figure 19 is not simply a chart of the physical data of soil types; rather, it is a chart of 'India's physical data'. Quite simply, the framing concept 'India' guides the depiction prior to the soils depicted. We can consider here an alternative. If one were offering a representation of soil types or rainfall levels more intimate to that data, would a national territory be necessary to frame that image? A more intimate representation of soil types might, instead, be guided

by the ways soils themselves varied, and framed by the places where soils did (and didn't) exist. What I am arguing is not that the representation of figure 19 is wrong. Rather, I argue that the supposedly innocent framing of the image actually hides – and normalises – key information. We can also notice at this point that the priority afforded to India in figure 19 – the priority that framed the other information – was drawn directly from the secular nationalist understanding of India. That is, the India that framed the information in figure 19 was not defined (though it certainly pretended to be) by any physical presence, by any material existence 'on the ground'. Even that which might physically define a 'country' – the limits to the monopoly of force of the state – did not frame this image. This is shown most directly by the inclusion in figure 19 of the entirety of Jammu and Kashmir, an area over which the Government of India does not hold the monopoly of force (see ICG 2002; 2003). In essence, the India depicted was defined by what secular nationalists imagined it ought to be; by the hiding of their interests within the abstract, disembodied picture.

Secondly, we can also find in these school textbooks a strategy of deliberate ambiguity about people and land. That is, we can find discussions where the nation – a collection of people – was discussed at the very same time, and with no qualifying remarks, as the physical territory. Such an ambiguity was employed in these texts to suggest to the students that there existed a direct and natural correlation between people and land, that the nation and the land were inherently locked together. Dreamland's *School Atlas*, for example, began its map and discussion 'India Political' with a description of the physical:

> India is the seventh largest country in the world and it has the second largest number of people. This vast land contains contrasts of every possible kind – in its peoples, languages, customs, religions and landscapes. There are massive mountain ranges hidden permanently under ice and snow, vast plains crossed by broad rivers, a parched desert, dense tropical forests and palm-fringed beaches (Prakash et al. 2004: 25).

This passage was directly followed by descriptions of the nation, also simply labelled India. Here the atlas offered that "India continues to make great progress in science, technology and industry" (Prakash et al. 2004: 25). At no stage in this short essay was a qualification made of this connection; the land and nation were obviously and unproblematically joined.

Finally, we can find in the school texts a deliberate use of photographs and other pictures to depict that which is visible in India. These photographs include both the particular – such as the *Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple) in Amritsar, the Taj Mahal in Agra, or the Sansad Bhavan (the parliament house) in New Delhi; and scenes of imagined normalcy – like that of 'Early morning in an Indian village' offered below in figure 22. What is important, I suggest, is that these pictures – thanks to their caption and the framing – presented their subjects as elements of the physical world visible and normal within India. That is, if the students presented with these pictures were to see the Taj Mahal or the

Sansad Bhavan for themselves, they would know they were in India; if the students saw their own village as somewhat like that of figure 22, they would know it is in India.

Directly echoing the secular nationalist use of the education system to propagate their understandings of India, it is worth recognising that the images emblazoned on the monetary currency produced by the Indian state have been used as a significant tool for the propagation of pictorial representations of the secular nationalist India. Variously, images of objects purportedly visible and normal in India, representative of India – such as the mountains of the Himalayas, village life or the Sansad Bhavan – see figures 20 and 21) – have been used on banknotes and coins (see a similar discussion in Hymans 2004). It is worth recognising that the audience of these pictorial representations is, of course, large and continuous. Countless people use and see these images every day.

Figure 20 A fifty rupees note, depicting the Parliament House of India, the Sansad Bhavan

Figure 21 A five rupees note, depicting a rural scene supposedly normal in India

Finally, alongside the mass public education system and the images emblazoned on the monetary currency, secular Indian nationalists have also employed state controlled and directed media as a means to propagate their understanding of the physical. This has included (amongst other things) the

publication of explicitly representational works like *India: A Pictorial Survey* and *India* (GoI 1950; 1958).

India: A Pictorial Survey (GoI 1950) offers a particularly compelling demonstration of the secular nationalist leaders using the organs of the state to depict their India; to normalise, for as broad an audience as possible, a certain understanding of what India looks like. In this, the volume opened with what is a typical secular nationalist argument:

> Separated from the mainland of Asia by the Himalayas in the north and bounded by the Indian Ocean to the south, India is a distinct geographical entity. In area 1, 220, 000 square miles, the country is two-thirds the size of Europe without Russia, or thirteen times the size of Great Britain. From the sub-tropics in the south, this sub-continent stretches for 2, 000 miles to the cold heart of Asia in the north and extends about 1, 500 miles from Kathiawar in the west to Assam in the east…
>
> Some travellers have described India as a land of princes and palaces, elephants, snakes and tigers. India has all these things, but they constitute only a part of the big picture that is India. Real India comprises broad fields and innumerable villages, many cities with modern buildings and big factories (GoI 1950: 6-7).

Following this introduction, the volume then offered some four hundred photographs of what this 'real India' looked like. Scenes offered included those of "The Land", "The People", "The Cities" and "Pastoral Scenes" (GoI 1950: 3); (see examples in figures 22 and 23).

Figure 22 'Early morning in an Indian village' (drawn from GoI 1950: 130).

All the photographs offered in the volume depicted physical objects – mountains, beaches, markets or people – claimed as visible and normal in India; as if once the reader had finished reading the volume they would have a decent grasp of what the real India looked like.

Figure 23 'Agricultural labourers at work' (drawn from GoI 1950: 141).

At heart, the leading activists and thinkers of the secular nationalist ideology have, since gaining state power, used a variety of powerful state controlled technologies to represent the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas as the Indian national territory. To do this, these leading secular nationalists have used the powerful authority of the state (we can consider here the discourse of authority that surrounds a school text or a banknote) to present what is supposedly an objective picture of India. We can turn here to the scene drawn from *India: A Pictorial Survey* offered in figure 22, 'Early morning in an Indian village'. This picture was offered in a state produced volume, and suggested that there was something 'Indian' about that particular village; that the people and buildings visible in the image could be understood through their essential 'Indian-ness'. What is crucial to note however, is that this 'Indian-ness' did not emerge from any 'objective' research, from any 'survey' the work may have claimed to have conducted. Indeed, the photograph of the village was not included in the volume for anything intimate to that particular village. Any examination of the buildings and clothes visible in the photograph would not reveal what made the village Indian. Rather, the factor that made this village Indian was the prior, abstract knowledge that that particular village was located in a physical area defined, in the abstract, as India. What we must also stress that while this abstract India was fundamental to making this particular village Indian, its inclusion in the volume as a depiction of that which is normal in India answered to more particular concerns. That is, this particular image was chose for the state produced volume by particular people who decided, in advance, that it was something normal in India. In essence, the image was given as a depiction of that which is normal in an Indian village thanks to both the abstract, disembodied India, and the author's personal, particular understandings of community and land. The Indian-ness of the village was, quite simply, carried to that village by the photographer and the publishers of the volume.

The similarity with Risley's *The People of India* (discussed in chapter 4) is clear. In both cases we can see a supposedly objective argument about the physicality of India, about that which can be seen in India. That is, in both Risley's pictures (see figure 12) and the pictures of the state produced *India: A Pictorial Survey* (see figure 22), we can see the idea that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is inhabited by people defined in relationship to the abstract, disembodied India. Both, essentially, offered a view of the people of India. The difference between the two can be seen in the particular ideas of community and land hidden within each supposedly objective portrayal. For Risley, the people of India that he described and photographed (see figure 12) deserved no political power because they were trapped in an 'irrational' and 'backwards' social system. Indeed, if one were to follow Risley's account, who would give political responsibility to a subsection of "the Doms… known as Maghaiya", who were "habitual thieves and burglars"? (1969 [1915]: facing plate XXXV). For the authors behind the state produced *India: A Pictorial Survey* however, the people of India were radically different. They were those who naturally deserved political power in the land between the Himalayas and the seas; they were those who were truly at home in India.

Material spatial practices

Alongside and intertwined with the state led representation of India, the arrival of independence also brought under secular nationalist control a number of powerful tools of material spatial practice; tools able to produce the secular nationalist India through the modification of the physical environment. Most importantly, secular nationalist actors gained control of the military, and tools of urban planning and mass infrastructure. As with the dramatic difference in representational abilities gained by secular nationalist actors with the winning of the state, these technologies of material spatial practice were radically different from those available to secular nationalist actors during the independence struggle.

In 1947, secular nationalist actors gained control of the Indian military. Though they were initially somewhat reluctant to use military force as a way of producing their India (probably, as many have suggested, because of the powerful discourses of non-violence present in the anti-colonial struggle (P Chatterjee 1997: 26; Fernandes 2000: 345)), we can find in a number of military actions a clear drive to perform the understandings of the secular nationalist ideology, to produce, through the manipulation of the physical environment, the secular nationalist India.

Military actions designed to perform the secular nationalist ideology have focused largely on countering four rival ways of understanding the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas; four forms of military emplacement not desired by secular nationalist actors. These are those of the independently minded princely states; those of the small non-British colonies on the Indian

subcontinent; those of neighbouring states with claims to portions of the land between the Himalayas and the seas; and those of insurrections within this area. A detailed description of each military action is not necessary here. However, in the rhetoric surrounding and the actions of Operation Polo (the 'police action' to seize the princely state of Hyderabad in September 1948 (see Patel 1949: 4)), Operation Vijay (the seizure of the Portuguese colonial lands of Goa, Daman and Diu in December 1961 (Fernandes 2000: 345-6)), the conflicts with Pakistan over Kashmir (in 1947-49, 1965 and 1999 (D Sinha 2002; Singhal 1967: 30)) and Operation Blue Star (the military campaign against pro-Khalistan separatists in June 1984 (Van Der Veer 1996)) we can clearly find the argument that each operation was designed to make or maintain the secular nationalist India. In the lead up to the invasion of the princely state of Hyderabad for example, the area was discursively cast as naturally within the Indian national territory (*The Times* 1948c) and, while governed independently, a clear threat to the rest of India. In this, Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel's 1948 *Government of India White Paper on Hyderabad* asserted that

> The Nizam [absolute monarch of Hyderabad] is converting Hyderabad into a *potential foreign base*. With the help of a very small group of the militant section of the minority and his personal wealth he seeks to suppress all democratic movements in the State and to develop an independent theocratic Fascist State *in the heart of India* (cited in *The Times* 1948f, emphasis added).

With this framing, the Government of India attacked the troops of the Nizam on September 13th 1948 (*The Times* 1948a). After four and half days of fighting, the Nizam ordered a ceasefire, and broadcast a message of surrender; "free entry" was afforded to the Indian troops (*The Times* 1948i). In essence, this 'free entry' permitted the placing of explicitly Indian bodies and Indian tanks in a physical location. In essence, the people who saw those bodies saw an embodied India in the intimate spaces of their daily lives.

Beyond military actions, secular nationalists have also used urban planning and infrastructural projects to produce their India. On a simple level, this has involved the removal of the statues and street signs associated with the British Empire, and their replacement with those of secular nationalist heroes. Dalhouise Square in Calcutta / Kolkata, for example, was renamed BBD Bagh in honour of three heroes (Binoy, Badal and Dinesh) of the independence struggle. At a more elaborate level, secular nationalist actors have also attempted to use the state to redesign the cities of the Indian subcontinent, to create a physical aesthetic both independent from colonial structures, and "unfettered by the traditions of the past" (Nehru, cited in Jackson 2002: 66 n 3). For Nehru, this was most clearly displayed in Chandigarh, the planned city designed to be symbolic of the new India; designed to offer new ways of seeing the city in southern Asia (Perera 2004; Sagar 2002).

A secular nationalist India

At the close of the previous chapter, I drew on an argument of R Palme Dutt's to describe the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia. We can return to this argument here. "The introduction of the English landlord system", suggested Dutt, "of individual landholding, of mortgage and sale of lands, and of a whole apparatus of English bourgeois legal conceptions alien to Indian economy and administered by an alien bureaucracy" transformed the ultimate understanding of the lands of southern Asia (1970 [1940]: 228). In essence, the British state assumed, through a variety of specifically modern transformations, the ultimate possession of the land. "From begin owners of the soil," Dutt concluded, "the peasants have become tenants" (1970 [1940]: 229).

The peasants of southern Asia were, as I suggested in chapter 4, expropriated from lands that were theirs. They were expropriated from soil they had known intimately through face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. Yet they were not, I must stress again, expropriated from India. 'India', a land that could be known with certainty, about which ownership could be authoritatively defined, did not exist for these peasants. It did not exist until it was made in disembodied abstraction. Yet the pain of the expropriation was still felt. In the earliest years of the dominance of disembodied integration, this expropriation occurred 'externally' to the lives of the peasants of British India – through the marginalisation and making redundant of what had been their primary understandings of community and land. Later, however, a class emerged in British India – a 'native elite' – who incorporated the disembodied spatial knowledge of the British Empire into their own lives, into their own ways of seeing the physical world. In essence, this class were the first to see the world in the disembodied ways suggested by the British Empire; to see the world with a certain India in it. Yet the marginalisation – the expropriation, to use Dutt's phrase – was still felt. For this class, the marginalisation was an 'internal' matter. It was, I suggest, a marginalisation of their parents' and their religious institutions' stories of community and land within their own ways of seeing the world. In essence, this native elite found in their minds radically contradictory ways to see the world around them.

Throughout this chapter, I have described one of the more significant attempts in southern Asia to resolve the contradiction felt between the intimate and the more abstract understandings of community and land; to resolve the contradiction between the still dominant Cartesian understandings of the world and the intimate understandings fostered by family and faith. This response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration – labelled for convenience as secular Indian nationalism – has revolved around the concept of home. At heart, this response has argued that the disembodied, abstract India should be understood through the intimate notion of *home*; that those who call this India home, whose homes are in this India, are the rightful occupants of this space.

To make such an understanding normal – to shape the dominant Cartesian India according to the particular understandings of the nationalist leaders – various activists and thinkers engaged in a complicated campaign of spatial production. In this, they used a variety of both state and non-state technologies to both represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to their particular understandings of community and land; and through material spatial practice to modify the physical sites of that land to make them look like the secular nationalist India. Overall, this campaign has sought to find ways to fit – through the concept of home – peoples' intimate understandings of community and land within the disembodied abstraction; to situate personal understandings of the world derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration within a particular disembodied India. This campaign, I suggest, has in some ways restored the ownership of the land between the Himalayas and the seas to the peasants from which it was expropriated.

What is crucial to recognise, however, is that this response has remained, necessarily, shaped by the particular understandings of the secular nationalist leaders. We can draw here from Nehru's *The Discovery of India*:

> Though books and old monuments and past cultural achievements helped to produce some understanding of India, they did not satisfy me or give me the answer I was looking for… New forces arose that drove us to the masses in the villages, and for the first time, *a new and different India rose up before the young intellectuals who had almost forgotten its existence or attached little importance to it*. It was a disturbing sight, not only because of its stark misery and the magnitude of its problems, but because it began to upset some of our values and conclusions. *So began for us the discovery of India as it was*… (1981 [1946]: 57, emphasis added).

Not quite. India, despite Nehru's assertion, was carried in the minds of these young intellectuals to 'the masses in the villages'. For these young intellectuals, India had already been defined as a certain spatial entity within disembodied, Cartesian abstraction. Yet these young intellectuals were willing – as they already knew the peasants were 'at home in India' – to find ways to fit the 'worlds' of the masses, the supposed 'Indias' of the masses, into the disembodied national framework. The ways they found, the ways to normalise the particular understandings of community and land within the disembodied framework, were, of course, defined by those who led the movement; defined by those who went to the masses to look for their India.

What we must now recognise is that others – others who had also felt the contradiction fostered by the disembodied representations of space offered by the British Empire – saw different ways to respond; different ways to situate their intimate spaces within the abstract India. One of these – a response that has grown perhaps ever more potent in recent years – is that of 'Hindu nationalism'. It is to this response I now turn.

6

A Hindu nationalist India

In chapter 3, I argued that to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, we must chart two things: the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and the response to this emerging from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. This chapter continues this exploration. In this, I build on the discussions offered in the previous two chapters (of the emergence to dominance of disembodied forms of integration and spatial representation in southern Asia, offered in chapter 4; and of a 'secular nationalist' response to this emergence, offered in chapter 5) by charting here another significant response to the initial emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia emerging from the intimate forms of integration marginalised by this emergence. In particular, I explore in this chapter the argument that India, the land between the Himalayas and the seas, is the rightful territory of those whose *culture* and *ancestry* are *indigenous* to this land. This response can be usefully labelled as 'Hindu nationalism'.

The Hindu nationalist understanding of India represents a significant ideological response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia; a significant attempt to reconcile what I have suggested was a key ontological contradiction felt between the disembodied representations of the world that emerged to dominance with the British Empire, and representations of the world derived from more intimate – face-to-face and agency-extended – forms of integration. In other words, during the British imperial dominance of southern Asia (discussed in chapter 4), a significant normalisation of particular, personal understandings of the physical world – those of the British administrators – occurred within the emergent framework of disembodied abstraction. In this, the British administrators treated their own particular understandings of community and land – understandings at least in part derived from family, guild and church – as normal elements of the 'objective', disembodied picture of the world. This, of course, presented few problems for the British administrators themselves. Yet for others – for the 'native elite' educated in the British schools and universities – the supposedly objective, disembodied stories of the world they were taught

marginalised and negated the understandings of the physical world offered by their parents and their religious institutions. In essence, this native elite found in their minds radically contradictory ways to see the world around them.

To attempt to resolve this contradiction, various activists, thinkers and politicians have engaged in an elaborate campaign to achieve two interrelated goals: to renegotiate the terms of the supposedly objective disembodied representations of the physical to make them more congruent with the understandings derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended forms of community; and to renegotiate the spatial representations employed in their more intimate (face-to-face and agency-extended) forms of integration to match with those of the disembodied. More simply, these activists and thinkers have attempted to make the highly abstract 'world' look like their intimate day-to-day spaces, and their intimate day-to-day spaces look like their understanding of the highly abstract 'world'. For Hindu nationalists, this campaign has revolved around the concept of *indigeneity*: around the idea that at a highly abstract, disembodied level, India should be defined first and foremost by the intimate, personal factors of *culture* and *ancestry*. It is the goal of this chapter to trace the development, shape and success of this campaign.

Thus to trace the development, shape and success of the Hindu nationalist campaign, I begin this chapter with a brief statement of the principles and claims central to the ideology. These principles will be employed and elaborated upon throughout the remainder of the chapter. Following this, the second section will offer a political history of the ideology. Here I trace the debates and changes in emphasis that have characterised its evolution. In the third and fourth sections of the chapter, I turn more directly to the spatial campaign of the ideology. I begin this with a brief statement of the ways leading Hindu nationalists have seen and understood the world around them. This section will mirror the 'key principles' discussed in the first section of the chapter. I follow this with a more detailed study of the central ways Hindu nationalists have produced their India: how they have worked to normalise their intimate ideas of community and land within the supposedly objective, disembodied 'world'.

The key principles of the Hindu nationalist ideology

There are alive today perhaps a billion people who might claim to be members of the Indian nation; to be members of the rightful political community in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. As I have argued throughout this thesis, not a single one of these billion people understands this India in a fashion identical to any other. That is, despite the powerful claims that the Indian nation is some objectively definable entity – that India can be seen by the rational gaze – we must stress (as I have

suggested in chapter 1) that it is, instead, a subjectively experienced phenomenon. It is, I argue, a form of political community felt and understood in innumerably different, personal ways. Yet despite this clearly subjective and diffuse understanding of India, we can find some principles which can be considered a potent nationalist ideology. We can, I suggest, find a potent response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia emergent from the more intimate forms of integration marginalised by this emergence in the ideology of *Hindu nationalism*.

This 'Hindu nationalism' is the ideology built in the writings and actions of V D Savarkar, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, M S Golwalkar, L K Advani and others, and organisations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is the ideology which (as Sunil Khilnani has suggested) has seen India as

> a victim of recurring invasions – whether led by Muslim horsemen or European adventurers, Aryan tribes or satellite TV moguls… [It has seen] India's history over the last millennium as a series of rude interruptions: its adherents promise to end all such interruptions, and to return to an original purity (1999: xv-xvi).

This section offers a brief statement of the key principles of the ideology of Hindu nationalism. These principles will be expanded upon, explained and employed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

At the core of the Hindu nationalist ideology is a simple argument. This argument is that all those with culture and ancestry indigenous to the stretch of the Earth's surface between the Himalayas and the seas – that all those with culture and ancestry indigenous to India – are members of the Indian nation; members of the rightful political community in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. Three points implied in this Hindu nationalist method of imagining the nation are worth further elaboration here.

Firstly, the Hindu nationalist argument has been used for at least a century (as I will show below) to exclude and marginalise others from their India. These 'others' have included the British (particularly during the anti-colonial struggle), Muslims, Christians and (to a lesser extent) modern secularists and Marxists. What has united these groups in Hindu nationalist thought is that *all* (supposedly) exhibit cultures or ancestry (or both) 'not indigenous' to India. Muslims living in southern Asia, for example, have been considered by Hindu nationalists to be a 'denationalised' group; to be people who have willingly given up their 'natural' culture and are ignorant of the 'true India' (see for example Golwalkar 1966: 166). What this point has also meant is that for Hindu nationalists, the struggle for independence remains a matter of unfinished business. That is, while great effort was expended in the first half of the 20th century to dislodge the British rulers (see discussion in chapter 5), Hindu nationalists have maintained that the influence of other foreign cultures and peoples – Islam, Christianity, secularism and Marxism – should also be removed from the land between the Himalayas and the seas.

Secondly, the Hindu nationalist argument has also stressed that while an individual's culture should determine their membership of the Indian nation, it should determine their political power within it. That is, while Hindu nationalists have clearly argued that those possessing 'foreign' cultures should be excluded from political power in India, they have also maintained that those possessing 'indigenous' cultures deserve no greater or lesser access to political power because of the particularities of their culture. What this has meant is that the plethora of different spiritual, cultural and caste groups seen by Hindu nationalists as indigenous to India – whether these groups consider themselves 'Hindu' or not – are, in Hindu nationalist eyes, equal members of the Hindu / Indian nation. Moreover, conflicts between these different groups (such as between Brahmanism and Buddhism, or between 'high' and 'low' castes), are irrelevant to an individual's membership of the nation. It must be noted, however, that this stance is not entirely settled within Hindu nationalist discourse. There does exist a significant body who have argued that the Hindu nation should be guided and lead by the traditional 'upper' castes, the Brahmins and Kshatriya. More will be discussed on these arguments below.

Thirdly, the Hindu nationalist argument has stressed that as people have possessed cultures and ancestry 'indigenous to India' for countless generations, the Hindu nation holds a great historical continuity. That is, all who have ever borne cultures and ancestry indigenous to the land between the Himalayas and the seas have been, by Hindu nationalist definition, members of a great trans-historical community; members of a nation with a history. More will be discussed on this below.

All three of these points are essential to the Hindu nationalist ideology. What must be stressed at this stage however is that the key Hindu nationalist claim – the argument that has united all three of these points – has always relied on and maintained the fundamental priority of India. That is, the argument that those who possess culture and ancestry indigenous to India are the rightful occupants of the area between the Himalayas and the seas has relied on the ontological existence of a defined, definable India: an 'India' in which certain cultures can be 'indigenous', an 'India' in which certain ancestries can be 'native'. This means, I argue (and in parallel with suggestions made in chapter 5), that the production of this 'India' has been crucial to the very production of the Hindu / Indian nation. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the production of this Hindu nationalist India – and hence, the Hindu nationalist ideology – has occurred through the response to the dominant disembodied integration and spatial representation first fostered by the British Empire. In essence, the Hindu nationalist ideology is a powerful ideological renegotiation of the disembodied depictions of the physical along the lines of certain individuals' intimate understandings of culture; a normalisation of certain intimate understandings of community and land (that is, the understandings derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended communities of the Hindu nationalist leaders) within the framework of disembodied abstraction. More will be discussed on this below. In the meantime however, with

these principles in hand I now offer a political history of the ideology. In this, I explore the debates and political context that have characterised the evolution of Hindu nationalism.

A political history of Hindu nationalism

The ideas at the heart of the Hindu nationalist ideology have been guided and shaped by thinkers, activists and organisations for over a century. This section traces this historical development. I break discussion here into four significant periods in the development of the ideology: early Hindu organisation to 1875; the growth of Hindu organisation between 1875 and 1905; Hindu nationalist thought during the anti-colonial movement between 1905 and 1947; and Hindu nationalist thought during the independent era, from 1947 to the present.

Early Hindu organisation

As I suggested in chapter 3, the first stirrings of nationalist thought in British India emerged in the early decades of the 19th century. This section traces the gradual emergence in these decades of thinkers and activists who considered themselves in some way as members of a 'Hindu' community. During this period, the work of these thinkers and activists was characterised by two related – though antagonistic – projects: one an attempt to defend 'Hindu tradition' from the power of the imperial state, the other an attempt to 'reform' the 'degenerate' and 'dissonant' practices of contemporary Hindus. Before discussing these projects, a brief background is necessary.

As I suggested in chapter 4, the British were, by the early 19th century, beginning to drive significant changes amongst the population of their Indian empire. Of particular importance for this discussion were two developments; the deliberate creation of a 'native elite', and the dramatic reorganisation of the cultures and peoples seen in British India. The deliberately created native elite – the class who not only had their lives altered by the disembodied integration of the British Empire, but who incorporated the British Empire's disembodied representations of community and land into their ways of seeing the world – has been described in different ways in chapters 4 and 5. Further elaboration of the emergence of this class is unnecessary here. What is of greater importance here is to return to what I described in chapter 4 as the expansion of disembodied abstraction in southern Asia through the 'knowledge intensive' imperial state. In this, we can find a dramatic reorganisation of the cultures and peoples of southern Asia. This directly influenced the thinking of the native elite.

From the very moment of their arrival in southern Asia in 1498, European powers began to collect and record information about the people and lands they were encountering. This, as I suggested in chapter

4, eventually developed into a variety of fully fledged scientific pursuits. What is important to stress once again is that this knowledge gathering – seen most visibly in the colonial pursuits of ethnography and geography – began to situate knowledge about the people and lands of India in an overall knowledge hierarchy; to place the people and lands of India before the disembodied – and supposedly objective – imperial gaze. What is perhaps most important for this discussion is that the imperial picture of the people of India included specific narratives of 'order' and 'disorder'; specific narratives about what was 'civilised' and what was 'uncivilised' (see Zavos 2004: ch 2; Metcalf 1994: 1). At heart, this focused on a description of the British society in British India as intrinsically modern, organised and rational – while the native society was almost always cast as traditional, disorganised, irrational and backwards, as a corruption of former glories. In this, the British administrators regularly championed the idea that the native society had experienced a 'golden age' in the Vedic or Aryan era (Zavos 2004: 32), and that the contemporary 'departure' from this was a corruption (see for example J Mill 1975 [1817]: book 2 chapters 1, 10). For the British, this idea offered a fixed and (supposedly) knowable picture of the core essentials of 'Hindu culture'; for native thinkers however, this began to offer a modern, historicised picture of the 'Hindu community'.

Meanwhile, while the British were situating the peoples, cultures and lands of southern Asia in a total picture of India, they were also conducting an explicit and deliberate project to change the peoples they governed. At its high point, this involved explicit state intervention into certain native cultural practices (such as the banning of *sati* – the practice of widow immolation – in 1829, or the destruction of the 'violent cult' of the 'Thugs' at a similar time); yet this was not typical. Throughout much of their rule, the British were largely unwilling to directly intervene in what they saw as the established practices of the natives (see for example Hastings, discussed in Zavos 2004: 30; *The Times* 1885). Thus instead of direct intervention, British liberals sought to change and 'civilise' the peoples of their Indian empire through incentive and education. In this, Thomas Macaulay's influential desire to form a 'class of interpreters', "Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (1958 [1835]: 601) launched a project of British education that profoundly affected the understandings and politics of the peoples of British India. In Macaulay's 'class of interpreters' we can, as I have suggested previously, find the emergence of the native elite crucial to the development of nationalism in British India; what is also important to stress here is that the imperial picture of the people of India taught to this native elite allowed them to see their 'Hinduism' – their intimate cultural knowledge derived from their face-to-face and agency-extended integration – in ways radically different from their parents.

Thus it was in this environment – with an imperial state situating the cultures and societies of southern Asia in a Cartesian, historical India, and a growing native elite – that the earliest prototypes of a

nationalist imagination of the Hindu community emerged. This occurred in two related, though antagonistic, projects.

On the one hand, we can find in the early 1830s thinkers and activists who began to make representations on behalf of what can, perhaps, be considered the 'orthodox Hindu community'. Perhaps the earliest of these was the Calcutta Dharma Sabha. This group formed in 1831 with the goal of "defending Hindu tradition" against Governor-General Bentinck's *sati* prohibition (Zavos 2004: 44). What is important to recognise is that the Calcutta Dharma Sabha operated (directly echoing Rammohan Roy, who arose to prominence in the same environment; see chapter 5 and below) very much within the disembodied administrative logic of the colonial state. In this they formulated petitions and memorials addressed to authority, and conducted their business and discussions along the lines of parliamentary procedure (Zavos 2004: 44).

Meanwhile, in this same milieu other activists and thinkers were instigating a rather different (though related) project of 'Hindu reform'. Perhaps the clearest early example of this can be found in the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj formed in 1828 with the goal of resisting the growing Christian missionary presence in Bengal through the instigation of a 'reforming' and 'modernising' spiritual project (Kopf 1979: Ch 3). This project centred on the rejection of the 'corrupt' contemporary religious forms in favour of what were considered the 'essentials' of Hinduism. This reform, it was assumed, would make Hinduism more palatable to both the 'modern-minded' Hindus who saw the religion as a degraded and illiberal faith, and those marginalised by contemporary Hindu practice. This 'return to essentials' included the rejection of idol worship in favour of devotion to 'one true god'; the rejection of caste segregated eating and worship; and an acceptance of widow remarriage. All, importantly, were justified as a *return* to 'Upanishadic rationalism' (see Jones 1976: 15, 17; Jaffrelot 1993: 517). What the Brahmo Samaj leaders were attempting was an erasure of the 'irrationalism', 'degeneracy' and 'division' supposedly apparent in contemporary Hindu practice in favour of a horizontally equal Hindu community. As with the Calcutta Dharma Sabha, the Brahmo Samaj also operated along the lines of the disembodied administrative logic of the colonial state. Though its aims were not as explicitly political as the Calcutta Dharma Sabha (that is, it did not address itself to the colonial state), the Brahmo Samaj operated with a formal structure and legal definition, with executive boards, secretaries and membership lists (Zavos 2004: 45).

What is crucial about the Calcutta Dharma Sabha and the Brahmo Samaj is that both demonstrated an attempt to respond to the marginalising dominance of the disembodied integration fostered by the British; both sought ways to assert their intimate understandings of community and land within the disembodied framework. For the Calcutta Dharma Sabha, this response meant attempting to shape the laws the British were enacting (such as the prohibition of *sati*) so they better reflected the Dharma

Sabha leaders' intimate understandings of community and land. For the Brahmo Samaj, this response meant attempting to shape their intimate spaces according to the more 'rational' and 'organised' fashion suggested by the British. In these responses we can find the prototypical beginnings of the goals, methods of operation, internal debates and understandings of the nation that have shaped much subsequent Hindu nationalist thought. That is, though we cannot call either of these groups Hindu nationalist, the Brahmo Samaj and the Calcutta Dharma Sabha sought to better the Hindu community (however they understood it) within the framework of modern disembodied integration. What is also important to recognise is that these groups – with the antagonistic goals of defending 'orthodox tradition' and offering templates for 'Hindu reform' – marked the earliest forays in a debate over the meaning of Hinduism and the membership of the Hindu nation, that has continued to the present.

The growth of Hindu organisation – 1875 to 1905

Towards the end of the 19th century, the ideas and politics of the early 'Hindu reform' and 'orthodox' societies gained momentum amongst some sections of the native elite of British India. This section traces their growth from the birth of the Arya Samaj in 1875 and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in 1887 to the beginnings of the independence movement in 1905. It was during this period that much of the ideological groundwork for 20th century Hindu nationalism was laid.

As I suggested above, the 19th century British portrayal of Hindu society – as the remnants of an ancient and glorious golden age "run to seed", as a corrupt and "confused tangle of divine personalities and incarnations" (Monier-Williams, cited in Metcalf 1994: 136) – had heavily influenced some of the era's leading Hindu philosophers. The Brahmo Samaj, for example, had internalised this criticism and attempted to reform 'Hindu society' in light of 19th century liberal philosophy and enlightenment rationalism (Jones 1976: 30). Yet despite offering the beginnings of a project of 'Hindu reform', the Brahmo Samaj became increasingly interested in Christian thought (particularly under the 1858 – 1877 leadership of Keshabchandra Sen (J Das 1958: 480; Mansingh 1996: 370-1)). For many, this made the Brahmo Samaj elitist and unwelcome; a group ignorant of the 'essential values' of Hindu society (see discussion in Jones 1976: 113-4). Yet importantly, the British instituted critique – that Hindu society was a corrupt and degenerate mockery of former glories – remained influential. Thus later in the 19th century, other organisations and thinkers launched different attempts to reform 'Hindu society'. One of the most influential was the Arya Samaj.

The Arya Samaj was formed in 1875 under the leadership of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a *sannyasin* (spiritual recluse) influenced by the methods of the Brahmo Samaj (Jaffrelot 1993: 518). Like the architects of the Brahmo Samaj before him, Dayananda had seen contemporary Hinduism in a 'deplorable state', its members quite open to the 'conquest' of other religions (Prasad 1978: xxxvii).

In response, Dayananda argued in his opus *Satyarth Prakash* (the doctrinal foundations of Arya Samaj thought) that social rejuvenation must be found in a return to the 'essential core' of Hinduism (1978 [1875]). For him, this 'pure' core of Hinduism rested in the certain texts: the correct (or '*ārsha*') scripture was that composed during Vedic times (the *Vedas* themselves, and all contemporaneous scholarship), while everything composed after the Vedic era was held as in error (or '*un-ārsha*') and not to be trusted (Dayananda Sarasvati 1978 [1875]: 69; Jones 1976: 31). In Dayananda's thinking, the *Vedas* were the texts of complete truth; the Vedic era the golden age of Hinduism, and of humanity in general (1987: 82-3).

As Dayananda extrapolated in *Satyarth Prakash*, this doctrine called for Hindus to worship the unitary God of the *Vedas*, and reject all elements of 'popular' or contemporary Hinduism (1978 [1875]: 565, 567). Idol worship, hereditary caste, Brahminical superiority, child marriage, pilgrimage, the ban on widow remarriage and restrictions on foreign travel were all to be abandoned in favour of a 'rationalistic' monotheism (Jones 1976: 32; Dayananda Sarasvati 1987: 84-6). Beyond these changes, Dayananda's Arya Samaj argued for a reinterpretation of ritual practice to make the Hindu community a more equal, meritocratic and (supposedly) open society. Perhaps most importantly, the Arya Samaj's reinterpretation of the purification ritual of '*shuddhi*' allowed 'reconversion' of those who had left the Hindu fold (Rai 1966: 190). Meanwhile, the merit based *varna* system of the *Vedas* was suggested as the scripturally correct replacement for hereditary caste (Dayananda Sarasvati 1987: 85). In this schema, Dayananda argued that instead of children automatically deriving caste from their parents, "classes of all persons [*varna*] should be determined according to *the qualifications, accomplishments and character* in the twenty-fifth or the sixteenth year, according as they are males or females" (2004 [1875]: 100, emphasis added; see also Jaffrelot 1993: 518).

The Arya Samaj was crucial to the development of modern Hindu nationalism. Most centrally, Dayananda's philosophy offered a means of imagining the 'Hindu community' – previously an intractably divided and hierarchical collection of communities and cultures – as a *nation*. In this, the ideas of a pure core of Hinduism and a meritocratic reformation of the caste system (both key elements of Arya Samaj thought and action) were clearly attempts to suggest that Hindus were members of a horizontally bound community, with an eternal, pure, centre. These are clearly nationalist concepts. What is crucial to recognise is that the Arya Samaj (like the Brahmo Samaj and the Calcutta Dharma Sabhas of earlier decades, and the Indian National Congress to emerge soon after (see chapter 5)) was fundamentally influenced by the disembodied integration fostered by the British Empire. That is, not only was the critique of Hindu society which inspired Dayananda clearly of British origin (see further discussion in chapter 4), the ideas and formation of the organisation reflected an embrace of the centrality and certainty of disembodied abstraction. In this, the very idea that there existed a central, certain 'essence of Hinduism' (see discussion in Thapar 1985: 18; Dalmia

1995) clearly demonstrates an abstracted – disembodied – way of looking at the practices and thoughts of Dayananda's Hindu contemporaries.

The arguments and claims of the Arya Samaj were not without controversy in the 19th century 'Hindu community'. While Dayananda argued forcefully for reform, other voices rose to defend their Hinduism in a rather different way. These voices can be observed most clearly in the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and, later, the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal. Together, these groups saw themselves defending the 'eternal religion', the 'Hindu orthodoxy'.

The Sanatana Dharma Sabhas were a collection of spiritual organisations which emerged in the same milieu as the Arya Samaj. In this, the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas saw, like the Arya Samaj, a 'disorganised Hinduism' rife with caste oppression and prone to the danger of the proselytising 'foreign' religions (Zavos 2004: 54); beyond this, both groups also saw themselves as representing the interests of the 'eternal religion' (the *sanatana dharma*) (Jones 1976: 109; Dayananda Sarasvati 1978 [1875]: 80; see also Griffith 2000: 9). What divided these two camps, however, was the fundamentally different ways each imagined the shape of the Hindu religion and, crucially, the Hindu community.

The Sanatana Dharma Sabhas arose to defend what they considered 'orthodox Hinduism' from 'foreign threats' and 'the Arya heresy' (Zavos 2004: 54). What is important to stress here is that despite the Sanatani claims, there simply did not exist in the 19th century any *monolithic* 'Hindu orthodoxy'. To use John Zavos' metaphor, there was no 'catholic' orthodoxy against which the 'protestant' Arya Samaj railed. Rather, the 'established Hinduism' of the time (if it can actually be labelled as such) was configured on a regional basis, specific to caste and *sampradaya* ('what is handed over': the teachings of local sages) institutions of an area (Zavos 2004: 42). What is crucial is that the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas did *not* arise to protect this 'established Hinduism'. Rather, they sought to defend – or, more accurately, create – "orthodoxy in the *pan-Hindu context*", or, "a *pan-Hindu constituency*" (Zavos 2004: 50, emphasis added). What the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas sought was the recognition that the 'Hinduism' of existing "practice and structure" (Zavos 2004: 53) (the very elements of contemporary Hindu life rejected by the Arya Samaj) was, however heterogenous, evidence of a definable Hindu community. The Hindu community was, in Sanatani eyes, already an organic community, a whole consisting of mutually necessary castes, cultures and sects. All the Sanatana Dharma Sabha thinkers asked was that – because each caste was a necessary element of the whole – greater respect and patriotic brotherliness be shown to all Hindus. This goal points to the fundamentally different ways the 'orthodox' and 'reform' societies of the 19th century saw their Hindu religion. Where the 'reformist' Arya Samaj saw Hinduism in doctrinal terms (embodied in the timeless lessons of the *Veda*) and sought to return to what they considered the pure Hindu tradition,

the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas rejected core doctrine and instead emphasised what they suggested were Hinduism's heterogenous spiritual teachings.

Perhaps the most explicit argument of the 'orthodoxy's' 'pan-Hindu' community developed within the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal (see discussion in *The Times* 1921c). This group first met in 1887 at Haridwar, and behaved as a Congress style British India-wide umbrella organisation of regional Sanatana Dharma Sabhas (Zavos 2004: 53). Its goals were clearly what the 'orthodoxy' considered pan-Hindu: refuting "the new propaganda of the modern Hindu sects" (Zavos 2004: 53), championing cow-protection, rejecting government intervention in social issues (such as marriage reform (*The Times* 1890)), and calling for obedience to Pandits and Brahmins. This agenda was clearly dominated, as Zavos has suggested, by the issues of "practice and structure" and deliberately avoided any doctrinal discussion (2004: 54). This allowed the spiritually disparate 'orthodoxy' to imagine a Hindu community, and to establish a common political platform. Thus in 1902, the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal claimed as its constituency "the whole of the orthodox classes of the Hindus in India" (Zavos 2004: 54; *The Times* 1907a). By this period, the 'orthodox' movement, led by the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, was explicitly equating 'nation' and 'religion' (defined in the broadest terms), and arguing that national rejuvenation – *throughout British India* – must come through national education in the national religion (*The Times* 1907a). Thus though the 'orthodox' movement rejected the Arya Samaj's attempt to find for Hinduism an explicit doctrinal core, it held explicitly to the idea that the Hindus of India shared a knowable, definable, *national* community.

Between the Arya Samaj and the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas, a body of opinion emerged in the late 19th century which saw the Hindus of British India as a nation. What is crucial to recognise is that in both these camps we can see an attempt to respond to the marginalising dominance of disembodied integration fostered by the British; in both we can see attempts to normalise particular understandings of community and land within the disembodied framework. For the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, this meant attempting to shape the laws of the British state (such as the marriage reform act) so they better reflected the interests of the 'pan-Hindu orthodoxy'. For the Arya Samaj, this response meant attempting to shape peoples' intimate spaces according to the 'essentials' of Hinduism. What must be recognised now is that, until the early years of the 20th century, the combined 'reform' and 'orthodox' movements – despite explicitly nationalist goals – held a largely internal gaze. In this, they focused largely on the social and religious problems within their Hindu community. Only a marginal interest was paid to the British state, and even less to the Muslim community of British India (*The Times* 1907a; van der Veer 1999: 428). In the early 20th century however, this focus went through radical change, and the threat from the Muslim 'other' became an issue of great political importance. This politicisation saw the birth of the first overtly Hindu nationalist groups.

Hindu nationalist thought during the anti-colonial movement – 1905 to 1947

The first decades of the 20th century saw significant shifts in all strands of nationalist thought in British India. This section charts the changes and developments in Hindu nationalist thought and action between the partition of Bengal in 1905, and the partition and independence of India and Pakistan in 1947.

As I have suggested earlier, Lord Curzon's 1905 administrative partition of Bengal sparked a dramatic change in nationalist sentiment in British India. As I have described in chapter 5, British India's Congress leaders saw the partition as "a cruel wrong" which had stirred "the whole country… to its deepest depths in sorrow and resentment" (Gokhale, cited in Wolpert 1993: 273; *The Times* 1906b). Importantly, these sentiments were echoed by Arya Samajists: Lala Lajpat Rai enlisted the Punjab Arya Samaj in the campaign against the partition (*The Times* 1907c). Yet the leading voices in British India's Muslim population (soon to be united in the Muslim League) saw the partition and the campaign against it differently. For them, the partition was a political benefit, as the new province of East Bengal was majority Muslim. Yet perhaps more importantly, the campaign against the partition showed the leaders of the Muslim community a clear link between the Congress and exclusively Hindu interests. In their mind, the supposedly 'secular nationalist' Congress might as well have been an exclusively Hindu organ – after all, why should an organisation of supposedly secular nationalist inspiration, engaged only in issues "in which the entire nation had a direct interest" (Naoroji, cited in Nanda 1998: xx), be overly concerned about the weakening of the political power of one community (the Hindu Bengalis) against another? In response, the Muslim League began in 1906 to demand separate representation on official councils, "not only on the basis of their numerical proportion but also on consideration of their political importance in the country" (Rahman 1970: 85). With this demand, great swathes of British India's 'reform' and 'orthodox' minded Hindu population became interested in politics.

The earliest advocates of an explicitly 'Hindu' strand of nationalism were largely Arya Samajists angry with the Muslim League and dissatisfied with the Indian National Congress. Perhaps emblematic of this dissatisfaction was Lal Chand's *Self-Abnegation in Politics* (1909), a polemic which argued that the Congress was passive in the face of unfair demands by the Muslim League, and that the British authorities held a pro-Muslim bias (Jaffrelot 1993: 519). This work formed the inspiration for the launch of the overtly Hindu nationalist groups known as the 'Hindu Sabhas', and their collective British India-wide body, the 'Hindu Mahasabha'. These groups acted largely as lobbying organisations. In this, they sought to put pressure on both the British and the Congress to further the interests of the Hindu community (Jaffrelot 1993: 519). What is important is that from this

point on, the gaze of the Arya Samaj (and the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas) turned outwards, explicitly towards the colonial state and British India's Muslim population. Thus, drawing on Arya Samaj theology, anti-Muslim politics and measures of early twentieth century Social Darwinism, the ideologues of the Hindu Sabhas began to define Hindu nationalist ideology. More will be discussed on this below.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, Hindu nationalism (like its rivals in the secular nationalism of the Congress and the Muslim nationalism of the Muslim League – see further discussion in chapter 5) remained an elite ideology. That is, early Hindu nationalist thought and action was conducted overwhelmingly by those of the native elite, and was largely removed from the everyday lives of many in British India; its political campaigns (led by the Hindu Sabhas) were largely attempts to lobby those with power (see for example *The Times* 1911). However, in the wake of the First World War and the '*Khilafat*' protests against the carve-up of the Ottoman Empire, a wave of riots shook British India, sparking a dramatic change in Hindu nationalist sentiment (*The Times* 1921d). What is crucial to recognise is that these riots – with their attendant 'forced conversions' and temple / mosque desecration – rapidly took on a Hindu / Muslim flavour (*The Times* 1921b; *The Times* 1921a; S Sarkar 1989: 233). This, as Christophe Jaffrelot has suggested, had a "traumatic (and catalytic) effect on the Hindu Sabhaites" (1993: 520). From this point on, those working on behalf of the Hindu nation subsumed ideological difference. Political and social organisation became an explicit and urgent goal (S Sarkar 1989: 235; Zavos 2004: 99).

After the riots of the early 1920s, the Hindu Sabhas and the Hindu Mahasabha launched a campaign to consolidate, unite, strengthen and organise the Hindu community. One of the leading Hindu nationalists of the time, B S Moonje (Central Provinces Hindu Sabha leader) argued that the Hindus must "remove the docility and the mildness" from their tempers, and "imbibe the aggressiveness of their neighbours" (Moonje, cited in Jaffrelot 1993: 520). At a bodily level, Moonje called for an end to the "un-vedic principle of ahimsa [non-violence]", for the abandonment of vegetarianism and the (re)embrace of animal sacrifice (cited in Jaffrelot 1993: 520). In this, Moonje explicitly wanted his Hindu community to become accustomed "to the sight of spilling blood and killing" (cited in Jaffrelot 1993: 520). More widely, Moonje saw a lack of unity and congregationalism amongst Hindus. To address this he called for the redevelopment of Hindu temples as communal meeting places (for all castes, "from the highest to the lowest on perfectly equal terms") along the lines of the mosque (Jaffrelot 1993: 520). Importantly, Moonje and the Hindu Sabhaites sought to situate these reforms – though inspired by the perceived strengths of the Muslim community – within the Hindu invented tradition composed by the Arya Samaj. That is, where Moonje called for the abandonment of the practices supposedly contributing to Hindu weakness, he argued that a powerful substitute was already available in the un-corrupted Hinduism of the Vedic golden age.

The clearest embrace of Moonje's call for his Hindu community to 'imbibe the aggressiveness of their neighbours' (and to this day one of the most influential organs of Hindu nationalist activity) emerged in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), or the National Volunteers Association. In this group we can find further development of the Arya Samajist ideas of the Hindu community, synthesised with a virulent militarist ethos. Moreover, what has also separated this group from the other Hindu nationalist organs has been its explicit commitment to a dedicated and patient attempt to build "hegemony through molecular penetration" (S Sarkar 1993: 164; see also T Sarkar 2003); to reconfigure and awaken the Hindu nation from the ground up.

The RSS was formed in Nagpur in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a follower of both Moonje and Hindu Mahasabha leader V D Savarkar (Beckerlegge 2004: 109; Jaffrelot 1996: 33). Like his predecessors, Hedgewar saw a Hindu society riven with 'disunity' and 'indiscipline', weak in the face of 'Muslim aggression' (Raychaudhuri 2000: 263; Beckerlegge 2004: 112). His response to this problem focused on the intimate, grassroots levels of his Hindu society: if the RSS could refashion Hindu men as organised, capable and patriotic individuals, their discipline and obedience would reawaken the Hindu nation (Alter 1994: 566; see also Raychaudhuri 2000: 265). The centrepiece of the RSS campaign was (and to this day remains) the daily *shakha*, a 'cultural congregation' which has brought Hindu men and boys together for ideological and physical training. More will be discussed on the *shakha* below.

Meanwhile, this same post-riot environment saw the explicit historicisation of the politics and nationalist imagination of Moonje and the Arya Samaj; the explicit writing of Hindu national history. Most prominently, Hindu Mahasabha leader V D Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1989 [1923]) offered a text that has remained central to the Hindu nationalist movement (Graham 1990: 44; Jaffrelot 1996: 33). Savarkar's goal in *Hindutva* (like the Arya Samajists and the Sanatana Dharma Sabhaites of the earlier generation) was to provide a definition of the Hindu community, of the Hindu nation. As his publisher suggested, an essential definition of the Hindu nation was, at the time, a tremendous difficulty:

> …all who got interested in the subject tried to define the word 'Hindu'. How the more precisely they tried to define the word 'Hindu' the more confound the confusion grew, [this] could best be seen by the fact that a respectable and studied booklet published at that time on the subject 'Who is a Hindu' could collect some fifty definitions of the word… [before] pointing out that the word 'Hindu' was simply undefinable! (S S Savarkar 1989).

For Savarkar, the definition of 'the Hindu' rested in history and culture. 'Hindu-ness' (or 'Hindutva') was, suggested Savarkar, held by "everyone who regards and claims this Bharatbhoomi from the Indus to the seas as his Fatherland and Holyland" (1949: 4). Extrapolated:

> A Hindu then is he who feels attachment to the land that extends from *Sindhu* to *Sindhu* [sea] as the land of his forefathers – as his Fatherland; who inherits the blood of the great race whose first and discernible source could be traced from the Himalayan altitudes of the Vedic *Saptasindhus* and which assimilating all that was incorporated and ennobling all that was assimilated has grown into and come to be known as the Hindu people; and who, as a consequence of the foregoing attributes, has inherited and claims as his own the Hindu *Sanskriti*, the Hindu civilization, as represented in a common history, common heroes, a common literature, common art, a common law and a common jurisprudence, common fairs and festivals, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments (V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 100).

Savarkar's understanding of the nation has, importantly, remained central throughout all subsequent Hindu nationalist thought. More will be discussed on his thinking below.

Following years of bloody communal rioting and the rise of the various Hindu nationalist organisations (and Muslim counterparts, such as the 'Mahomedan Tanzim' and Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi's 'Khaksars' in the Punjab (Gangulee 1927; S Sarkar 1989: 357)), politics in British India in the mid 1920s was deeply polarised between Hindu and Muslim communities. Yet while a polarisation of some sort remained, the final decades of the British Empire saw a gradual decline in the political fortunes of the Hindu nationalist organs. In this, some of the more significant political actions of the era (such as Gandhi's salt *satyagraha* of 1930, see discussion in chapter 5) were avoided by Hindu nationalist actors, who considered them unlikely to lead to an independent Hindu state. Indeed, throughout much of this era the Hindu nationalist organisations were decidedly cooperationist, happy (at least for political expediency) to remain within the British Empire. Thanks to this (as described in chapter 5), secular nationalist ideas dominated Indian politics throughout much of the 1930s. In the elections of 1937 for example, the Congress won decisive victories in many areas (see chapter 5); the explicitly communalist Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha suffered resounding defeats (S Sarkar 1989: 357). Yet this does not meant that the Hindu nationalist forces had retreated entirely from politics. Rather, their impact was felt most clearly on the streets of British India. In this, the RSS gradually grew from its initial base in Nagpur towards the United Provinces and Punjab, and thence to other parts of British India. By 1940 (when M S Golwalkar took over leadership of the organisation) some one hundred thousand cadres were listed as members (S Sarkar 1989: 357).

During the Second World War, Hindu nationalist forces remained much more wedded to the British Empire than the secular nationalists in the Congress (*The Times* 1939c). Golwalkar kept the RSS out of the Congress' 1942 'Quit India' campaign, while Savarkar urged Hindu Mahasabha members to "stick to their posts and continue to perform their regular duties" (cited in S Sarkar 1989: 412). As the War concluded – and the British moved ever closer to granting independence to the peoples of their Indian empire – the Congress continued to dominate British India's Hindu and secular minded voters. As I discussed in chapter 5, the elections of 1945 saw a polarisation of Congress dominance in the 'general' electorate, and Muslim League dominance in the reserved Muslim constituencies. This division contributed directly to the partitioned independence of 1947. Meanwhile, the Hindu

Mahasabha were left almost irrelevant, overwhelmed in the general electorate by the Congress (*The Times* 1945c). Though the RSS continued to make its presence felt in the towns and cities of southern Asia – particularly in the Partition riots – Hindu nationalist forces remained marginalised from the elite level constitution making and state formation occurring between 1945 and 1950. At the very birth of the independent India, Hindu nationalism was an ideology of little political impact.

Independent India – 1947 to the present

On August 15th 1947, the leaders of the Indian National Congress gained control of the Indian state partitioned out of the former British India (see discussion in chapter 5). This momentous event dramatically changed the Indian political landscape, carving a picture that largely remains in place today. This section charts the rises and falls in political success of the Hindu nationalist ideology from this period to the present.

As I observed in chapter 5, the years after independence saw a significant consolidation and entrenchment of the secular nationalist ideology. Meanwhile, Hindu nationalist forces suffered considerable setbacks. The reasons for this have been partially observed in chapters 5 and 3: that the Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru had significant pre-independence political capital, which translated to post-independence votes (we can compare, for example, the 1945 and 1952 elections, which both saw significant Congress dominance); and that the most significant other political player of the anti-colonial era – the Muslim League – was removed from the sphere of domestic politics in India. Yet it must also be observed that simultaneously, the Hindu nationalist organisations suffered enormous reversals of fortune. Firstly, it must be remembered that the political capital afforded to the Congress for their role in the anti-colonial struggle was not attributed to the Hindu nationalist organisations. That is, though Hindu nationalist thinkers had called for independence from the British Empire for (perhaps) a longer period than the Congress (Sri Aurobindo and Lala Lajpat Rai made explicit calls for independence throughout the *swadeshi* campaign after the partition of Bengal; Congress leaders remained mostly cooperationist until after the First World War), their behaviour during the final years of the anti-colonial struggle had been much more cooperationist. Here the avoidance of Gandhi's mass movements of the 1930s, Golwalkar's decision to keep the RSS out of the 'Quit India' campaign of 1942, and Savarkar's injunction to Hindu Mahasabha members to 'stick to their posts' – certainly decisions made for hoped political gain – were held as taints in the new independent India (Raychaudhuri 2000: 264).

Secondly, the assassination of Mohandas Gandhi in 1948 occasioned widespread revulsion at Hindu nationalist tactics and thinking (*The Times* 1948d). In this, Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse held motives clearly Hindu nationalist in inspiration: not only was he linked with the Hindu Mahasabha

(editing a Mahasabha newspaper called *Hindu Rashtra*), and closely associated with Savarkar, Godse offered in his own words a Hindu nationalist reason for killing Gandhi: "I thought it my duty", he offered, "to put an end to the life of the so-called father of a nation who had played a very prominent part in bringing about the vivisection of the country" (cited in *The Times* 1948e). Godse was convicted of the murder and executed; Savarkar was charged (though acquitted for lack of evidence) with being the architect of the plot (*The Times* 1948b; *The Times* 1949). In the wake of the assassination, people across India condemned, demonstrated against and attacked the Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu nationalist organs (*The Times* 1948h). At the elite level, Prime Minister Nehru banned the RSS. Though this ban was lifted in 1949, its political work was severely hampered. For the next few decades, Hindu nationalism remained a dormant political force, limited to the grassroots activism of the RSS (Varshney 2002: 70).

In recent decades however (since perhaps the middle of the 1970s), the dominance of the secular nationalist ideology at the centre of Indian politics has become increasingly questioned. This could be attributed to the anti-democratic and perhaps corrupt behaviour of Congress leaders in the 1970s and 1980s (see Ramachandra Guha 2004c; Jaffrelot 2003: 2); it could be attributed to the growth of so called 'vote-bank' politics (see Hazarika 2004; Sanghui 2001; Sunil 2004); it could even be attributed to the inevitable death of those who actively fought in (and remembered the politics of) the anti-colonial struggle. Regardless of the reason however, we can follow Achin Vanaik in accepting that the 'Nehruvian consensus' that was once at the centre of Indian politics (1997: 301) is no longer as sure or certain. What is important for this discussion is that Hindu nationalist activists and thinkers have, in these recent decades, made a concerted attempt to return from the grassroots and religious work of the RSS and the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) to 'fill the ideological vacuum' at the centre with their brand of national identity. This has seen the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a significant (almost) India-wide political party; perhaps more importantly, it has also seen the activism and claims of the Hindu nationalist organs fought for and debated at the very centre of Indian politics.

The first moments of the political resurgence of Hindu nationalism can be observed in the wake of the 1975-1977 Emergency. In the post-Emergency elections of 1977, voters turned overwhelmingly against Indira Gandhi's Congress government (Wigg 1977); one of the parties to profit heavily from this was the Jan Sangh, an offshoot of the RSS. The Jan Sangh won ninety seats (of 542 in the Lok Sabha) in the election, and formed a significant force in the governing coalition known as the Janata Party. Yet despite its electoral success, the Janata Party coalition was short-lived. Some have attributed this to the fact that the Jan Sangh refused to sever its connections with the RSS (Vanaik 1997: 45); others to the fact that the only rationale for the coalition was the removal of Indira Gandhi from power (Ramachandra Guha 2005); others still to the fact that the Janata Party proved an ineffectual and unstable government. Regardless, Indira's branch of the Congress (Congress-I)

returned to power in January 1980 with a convincing election victory (Wolpert 1993: 410). Over the next few years, the Jan Sangh became increasingly marginal. By 1984, they were almost irrelevant. Only their reconstitution in later years as the BJP (with a change in direction) lead to a change in impact.

While this brief flash of Hindu nationalist influence in government played out and disappeared at the end of the 1970s, a rather different Hindu nationalist campaign was beginning to gather momentum. This campaign – including the agitation for a temple at the '*Ram janmabhūmi*' in Ayodhya – changed much in Indian politics (Subrahmaniam 2004; R Singh 1993). To explain this campaign, a brief background is necessary. The Babri Masjid was a mosque in the small town of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, built in 1528 to honour Babur, the first Mughal emperor. Local legend held that the mosque was constructed on the rubble of a destroyed temple (van der Veer 1987: 285). This was a common (though not absolute) practice of the invading Mughal armies (S K Mukherjee 1987; van der Veer 1987: 287); indeed, Hindu nationalists have regularly asserted that thousands of temples were destroyed in the Mughal conquest (Silver 2003; H Narayan 2002). What made the Babri Masjid particularly significant for Hindu nationalists was the belief that the destroyed temple – and hence the mosque – marked the spot of the birth of Ram (the '*Ram janmabhūmi*'), the hero of the *Rāmāyana* and a figure revered by many Hindus (Klostermaier 1989: 85).

Until the middle of the 19th century, both Hindu and Muslim communities had used the grounds for worship. In 1855 however, the site became (perhaps because of a shift in the local power balance sparked by the rise of British influence) a flashpoint for local intercommunal tension (van der Veer 1987: 288). Sporadic violence – though neither lasting nor translatable to other areas of British India – occurred around the mosque throughout the remainder of British rule. Following Partition, the mosque was locked in an effort to preserve communal harmony – yet on the night of the 22nd of December 1949, an idol of Ram appeared in the mosque. Muslim groups took this as a defilement, while for Hindus this was a sacred occurrence. Following this, a committee of Hindus were given permission to enter the mosque and worship the idol once a year, on the night of the 22nd of December. At all other times the building remained locked (van der Veer 1987: 289-90).

In 1984, the VHP launched a campaign to "liberate Ram's birthplace" (Jaffrelot 1996: 363; see also van der Veer 1987: 291). This campaign included, over the following few years, a variety of demonstrations and highly visible processions (or *yatra*), such as the VHP's *Ekatmata Yatra* and LK Advani's BJP supported *Ram Rath Yatra* (more will be discussed on these campaigns below); these focused broad Hindu attention on the mosque. All along, the campaign trumpeted the Hindu nationalist blend of religion and politics, making 'India-wide' what had been a local dispute (Raychaudhuri 2000: 261). What is important is that the Ayodhya campaign harked directly back to

the drives to foster a Hindu community instigated by the Arya Samaj and the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas a century earlier. Part of the campaign was, as has Sarkar noted, an effort to "make out of Ram and Ayodhya … a single supreme deity and pilgrimage centre" (1993: 166), a Hindu 'Mecca' (Jaffrelot 2004: 212; Assayag 1998: 130). This goal clearly aligned with Arya Samaj thinking regarding the 'centre' or 'essence' of Hinduism. Yet meanwhile, the VHP also worked diligently to make the *Ram janmabhūmi* / Babri Masjid an issue of *pan-Hindu* importance, irrespective of spirituality. The sadhus of the VHP, for example, rarely mentioned their differences, and instead referred to their commonality (van der Veer 1987: 293). Indeed, the clearest message in this campaign to 'liberate Ram's birthplace' was one of Hindu nationalism: that the sacred spaces of the Hindu nation – regardless of the particular spiritual reasons they were sacred – were threatened by cultures 'not indigenous' to India.

On December 6th 1992 – following a noisy *yatra* led by Advani – a mob made up of many VHP and Bajrang Dal members destroyed the mosque. This event changed the political fortunes of the BJP. In this, in the 1996 general elections, the BJP emerged as the single biggest party in the *Lok Sabha*, though without a clear majority. Though they were unable to form a coalition in this session, the 1998 and 1999 elections again returned the largest share of seats to the BJP, who were able to form moderately stable – though politically limited – coalition governments. This period of government (led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani), ended with the return of the Congress to power in May 2004, yet it was able to force the *Hindutva* agenda to the very core of Indian political debate, bringing to many minds a different spatial India – one defined by Hindu nationalist ideas of community.

With this history and central principles of the ideology, I now turn to an exploration of the spatial campaign and spatial thinking of Hindu nationalism. In the two sections below, I examine how the protagonists of this ideology have seen and produced their Hindu / Indian nation in the physical world. What I aim to demonstrate is that throughout the many years of Hindu nationalist evolution, a variety of political actors have engaged in a complicated political campaign to normalise particular understandings of community and land within the framework of disembodied abstraction. Quite simply, these actors have sought to renegotiate the terms of the abstract, disembodied India first defined by the British Empire, so that it corresponds more readily with their intimate understandings of culture and ancestry.

The spatial understandings of Hindu nationalism

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that to trace the production and understanding of the Indian national territory, we must chart both the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration and spatial representation amongst the peoples of southern Asia, and the response to this emerging from

the face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration marginalised by this development. To this stage in this chapter, I have offered both a brief description, and a political history, of what can be called the 'Hindu nationalist' response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration in southern Asia. I turn now, with a more specific focus, to the spatial campaign of this ideology; to the efforts that Hindu nationalist thinkers, activists and politicians have made to situate the spaces of people's everyday lives within a particular abstract national territory; to persuade people to see the bodies, buildings and behaviours of their everyday lives as within their abstract India. I begin this discussion here with an elaboration of the ways leading Hindu nationalists have seen the physical world around them, how they have understood this physical world to be fundamentally connected to a certain, abstract, India. In the section that follows, I explore the methods Hindu nationalists have used to produce this 'world', to politically normalise their own understandings and persuade other people to see the physical world around them as within the Hindu national territory, within the Hindu nationalist India.

In examining the ways that leading Hindu nationalists have understood the world around them, I expand here on some of the key principles of the ideology discussed briefly above. Two broad aspects of the Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical will be explored in this section. Firstly, I look at the ideology's understanding of highly abstract geopolitics, the 'scale' (to employ the Cartesian language essential to this understanding; see further discussion in chapter 2) beyond the perception of the human senses. Following this, I turn to the Hindu nationalist understanding of the spaces of everyday life. Here I look at how the bodies, buildings and behaviours of the physical world have been understood through Hindu nationalist eyes. What is crucial to remember is that it is a clear and consistent desire of the nationalist ideology (and this, as I have suggested earlier, applies to any nationalist ideology) to situate the abstract ideas of a disembodied geopolitics within a nationalist's everyday life, and, crucially, the nationalist's intimate, everyday life within that particular abstract geopolitics. That is, Hindu nationalists have long understood the streets, buildings, bodies and behaviours of their day-to-day lives in the light of a highly abstract geopolitical narrative, and that abstract geopolitical narrative in terms offered by their more intimate face-to-face and agency-extended representations of the physical. These two 'scales' are, in the nationalist's eyes, fundamentally intertwined.

The abstract India of Hindu nationalism

The key Hindu nationalist claim is that all those with culture and ancestry indigenous to India are members of the Hindu / Indian nation, and that this group deserve political power in the area between the Himalayas and the seas. This argument has relied on two key spatial claims which are crucial to and oft-repeated in Hindu nationalist discourse. Firstly, the argument requires the understanding that

the particular portion of the Earth's surface in question – India – is a cohesive area; that all of the physical land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean is naturally one unit. This argument, it must be recognised, is largely (though not absolutely) identical to a parallel argument raised by secular nationalist thinkers. The key differences will be discussed below. The second spatial claim on which the Hindu nationalist argument has rested is that certain people, because of the relationship of their culture and ancestry to that land, deserve political power in that area above all others. This, as I will demonstrate in greater detail below, is a claim radically different from that made by secular nationalists. Together, these two understandings suggest that the land between the Himalayas and the seas should be thought of as the Hindu national territory, as the 'holyland' and 'fatherland' of the Hindu nation.

Hindu nationalists have, over the past century and a half, considered particular and certain portions of the Earth's surface as the Hindu national territory, as inherently connected to the Hindu nation. Over this time, this has taken three broad forms. Firstly, a number of early Hindu nationalist thinkers – Dayananda in particular – considered their country as the land lying between the Himalayas and the Vindhyachala mountains, between the river Attock (another name for the Indus) in the west and the Brahmaputra in the east (Dayananda Sarasvati 1987: 87; Yadav 1987: 12-13; see discussion in Pateria 1985: 65); (see figure 24). This land Dayananda usually called 'Aryavarta', though the term 'Brahmāvarta' has also been used (see discussion in J P Singh and Khan 2002: 44; V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 12-13; Saraswati 2001: 51).

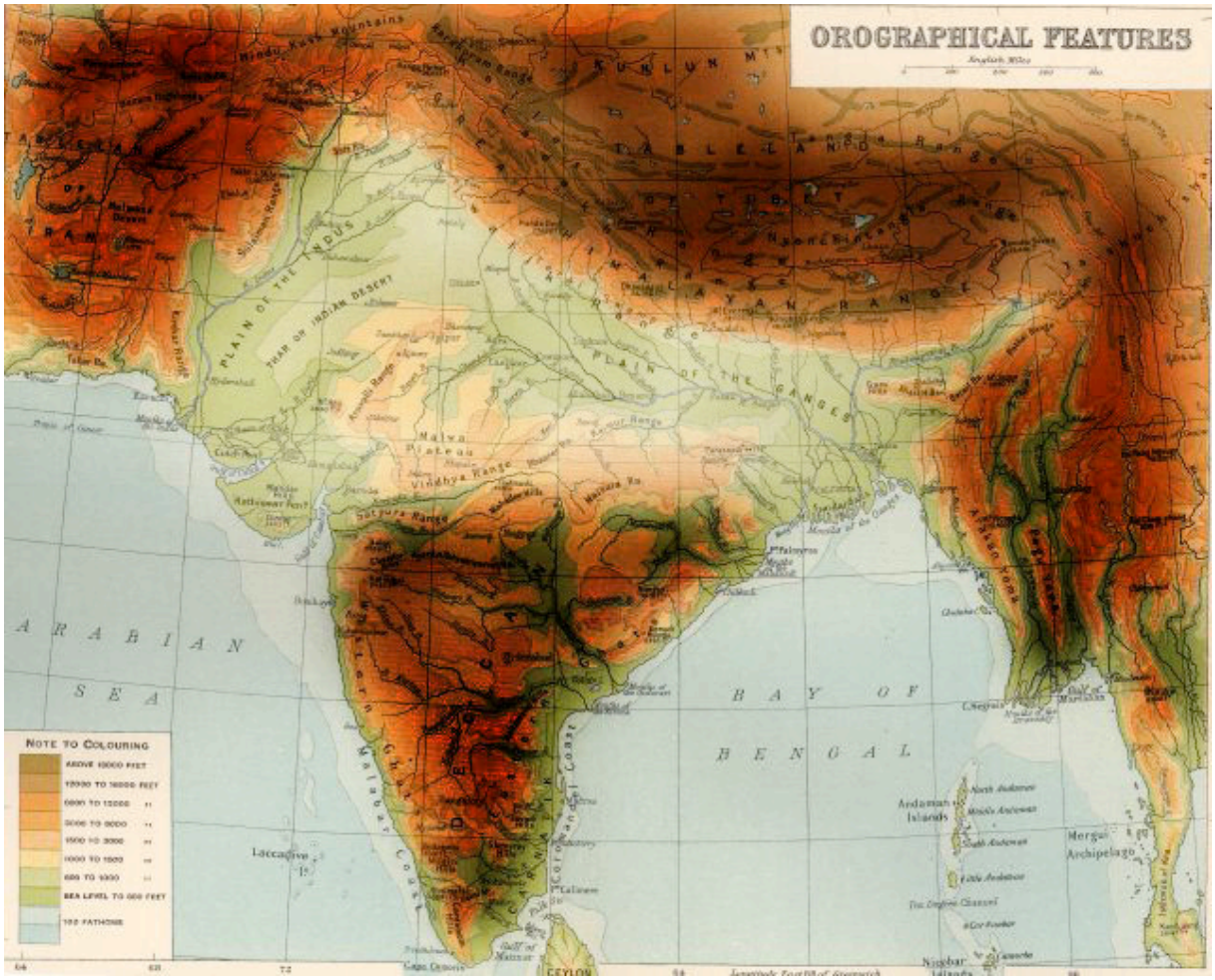

Figure 24 The 'Aryavarta' (unshaded area) Dayananda considered his country (Dayananda Sarasvati 1987: 87; map drawn from *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* 1931: plate 4, image edited).

This first understanding is today rare within Hindu nationalist discourse (though one can find ideas of a Hindu 'heartland' covering much the same area (see for example Pant 2004; Stackhouse 1996)). Much more common is the second understanding: that the Hindu national territory stretches from the Himalayas and the Indus to the seas (see figure 25).

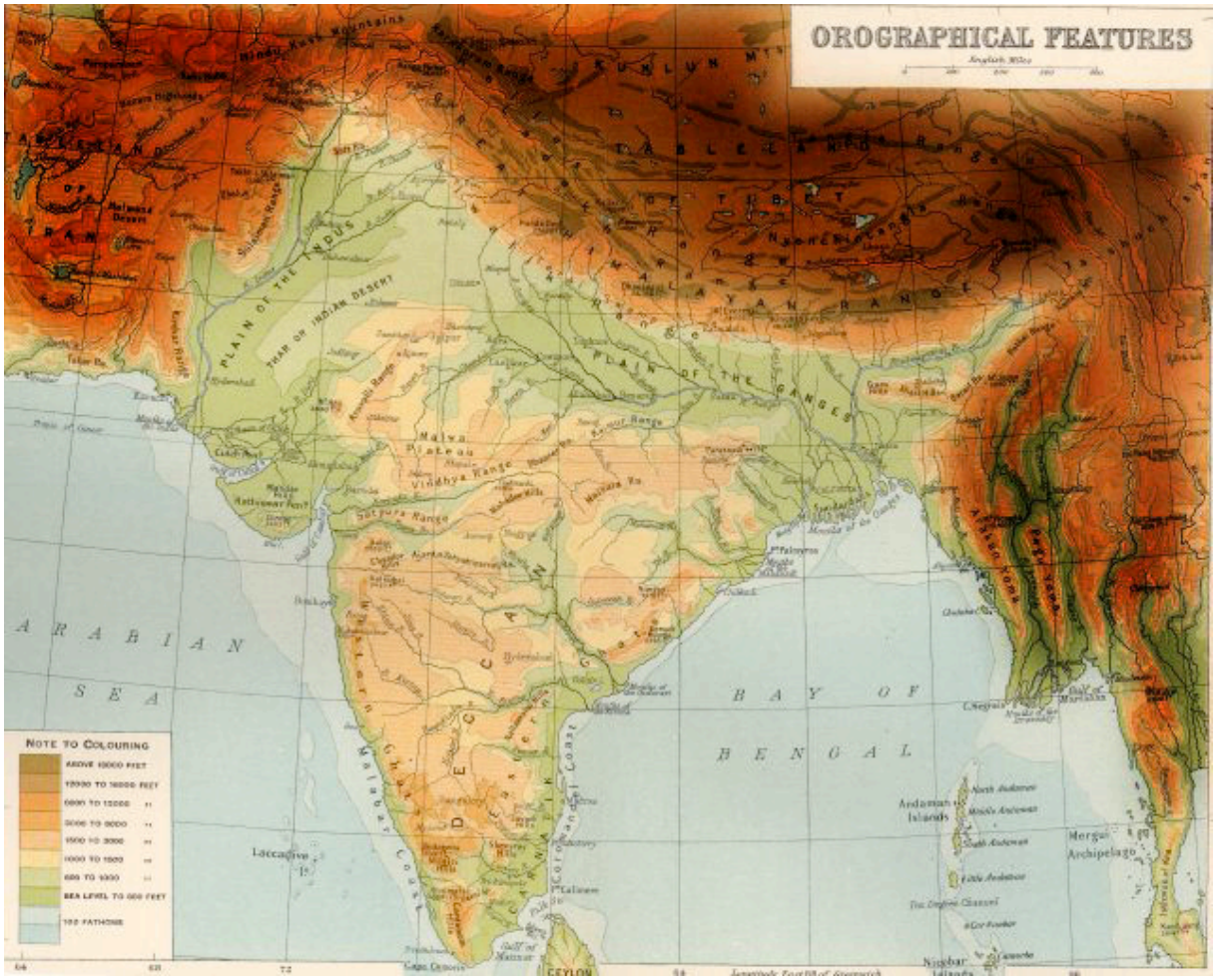

Figure 25 The area (unshaded) considered to be the Hindu national territory by most Hindu nationalists (see for example V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 100; map drawn from *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* 1931: plate 4, image edited).

Aurobindo, for example, considered "this sacred and ancient land" to be that which lay "in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas" (1909); see figures 25 and 26. Similarly, Savarkar considered the Hindu national territory to be "the land that extends from *Sindhu* to *Sindhu* [sea]" (1989 [1923]: 100; compare 1970 [1909]: facing viii, 4); that is, from the Indus river to the ocean (see figure 25, see also figure 27). Finally, M S Golwalkar thought of his country as "the land of Bharat", which he described using a Vedic reference:

> over all the land up to the oceans, one nation … is the trumpet cry of the Vedas. Āsetu-Himāchal – from the Setu to the Himalayas – has been our clear concept all down these ages. Long ago our forefathers sang: 'The land to the north of the oceans and south of the Himalayas is called Bharatavarsha, and Bharatis are her children' (1966: 79, 81).

This understanding of the cohesive Hindu national territory – from the Indus and the Himalayas to the seas – remains central to much Hindu nationalist discourse. That is, many Hindu nationalists (particularly those in the RSS and VHP) have considered Pakistan and Bangladesh (and, possibly, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka (Jaffrelot 2004: 209)) to be merely temporary occupants (or disruptions) of the eternal Hindu national territory (Sharma 2005; Elst 1999: 85-86). In Golwalkar's eyes for example, Pakistan was "an aggressive Muslim State *carved out of our own motherland*" (1966: 168,

emphasis added); in RSS parlance, Pakistan "was carved out *artificially* by disrupting the natural, national integrity of *Bharat*… peace and normalcy are inconceivable without the establishment of *Akhand Bharat* ['undivided India']" (cited in Sharma 2005, emphasis added; see also Singhal in Calamur 2005; Kunju 2005). In essence, for many Hindu nationalists the Partition which created modern Pakistan and India *did not* – as secular nationalists might argue – create two (or three) national homelands. Rather, this entire land would always be the Hindu national territory, and the contemporary divisions are merely the latest in a long history of kingdoms and states ignorant of the true nature of the land (Golwalkar 1966: 92). This concept of the 'undivided India', or the *Akhand Bharat*, remains a potent element of Hindu nationalist discourse.

We must recognise, however, that a third understanding of the rightful Hindu national territory has emerged in recent years. This understanding has taken Partition as an established fact, and has argued that the Hindu community must work within the current state defined borders of India to reawaken their Hindu Rashtra. Most prominently, this position can be seen in comments made by L K Advani (for which he has received sustained criticism from many Hindu nationalist organs), that "the creation of India and Pakistan as two separate and sovereign nations is an unalterable reality of history" (cited in Sharma 2005). This, of course, is a position clearly distinct from that of Golwalkar's above. Perhaps similarly, others have suggested that the fact of Partition – that is, that an explicitly Muslim state was created from the former British India – meant that the remaining India was an inherently Hindu land. The Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, for example, has argued that before independence "the Muslims demanded a separate nation" and therefore when they received it, what was left – "the rest" – "is Hindu" (cited in *The Hindu* 2002).

While arguing that the broad area between the Himalayas and the seas is a cohesive portion of the Earth's surface, Hindu nationalists have made a second spatial argument: that certain people, and not others, deserve political power in this area. For Hindu nationalists, those that deserve political power in the area between the Himalayas and the seas are those who's culture and ancestry are 'indigenous' to that area. This, it must be recognised, is an understanding clearly distinct from that held by secular Indian nationalists (see discussion in chapter 5). That is, in secular nationalist minds, one's culture and ancestry are nationally meaningless. So long as a person considers India home, they can be considered a member of the Indian nation. Indeed, for secular nationalists (see for example Nehru 1981 [1946]: 62) a person could (over time) *become* Indian by considering India home (Italian born Sonia Gandhi is a clear example of this). In Hindu nationalist eyes however, to hold political power in the land between the Himalayas and the seas, one's family and culture must be indigenous to India. In this conception, there exist people who, regardless of behaviour, will *always* be foreign, never deserving of power in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. Two related arguments have been

used to argue such a position; both have sought to assert that the Hindu nation is the normal and natural occupant of the area between the Himalayas and the seas.

Firstly, many Hindu nationalists have made claims of a direct continuity between the earliest inhabitants of the area between the Himalayas and the seas and their modern Hindu nation. That is, they have claimed that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is rightfully theirs because they have been living in it since time immemorial. Dayananda, for example, explicitly noted that "the people who have been living in [this country] from time immemorial are called *Aryas* [his word for the true Hindu community]" (1987: 87). Similarly, Savarkar asserted that 'Hindu' is

> the name that this land and the people that inhabited it *bore from time so immemorial* that even the Vedic name Sindhu is but a later and secondary form of it. If the epithet Sindhu dates its antiquity in the glimmering twilight of history then the word Hindu dates its antiquity from a period so remoter than the first that even mythology fails to penetrate – to trace it to its source (1989 [1923]: 10, emphasis added).

To demonstrate such a trans-historical connection, various Hindu nationalist thinkers have argued that the ancient cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa – the earliest known cities in southern Asia (see Kenoyer 1998) – were of the 'same culture' as the modern Hindu nation (Danino 1999; Elst 1997: ch 6; Gautier 1999: 7); or that the landscape depicted in the *Rig Veda* – the earliest text sacred to many modern Hindus, and one of the earliest texts known to the modern world – is the Hindu national territory (Golwalkar 1966: 81; Elst 1999: 89; see discussion in Thapar 1996; Panikkar 2004). This claim to immemorial occupancy – that the Hindu nation was the first to occupy and / or civilise the Hindu national territory – is clearly a claim to priority, seniority and rightful ownership of the land.

It must be recognised that the Hindu nationalist claim to immemorial occupancy of India has not always been unproblematic. Most centrally, the theory of Aryan invasion – a long established lynchpin of British Empire discourse – suggested that Aryan (hence Vedic, hence – for many Hindu nationalists – Hindu) culture developed outside the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas. This suggested that the truly indigenous population of India were the modern Adivasis and Dalits, or those who spoke the Dravidian language (see Omvedt 2000). This meant that early Hindu nationalists were forced to deny or belittle any prior occupation of the area. Dayananda, for example, accepted the migration, but denied any prior occupancy. In this he suggested that "Aryavarta had no name, nor was it inhabited by an other people before the Aryas settled in it, who sometime after creation came straight down there from Tibet and colonized it" (cited in Pateria 1985: 65). Alternately, Savarkar accepted the existence of earlier inhabitants, yet belittled their presence. "We know it for certain", he argued,

> that the region of the Sapta Sindhus was, *though very thinly*, populated by *scattered tribes*. Some of them seem to have been friendly towards the *newcomers* and it is almost certain that many an individual had served the Aryans as guides and introduced them to the names and nature of the new scenes (1989 [1923]: 9, emphasis added).

Though accepted as 'native', these tribes were afforded by Savarkar only a tenuous purchase on indigeneity. The phrases 'thinly scattered' and 'thinly populated' portrayed them as barely embedded in the land. Beyond this, Savarkar sought to suggest that despite prior indigeneity, it was only with the arrival of the Aryans that civilisation (indeed, humanity) emerged in the land between the Himalayas and the seas:

> Tribe after tribe of the Hindus issued froth from the land of their nursery and led by the consciousness of a great mission and their Sacrificial Fire that was the symbol thereof, they soon *reclaimed* the *vast, waste and but very thinly populated lands*. Forests were felled, agriculture flourished, cities rose, kingdoms thrived, – the touch of the *human hand* changed the whole face of the wild and unkempt nature (1989 [1923]: 10, emphasis added).

Later Hindu nationalists – particularly following Golwalkar – have not troubled themselves with such qualification and have explicitly claimed that the Hindu community emerged within the land between the Himalayas and the seas, within India (Golwalkar 1966: 115; see discussion in Omvedt 2000).

Secondly, various Hindu nationalist thinkers have asserted that India is rightfully theirs because only those of the Hindu community recognise its true spiritual worth. Importantly (echoing the divide between the doctrinal and the communal understandings of Hinduism; see discussion above), this position has been asserted both inside and outside religious doctrine. That is, in Dayananda's mind, 'this land' was "the land of God", the land of those who upheld the *dharma* of the *Vedas*. This position drew directly on Dayananda's conception of Hinduism's 'pure' Vedic core (1987: 83, 87; Yadav 1987: 12-13). Meanwhile, others asserted that a doctrinal definition was unnecessary, suggesting instead that the holiness of the land was a common understanding of all Hindu people, regardless of their particular spiritual tradition. Rajendra Singh, for example, has argued that "India is not just a geographical entity, but is invested with a spiritual glow. Its hills and rivers are sacred *for the people*" (1993, emphasis added). Similarly, Golwalkar argued that "our forefathers were of the conviction that throughout the world this is the holiest of the lands":

> no wonder that such a land with divinity ingrained in every speck of its dust, has been to us the holiest of the holy, the centre of our utmost devotion. And this devotion is felt for the whole of the land and not for any fraction of it. The worshipper of Shiva goes from Kashi to Rameshwaram, and the devotee of Vishnu in His various forms and Incarnations travels the whole length and breadth of this country. If he is an *Advaiti*, the four *āshrams* of Shankaracharya standing as sentinels take him to the four corners of the country. If he is a *Shākta*, the worshipper of Shakti – the Divine Mother of the Universe – fifty-two are the places of his pilgrimage spreading from Hingulat in Baluchistan to Kamakshi in Assam and Jwalamukhi in Himachal Pradesh to Kanyakumari in the South. It only means that this land is the divine manifestation of the Mother Universe (1966: 86-87).

In all, various Hindu nationalists have asserted that because those of the Hindu nation are the only ones who "address this land, this Sindhusthan, as *punyabhū*, as Holyland" (Savarkar, cited in Klostermaier 1989: 292; see also Singhal 1967: 12), it is they who deserve political power.

Importantly, while Hindu nationalists have long claimed the stretch of land between the Himalayas and the seas as their rightful and eternal Hindu national territory, they have also made it clear that this abstract land can be seen in people's everyday lives.

The intimate India of Hindu nationalism

For Hindu nationalists, the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the Hindu national territory; it is the portion of the Earth's physical surface where the Hindu / Indian nation is the rightful political community. This highly abstract geopolitical understanding sits at the very heart of the ideology; it is something which all Hindu nationalists would agree is an unproblematic accepted fact, a consensus amongst their community (see for example Golwalkar 1966: 79; V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 100). What is crucial to recognise however, is that this supposed consensus is (to draw from Anderson) imagined. That is, though all Hindu nationalists might be able to point to an abstract Cartesian map and be able to see their India, their understanding of that India is necessarily particular. Quite simply, each person who considers themselves a Hindu nationalist has, necessarily, lived in and experienced the physical world in vastly different – and subjective – ways. To use terms employed by this work, each person who considers themself a Hindu nationalist has experienced the physical world in ways shaped, at least partially, by their face-to-face and agency-extended communities. Yet – and this is a crucial point – all who consider themselves to be followers of the Hindu nationalist ideology imagine that their India, their Hindu national territory, is a certain entity, something all Hindu nationalists know is 'in the world' and can be seen in their everyday lives.

Three broad arguments appear common amongst the ways Hindu nationalists have seen their India in the physical world around them. These three centre (and this is radically different from the stance held by the secular nationalists discussed in chapter 5) centre on visible bodies and buildings. That is, of central importance for Hindu nationalists are symbolic forms (forms of clothing and building) that they suggest are natural and normal within the Hindu national territory, indigenous to India. The first of these three arguments is that bodies, buildings and behaviours marking cultures and / or ancestries 'indigenous' to India are normal, and (in some way) representative of the Hindu nationalist India at large. Meanwhile, those bodies, buildings and behaviours that mark cultures and / or ancestries 'not indigenous' to India are abnormal, a rejection of the Hindu nationalist India. Secondly, many Hindu nationalists have maintained that subjective, personal understandings of the physical – if indigenous to India (and not counter to the third point below) – deserve no greater of lesser access to political power. That is, spiritual doctrine native to India is, in many Hindu nationalist eyes, private. This point clearly echoes the liberal ideas evidenced in secular nationalist thought, yet we must acknowledge a similar understanding (the principle of *Sarva Dharma Sambhava*; in Golwalkar's words "truth is one, sages call it variously" (1966: 27; see also Aurobindo 1959: 102; Frawley 1997)) has some precedent in

broad Hindu thought. Thirdly, Hindu nationalists (though not unanimously) have argued that indigenous understandings of the physical, if harmful to other Hindus, are an affront to the nation and undeserved in their India. This argument has focused mostly on the matter of 'untouchability'.

Hindu nationalists have consistently argued that the intimate spaces of people's everyday lives are, in some sense, 'microcosms' or 'fractals' of their abstract India; that the village or street in which each individual might live shares fundamental similarities with the countless other streets, villages and cities of India. At the centre of this, certain types of buildings, bodies and behaviours have been considered by Hindu nationalists to be normal and natural markers of India; to be visible forms common across the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas. Perhaps most importantly, this portrayal of the India visible in the intimate has, as I will show below, centred on Hindu cultural forms: on temples, pilgrimage sites, *shakhas*, religious processions (*yatra*) and clothing styles. Meanwhile, non-Hindu buildings and bodies have been considered by Hindu nationalists to be unnatural, to be abnormal distortions of India. This (as I will also show below) has centred on Muslim, Christian and 'secularist' cultural forms: on mosques, madrassas, churches, Christian schools and 'western' clothing.

The understanding that India is filled with cohesive and consistent Hindu local spaces is clear in much Hindu nationalist writing. Savarkar, for example, suggested that in the 'normal', 'peaceful' India (for him, the India prior to the Muslim invasions) "every village has its temple; in all districts are sacrifices performed; every family has plenty of wealth; and people are devoted to religion" (1989 [1923]: 42; see also 1947: 6). In a different passage, Savarkar suggested that across India, "in Maharashtra or Panjab… in Bengal or Sind", "we have feasts and festivals in common":

> The Dasara and the Divali, the Rakhibandhan and the Holi are welcomed *wherever a Hindu breathes*, Sikhs and Jains, Brahmans and Panchams alike. You would find *the whole Hindu kingdom enfete* on the Divali day… Not even a cottage in the Tarai forest could be found on that night that has not shown its little light. While the Rakhi day would reveal to you every Hindu soul from the delighted damsel of Punjab to the austere Brahmins of Madras tying the silken tie… (1989 [1923]: 98-99, emphasis added).

What Savarkar suggested in these passages was that visible elements of the physical world – houses lit for Divali, bodies adorned with ribbons for Rakhi day, village temples – were identical and natural across 'the whole Hindu kingdom', the whole Hindu nationalist India.

Other Hindu nationalists have echoed Savarkar's suggestion that the true India is marked by particular physical objects. Aurobindo, for example, suggested that "here is a country which is still heavily coloured with the ochre tint of the garb of the Sannyasin" (1959: 99; see also Gautier 2002); (see figure 26). This argument suggested that a particular type of body – the ochre robed *sannyasin* – was

normal and natural in India. In a similar way, Golwalkar portrayed the RSS *shakha* (which will be discussed in greater detail below) as normal, natural and cohesive across India:

> Under a saffron flag groups of youths and boys are absorbed in a variety of Bharatiya games … finally, they stand in rows before the flag and recite the prayer: *Many salutations to Thee, O loving motherland!* whose echoes fill the air and stir the soul. 'Bharat Mata ki jai' uttered in utmost earnest furnishes the finishing and inspiring touch to the entire programme. *Throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan, not only in towns and cities but in far off hamlets, hills and dales, these inspiring scenes and soul-stirring songs greet us regularly and punctually at the time of sunrise, sunset or at night everyday.* We call it 'shākhā' (1966: 323-4, emphasis added in part).

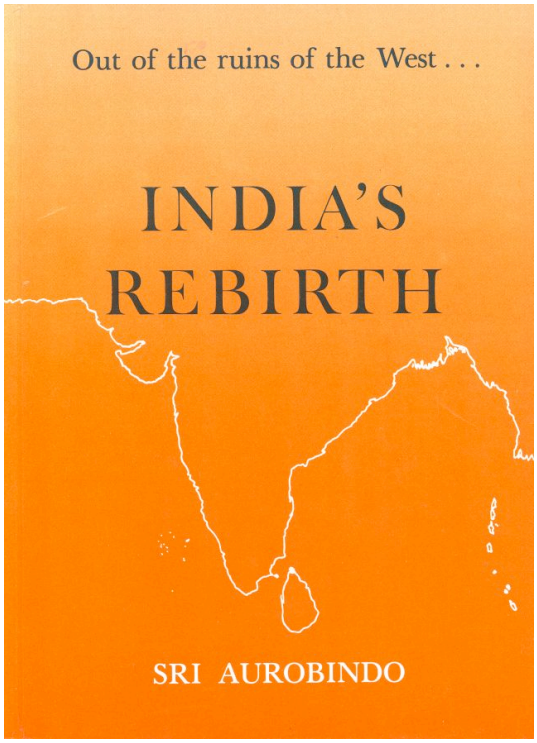

Figure 26 The front cover of Aurobindo's *India's Rebirth* (1993). The explicit use of the saffron / ochre hue and the Cartesian outline of India is, I suggest, an attempt to associate a particular culture and body – "the garb of the Sannyasin" (Aurobindo 1959: 99) – with the abstract India. This can be directly compared with the cover of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule* (see figure 14). We must note that this particular edition – though clearly an endorsement of Aurobindo's views – was released forty-three years after the author's death.

Against this normalisation of Hindu cultural markers, physical markers of non-Hindu, 'non-indigenous' cultures have been explicitly problematised and considered by Hindu nationalists as abnormal in India. In this, mosques, churches and areas where large Muslim populations live have been portrayed by Hindu nationalists as visible interruptions of the natural India. Golwalkar, for example, suggested that

> all over the country *wherever there is a masjid or a Muslim mohalla* [neighbourhood], the Muslims feel that it is their own independent territory… within the country there are so many Muslim pockets, ie, so many 'miniature Pakistans', where the *general law of the land* is to be enforced only with certain modifications and the whims of the miscreants have to be given the final say. This acceptance, indirect though it may be, implies a very dangerous theory fraught with possibilities of destruction of our national life altogether. Such 'pockets' have verily become centres of a widespread network of pro-Pakistani elements in this land (1966: 174, emphasis added).

This portrayal of mosques and Muslim neighbourhoods as 'mini-Pakistans' – as visible interruptions of the true India – has been embraced throughout Hindu nationalist discourse (see Vivek 1999; and discussion in Nambath 1997; *The Times of India* 1982; Brass 2004). The Shiv Sena newspaper *Saamna* for example, has argued that

> Mosques in the entire country, including Mumbai, have become arsenals. The Muslim bastis (slums) in Mumbai and Maharashtra, which have come up as *mini-Pakistans*, are wailing for the Babri Masjid, blocking roads and attacking Hindu temples. Why should we tolerate this? … Muslims who have come out on the streets and are creating havoc with violence and committing sacrilege against Hindu deities and temples are traitors… They have no religion, God or nation, and no culture either. Although they have lived here for generations, they are now committing incest with their mother (cited in Swami and Katakam 2001, emphasis added).

In the same way, contributors to the RSS's in-house newspaper *Organiser* have regularly problematised 'mini-Pakistans' and the presence of Muslim buildings in their India. Lalitha Sridhar, for example, claimed that when Hindus living aboard travel to India, "they receive a rude shock. They get confused when they see how Hindus in India are in the solid grip of Muslims and Islamists… Why are there so many mosques in India?" (2004). Similarly, Basudeb Pal argued that the presence in West Bengal of "thousands of madarsas [sic]" and "mosques" (which he equated with "terrorist training camps") was a reason for "apprehension" (2005). Finally, V P Bhatia considered mosques as elements of a strategic campaign; that Persian Gulf oil money "is above all used lavishly for myriad jehadist purposes of setting up mosques and madarsas [sic] in [the] hundreds at *strategic places* all over India" (2000, emphasis added).

While claiming that the Hindu buildings, bodies and behaviours observable between the Himalayas and the seas share a common relationship to India, many Hindu nationalists have also maintained that other subjective understandings of the physical – if indigenous to India – deserve no greater or lesser place within the nation. What this argument suggests is that particular religious or cultural doctrine (if broadly Hindu) should have no particular bearing on one's access to political power.

In a passage discussed above, Savarkar suggested that "we" – the Hindu nation – "have feasts and festivals in common". Providing evidence, he suggested the festivals Divali and Rakhibandhan were common across the "whole Hindu kingdom" (1989 [1923]: 98). Importantly, Savarkar directly followed this passage with an affirmation of the belief in pan-Hindu religious tolerance, a 'pan-Hindu community':

> We have deliberately refrained ourselves from referring to any religious beliefs that we as a race may hold in common. Nor had we referred to any institution or event or custom in its religious aspect or significance, because we wanted to deal with the essentials of Hindutva not in the light of any 'ism' [here he means 'Hinduism'] but from a racial point of view; and yet from a national and racial point of view… *the different places of pilgrimage constitute [the] common inheritance of our Hindu race* (1989 [1923]: 99, emphasis added).

What Savarkar suggested was that from the national point of view, the actual religious meaning of a pilgrimage or a temple was irrelevant, merely the cultural 'stuff' of the nation or the 'common

inheritance' of the 'Hindu race'. A similar position can be observed in Golwalkar's thinking. When he described the "divinity ingrained" in every speck of the motherland, he explicitly noted that "the worshipper of Shiva goes from Kashi to Rameshwaram; and the devotee of Vishnu… travels the whole length and breadth of this country"; "if he is a *Shākta*, the worshipper of Shakti – the Divine Mother of the Universe – fifty-two are the places of his pilgrimage" (Golwalkar 1966: 86-87, see above). For Golwalkar, these religious differences within the Hindu fold were irrelevant to the nation. This 'internal' tolerance suggests clearly an affinity with the 19th century Sanatana Dharma Sabhas' method of understanding the Hindu religion, which imagined 'Hindu orthodoxy' in a 'pan-Hindu', communal sense (see discussion above, see also Zavos 2004: 50; Golwalkar 1966: 27). We must recognise that the Arya Samajist understanding – that the *Vedas* and contemporaneous works are the only doctrines of Truth – does hold a limited influence in contemporary Hindu nationalist discourse.

Finally, while many Hindu nationalists have argued that all understandings of the physical 'indigenous' to India are legitimate in the area between the Himalayas and the seas, we must note that this is usually qualified with a rejection of the iniquities of caste prejudice, particularly untouchability. Mostly, this rejection has been phrased not as a dismissal of the entire caste system, but as a rejection of the 'anti-national' ideas of untouchability. Golwalkar, for example, described Hindu society as a 'highly evolved system', in which various elements were crucial:

> The present-day mind, accustomed to view things through the medium of foreign 'isms' and their high-sounding slogans of equality, has failed to grasp this unique feature [of Hindu society] and has raised the cry that all the various diversities of our life are all so many sources of dissension and should therefore be eradicated and rolled into a 'classless' society. Merely because the various limbs and organs in a body appear different and play their own specific functions, should we call them different 'classes' and proceed to remove them all to make the body a 'classless' entity? If we do that, will that be evolution or murder? (1966: 100).

In this conception, caste was treated as not a matter of 'high' and 'low', but of various groups dependent on each other, which together composed the Hindu nation. "Today", Golwalkar argued, "the *Varna-vyavasthā* [system]… is being dubbed 'casteism' and scoffed at":

> The feeling of inequality, of high and low, which has crept into the *Varna* system is comparatively of recent origin. The *perversion* was given a further fillip by the scheming Britisher in line with his 'divide and rule' policy. But in its *original form*, the distinctions in that social order did not imply any discrimination of big or small, high or low, among its constituents. On the other hand, the *Gita* tells us that the individual who does his assigned duties in life in a spirit of selfless service only worships God through such performance (1966: 107, emphasis added).

In such an argument, those of 'untouchable' castes were clearly considered to be *of* the Hindu nation. Hindu nationalists have suggested that because of this, a spirit of respect and community mindedness was clearly needed.

The Hindu nationalist India

Some centuries ago (as I have suggested in previous chapters) India became known, with a putative certainty, in a disembodied representation of the physical world. Over the centuries of British imperial dominance in southern Asia, this disembodied knowledge became gradually more dominant, gradually more influential in the lives of the people of the land between the Himalayas and the seas. As I have suggested previously, this dominance remains: the dominant definition of India in Hindu nationalist discourse, the definition to which supreme authority is ascribed, remains that of land defined in a disembodied, Cartesian manner. We can consider here the cover of Aurobindo's Hindu nationalist polemic, *India's Rebirth*, offered above in figure 26. Aurobindo's cover displayed a symbolic version of a Cartesian map of India to encapsulate the complicated political and social arguments discussed within: as if the simplest and clearest way of representing the India that Aurobindo wanted 'reborn' was a meandering white line that wandered across the cover from left to right. We can, again, quite readily admit that the decision to use this image may have been arbitrary, and (given its publication forty-three years after the author's death) was probably not made by Aurobindo himself. Yet what must be stressed is that this disembodied, putatively Cartesian map *was* displayed to deliberately and unequivocally evoke India, to capture and symbolise the political and social problems described within the volume. In essence, it treated this India that was to be 'reborn' as if that land could be seen with the rational gaze, and, moreover, that the most certain way to see it was through the disembodied, Cartesian map.

Yet while accepting the dominant authority of the Cartesian mapping of India, Hindu nationalists have also stressed that this India is also defined in a radically different spatial context: in the bodies, buildings and behaviours that are visible in southern Asia. Here we can again look at the cover of Aurobindo's *India's Rebirth*. The alternate symbolisation used to represent India, to represent that which is (or ought to be) visibly normal in India, was an ochre / saffron wash. In Aurobindo's terms, "the ochre tint of the garb of the Sannyasin", with which this "country is still heavily coloured" (1959: 99). In essence, the suggestion of this symbolic emplacement was that there existed another visible India, another way of seeing India. For Hindu nationalists, this visible India has rested in the bodies, buildings and behaviours of 'Hindu culture', in the 'ochre tinted garb' of Hindu spirituality. At heart, Hindu nationalists have argued that their India is a certain presence in both the highly abstract 'world' *and* the streets of southern Asia; a definable object in both disembodied and face-to-face understandings of the physical.

This Hindu nationalist position is a significant ideological response to the disembodied integration and spatial representation fostered by the British Empire, emergent from the intimate forms of integration marginalised by the emergence to dominance of the disembodied. It is a renegotiation of the disembodied spatial representation of India along the lines of the intimate understandings of community and land derived from the face-to-face and agency-extended integration of the Hindu

nationalist leaders. To this stage however, I have presented only the Hindu nationalist understandings of community and land; in essence, only the Hindu nationalist ideology. Of crucial importance now, however, are the efforts that Hindu nationalist actors have made to propagate these understandings: to produce a world with their India in it. It is to this production I now turn.

Producing the Hindu nationalist India

Disembodied spatial representation – the form of spatial representation in which India first gained a certain location in the 'world' – emerged to dominance in southern Asia with the British Empire. This emergence has been described in chapter 4. As I have also stressed earlier, this form of spatial representation, despite the powerful Cartesian rhetoric embraced by the British Empire, was always framed by the intimate understandings of community and land of the British administrators. Quite simply, the ways of seeing in which India first gained a certain location in the 'world' were always guided by particular – though carefully hidden – interests. These interests, as I have stressed throughout this and earlier chapters, marginalised the face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land held by those distant from British power. In the earliest period of imperial rule, this meant that many people's day-to-day worlds became defined 'externally', by forms of economic and military integration driven by distant machines and ships (see discussion in chapter 4). Later, it meant that certain people – those of the native elite, first to learn and embrace the disembodied spatial representations offered by the Empire – found their face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of community and land marginalised 'internally', by the disembodied representation of the world they came to know. In essence, their parents' and their religious institutions' stories of the physical became wrong. In a complicated and drawn out campaign, a variety of these thinkers attempted to reconcile this contradiction, to seek ways to politically normalise their own intimate understandings of community and land within the disembodied frame. In this normalisation we can find the production of the Hindu nationalist India, of the Hindu national territory. In this section I discuss the attempts of Hindu nationalist actors to normalise their own particular understandings of community and land, to make their understandings of indigeneity normal in the disembodied depiction of India.

To explore the attempts to normalise the Hindu nationalist understandings of the physical world – to explore, that is, the Hindu nationalist production of space – I employ in this section the same structure and 'Lefebvrian matrix' used in chapter 5. That is, to explore the specific production of the Hindu nationalist India I trace over the next two sections the political work conducted by Hindu nationalists in the 'material' and 'representational' realms of the Lefebvrian triad. (More, as I suggested in chapter 5, will be discussed on the 'symbolic' realm in the thesis' conclusion). I break this discussion into two

different periods. To begin, I look at the era when Hindu nationalists reacted against the dominance of others' spatial understandings (during the British rule in India and the period of secular nationalist dominance); following this, I look at the period when Hindu nationalists gained control of the state.

The Hindu nationalist response to the spatial understandings of the British Empire and the secular nationalist state

Hindu nationalists have spent great energy in a long political campaign attempting to persuade people to see the Hindu nation as the natural and rights bearing community in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. This section explores the evolution of this campaign in the years when Hindu nationalist actors have been outside (and hence unable to access the power) of the state. During this time, Hindu nationalists used the various methods of spatial production described in chapters 2 and 5 to attempt to normalise their understandings of community and land within the disembodied framework, against both the British and secular Indian nationalists. This campaign has seen a twin effort to represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to the Hindu nationalist narrative described above and, simultaneously, to embed this understanding through material spatial practice in the day-to-day lives of all who would be Indian. More simply, these activists and thinkers have attempted to make the highly abstract India look like their day-to-day spaces, and their day-to-day spaces look like their understanding of the highly abstract India.

Representations of space

Over the past century, Hindu nationalists have used a great variety of specifically modern ways of representing the physical world – ways of representing their India – against both the British Empire and secular Indian nationalists. Some, as I will show below, sought a direct renegotiation of the highly authoritative disembodied portrayal of India. The Hindu nationalist histories of India provide compelling examples here. Others, as I will also show below, sought to communicate that new disembodied picture of India to as wide an audience as possible; forms of literature, journalism, speeches, film and mass-produced posters provide compelling examples of this. In all, I suggest we can find a key argument that the Hindu nationalist India existed as a certain physical entity in both the highly abstract 'world', and the intimate spaces people could see.

Histories have, of course, long been crucial to the Hindu nationalist representation of community and land. Like their secular nationalist rivals, Hindu nationalists began to compose histories of their India in the middle of the 19th century. Early examples include Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay's *Bhāratbarşer itihās* ('The History of India', 1858), and Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay's utopian 'history' *Svapnalabdha bhāratbarşer itihās* ('The History of India as revealed in a dream', 1862) (see discussion in P

Chatterjee 1993: 111; Dayal 1999). Later works include V D Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence 1857* (1970 [1909]) and *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1989 [1923]). These works, with modern, nationalist historiographies, offered a definition of the Hindu nation as a transhistorical community naturally and permanently embedded in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. We can begin this discussion with Tarinicharan's work.

Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay's *Bhāratbarşer itihās* represents an early prototype of a Hindu nationalist history of India. In this, we can clearly see an explicit connection between the 'ancient' and the 'modern' Hindu. In a section on "the civilization and learning of the ancient Indians" for example, Tarinicharan argued that

> what distinguishes the giant from the dwarf or the mighty from the frail is nothing compared to the difference between *the ancient and the modern Hindu*. In earlier times, foreign travellers in India marvelled at the courage, truthfulness and modesty of the people of the Arya *vamśa*; now they remark mainly on the absence of those qualities. In those days Hindus would set out on conquest and hoist their flags in Tatar, China and other countries; now a few soldiers from a tiny island far away are lording it over the land of India. In those days Hindus would regard all except their own jāti as *mleccha* and treat them with contempt; now those same *mleccha* shower contempt on the descendents of the Aryans. Then the Hindus would sail to Sumatra and other islands, evidence of which is still available in plenty in the adjacent island of Bali. Now the thought of a sea voyage strikes terror in the heart of a Hindu, and if anyone manages to go, he is immediately ostracized from society (cited in P Chatterjee 1993: 97, emphasis added).

Beyond this, Tarinicharan explicitly held "the Muslims" as a foreign community bent on destroying 'Indian independence' and 'the Hindu religion'. An example of this can be found in his description of the conquest of Mahmud of Ghazni. In this, King Anandapal of the Shahiya dynasty (who ruled an area around modern Punjab in the early 11th century) was afforded considerable Hindu nationalist foresight and spatial imagination:

> "The Muslims [argued Anandapal] are determined to *destroy the independence of all of India* and to eradicate the Hindu religion. If they conquer Lahore, they will attack *other parts of the country*. It is therefore a grave necessity for all to unite in suppressing the *mleccha* forces." Saying this, the King [Anandapal] sent emissaries to all the principal Hindu kings. His appeal did not go unheeded. The kings of Delhi, Kanauj, Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar and other places joined with [Anandapal]. Masses of troops arrived in Punjab. Worried by this sudden increase in the strength of the opposition, Mahmud decided, for reasons of safety, to halt near Peshawar. The Hindu forces increased daily. Hindu women from far away sold their diamonds, melted down their gold ornaments and sent supplies for war (cited in P Chatterjee 1993: 104, emphasis added; compare Elphinstone 1849: 280-81).

As Chatterjee has suggested, the words Tarinicharan attributed to King Anandapal *cannot but* be the words of a modern historian, equipped with historical information about 'Muslim goals' and a nationalist consciousness (1993: 104). Yet what is more important for this discussion is that Tarinicharan clearly considered India to be a land that existed *prior* to the history that happened in it, naturally occupied by the Hindu nation. That is, though the King Anandapal feared for his own kingdom, Tarinicharan suggested that his principal fear was for 'all of India'. We can concede that Anandapal may, indeed, have felt some affinity with the kings of Delhi, Kanauj and Ujjain; yet to consider these other rulers as kings of 'other parts of the country' – as Tarinicharan suggested

Anandapal did – requires the understanding that this 'country', this 'India', existed *prior* to their rule. Quite simply, Tarinicharan projected in this passage a modern understanding into the thinking of the past: in essence, Tarinicharan suggested – in the authoritative tones of modern, disembodied historical scholarship – that there existed an 'India', and a particular 'people of India', since before the history that happened in it.

Along similar lines, Savarkar's histories also offered a Hindu nationalist depiction of the world. The nationalist consciousness in Savarkar's works is, of course, considerably more explicit than those written in the 19th century. Savarkar noted, for example, that the objective of his work *The Indian War of Independence 1857* was "to inspire … people with a burning desire to rise again and wage a second and successful war to liberate their motherland" (cited in Joshi and Savarkar 1970: xiii). Though this particular work did not offer an ideology as clearly *Hindu* nationalist as is evident in Savarkar's later thinking (Savarkar's key villains in *The Indian War of Independence 1857* were the British and their 'native collaborators', while "Hindu and Mahommedan" were explicitly written as allies and compatriots (1970 [1909]: 6, 496; compare 1989 [1923]; 1949; 1947)) it does offer us a key access to Savarkar's depictions of India. In this, Savarkar explicitly suggested the battles of 1857 were in favour of independence for 'all of India'. That is, despite the fact that most of the battles of the 1857 conflict were localised, northern province affairs (see discussion in Vanaik 1997: 13 and chapter 3), Savarkar depicted them as part of a "vast tidal wave from Peshawar to Calcutta" (1970 [1909]: 4). This was deliberate, an attempt to portray the uprisings as indicative of a spirit spread across the national territory, across the "India bounded by the Himalayas on the north and the Ocean on the south" (V D Savarkar 1970 [1909]: 13). This can be seen explicitly in the map included in the 1970 edition of *The Indian War of Independence 1857*, which clearly suggested that the localised uprisings were symptomatic of the entire territory (see figure 27).

Figure 27 A depiction of "The Volcano" of Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence 1857*; this revolution 'erupted', according to Savarkar "in India in 1857" (1970 [1909]: 1, image facing viii). What the image suggested was that the *localised* events of 1857 (see discussion in Vanaik 1997: 13 and chapter 3) were representative of the entire national territory, and that the cohesive red area of India was inherently different (as far as 'Indian Independence' was concerned) from other parts of the globe. What is crucial is that this picture speaks more of Savarkar's (and his publisher's) understandings and intent than of the understandings of the soldiers who rebelled in 1857. It must be acknowledged – though this picture clearly depicts Savarkar's argument that the events reflected sentiment "all over India" (1970 [1909]: 58) – that this map is drawn from the 1970 edition, and hence cannot be claimed as an element of earlier editions.

Savarkar's later *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* built on his portrayal of India offered in *The Indian War of Independence 1857*. Though this work was not perhaps as rigorous and structured a history as either *The Indian War of Independence 1857* or Tarinicharan's *Bhāratbarşer itihās*, it did offer what has become the central definition of the Hindu nation, and the Hindu nationalist India. To begin, Savarkar located his argument in the contemporary political environment, stating that "Hindus we are and love to remain so" (1989 [1923]: 1). Following this, Savarkar attached the contemporary label 'Hindu' to historical events – in essence, nationalising the past. In this, the ancient migration of Vedic culture (marked by Savarkar by the 'Sacrificial Fire') was described as an event of Hindu national history:

> …The activities of so intrepid *a people* as *the Sindhus or Hindus* could no longer be kept cooped or cabined within the narrow compass of the Panchanad or the Punjab. The vast and fertile plains farther off stood out inviting the efforts of some strong and vigorous race. Tribe after tribe of the Hindus issued forth from the land of their nursery and led by consciousness of a great mission and their Sacrificial Fire that was the symbol thereof, they soon reclaimed the vast, waste and but very thinly populated lands (1989 [1923]: 10, emphasis added).

What is crucial for this discussion is that Savarkar regularly referred to a physical area – "from the Indus to the Seas" – as a cohesive land in which this transhistorical Hindu community was naturally embedded:

> On the southern side of *our country* the *natural and strategic limits* were already reached, sanctioned and sanctified. The frame-work of the deep and boundless seas in which our southern peninsula is set is almost poetical in its grace and perfection. The Samudrarashana had pleased the eyes of generations of our poets and patriots. But on the *north-western side of our nation* the commingling of races was growing rather too unceremonious to be healthy and our frontiers too shifty to be safe. Therefore it would have been a matter of surprise if the intense spirit of self-assertion that had found so benign an asylum under the patronage of the Mahakal of Ujjain had not made our patriots turn to this pressing necessity of drawing a frontier line for us that would be as vivid as effective. And what could that line be but the vivacious yet powerful stream – the River of rivers – the 'Sindhu'? The day on which the patriarchs of our race had crossed that stream they ceased to belong to the people they had definitely left behind and laid the foundation of a new nation (1989 [1923]: 28-29, emphasis added).

What is apparent about Savarkar's description of 'his country' is that it sat in his mind – at least partially – *prior* to the history that happened in it. That is, though he accepted in one phrase that the frontier line of India had to be *drawn*, he was plainly uncomfortable with this position. In fact, in the very next passage, India was presented as *prior* to human agency. That is, we can only accept his argument that on the "day on which the patriarchs of our race… crossed that stream they ceased to belong to the people they had definitely left behind and laid the foundation of a new nation" (V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 29) if there was a 'frontier' – an 'India' – *prior* to that event. What Savarkar sought to do in his *Hindutva*, I suggest, was present an authoritative history of the modern, Cartesian area known as 'India' that displayed the 'Hindu community' as the rightful and earliest occupants of that land. At heart, this was a direct claim to the chief authority of the disembodied historical portrayal of India.

Following the emergence of these Hindu nationalist histories in the 19th and early 20th centuries, various thinkers and activists in British India began to represent their India in other forms of literature and communication. Some brought new forms of authority to support the Hindu nationalist representations of India, others offered the central understanding in new forms. I look briefly here at poetry, prose and other forms of literature and nationalist newspapers.

Early works of literature which contributed to the Hindu nationalist representation of the physical world (though they were not necessarily ontologically identical to Savarkar's *Hindutva*) include Bankimchandra Chatterjee's novel *Ananda Math* ([1882]), S M Mitra's *Hindupore: A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest* (1909) and Sarath Kumar Gosh's *The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna* (1909).

Variously, these works offered templates for 'Hindu resistance' to British and Muslim power, while representing the country in what can be considered Hindu nationalist ways. Chatterjee's famous novel *Ananda Math*, for example, fictionalised the events of a '*sannyasi* rebellion' of 1772-1774 (Tickell 2005: 531; Hastings [1773]), when "bands of Sannyasis" (in Governor-General Warren Hastings' terms at the time) 'overran' "the province and committed great depredations" (Hastings [1773]: i, iii; G S R Chaudhuri nd). What is important about *Ananda Math* is that Chatterjee regularly located the motivations of the *sannyasi* rebels in their primal connection with the land ([1882]: 29, emphasis added):

> Silently in the moonlit night the two crossed the open country. Mohendra was silent, sorrowful, full of pride, but also a little curious.
>
> Suddenly Bhavananda's whole aspect changed. No longer was he the ascetic, serious of aspect, calm of mood; no longer the skilful fighter, the heroic figure of the man who had beheaded the captain with the sweep of a sword; no longer had he that aspect with which even now he had proudly rebuked Mohendra. It was as if *the sight of that beauty of plain and forest, river and numerous streams, all the moonlit peaceful earth*, had stirred his heart with a great gladness; it was as if Ocean were laughing in the moonbeams. Bhavananda became smiling, eloquent, courteous of speech. He grew very eager to talk and made many efforts to open a conversation, but Mohendra would not speak. Then Bhavananda, having no other resource, began to sing to himself.
>
> 'Mother, I bow to thee!
> Rich with thy hurrying streams,
> Bright with thy orchard gleams,
> Cool with thy winds of delight,
> Dark fields waving, mother of might,
> Mother free!'

At this point, Mohendra questioned Bhavananda's song, asking who this 'Mother' might be. Bhavananda merely continued his song:

> 'Glory of moonlight dreams
> Over thy beaches and lordly streams;
> Clad in thy blossoming trees,
> Mother, giver of ease,
> Laughing low and sweet!
> Mother, I kiss thy feet.
> Speaker-sweet and low!
> Mother, to thee I bow.

> Mohendra said, 'That is *the country*, it is not the Mother.'
> Bhavananda replied, '*We recognize no other Mother. Mother and Motherland is more than heaven itself. We say the motherland is our mother*. We have neither mother nor father nor brother nor friend, wife nor son nor house nor home. We have her alone, the richly-watered, richly-fruited, cool with delightful winds, rich with harvests –'
>
> Then Mohendra understood and said, 'Sing it again'. Bhavananda sang once more (B C Chatterjee [1882]: 30, emphasis added).

The remainder of Bhavananda's song – *Vande Mataram* – continued to praise and worship the 'Motherland', the "Loveliest of all earthly lands" as "Durga, Lady and Queen" (B C Chatterjee [1882]: 32). After establishing this *sannyasin*'s intimate relationship with the land, Chatterjee afforded the relationship an explicit political meaning:

> Mohendra saw the robber shedding tears as he sang. In wonder he asked, 'Who are you?'
> Bhavananda replied, 'We are the Children.'

> ‘What is meant by the Children?’ asked Mohendra, ‘Whose children are you?’
> Bhavananda replied, ‘The children of the Mother.’
> ‘Good’; said Mohendra, ‘Do the children worship their mother with theft and looting? What kind of filial piety is that?’
> ‘We do not thieve and loot,’ answered Bhavananda.
> ‘Why, just now you plundered the carts.’
> ‘Is that theft and looting? Whose money did we plunder?’
> ‘Why, the ruler’s.’
> ‘The ruler’s! What right has he to the money, that he should take it?’
> ‘It is his royal share of the wealth of the country.’
> ‘Who rules and does not protect his kingdom, is he a ruler at all?’
> ([1882]: 32-3).

Ananda Math was an enormous success. Not only was the poem Bhavananda sang to Mohendra (partially quoted here) embraced as the ‘national song’ and slogan of the anti-colonial struggle (*The Times* 1906a; *The Times* 1906c), many subsequent Hindu nationalists were clearly influenced by its ideas. Aurobindo, for example, praised the novel as offering “a sacred ‘mantra’” for “the whole of India” (cited in G S R Chaudhuri nd: xi; see Aurobindo 1993: 21; see similar in Golwalkar 1966: 80). What is important to recognise is that Chatterjee’s novel (and the swathe of others that emerged in the following decades) offered the beginnings of the Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical to an audience far broader than that gained by Tarinicharan Chattopadhyay’s *Bhāratbarşer itihās*. That is, Chatterjee’s understanding of the physical world – in which Hindu actors could resist dominant forms of power thanks to their inherent embeddedness in the country – could be represented to the literate public beyond those engaged in discussions of history. This, of course, stimulated and shaped much of the nationalist movement in the early 20th century.

While these histories and various forms of literature have clearly been crucial to the development and explanation of the Hindu nationalist argument, we must recognise that the communication of these ideas to those who would (in Hindu nationalist eyes) be Indian only became truly possible with the development of mass broadcast technologies. In this, the development of forms of mass communication – newspapers, television, broadcast speech and pictorial iconography – afforded Hindu nationalist thinkers a powerful means of such communication. Here I look at the RSS newspaper, *Organiser*.

Organiser was first published in 1947, and it remains one of the leading English language organs of Hindu nationalist thought (its sister publication *Panchjanya* is published in Hindi (*Organiser* 2004)). What is clearly apparent and important for this discussion is that the letters, editorials and articles published in *Organiser* have been infused with a Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical. Perhaps typical of this, Roshan Sridhar argued in the *Organiser* article ‘Puzzling Attitude’ that “in the last three decades, several natural disasters have hit India”:

> Each time, many Indian organisations in the US collect donations from Indians for relief operations in India. Many local ethnic newspapers and weeklies ask for help. After receiving money, these ethnic newspapers publish the lists of names of the persons or Indian organisations

> who have donated money for relief work in India. I have been living in the US for the last about 30 years. *I have never seen the name of any Muslim or any Muslim organisation, donating any money towards relief operations in India.* On the other hand, when natural disasters hit any Muslim country, I see long lists of Muslims and Islamic organisations, donating money towards relief operations in Muslim countries including Pakistan (2005, emphasis added).

What Sridhar argued, of course, was that amongst the Indian organisations in the US, there were no Muslim people; that there were no Muslims amongst the Indians living in the US who cared for those in India. This Hindu nationalist imagination of India has regularly been elaborated in the letters pages of *Organiser*. An interesting example of this can be found in the individual reactions of G Vijayalakshmi (2005), N Nagaraja Rao (2005) and Rashmi Chowdhary (2005) to the news reported in *Organiser* the previous week that Swami Avimukteshwarananda Saraswati "was made to disembark from an Indian Airlines flight for carrying his holy dand, a thin bamboo stick which is a symbol of [his] spiritual designation, inside the aircraft cabin" (*Organiser* 2005). Responding to this story, all three wrote to *Organiser* to argue that this was an "indignity", a denial of "our great motherland Bharat" (Vijayalakshmi 2005), and a reflection of "the contempt the majority community commands in their homeland" (Rao 2005). In essence, these letter writers added nothing newsworthy to the story; yet the publication of their letters demonstrated that understandings of the 'great motherland Bharat' and its relationship to intimate, personal spaces, was shared by those who truly knew their homeland.

These various forms of communication – histories, literature, newspapers, as well as television and symbolic iconography (see discussion in Pinney 1997) – have been used to great effect throughout the 20th century to offer the Hindu nationalist ideology to an ever wider audience; to represent the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas according to the Hindu nationalist understanding of India. At heart, these representations of the physical world have operated in the same disembodied realm in which the British first defined their India, yet they have also explicitly drawn on both disembodied *and* more intimate sources of authority. To explain, we can return here to Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* At the heart of Savarkar's *Hindutva* is the argument that "a Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha, from the Indus to the seas as his Father-land as well as his Holy-land that is the cradle land of his religion" (1989 [1923]: front cover). In extrapolation,

> A Hindu then is he who feels attachment to the land that extends from Sindhu to Sindhu as the land of his forefathers – as his Fatherland; who inherits the blood of the great race whose first and discernible source could be traced from the Himalayan altitudes of the Vedic Saptasindhus and which assimilating all that was incorporated and ennobling all that was assimilated has grown into and come to be known as the Hindu people; and who, as a consequence of the foregoing attributes, has inherited and claims as his own the Hindu Sanskriti, the Hindu civilization, as represented in common history, common heroes, a common literature, common art, a common law and a common jurisprudence, common fairs and festivals, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments (1989 [1923]: 100).

Now, we must mark carefully Savarkar's language. On the one hand, 'this land' was presented by Savarkar as a defined, definable quantity, from the 'Indus to the seas'. This, I stress, must be recognised as an understanding derived from a disembodied, Cartesian way of seeing the world. After

all, could a person know, with certainty, that their village on the plains of the Deccan for example – where neither Indus nor sea were visible – was part of a particular land 'between the Indus and the seas'? They could, I suggest, *if* their intimate world, the streets and hills they knew in an intimate, embodied fashion, also held a certain location in the Cartesian 'world', a certain location 'between the Indus and the seas'. Yet prior to the emergence of such a definition, the abstract concepts of 'Indus' and 'seas' (concepts which might have held some *vague*, agency-extended meaning for our villager on the Deccan) *cannot* have provided the dominant definition of that villager's world. In essence, Savarkar was happy to accept that 'this land' was defined through the highly abstract disembodied representations of the physical. Yet on the other hand, Savarkar also suggested that this highly abstract India was a "real and living" entity (1989 [1923]: 99), a concept to which Hindus would feel attachment. What is crucial about this 'attachment' is that it is drawn directly from *intimate* sources of authority; from understandings of community and land derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration. That is, although the concepts of 'fatherland' and 'holyland' were re-framed by Savarkar's description as relating to the abstract land India, they relied on ideas of *family* and *religious community* fostered in face-to-face and agency-extended integration.

In essence, Savarkar and the other Hindu nationalists have not rejected either the disembodied integration or the disembodied representation of the physical first offered by the British. What Savarkar was rejecting was the normalisation of the British administrators' particular knowledge in the dominant understanding of India. By situating his own particular knowledge, his own knowledge derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration within the disembodied framework, Savarkar was offering a new – Hindu nationalist – India.

Crucially, while representing the physical area between the Himalayas and the seas as the Hindu national territory – as their India – Hindu nationalists have also instigated a dedicated campaign to perform that understanding: to produce, through material spatial practice, the Hindu national territory.

Material spatial practices

The production of space, I suggested above (and in chapter 2), occurs through the influence of power in three interlinked domains – that of 'material spatial practices', 'representations of space', and 'spaces of representation' (Harvey 1989: 218). Above, I have explored how Hindu nationalists have invested considerable political energy in renegotiating the dominant representations of India. What I now suggest is that simultaneously, these same activists and thinkers have engaged in an elaborate campaign of material spatial practice: modifying the intimate physical environment around them to make it look like their abstract India. This effort has involved a number of campaigns, perhaps

stretching back to the late 19th century work of Swami Dayananda (see Jones 1976: 34). Some of the more potent, however – such as the *shakha*, the *yatra* and mob violence – emerged in the 20th century.

The *shakha* (as I noted briefly above), is the form of 'cultural congregation' at the heart of the RSS campaign to make a 'Hindu Rashtra', at the heart of the RSS campaign to make the land between the Himalayas and the seas the Hindu national territory. To reiterate briefly: the *shakha* is a homogenised form of daily 'cultural congregation', in which Hindu men and boys are brought together for ideological and physical training. Alongside the "group singing of patriotic songs" and prayer to the Motherland (*RSS* 2004a), this has included rigorous training in fighting techniques and community service operations (see discussion in Raychaudhuri 2000: 265; Andersen and Damle 1987: 91; Alter 1994). There are, according to the RSS, perhaps fifty thousand *shakha*s that meet regularly in modern India (*RSS* 2004b). What must be recognised about the daily ideological and physical training each *shakha* conducts is that it is explicitly a performance of the Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical; a manipulation of the physical environment – by placing Hindu bodies – along the lines of the Hindu nationalist ideology.

At one level, the *shakha* is designed to produce physically capable, caste ignorant, obedient and uniformed male Hindu bodies. Here the combination of physical exercises (discussed in Alter 1994), rigorous military style training (see discussion in S Sarkar 1993; Raychaudhuri 2000: 264; Andersen and Damle 1987: 89-90), a clear and consistent uniform (of khaki shorts, a white shirt and a black cap (see Beckerlegge 2004: 111; *RSS* 2003b; *Organiser* 2003)) and a regimented spatial behaviour are designed to (re-)produce and situate individual bodies as elements of a homogenous and visible Hindu nationalist India (see Alter 1994: 565), see figure 28.

Figure 28 RSS members in *shakha* training. Note the homogenising uniforms and spatial behaviour (denying other forms of identity, in particular caste), as well as the *lathi* / *danda* / staff each volunteer bears (image drawn from http://www.www.secularindia.net/image/communal_rss2.jpg, accessed 16 Nov 2005).

What is crucial about the manipulations of the physical environment fostered by the *shakha* – whether the *lathi* training and uniform wearing of figure 28, or the 'patriotic singing' and community service the RSS boast of (RSS 2003a; RSS 2004a) – is that they are always situated discursively in the Hindu nationalist India. In this, *shakha*s (according to the RSS) always culminate with "the participants assembling in orderly rows in front of the flag at a single whistle of the group leader, and reverentially reciting the prayer '*Namaste Sada Vatsale Matrubhoome*' (My salutation to you, loving Motherland)" (RSS 2004a; see Golwalkar 1966: 323-4). Meanwhile, the exercises and parades always surround the *bhagwa dhwaj*, the saffron flag which – in RSS discourse – "symbolizes the glorious Hindu past" (Purohit, cited in Alter 1994); see figure 29.

Figure 29 RSS volunteers march under the *bhagwa dhwaj*, the saffron flag used by the RSS to mark the Hindu nation and the Hindu national territory (drawn from *RSS* 2005).

Meanwhile, while the *shakha* volunteers sing the praises of the Motherland, or march before the *bhagwa dhwaj*, they are asked to imagine that across the land between the Himalayas and the seas – stretching out from the volunteer visibly standing next in line, to the 'far off hamlets of Hindusthan' – the *same behaviour* is occurring. As Golwalkar claimed (in a quote discussed earlier),

> Under a saffron flag groups of youths and boys are absorbed in a variety of Bharatiya games … finally, they stand in rows before the flag and recite the prayer: *Many salutations to Thee, O loving motherland!* whose echoes fill the air and stir the soul. 'Bharat Mata ki jai' uttered in utmost earnest furnishes the finishing and inspiring touch to the entire programme. *Throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan*, not only in towns and cities but in far off hamlets, hills and dales, *these inspiring scenes and soul-stirring songs greet us regularly and punctually at the time of sunrise, sunset or at night everyday*. We call it 'shākhā' (1966: 323-4, emphasis added).

Thus *shakha* volunteers (if Golwalkar's ideology has been embraced) are trained to imagine that throughout their India other Hindu nationalists are performing and acting in the same space as them, that their village, their *shakha* grounds, and their bodies are echoed across that India.

Alongside the *shakha*, the political *yatra* (procession), has also been crucial to the production and performance of the Hindu nationalist India in intimate, material, settings. To explain this, a brief

background is necessary. The *yatra* is a concept with some centuries of precedent in the religious traditions of southern Asia. Spiritual versions of *yatra* have included pilgrimages to sacred sites (such as the *Amarnath Yatra*, to the Amarnath cave in modern Jammu and Kashmir), or processions of spiritual leaders and deities along certain routes (such as the *Jagannāth Rath Yatra* in Puri); (see discussion in Waghorne 1999). These 'traditional' forms of the *yatra* are, of course, ways of performing particular (agency-extended and face-to-face derived) understandings of space; manipulating the physical environment according to ideas derived from these forms of integration. The *Jagannāth Rath Yatra*, for example, has centred on the wheeling of the chariot of the deity *Jagannāth* around the streets of Puri, while devotees line the streets to 'take the *darśan*' (the duality of 'seeing' and 'being seen' crucial to much Hindu worship (Eck 1981: 3)) of the deity. What is important for this discussion is that since the early 1980s, Hindu nationalist actors have embraced the *yatra* as a powerful form of material spatial practice, a powerful way of placing the bodies and symbols marking their abstract India in people's everyday spaces. To do this, the prominent Hindu nationalist *yatras* – such as the VHP's *Ekatmata Yatras* of 1983 and 1995, and LK Advani's BJP supported *Ram Rath Yatra* of 1990 – have utilised this Hindu religious form in explicitly pan-Hindu, or Hindu nationalist ways.

The *Ekatmata Yatra*, or 'pilgrimage for unity' (also known as the *Ekatmata Yajna*, or 'sacrifice for unity') was launched in 1983 as an explicit attempt to arouse people's faith in Bharat Mata (Mother India) and Ganga Mata (the Ganges as a mother goddess) (Bacchetta 2000: 267; Jaffrelot 1996: 362). In the words of Acharya Giriraj Kishore, a senior vice president of the VHP, "the Ekatmata Yagna was really a Yagna held in Vedic sense whereby – the mass of people – men–women, old–young all *converged together for Darshan* and worship of the Holy Mother Ganga" (Kishore 2003, emphasis added). The core of the campaign was a series of some fifty interlinked *yatra*, with three major processions travelling from Haridwar to Kanyakumari, Kathmandu to Rameshwaram and Gangasagar to Somnath. Forty-seven minor processions crossed other areas before joining the major *yatra*. (The paths of these *yatra* are tracked in figure 30). The three major *yatra* crossed paths ("in the manner of the three sacred rivers (*triveṇī*) at their confluence (*sangam*)", according to Jackie Assayag (1998: 135)) at the oft-claimed 'geographical centre of India', Nagpur – which is also RSS headquarters (Jaffrelot 2004: 212). Kishore described this meeting in explicitly Hindu nationalist terms:

> At Nagpur on Nov. 20, 1983 there was an unprecedented scene. On that day all roads were leading to Nagpur. All the three major Yatras formed a Triveni Sangam scene there… Karnataka had planned the meeting of the Yatra at one place called 'Dharmasthal'. Dharmasthal is verily the symbol of living unity where the Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Pujari is a Vaishnava and the Manager is a Jain. Such a core unity in fact represents *the typical Hindu life style*, which is rarely found in the whole world (Kishore 2003, emphasis added).

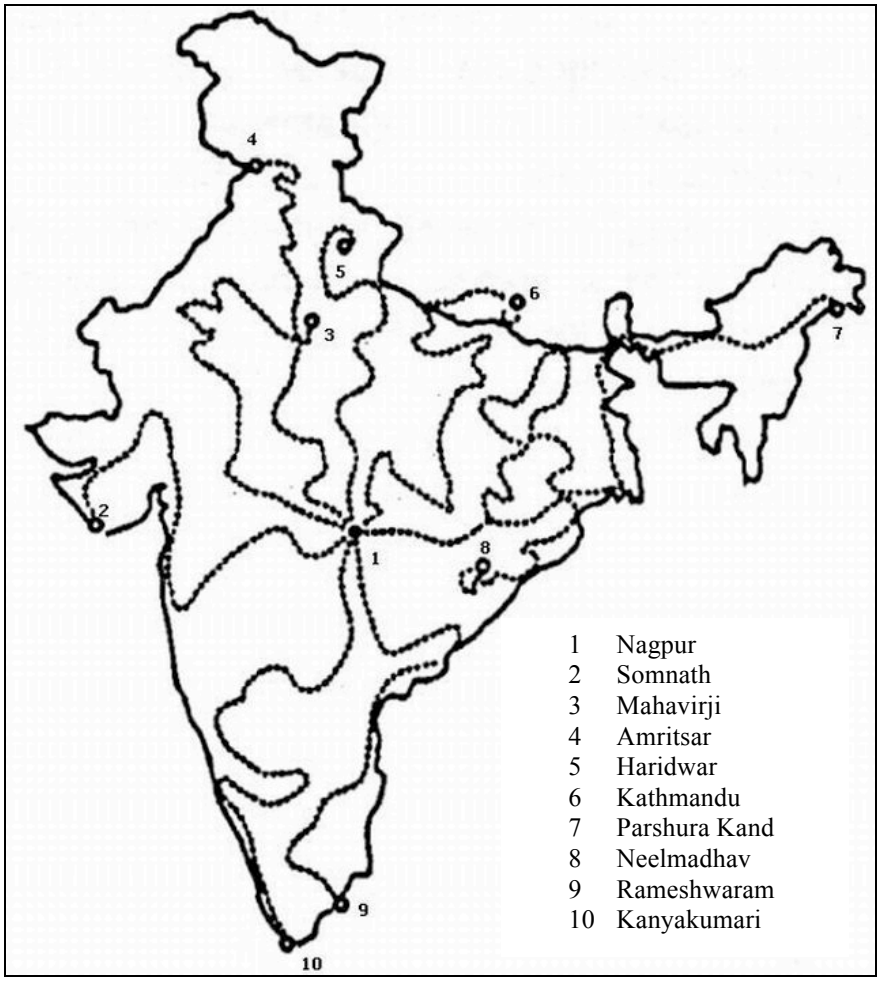

Figure 30 The routes traced by the VHP's 1983 *Ekatmata Yatra* (drawn from Assayag 1998: 147, image partially edited). Many of the towns visited were important sites in a 'pan-Hindu' sacred geography. In this campaign, their spiritual meanings were taken up in explicitly Hindu nationalist ways.

Importantly, as Paola Bacchetta has suggested (and Kishore's comments demonstrate), this campaign made explicit use of 'pan-Hindu' spiritual understandings of the physical (2000: 267). In this, the processions marched along well known pilgrimage paths, and visited some of the more popular and significant temples, such as Haridwar, Somnath and Kanyakumari (see figure 30). With long histories of spiritual pilgrimage, these sites and paths were already clearly established in various 'traditional' – agency-extended – understandings of the physical world (Klostermaier 1989: 137; Jaffrelot 2004: 212). Meanwhile, the 'chariots' of the *yatra* – modern trucks re-branded by the VHP – bore decorations which sought to evoke the 'traditional' temple-chariots and the warrior-chariot of Arjuna (a hero of the *Mahābhārata*), and other 'pan-Hindu' motifs (Bacchetta 2000: 267; Assayag 1998: 135). Finally, symbolically 'Hindu' bodies (*sadhus*) led the marches (Jaffrelot 2004: 212; van der Veer 1987: 292). All these symbolic references were offered in a 'pan-Hindu' sense, as symbolic of narratives important to 'the Hindu community at large', rather than to particular spiritual sects. As Kishore claimed, people of a variety of spiritual faiths "joined in the Yagna to prove that despite differences in modes of worship, racially and culturally they [were] all Hindus" (Kishore 2003). This

'pan-Hindu' symbolism was further developed – and made more explicitly anti-Muslim – in later *yatras*. In a 1985 *yatra* for example, the VHP displayed images of the deity Ram imprisoned in an cage styled in Islamic patterns (Assayag 1998: 136), a clear reference to the Babri Masjid's 'occupation' of Ram's 'birth site' (the *Ram janmabhūmi*; see discussion above and further discussion below). In this, the implication was that a site sacred to some Hindus had been usurped by Muslim invasions and that this was, therefore, a threat to the 'Hindu community' and 'Hindu culture' in general.

Echoing the VHP's *Ekatmata Yatra*, L K Advani's *Ram Rath Yatra* began at Somnath on the Gujarat coast on the 25th of September 1990, during the *navarātri* or 'Nine nights' religious festival (Assayag 1998: 137). From there, the procession wound through eight states, headed for the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. Mirroring the launch at Somnath, the *yatra* was scheduled to arrive on the 30th of October, the arrival date for the traditional pilgrimage to the town (Assayag 1998: 137). Both these towns, it must be recognised, have figured prominently in both spiritual (that is, agency-extended) discourse and in Hindu nationalist portrayals of 'Muslim invasion'. As with the VHP's processions, the *Ram Rath Yatra* employed 'traditional' symbolism (see figure 31) in explicitly Hindu nationalist ways. Advani's 'chariot' for example, was decorated to evoke the warrior chariot of Arjuna (see figures 31 and 32), while the Bajrang Dal members who joined the *yatra* declared themselves to be "soldiers of Hanuman" (echoing the monkey-god who supported Ram in the epic *Rāmāyana*), bore a *triśūl* (a 'traditional' – though certainly deadly – three pronged weapon symbolising Shiva) and swore to "protect women, temples, and religion against all the irreligious" (Assayag 1998: 137).

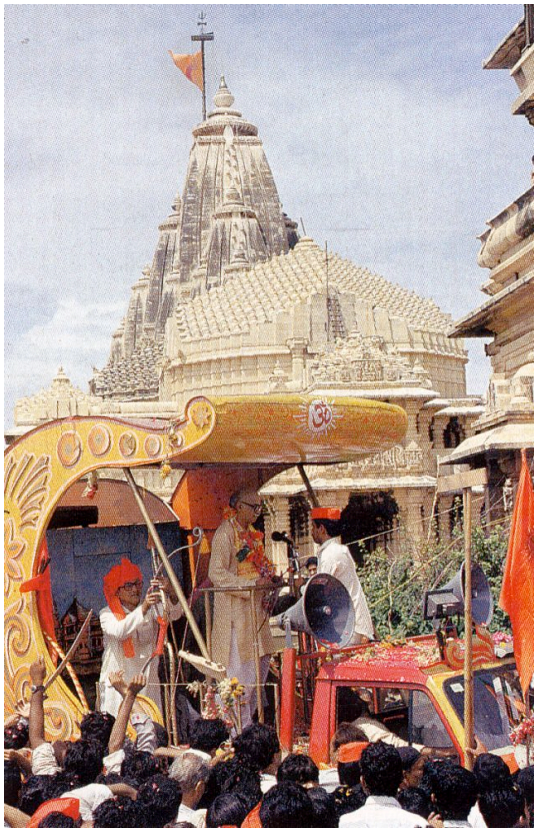

Figure 31 L K Advani's *Ram Rath Yatra* as it left Somnath for Ayodhya in September 1990; note the decorations evoking the chariot of Arjuna (see figure 32) in an explicitly modern, broadcast form, and the *bhagwa dhwaj* on the peak of the temple (drawn from Panikkar 2004: 5).

Both the *Ekatmata Yatra* and the *Ram Rath Yatra* (and a number of other Hindu nationalist *yatras*) were powerful performances of the Hindu nationalist 'India'. Essentially, they were visible, tangible phenomena – manipulations of the physical environment – which claimed to be explicitly in the Hindu nationalist India. Each person who saw the decorated trucks and bodies of the Hindu nationalist *yatra* was asked to see entities located between disparate holy sites (such as Somnath and Kanyakumari), located in relationship to a specific past, and located amongst a vast Hindu community that was also watching (see discussion in Assayag 1998: 135). All this was clearly a powerful way of suggesting to people that, as they saw the *yatra*, other Hindus throughout India were seeing and experiencing the same event: walking in, standing in, and 'taking the *darśan*' of the Hindu nation and the Hindu nationalist India.

Figure 32 A depiction of the chariot of Arjuna, driven by Krishna. Many Hindu nationalist *yatras* have sought to evoke the symbolism of the *Mahābhārata* (image drawn from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Krishna_giridhar3.jpg, accessed 24 Nov 2005).

Finally, alongside the *shakha* and the *yatra*, Hindu nationalist actors and organisations have used violence as a means of manipulating the physical environment to make it look like their abstract India. That is, in the riots of the 1920s, in the savage inter-communal bloodletting surrounding Partition and in the demolitions and pogroms of the past decade, various Hindu nationalist groups have sought to manipulate the physical environment through violence; to re-produce villages, towns and streets along Hindu nationalist lines. Compelling examples of this can be found in the Babri Masjid destruction in 1992, and the 2002 'post-Godhra' riots in Gujarat. We can begin this discussion with the Babri destruction.

In the 1980s (following a dedicated VHP-led campaign, including some of the *yatras* described above), the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya began to form a focal point for various Hindu nationalist groups, a key demonstration of 'Hindu humiliation' at the hands of 'Muslim invaders' (R Singh 1993; Prabhu 1987; see also Limaye 1987). In L K Advani's words, the Babri mosque was "an ocular demonstration against the Hindus" (cited in Sharma 2005; see also Madhav 2003). What the Ayodhya site offered Hindu nationalist actors was a powerful combination of narratives of 'Hindu indigeneity' and of 'Muslim interruption'. In this, Hindu nationalists argued (drawing on well established local and spiritual understandings – that is, understandings derived from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration) that the mosque sat on the birth place of Ram, the widely revered hero of the *Rāmāyana*. This made the site sacred for those who worshipped Ram, yet it also made the site (perhaps more importantly) a location for the otherwise mythical *Rāmāyana*. This allowed other Hindus (that is, those who did not worship Ram as an incarnation of Vishnu) to see the

site as intimately connected to an ancient epic, loved and known throughout the Hindu nation. In both these conceptions, the Babri Masjid was cast as an interruption, a denial of what was sacred, natural and important to the Hindu nation, and a violent invasion of a culture ignorant of the 'true India'. The Babri Masjid, in essence, offered Hindu nationalists a powerful symbol of their geopolitics, able to transcend spiritual divides (van der Veer 1987: 293; see also *The Tribune* 2003).

It is worth also recognising that this framing of the Babri Masjid was deployed in a way that paralleled with other sites in the land between the Himalayas and the seas. That is, by trumpeting its roots in 'invasion' and its 'unnaturalness' to the Hindu national territory, the mosque was presented as emblematic of the denial of the abstract India, emblematic of other mosques between the Himalayas and the seas. Speaking for the RSS, Ram Madhav noted that the *Ram janmabhūmi* movement was "not just a movement for a temple. It manifests the innate yearning of a people for self-respect and honour, an urge to unshackle themselves from the humiliations history heaped on it" (2003). Following such a portrayal, other mosques in India gained in Hindu nationalist eyes the same narrative meaning as the Babri Masjid. In this, Harish Bhatt (a Bajrang Dal leader) talked of *all* mosques in modern India in the terms of the Ayodhya dispute:

> We ask all Muslim community also, if they are brotherhoodly, they are staying in this country, if they want to stay peacefully they should hand over *these three temples* [Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura], no more any quarrels, no more any riots, no more problems. Only three are required. But if three are not given, we'll try for *three thousand*. That's also our motto (cited in Silver 2003, emphasis added; see also Panikkar 2005).

For Bhatt, all the mosques between the Himalayas and the seas were, at root, interruptions of the natural Hindu nationalist India.

Violence broke out in Ayodhya on the 6th of December 1992. Following a dramatic Advani led *yatra*, a mob made up of many VHP and Bajrang Dal members destroyed the mosque (see figure 33). It is not certain what level of planning lay behind the day of destruction; it is clear, however, that the years of discursive representation in which the mosque was delegitimised in Hindu nationalist eyes guided and directed the mob's violent manipulation of the physical environment, their remaking of the material world to make it look like their India.

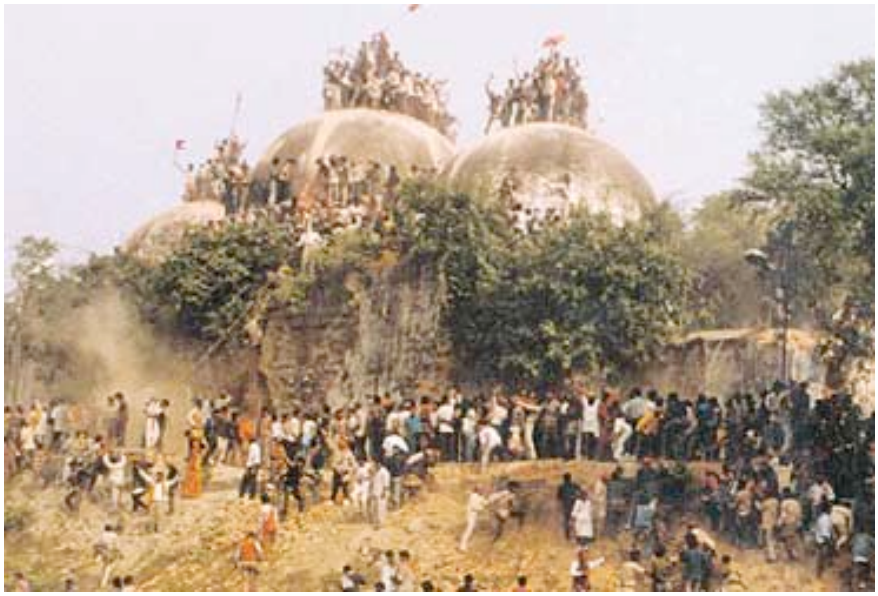

Figure 33 A crowd of Hindu nationalist activists at the moment when they began to destroy the Babri Masjid, on 6th December 1992. Note the *bhagwa dhwaj*, or saffron flag, hoisted by the crowds atop each dome – compare with figures 29, 31 and 32 (image drawn from *Debating India* 2005).

In a similar way, Hindu nationalist groups have also used violent riots as a means of performing and producing the Hindu national territory. This can clearly be seen in the riots in Gujarat in 2002, when perhaps as many as two thousand people – mostly Muslims – were killed in a series of pogroms beginning on February the 27th (HRW 2002). In both the rhetoric surrounding these events and the physical practice we can detect a Hindu nationalist attempt to reproduce local areas according to their abstract India. We can begin with a brief background.

The February 2002 riots began after a train carrying Hindu pilgrims was attacked and torched by a Muslim mob at the station at Godhra; fifty-eight of the pilgrims died (HRW 2002: 13-14). Rioting began almost immediately, and touched most of the major towns in Gujarat. Though this chain of events is clear, it must be recognised is that there remains significant controversy surrounding the cause of the riots. According to Hindu nationalist actors, the riots were the spontaneous expression of Hindu anger, a natural "reaction" to the Godhra train fire (Modi, cited in Bhushan 2002; see also T Sarkar 2003; Bhatt, cited in Silver 2003; Vaidya 2004). Against this claim however, significant evidence can be found that the riots were meticulously planned by a variety of Hindu nationalist groups (see Gera and Agrawal 2003). In this, it has been alleged that voter lists were systematically used to identify and target particular people and businesses (Dev 2002; *The Times of India* 2002); that police (guided by the BJP state government – see further discussion below) actively aided rioters (Bhushan 2002); and that, in the months before the riots, VHP volunteers actively gathered information on Muslim residences and businesses (Bhushan 2002). What must be recognised at this stage is that regardless of whether the riots were meticulously planned or were a spontaneous occurrence, the very claim that the riots were a 'natural reaction' – such as made by BJP Chief

Minister Narendra Modi (see HRW 2002: 34; Bhushan 2002) – is significant. In essence, such a claim suggests that the violent mob was behaving normally, that the particular buildings and bodies targeted were plainly 'unnatural' and 'abnormal'. This, of course, is a clear statement of Hindu nationalist ideas of India; a clear attempt to paint the Hindu community as natural, and the Muslim community as unnatural, in the land between the Himalayas and the seas.

If we turn to the actual shape of the riots, we can see significant evidence of the performance of the Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical. In this, at least twenty mosques were destroyed (HRW 2002), while in the demolished mosques, idols were often installed to mark the site as 'Hindu' (Bhushan 2002). Alongside the mosques, the rioters also destroyed *dargahs*, traditional meeting grounds for Hindus and Muslims, hence spaces conducive of a communal harmony (HRW 2002). Meanwhile, of the two thousand people killed (the great majority of whom were Muslim) there exists evidence that Muslims not living in predominantly Muslim areas were particularly singled out (see Bhushan 2002). This can clearly be understood as an issue of strength (mobs are much more powerful against individuals than an entire community living in one suburb), yet we can also see it as a writing of the Hindu nationalist idea of 'internal threats' on the neighbourhood scale. As with other incidents of communal violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence also figured prominently. As Human Rights Watch has recounted, "women in the Aman Chowk shelter told appalling stories about how armed men disrobed themselves in front of a group of terrified women to cower them down further" (HRW 2002: 27).

After the pogrom, Gujarat remained "caught in a fear psychosis", with people from each community warily avoiding those of the other (PUCL 2002). This was a clear goal of the Hindu nationalist groups behind the rioting. The situation after the riots was described by Sumit Mukherjee described in 2004:

> After the diabolical carnage in Gujarat two years back, Muslims of the state are still subjected to persecution, discrimination and marginalisation. The aftermath of the communal riots in Gujarat, has confronted the Muslims with the threat of ostracisation… The owner of a cycle shop who fled during the riots, encountered virulent opposition from local Hindus when he wanted to return to his village… Uprooted Muslim families are now living in Muslim majority areas in towns like Halol, Kalol and Godhra but the chances of their rehabilitation in their native village, are virtually nil. A grocer of the Kharod village of the Panchmahal district, who wanted to rebuild his house which was destroyed during the riots, was attacked by Hindus (2004).

With Muslim families ostracised and uprooted, the Hindu nationalist understanding of India had been stamped on the area. Thanks to the violent production method, even people who utterly rejected Hindu nationalist thought were forced to live by its dictates.

The methods employed by Hindu nationalists to persuade people to understand the land between the Himalayas and the seas as the Hindu national territory have been – almost overwhelmingly – non-state methods. In the last decade of the 20th century however, a number of Hindu nationalist actors gained

some control of the organs of the Indian state. This development afforded them a radically different set of tools able to represent, and manipulate, the physical land between the Himalayas and the seas according to their understanding of India.

The spatial productions of the partially Hindu nationalist state

In the 1996 general elections, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP, emerged as the single biggest party in the *Lok Sabha*. Though the party did not win a clear majority in this session and was unable to form a stable coalition, the 1998 and 1999 elections again returned the largest share of seats to the BJP. From the 1998 election onwards, the BJP were able to form moderately stable – though politically limited – coalition governments (see Panikkar 2005). Meanwhile, various states (such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa) have, over the past decade, also seen governments led outright, or in coalition, by the BJP. Thus over the past decade, Hindu nationalist actors have gained at least partial control of the significant and powerful tools of the state, using them represent and manipulate the physical world between the Himalayas and the seas according to their understanding of India. This section charts some of the Hindu nationalist uses of state technologies to represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to their understanding of India and, simultaneously, to embed this understanding in the daily lives of all who would be Indian through material spatial practice.

Representations of space

In the late 1990s, Hindu nationalist politicians in the Bharatiya Janata Party gained at least partial control of some significant state communications technologies. Most importantly, these Hindu nationalist actors gained – at both the state and federal level – the ability to define and shape school curricula (see Bhattacharya 2003; Nair 2005).

Nationalist thinkers in modern India have for some time used the school system as a means of propagating particular understandings of the physical world. As I suggested in chapter 5, secular Indian nationalists used the school system to suggest to the students of modern India that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is their home (see for example SCERTCG 2005: 17). In similar ways, Hindu nationalist actors have also used school education to suggest to great numbers to students that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is their national territory. Importantly however, these Hindu nationalist actors have also endeavoured to rephrase the portrayal of the secular nationalist works, suggesting instead that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the eternal 'holyland' and 'fatherland' of the Hindu nation. To do this, geography and history subjects have been taught – and, importantly, their textbooks revised (see discussion in Deep 2003; Rajalakshmi 2002; K

Roy 2003) – to emphasise the Hindu nationalist understanding of the physical. A clear example of this can be found in the Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks' volume *Environment* for Class IV.

From the outset of this discussion, it must be recognised that in the Gujarat text, secular nationalist ideas of India (discussed in chapter 5) were not directly rejected. In the chapter 'National Integration' for example, the students were explicitly placed within the history of the independence struggle. Here the text suggested to the students that "Swararj or Self-rule is to have *our country* ruled by *ourselves*… In order to keep up our national unity, we take this oath: India is *my country*" (GSBST 2005: 3, emphasis added). The chapter then explained what constituted this 'country':

> *Our country* is spread over a vast area. It is marked by a wide geographical diversity. It has high mountain ranges whose peaks are snow-clad all through the year. It has vast plains which remain fertile through all seasons. It has dense forests and arid deserts. It has a long coast line stretching over hundreds of kilometres. We have a wide variety of eco-systems in our country such as mountain ranges, high lands, plains, forests and coastal regions (GSBST 2005: 3, emphasis added).

This passage clearly represented a certain patch of the Earth's physical surface as connected with a national 'us'. What must be stressed is that this description differs little from what has been offered in the textbooks guided by secular nationalist thinking (see chapter 5). The crucial difference between these two forms of textbook can be found in their discussions of culture. Thus after listing the geographical features of 'our country', the text then offered that

> Our country is very rich in culture diversity. Each of the various regions has its own cultural tradition going back to thousands of years [sic]. And yet there is unity in the midst of all this diversity. *There are ancient literary works like the epics Ramayana and Mahabharat with which the whole country is familiar*.
>
> Ancient monuments like the Sun Temple at Modhera, the Rudramahalaya at Siddhpur… the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai … speak of the diversity as well as of *the unity of Indian culture*. These monuments do not represent the tradition of any one religion, or caste or people today… This is also true of popular festivals. Thus Gujarat has its Navaratri festival, Maharashtra its Ganesh Chathurthi, Rajasthan its Holi, Punjab its Baishakhi, Bengal its Durga Puja, Keral its Onam and Tamilnadu its Pongal. *These festivals demonstrate cultural unity of the country* (GSBST 2005: 3, emphasis added).

These claims – that there exist cultural narratives with which the whole country is familiar, that there exists a unity of Indian culture – suggest to the students that their own culture is an element of the 'Indian cultural unity', and, moreover, that the 'plains' 'forests' and 'deserts' of their intimate spaces are mirrored across the Hindu national territory.

The position offered by the Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks' *Environment* has been echoed in other school textbooks influenced by Hindu nationalist governments. The National Council of Education Research and Training's history text for Class VI (released in 2002), for example, clearly portrayed the Hindu nation as a changeless and transhistorical community permanently embedded in the broad area between the Himalayas and the seas (see discussion in K Roy 2003). In this, the cultures of the ancient Harappan or Indus river civilisation were explicitly connected with those of

modern India. In one example, the text suggested that "the pipal tree was worshipped and revered by the Harappans, [it] continues to be worshipped even today. These people also worshipped Siva in the form of linga which is done today also" (cited in K Roy 2003; see discussion in Rajalakshmi 2002). This not only suggested that a direct continuity existed between the most ancient peoples of the Indus river civilisation and the modern Hindu community, it also suggested that the core cultural principles of modern Indian civilisation sprang from this period. As Kumkum Roy has suggested, "it is as if the ancients defined for all times the cultural principles of Indian civilization" (2003). Meanwhile, the way the text dealt with religion is also significant. Hinduism was presented in the text as an eternal, 'all-India' phenomenon, free of the sectarian strife seen in other faiths; the spread and physical presence of other faiths were ignored (K Roy 2003; Rajalakshmi 2002). Thus when the architecture and sculpture of India were discussed in other lessons, visible Christian or Muslim forms were neglected, as if not truly a part of India (K Roy 2003; see also T Sarkar 2003).

What both these treatments did was suggest to students (in the authoritative voice of the school textbook) that the land between the Himalayas and the seas is the national territory of the Hindu nation, and that other communities – such as those who are unfamiliar with the *Rāmāyana*, or those who worship in churches or mosques – are not truly connected with this land.

Material spatial practices

Alongside the presentation of the Hindu nationalist ideology in school textbooks, the access to state power also brought under Hindu nationalist control a number of powerful tools of material spatial practice; tools able to manipulate the physical environment between the Himalayas and the seas to make it look like the Hindu nationalist India. Most importantly, in gaining state power Hindu nationalist forces gained control of the military and, in the states where they gained power, the police force. They also gained control of the tools of urban planning and design, and mass infrastructure. Though all were used in various ways manipulate the physical world to make it look like the Hindu nationalist India, it is in particular uses of the police force that we can most clearly see an attempt to manipulate the physical environment in ways divergent from that of the secular Indian nationalists. It is also important to note that while the past decade has seen Hindu nationalist actors equipped with significant state powers, some of their most cherished goals of material spatial practice – most centrally, the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya – were denied by coalition and constitutional restraints (see Panikkar 2005).

In recent years, various state governments led by the BJP have used the police force as a tool of material spatial practice; as a way of placing meaningful and authoritative bodies in the physical environment in ways that conform to the Hindu nationalist ideas of India. Most prominently, during

the 'post-Godhra' riots in Gujarat in 2002 (discussed in part above) we can find evidence which suggests that the BJP-led state administration used the police force to aid the rioters, to assist in the manipulation of the physical environment along Hindu nationalist ideas of India.

The Human Rights Watch report *We Have No Orders To Save You* (HRW 2002) has recounted many stories of state complicity in the violence that followed the Godhra train fire in February 2002. In this, the authors of the report suggested that in both acts of commission and omission, the state police force greatly assisted the VHP and Bajrang Dal attempts to manipulate the streets and bodies of Gujarat so they looked like the Hindu nationalist understanding of India. A graffito reportedly left on the charred walls of a torched madrassa in Ahmedabad boasted of this support:

Yeh andar ki bat hai	This is inside information
Police hamarey saath hai	The police are with us
Jaan se mar dengey	We will kill
Bajrang Dal zindabad	Long live the Bajrang Dal
Narendra Modi zindabad	Long live Narendra Modi [BJP Chief Minister of Gujarat]

(cited in HRW 2002: 22).

The shape and rhetoric surrounding these riots has been discussed previously; in essence, the violence appears to have been part of a concerted effort to make people understand that certain streets and locales deserved to be marked by a visibly Hindu – not Muslim – presence. To do this, Hindu nationalist actors attacked, raped and killed Muslim people, and looted and torched Muslim businesses and buildings. What is important here is that many have alleged that throughout this violence, the state police force were instructed by the state administration either "not to act firmly" against the rioters (M Dasgupta 2002) or, worse, to aid the VHP and Bajrang Dal mob. In this, many of the attacks occurred within clear view of police posts, with police, perhaps, 'looking the other way':

> Even as the hooligans were breaking a small mausoleum in the middle of a road *barely a few metres away from the police commissioner's office*, the police vehicles passing by, not only did not bother to intervene, the police actually gestured to the hooligans to go ahead. There had been at least 15 incidents of damaging and destroying minority places of worship which were overnight converted into 'temples' with the police remaining a mute spectator (M Dasgupta 2002, emphasis added).

In more dramatic examples of the state complicity, others have alleged that the police 'led the charge'; Ahmedabad resident Abdul Aziz recounted to Human Rights Watch his experience in the riots:

> On the 28th afternoon at 3pm my younger brother was returning from work. The police said that a curfew was in place. A crowd gathered to attack. *The police was leading the crowd*. They were looting and the people followed, looting and burning behind them. The crowd was shouting, 'Go to Pakistan. If you want to stay here become Hindu.' The police very clearly aimed at my brother and fired at him. He was twenty-three years old. At 6pm, three hours later, we were able to get him to the hospital… We have not filed any complaints. All the doctors that have been coming here are private or from NGOs (Abdul Aziz, interviewed in Ahmedabad March 23 2002, cited in HRW 2002: 26, emphasis added).

A police force is, by its very nature, an embodiment of the state. That is, a police force is an institutional arrangement of human actors – theoretically removed by uniform, training and hierarchy from more intimate forms of integration – that are permitted, in specified physical areas, access to the

state monopoly of violence. What is important for this discussion is that when the people of Gujarat saw these authoritative bodies behaving according to an understanding of space that violently threatened their existence, the inference must have been clear: that the state was ideologically against them, that the state did not want their bodies in that physical space. We must remember that all the Gujarati police did not act in the ways suggested above, and that those who did may have acted on personal (rather than professional) motivation. Yet at a fundamental level, the sight of uniformed bodies emplaced according to the Hindu nationalist India must have had, for the terrified witnesses, a clear spatial meaning.

A Hindu nationalist India

At the close of chapter 4, I drew on an argument raised by R Palme Dutt to describe the emergence to dominance of a disembodied form of integration – and a disembodied form of spatial representation – in southern Asia. We can return, once again, to this argument. What Dutt suggested was that a variety of modern developments – "of individual landholding, of mortgage and sale of lands, and of a whole apparatus of English bourgeois legal conceptions alien to Indian economy and administered by an alien bureaucracy" – had transformed the dominant understanding of the lands of southern Asia (1970 [1940]: 228). Quite simply, the British had enacted in their Empire "the characteristic process of the colonial system… the expropriation of the Indian people from their land" (Dutt 1970 [1940]: 229). "From being owners of the soil," Dutt concluded, "the peasants have become tenants" (1970 [1940]: 229).

The peasants of southern Asia were, as I have stressed in chapters 4 and 5, expropriated from soil that had been theirs, from lands they had known intimately through face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration. Yet they were not expropriated from India. 'India', a land that could be known with certainty – about which ownership could be authoritatively defined – did not exist for these peasants. It did not exist until it was made in disembodied abstraction. Yet the pain of expropriation was, of course, still felt. As I have argued previously, in the earliest years of the dominance of disembodied integration, this expropriation occurred 'externally' to the lives of the peasants of British India, through the marginalisation of what had been their primary understandings of the land beneath their feet. Later, however, a class emerged in British India – a native elite – who incorporated the disembodied spatial knowledge of the British Empire into their own lives, into their own ways of seeing the physical. This class, I suggest, were the first to see the world in the disembodied ways offered by the British Empire; to see the world with a certain India in it. Yet again, the marginalisation – the expropriation – was still felt. For this class, the marginalisation was an 'internal' matter, a marginalisation of their parents' and their religious institutions' stories of community and

land within their own ways of seeing the world. In essence, this native elite found in their minds radically contradictory ways to see the world around them.

Throughout this chapter, I have described one of the more significant attempts in southern Asia to resolve the contradiction felt between intimate and more abstract understandings of community and land; to resolve the contradiction between the dominant Cartesian depiction of the world and the intimate understandings derived from family and faith. This ideological response to the emergence to the dominance of disembodied integration – labelled for convenience as Hindu nationalism – has revolved around the concept of indigeneity. At heart, this response has argued that the disembodied, abstract India – the supposedly objective 'India in the world' – should be understood primarily through the intimate understandings of the culture and ancestry 'most indigenous' to the land between the Himalayas and the seas; that those who hold culture and ancestry indigenous to this India are the rightful occupants of the land between the Himalayas and the seas.

To attempt to make such an understanding normal – to attempt to shape the dominant conception of India according to the particular understandings of the Hindu nationalist leaders – various activists and thinkers enacted a complicated campaign of spatial production. Using a variety of state and non-state technologies, these activists and thinkers have sought to both represent the area between the Himalayas and the seas according to their particular understandings of community and land, and through material spatial practice to modify the physical sites of that land to make it look like their India. This campaign has, I suggest, sought to find ways to fit – through the concept of indigeneity – peoples' intimate understandings of community and land within the disembodied abstraction; to situate personal understandings of the physical, derived from face-to-face and agency-extended integration, within a particular abstract India. This could, in some ways, restore ownership of the land between the Himalayas and the seas to the people from which it had been expropriated.

What is crucial to recognise, however, is that this response has remained, necessarily, shaped by the particular understandings of the Hindu nationalist leaders. We can draw here from Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*:

> ...The Rathayatra festival at Jagannath, the Vaishakhi at Amritsar, the Kumbha and Ardhakumbha – all these great gatherings had been the real and living congress of our people that kept the current of life and the thought coursing throughout our body politic. The quaint customs and ceremonies and sacraments they involve, observed by some as a religious duty, by others as social amenities, impress upon each individual that he can live best only through the common and corporate life of the Hindu race (1989 [1923]: 99).

Perhaps these festivals have 'impressed upon each individual' the ideas of the 'corporate life of the Hindu race'. Yet what we must stress is that the essential 'Hindu-ness' of these festivals was defined by Savarkar in the abstract: defined by their relationship to that which was absent, that which lay

beyond the perception of the human senses. In essence, the 'Hindu-ness' of these festivals was given by the fact that the attendees considered "the land that lies between Sindhu and Sindhu – from the Indus to the Seas" to be their "Fatherland and Holyland" (V D Savarkar 1989 [1923]: 32; 1949: 4). At heart, Savarkar carried an abstract definition of Hindu, an abstract definition of India *to* these festivals; for him, India had already been defined as a certain spatial entity through disembodied, Cartesian abstraction. In essence, because Savarkar already knew these festivals were 'Hindu', he and the other Hindu nationalist leaders sought ways to incorporate them into the disembodied picture of India. The ways Savarkar found, were, of course, defined by those who led the movement; defined by those who went to look for their India.

Thus over the past century, a variety of activists and thinkers have sought to fit their intimate worlds into the abstract India; to make their face-to-face and agency-extended understandings of the physical world normal within the dominant, disembodied picture. Some of these thinkers have had greater success than others. Yet what we must finally recognise is that the response to the emergence to dominance of disembodied integration emergent from the intimate forms marginalised by that dominance – the attempt to resolve the contradiction between the dominant disembodied depictions of the physical and those emerging from face-to-face and agency-extended forms of integration – will never attain resolution. There will, whilst people draw meaning and authority from conflicting forms of integration, always be a debate about the meaning of India.

Conclusion

I have enquired in this thesis into the claim to national territory in India. We can, now, recapitulate and conclude.

The Indian national territory – the claim to national territory in the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean – has emerged through the assertion of particular, intimate understandings of the physical in the dominant knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. More precisely, the Indian national territory is a space which has been produced through the emergence to dominance in southern Asia of highly abstract, disembodied forms of knowledge of the physical, and the complicated and ongoing efforts to renegotiate this highly abstract knowledge according to interests and understandings more intimate and particular. The Indian national territory is understood, thanks to this production, as a land natural and concrete, eternal and certain, in both embodied locales and the world at large.

To conclude this work's enquiry, we can step back from this argument, and we can turn our gaze, finally, to the conditions which have made this space – this Indian national territory – possible. In this, we can turn to the third domain of the Lefebvrian triad: to the 'representational spaces' within which the Indian national territory has emerged to certainty (see Lefebvre 1991: 33, and further discussion in chapter 2).

Modernity – we might suggest – began with a turning away from the body; with a cleaving of the mind from the material. As René Descartes argued in his groundbreaking *Meditations on the First Philosophy*,

> there is a vast difference between mind and body, in respect that body, from its nature, is always divisible, and that mind is entirely indivisible. For in truth, when I consider the mind, that is, when I consider myself in so far only as I am a thinking thing, I can distinguish in myself no parts, but I very clearly discern that I am somewhat absolutely one and entire; and although the whole mind seems to be united to the whole body, yet, when a foot, an arm, or any other part is cut off, I am conscious that nothing has been taken from my mind; nor can the faculties of

> willing, perceiving, conceiving, etc., properly be called its parts, for it is the same mind that is exercised (all entire) in willing, in perceiving, and in conceiving, etc. But quite the opposite holds in corporeal or extended things; for I cannot imagine any one of them (how small soever it may be), which I cannot easily sunder in thought, and which, therefore, I do not know to be divisible (1912 [1641]: 139).

What has been important for this enquiry is that this Cartesian separation of the mind from the material contributed enormously to the form of appropriation of the physical – the form of space – within which the national territory became possible. It has been, quite simply, in the modern appropriation of the world that the national territory has arisen.

At heart, Descartes' logic afforded a stance toward the material world – a way of seeing – that permitted a scientific appropriation of the physical, and with this, a raising of space to a dominant absolute. We can elaborate. With his ontological separation of body and mind, Descartes rejected knowledge derived from the senses. That is, as he "desired to give [his] attention solely to the search after truth", Descartes surmised

> that I ought to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which I could suppose the least ground for doubt, in order to ascertain whether after that there remained aught in my belief that was wholly indubitable. Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations; and finally, when I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time not one of them true, I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into my mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams (1912 [1637]: 26).

From this position, Descartes then suggested that certain knowledge of the material world must come from "the office of the mind alone": from that which is "entirely and truly distinct from [the] body" (1912 [1641]: 136, 133). We might paraphrase: certain knowledge must come from that which is entirely and truly distinct from the material world. Thus to gain this certain knowledge regarding material objects, Descartes turned to what he could know, with certainty, from his position wholly removed form the material world:

> And what I here find of most importance is, that I discover in my mind innumerable ideas of certain objects, which cannot be esteemed pure negations, although perhaps they possess no reality beyond my thought, and which are not framed by me though it may be in my power to think, or not to think them, but possess true and immutable natures of their own. As, for example, when I imagine a triangle, although there is not perhaps and never was in any place in the universe apart from my thought one such figure, it remains true nevertheless that this figure possesses a certain determinate nature, form, or essence, which is immutable and eternal, and not framed by me, nor in any degree dependent on my thought (1912 [1641]: 120-21).

What Descartes argued was that these certainties – of pure mathematics, figures, numbers, arithmetic and geometry – permitted a way of seeing in which the divisible material world could be compared with certain, universal absolutes. That is, these mathematical certainties, external to the material universe, offered Descartes a way to look at and know the physical with certainty. With this way of

seeing, Descartes concluded; "I possess the means of acquiring a perfect knowledge respecting innumerable matters… and other intellectual objects [of] corporeal nature, in so far as [they are] the object of pure mathematics" (1912 [1641]: 126).

Thus with this logic, Descartes and his followers could re-turn to the physical, viewing it in comparison with the certainty of their universal, mathematical absolutes. A falling apple could be seen as an example of the universal, measurable force of gravity; an animal could be seen as an example of the species *Corvus corax* (see Dennett 1995: 36); a sentence could be seen as a construction in the English language (see Davidson 2005: Ch 7); and a mountain range could be seen as a ripple on the surface of the planet. These abstractions were neither newly minted in the wake of the Cartesian revolution, nor were they (perhaps more importantly) wrong. Yet with the modern Cartesian gaze, the abstraction was raised to ontological dominance. We can draw from Lefebvre:

> With the advent of Cartesian logic… space had entered the realm of the absolute. As Object opposed to Subject, as *res extensa* opposed to, and present to, *res cogitans*, space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies (1991: 1).

In essence, the modern, scientific appropriation of the world launched with the advent of the Cartesian logic raised the highly abstract to dominance, certainty and priority, and subordinated the physical to merely the divisible derivations of essence. Space became an absolute, within which the physical could be seen. It is this absolute space, I argue, within which the national territory has emerged.

Yet – crucially for this argument – within the modern, scientific appropriation of the world, opinion and particularity has always lurked. The absolute space crafted by Descartes (and Newton and Leibniz and, of course, many others) has always been, despite the claims of its protagonists, a space not universal, but reflective of interests and understandings more intimate and particular. To explain, we can borrow from Nietzsche. "The invention of the laws of numbers", so crucial to the Cartesian logic, "was made", as Nietzsche argued, "on the basis of the error, dominant even from the earliest times, that there are identical things (but in fact nothing is identical with anything else); at least that there are things (but there is no 'thing')" (1977: 56). Quite simply, at its very heart the Cartesian appropriation of the physical has depended on the irredeemably situated, irredeemably human application of mathematical 'certainties' to the material world; the gap between Descartes' 'true and immutable triangles' and the material world has always – will always – be bridged by human particularity. There is no escaping the fact that abstraction is, necessarily, an emergent appropriation of that which is prior. Whether it is the tribal intellectuals interpreting "the passing particulars of social life" and "storing memories of seasonal cycles" (James 1996: 42, 43), or the cosmologists discussing gravity waves and the "elusive Higgs boson" particle (Merali 2006: 32), the practice is the same: the abstract appropriation of that which is prior.

Thus, in the modern, scientific appropriation of the lands of southern Asia between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean, particularity and opinion have always lurked; more intimate understandings of the physical have always lingered. To state explicitly: throughout the British imperial survey of these lands, understandings of community and land derived from the forms of integration intimate to the British administrators were made, in this newly dominant Cartesian appropriation, normal. This normalisation can be seen in a variety of areas of British imperial behaviour (see discussion in chapter 4), yet perhaps most dramatically, it was with this normalisation – with the intersection of British particularity with the dominant, disembodied knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean – that this portion of the Earth's surface became India. We must stress: India was a concept – an idea of a land – carried to southern Asia by the geo-graphing Europeans. Over a period of some centuries, this mythical India of fabulous wealth and heathen monsters was placed in the world. This began with the sea route to India charted by Vasco da Gama, and continued with the surveys of James Rennell, Colin Mackenzie, George Everest, Andrew Waugh and the other Surveyors-General of India. In essence, it was in their work on the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean (which has been described masterfully in Edney 1997) that this land was triangulated – to highlight its Cartesian roots – into India. What has been crucial for this work is that the normalisation of the British understandings of community and land also meant that other understandings of this land were marginalised. Throughout the entire colonial enterprise, understandings of the land derived from non-British forms of community were made irrelevant to the exercise of power in the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean.

The marginalisation of non-British understandings of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean occurred in a variety of ways. In the earliest period of the colonial dominance, and for those first to feel the influence of British power, this marginalisation occurred externally. The lands these people had known through embodied and agency-extended forms of knowledge became defined in dominance in disembodied maps, utterly unshaped by their claims to the soil. As I have suggested in earlier chapters, it was, as Dutt has argued, in the "revolution in the land system effected by the British conquest" that "the expropriation of the Indian people from their land" was enacted (1970 [1940]: 227, 229). In later periods however, a class of people living in British India – a native elite – began to feel this marginalisation internally. In the face of the new knowledge taught by the imperial state, the stories of the physical taught to this native elite by their parents and their religious institutions became wrong. Mount Meru and Jambudvipa, the seven concentric oceans of the Puranic universe and the ongoing cycle of *yuga* – concepts that had structured the world of the parents of this native elite – became irrational, irrelevant and wrong. In their response to this marginalisation – in their efforts to renegotiate the dominant knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean according to understandings of the physical derived from *their* intimate communities – we can find the emergence of an Indian nationalism.

It is, at this stage, not necessary to redescribe the diffuse efforts to renegotiate the dominant knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the seas according to interests and understandings more intimate and particular. This, of course, formed a key focus of the discussion in chapters 5 and 6. We can, however, look now at these efforts in the abstract. We can look at these efforts to renegotiate the dominant knowledge of the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean according to their role in the 'representational spaces' of the Lefebvrian triad.

The works *The Discovery of India* (by Jawaharlal Nehru (1981 [1946])), and *Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1949)) – works significant to the development of both secular Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism respectively – disclose in their titles a feature crucial to the nationalist production of space. The words 'discovery' (which we might here define as the bringing to light and the making visible of that which was previously concealed) and '*darshan*' (which we can, in turn, render as the seeing / being seen crucial to much Hindu worship) highlight what I argue is the centrality of *seeing* to the phenomena of nationalism and the national territory. In essence, the very idea of being able to see India – to see that which is, by its very nature, defined in highly abstract, disembodied realms – is fundamental to the nationalist argument. This, I stress, is fundamentally a product of the advent of the Cartesian logic.

To digress briefly, we can describe now the advantages offered by this argument. In essence, the argument presented in this work offers new and useful ways to look at both modern politics in southern Asia, and nations and nationalism more generally. For our understanding of modern politics in southern Asia, this argument offers at least three advantages. Firstly, the argument offers us a way to see Indian politics as not the fighting over a pre-existing and eternal India, but as the ongoing making of India. Secondly, this argument affords a way to conceptually link the domestic and the international political spheres in southern Asia; a way to discuss the inherent linkages between these domains. Finally, this argument allows us to understand why India – a space that might appear as an abstract, emergent and diffusely understood entity – can still be passionately loved and, indeed, died for. Meanwhile, this argument offers at least three advantages for our understanding of the phenomena of nations and nationalism in general. Firstly, this argument offers us a way to consider the national territory (whether India, England, Serbia or Rwanda) as a form intimately connected with the phenomena of nations and nationalism, and not some pre-existent entity. This allows us, quite simply, to see nationalism as the ongoing making of space. Secondly, this argument also allows us to see nationalism as the space making force visible in both the disorganised riot and the organised strategic defence of a country. Finally, this argument offers us a new way forward in the abstract theoretical understanding of the nation; a way to see and shed light upon that which is national in the spaces of our everyday lives.

In the volatile days following Gandhi's salt *satyagraha*, thousands of nationalists gathered on a beach in Bombay to witness the production of salt.

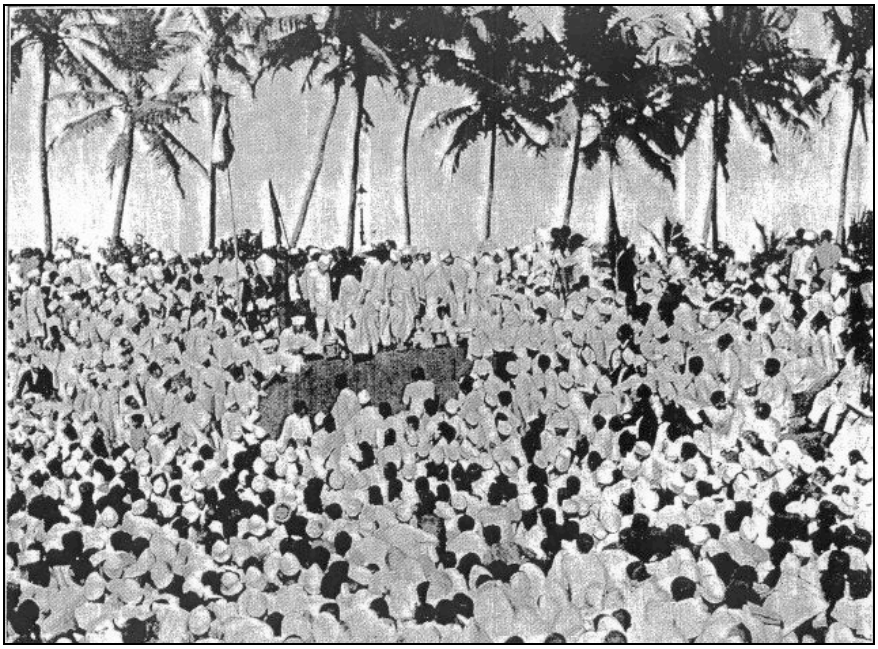

Figure 34 'A Salt Tax Demonstration in Bombay' (drawn from *The Times* 1930: 16).

Though these nationalists gathered to watch the production of salt, it is, perhaps, more accurate to suggest that they gathered to watch the production of space. They gathered to witness and participate in the production of a space in which they were the rightful occupants of the land. They gathered, quite simply, to see.

Those who gathered for the salt *satyagraha* in April 1930 felt largely that their Indianness, their right to national territory in that site, was defined by the intimate notion of home. They felt that the highly abstract India ought to be defined first and foremost by those who felt it their home. This understanding of the site and of India was not – and indeed cannot be – exhaustive. Quite simply, there have existed countless other intimate understandings of the physical through which people have experienced the highly abstract India, countless other understandings according to which people have sought to renegotiate the highly abstract India. Perhaps most influentially, there exist great numbers who have experienced the highly abstract India through the forms of integration offered by Hinduism. Great numbers of people have seen India in the forms of culture and ancestry they would claim as indigenous to India. Like their secular nationalist rivals, the protagonists of this form of thinking have also invested great political energy attempting to renegotiate the highly abstract India. In a direct parallel with those witnessing the salt *satyagraha*, countless millions have lined the streets of the land between the Himalayas and the seas to take the *darshan* of the various Hindu nationalist *yatras*, to see the Hindu India. Yet as influential as this understanding has been in contemporary Indian politics, it,

too, offers no exhaustive account of the contemporary understanding of India, nor of the contemporary attempts to renegotiate this India. Though these two ideologies cast perhaps the greatest shadow, there exist in contemporary Indian politics countless other forms of intimate integration through which people have seen the highly abstract India. Thus we could, if we were to expand on this enquiry, explore the ways India has been understood by the dalits, by the adivasi, by labour and by capital, by nomadic groups, by those who are 'non-resident', by those of the village and by those of the city, by those who are literate and those who are not, by the able bodied and the disabled. There is, quite simply, much to be seen in the lands between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean; there is much in which an India might be discovered.

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