UNIT 1 THEORIZING THE NATION–1

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the course MWG-002, in Block 3, Gender, State and Community, we have already studied the Unit Nation, Nationalism and Citizenship. You know ‘Nation’ is one of the most common discourses in social sciences. In this Unit, we will explore the idea of nation from the literature perspective. Thus, Nation has the peculiar quality of referring, simultaneously, to a thing that exists, an ideal to aspire to achieve, as well as a collective identity. It is often used synonymously with ‘state’, ‘nation-state’ and ‘country’, which leads to much confusion. What are the similarities and differences between these concepts, and how do these affect the political systems they are used in? And why is it important for us to understand these distinctions?

In this Unit, you will learn about these concepts and some of the main theoretical frameworks in which they are understood. You will be introduced to theories of nationalism, and learn how to understand and define the concept of the nation, as well as various other factors involved in these understandings and definitions, such as ethnicity, nature versus culture, language, race, gender, etc. You will also be introduced to some of the issues that have been central to the debates around nationalism, such as
territoriality, common heritage, the invention of histories and traditions. In addition, you will be introduced to feminist perspectives on nation and nationalism, on the issues noted above, as well as on the ways in which masculinity and femininity are deployed in these nationalist discourses. It is important to remember that these are concepts and understandings that you will put to use in exploring and analyzing their literary representations, in subsequent Units.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between the concepts of nation and nationalism;
- Outline some of the main theoretical approaches to these concepts;
- Examine the different ways in which these concepts are gendered;
- Discuss feminist perspectives on nation and nationalism; and
- Elaborate on the connections between these concepts and their literary representations.

1.3 NATION, NATION-STATE, COUNTRY, NATIONALISM

Let us begin this section by looking at some key concepts: nation, the nation-state, country and nationalism, in order to come to a basic understanding of these terms.

1.3.1 Nation

Etymologically, the word ‘nation’ descends from the Latin word ‘nationem’, meaning ‘birth, origin; breed, stock, kind, species; race of people, tribe’. The Latin ‘nationem’ is itself derived from another Latin word, ‘nasce’, meaning ‘to be born’ (www.etymonline.com). This sense of the word ‘nation’ remains the dominant one, although in more recent times, it has gained another set of meanings. In this second set, it is more commonly thought of as a political formation. According to the cultural theorist and critic Raymond Williams, the term ‘nation’ has been in common use in the English language since the thirteenth century, and for a large part of its history, it has contained these two senses: one, that of a social collective, usually based on racial or ethnic commonalities; and two, the more modern sense of a political formation, as for instance in the concept of an international conglomeration of ‘nation-states’. The modern sense of the word ‘nation’ is not older than the eighteenth century (Williams, 1985, p. 213-4). It is closely linked to the formation of independent states in Europe, especially after the eighteenth century. In fact, the term ‘nation-state’ is a specification of these two senses of the word ‘nation’, with each
part of ‘nation-state’ - ‘nation’ and ‘state’ - representing one of the two meanings. Thus ‘nation’ in our times has come to signify the more affective, emotive, psychological and cultural elements that bind a collective together, while ‘state’, as always, signifies the legal, administrative, juridical and other institutional mechanisms that govern this collective. It is important to remember that, in the final analysis, the nation any nation is always understood as simultaneously, already formed and always in the process of being formed. This dual character of the (idea of the) nation stems from its being both an established collective that assumes and has the allegiance of the individual, and a projected collective that demands and exhorts that allegiance from more individuals. The nation - any nation - is in this sense an always incomplete project.

1.3.2 Nation-State

Already the close relation between the terms is clear, even as the distinctions between them also become evident. Although the term ‘nation-state’ has clearly evolved out of the term ‘nation’, there are substantial conceptual divergences between the two terms. In general, ‘state’ is the term we use for the set of coordinated institutional mechanisms, usually divided functionally as legislative, judicial and executive institutions that govern and administrate a collective. The nation and the state are not always or necessarily coincidental, nor are they synonymous. This means that, in any given case, the collective that constitutes the nation need not necessarily be governed by its own state e.g., Tibet; conversely, a single state may govern many such collectives, or multiple nations - e.g., India. Indeed, in the second example, in the case of India, there may arise tensions between different understandings of the nation, based on different understandings of the collective, e.g. between the understanding of India as a secular collective, and that of India as a Hindu nation. The relations between ‘state’ and ‘nation’ are crucial to understanding both, in specific cases as well as for a more general, theoretical understanding. We shall be returning to these issues later. For now, we need to introduce another similar term, viz., ‘country’.

1.3.3 Country

A good way to understand this term, and how it might be similar to or different from ‘nation’, is to ask, for instance, if we can rename the ‘United Nations’ as the ‘United Countries’. Why would this not be acceptable, or at least, sound rather odd? It is not just because we are used to the term ‘United Nations’; it is because the term ‘country’ has a different set of meanings from ‘nation’, even if there is some overlap. While both can refer to collectives of people, the former is more integrally associated with land and territory than the latter - which we can see, for instance, in the
opposition of country/city, or in the term ‘countryside’, referring to the land around a city. A country is thus defined as much by its territorial boundaries as by the people who inhabit it. More importantly though, the term ‘nation’ does not necessarily entail a country - i.e., it is not always associated with a bounded physical terrain, for instance, the idea of an ‘Islamic nation’ or a ‘black nation’; or, somewhat differently, the Kurdish nation - which essentially denote a single collective spread over multiple territories. The main difference that emerges is that the idea of the nation is not founded on location but on a common and shared imagination of the collective. That is, ‘nation’ is a concept that transcends physical limitations and exists predominantly at the symbolic, cultural and psychological levels - what Benedict Anderson famously called ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991). The term ‘country’, in contrast, refers to a territorially and geographically specific entity, that may have more than one such imagined community or nation living within its borders. Again here, the example of India proves useful: it is one country, but with many such imagined communities within its borders.

But if India is a good example to illustrate both ‘country’ and ‘nation-state’, does this imply that these two terms are synonymous? There is some similarity between the two concepts - but there are also some very important differences that prevent us from seeing them as synonymous. Both ‘country’ and ‘nation-state’ are concepts that refer to geographically bounded entities; they may both be constituted of multiple ethnic communities (or nations); and they may both be sites of conflict between communities seeking to control them. Nevertheless, they are also fundamentally different concepts. The most crucial difference is that the idea of the ‘country’ does not necessarily invoke a particular history or set of traditions: being a more explicitly physically defined entity, the idea of the country rarely changes - or if it does, then it changes over a very long period of time. For example, in spite of being split into two nations for many decades now (since 1949), Ireland remains a single country, bounded by the fact of being an island. By contrast, the nation-state is an ideological construct that may have physical definition and form - by way of the physical boundaries and institutional structures that are required for any state - but which is primarily shaped by ideas of tradition and history (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992). For instance, the formation of Pakistan as a nation-state was a consequence of the idea of Pakistan emerging as an Islamic nation with a distinct and separate history (Adnan, 2006). All histories are of course, contested histories: but nations and nation-states are the products of specific histories that rise to dominance, and come to define their collectives in very specific ways. This brings us to our fourth concept, viz., the collective of ideas and discourses referred to as ‘nationalism’. 
1.3.4 Nationalism

One of the most influential theorists of nationalism, Ernest Gellner, has argued that nationalism is a product of modernity (Gellner, 1983). In fact, as Jan Pettman has argued,

... colonization, anti-colonialism and post-colonialism are crucial ingredients in the study of nationalism.... So too are the massive transformations associated with the rise of industrial capitalism and new communications technologies; and the complex politics of state formation and consolidation that tapped into or sought to contain nationalist passions. (It may be no accident, then, that the current ‘upsurge’ of nationalist movements and violence coincides with another series of dramatic transformations, including...globalization.

(Pettman, 1998, p.152)

There are several major schools of theorizing nationalism, but almost all of them concur on seeing it as a modern phenomenon, or at least as being shaped substantially by modernity.

Let us read about some of the dominant schools of theorizing nationalism and their main arguments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Theoretical School</th>
<th>Main Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Primordialist and Sociobiologist</td>
<td>Collective defined by blood, race, language, religion, region, etc. Ethnicity as basis of identity, and biology as basis of ethnicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Instrumentalist</td>
<td>Ethnicity is result of economic, social or political processes that may also be competitive between groups, and may have elements of rational choice. It is not simply a consequence of blood or other primordial relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Modernization</td>
<td>Nationalism is consequence of transition from traditional society to modern one; integrally related to industrialization, commercialization, bureaucratization, secularization and globalization - i.e., to the mechanisms of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Evolutionary</td>
<td>Tries to explain the continuities and discontinuities between pre-modern and modern forms of ethnic and other collectivities, by arguing that the first ‘evolves’ into the second through the processes of modernization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all these theories of nationalism share the understanding that nationalism - even as it is shaped by economic, institutional and other such 'external' or material forces - is essentially an ideational and ideological phenomenon. In classical Marxian terms, it belongs in the realm of the superstructure, even if it is shaped by the base. Pettman’s reference to ‘nationalist passions’ (above) illustrates the superstructural nature of this phenomenon: but the rest of his observation also indicates the more material forces at work in shaping it. In general, most theorists of nationalism agree that its commonly recognizable forms today had their origins in Europe, in the process of nation formation and reorganization that took place through the last four hundred years. While cases of nationalism may be argued as existing prior to this, for example, in the ancient Greek city states, as well as outside the European theatre, for example, in the Japanese reaction to the encounter with Europe. From the sixteenth century to the early twentieth century, Japan closed itself to all foreign contact, following ‘the Shogunate’s policy of national seclusion’ under the Tokugawa regime. These are relatively isolated phenomena that do not display the spread and persistence of its contemporary forms. One of the crucial factors in the shaping of contemporary nationalism is the corresponding emergence and consolidation of a bourgeoisie in the given society (Smith, 1998, p.49). Even outside the European context, nationalism has emerged wherever the local bourgeoisie has taken root and grown, albeit in different ways, to different extents and with different orientations. In this sense, nationalism is closely related to and defined by the economic, social, political and cultural profile of the middle class that evolves it. A very important role was played by transformations in printing technology in the shaping of both the middle class and its nationalisms, as Benedict Anderson as argued (1991). We will explore these issues in greater detail in some of the following Units. For now, let us list the other characteristics that are definitive of the phenomenon (see Spencer and Wollman, 2002):

i) It is the basis of unification of a group or community: this may be through an emphasis on ‘blood’ or a claimed ethnic or racial commonality; a common history, language, culture, religion, or region; and/or a common ideology. This collective becomes the ‘nation’, and allegiance to it is often projected as superseding all other allegiances - religious, legal, ethical, etc.

ii) It may be inclusive or exclusive or both, with varying degrees of emphasis. This sense is usually associated with claims and rights to resources, and often with a sense of being aggrieved in the denial of those claims. Instrumentalist theories of nationalism in particular emphasize this aspect, by showing how nationalism becomes a means of collective bargaining.
iii) It is usually related to a sense of territorial belonging, though it need not be territorially bound. It is for this reason that nationalism and war are closely related.

iv) It is often accompanied by revivalism and the eulogizing of past traditions and historical figures, as symbolic. In fact, it is heavily reliant on symbolism and ritualism. For this reason, almost all nationalisms display a religion-like quality, with the nation as the divinity to be worshipped.

v) It is closely related to notions of citizenship and patriotism, and is often mistaken for them. In fact, all three concepts express forms of relationship between an individual and his/her nation-state.

However, there are crucial differences. For instance, neither of these two concepts is mediated for the individual by mass opinion, in the way nationalism is. Further, citizenship is a statutory condition with legally binding rights and obligations, which are not necessarily, affected by the individual’s actual feelings towards his/her state. And patriotism, which - like nationalism - is related to popular or national sentiment, nevertheless leaves enough room for the individual to be critical while remaining ‘patriotic’ - whereas nationalist thought rarely permits criticism.

The critical and theoretical literature on nationalism is enormous: however, one can discern two broad tendencies in the arguments offered: one, that nationalism originally emerged in the European context, and was integrally related to the evolution and formation of nation-states there; and two, that nationalism spread in the non-European, post-colonial world as a reaction to imperialism and colonialism. This is often referred to in the literature as the ‘Janus-faced’ nature of nationalism, as ‘civic nationalism’ versus ‘ethnic nationalism’ or as ‘good nationalism’ versus ‘bad nationalism’ (Spencer and Wollman, 2002, p.94ff). The distinction was first propounded by Hans Kohn in his classic study The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background (1944). These two tendencies are either propounded or argued against in the literature that followed, with proponents maintaining that nationalism is a progressive political phenomenon that needs to be salvaged from the reactionary distortions effected by post-colonial history; and opponents arguing that nationalism was never progressive, and that it had displayed exclusionary and reactionary dimensions even in the course of its supposedly progressive emergence in Europe. An integral part of this debate has been the tendency for nationalisms (especially those forms that emerged outside the European context) to become ‘specialized’, i.e., to be seen in the literature as distorted or coloured by other elements - as for instance, in ‘religious nationalisms’, ‘ethnic nationalisms’, ‘cultural nationalisms’, ‘economic nationalism’ or ‘linguistic nationalisms’. 
The persistent sense that nationalism was ‘originally’, in the European context- a ‘civic’ phenomenon, i.e., an enabling and progressive development, in fact derives from its close association with the increasing dominance of the bourgeoisie: it was understood as the inevitable consequence of the weakening political hold of the aristocracy and nobility in general, across Europe; it was also argued as entailing the democratisation of political institutions and of the polity in general. But as several scholars have argued, this assumed ‘civic’ process of democratisation was not in fact either democratic or inclusive, but confined to ensuring that the bourgeoisie began to take over political and economic power, but at the same time keeping that power out of the hands of large sections of the populace, based on racial, gender, class, and other differences (McCrone, 1998, p.7ff). It is for this reason that nationalism continues to be dogged by exclusivist tendencies as well as strongly patriarchal distortions. We will have opportunity to study these and other related matters (for instance, the relations between nationalism and fundamentalisms) in greater detail in subsequent Units. Here, it is interesting to note that both tendencies of the debate were often articulated in gendered terms, using the language of masculinity and femininity to indicate ‘good’ or ‘bad’, dominant or subjugated, successful or unsuccessful, etc. What is of particular interest for us therefore, is the way in which these nationalisms (whether inside or outside Europe) emerged as gendered and sexualized phenomena. Let us explore now the ongoing debates on gender, sexuality and nation from the perspective of literature. You have already studied all these concepts and theoretical models in the course MWG-004, Gendered Bodies and Sexualities.

**Check Your Progress:**

1) *What is Nationalism?*

2) *Discuss in brief the various theoretical schools of thought.*
1.4 GENDER, SEXUALITY AND THE NATION

This approach to the study of nations and nationalism, viz., to explore their gendered and sexualized natures, is a relatively more recent one than the well-established and dominant schools of theorizing noted above. One of the earliest studies in this regard was George Mosse’s pioneering work, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (1985) and was followed soon after by works like Kumari Jayawardena’s *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986), Partha Chatterjee’s *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (1986) and *Woman-Nation-State*, edited by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (1989). Mosse focused on the European bourgeoisies’ uneasy relation to sexuality, and the ways in which this determined the construction of norms of femininity and masculinity as national ideals. These norms were marked by de-sexualization, heteronormativity, and ‘respectability’ (i.e., emphasizing middle class moral virtues as superior to both, the debauchery of the aristocracy and the profligacy of the lower classes (Mosse, 1985). Jayawardena’s work demonstrated that feminism was not a ‘Western import’ into the ‘third world’; rather, in many of these non-European contexts, there were already local and indigenous women’s movements for equal rights and against oppression and exploitation. These in fact, also played an integral role in the anti-colonial and nationalist movements of their respective nations. Chatterjee’s work opened out the ways in which tropes of masculinity and femininity were used by both colonizer and colonized to describe and understand their relations to each other. Chatterjee also argued, albeit somewhat controversially, for the gendering of spaces under colonialism into the masculine public and the feminine private, with the latter then becoming the repository of all cultural values, and thus coming to represent and embody the nation nation itself (Chatterjee, 1986, p. 77ff). This argument was also made, from other contexts and locations, by the contributors to the volume edited by Yuval-Davis and Anthias. They argued that ethnic and racial divisions are deeply gendered, not least because women play a crucial role in the biological reproduction of the community; moreover, they are also often tasked with the education of children and therefore become its ideological reproducers as well. Additionally, as they argue, in many such nationalisms, women therefore also become embodiments of the national identity, often leading to the close regulation of women’s sexuality and social conduct.

1.5 NEW THINKING ON NATIONALISM

Taken together, and along with other similar work on the gendered and sexualized nature of nationalism, this work has opened several directions of new thinking on nationalism, e.g.:
i) That the role and significance of women and femininity (of gender in general) in the history of nations, nation forma
tions and nationalisms has been crucial, yet relatively understudied.

ii) That this role has usually been as biological and ideological reproducers - but also as iconic bearers of the ideology of the nation. Thus, even as women are often represented as crucial to the propagation of the nation, they are also represented as themselves embodying the nation.

iii) That, conversely, the nation is also often represented as female, maternal, goddess-like (for instance, in the representation of India as ‘Bharat Mata’). In both cases above, certain norms of femininity are instituted as ideals. These norms of femininity invariably also entail the institution of corresponding norms of masculinity.

iv) The ideals of femininity and masculinity that are unfolded by most nationalist discourses are invariably drawn from and shaped by the patriarchal formations that constitute the base of the respective nationalist discourses.

v) Women in such discourses tend to occupy positions of subordination even when they are involved as activists and leaders; at the same time, they are also valourized and/or deified as iconic figures - as living metaphors for the nation. The expectations of women in these nationalist discourses are thus paradoxical, even contradictory.

vi) Men too are expected to live up to ideals of masculinity that are simultaneously protective and predatory; and although the objects of protection and predation are not the same - the first being usually the women and children of the nation of belonging, while the second are the women and children of ‘other’ nations - the slippage from one to the other is not only possible but occurs frequently.

vii) Consequently, nationalism often invokes and deploys a violent sexualization of its communities, and is accompanied for instance by the militarization of women and children (see Nagel, 1998). Curiously, in some cases, this is accompanied by an inversion of the conventional gendering of the nation as ‘motherland’, into the masculine and paternalistic idea of the nation as ‘fatherland’.

These and other issues, opened up by feminist interventions in particular, have become integral to the study of nationalism. In the words of Anne McClintock, feminist theories of nationalism would focus on the major arguments given below:

- investigating the gendered formation of sanctioned male theories;
- bringing into historical visibility women’s active cultural and political participation in national formations; bringing nationalist institutions into critical relation with other social structures and institutions;
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• at the same time paying scrupulous attention to the structures of racial, ethnic and class power that continue to bedevil privileged forms of feminism (McClintock, 1996, p.263).

It is clear that feminism understands its intervention into the debates around nationalism not as being an add-on to the field, but as a fundamental reorientation in the understanding of the field and its different aspects. You will learn more about these different aspects to the study of nationalism, as well the ways in which they are gendered, in later Units. For now, we will briefly touch upon two growing fields of study in this regard:

i) Feminist interventions in the field of International Relations (IR). This has been a very important development precisely because the study of competing nationalisms and their impact on the global scale is an integral part of IR. Some major scholars in this regard include Carole Pateman (1989), Cynthia Enloe (1989), Valentine Moghadam (1994), Anne McClintock (1996), Andrea Parker, et al., (Eds., 1992), Saskia Sassen (1998), Charlotte Hooper (Manly States, 2001), and Nira Yuval-Davis (1997).


There are of course other issues as well that are of great significance in the study of nationalism, such as the relation of nationalism to other forms of sectarianism such as caste, communalism, tribalism, etc. These too will be examined in greater detail in the following Units.

Check Your Progress:

i) Do you agree with the positions of Parth Chatterjee on nation?
ii) What are the significant roles of femininity and masculinity in constituting the idea of ‘nation’?

1.6 LITERARY AND CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

Many of the themes and concerns outlined above have inevitably found their way into literature and cinema. The literary and cinematic representation of these themes and concerns have also been the subject of a very large body of scholarship, much of which you will become familiar with in the course of studying the remaining Units, that deal with specific cases and kinds of such representations. However, before we move to those, let us briefly think about the concepts we have been engaging with so far, in terms of some of their representational aspects.

Firstly, it is worth noting that in almost all varieties and manifestations of nationalism, the nation has a tendency to be anthropomorphized, i.e., conceived of as a being with a human or quasi-human form or appearance, in many cases as a divine or quasi divine being, and sometimes as a full-fledged person with a personality: the figure of Bharat Mata or Mother India ought to come to mind immediately. This permits the nation to be narrated (or at least represented) as if it were a living person, or - as for instance in the film Mother India (Dir., Mehboob Khan, 1957) a character in the narrative to embody the nation. It also allows for the characters in a given narrative of this kind - e.g., in Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children and even its readers, to relate to the nation in a more affective, emotional, intimate way.

Secondly, every form and kind of nationalism invests in the building of mythologies of the nation, and heroizing specific national figures. These in
turn often enter into narratives and representations in fictionalized ways, as fictionalized versions of their originals, thereby rendering the narrative or representation in question a ‘national’ one, if not explicitly, then through the echoes of the national mythological and heroic figures. This is evident in a film like *Karan Arjun* (Dir., Rakesh Roshan, 1995), for instance.

Thirdly, the nation is anthropomorphized, and its heroes and mythologies become metaphors in the narratives and representations that invoke it, directly or indirectly, precisely because it is closely related to notions of self and identity. National identity is idealized through representations of these heroes and mythologies; it also thus becomes the means through which individual subjects - who each develop a sense of identity with that ideal - gain a sense of identification with the larger community of similarly self-identifying subjects. That is, narratives of the nation that are disseminated in the community, and consumed by it, serve as (one of) the bond(s) that holds the community together, with a common sense of national identification. As such, the analysis of narratives of nationalism invariably involves an analysis of questions of identity (Rajagopal, 2001).

Fourthly, and following from the previous point, because all narratives of nation and nationalism are necessarily narratives of identity, such narratives usually register a contestation - or at least a complexly interacting heterogeneity of multiple identities, all of which may lay claim to the nation, to the national narrative and to being the national identity. These identities may be articulated in and through different frameworks - caste, class, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, etc. and hence enter into representation in and as a contest for the categories and terms in which the nation will be articulated. Thus, any study of the narrative dimensions of nations and nationalism must examine the specific identity categories that are deployed and their implications for the narrative of the nation.

Fifthly, and in a somewhat different sense, as Homi Bhabha (1990) and others such as Stefan Berger, 2008 have argued, the nation always exists in its narratives, in the narrating of the nation. This is not to say that the nation does not exist outside of its narratives, but rather that the narratives of the nation give us the terms and frameworks within which to conceive and understand it. That is, the nation exists in the imagination of it, in the ways in which it is constructed in the narratives of it. This includes the nation’s imagination of and engagement with its own history, and the narratives that constitute that history, as much as the imagination that sculpts its vision of its present and future. As we noted at the beginning, all nations are incomplete projects by definition. In this sense, it is crucial to study narratives of the nation, as much as its social, economic, cultural and institutional dimensions, in order to understand the imagination that constructs its vision of its past, present and future.
1.7 LET US SUM UP

In the above sections, we have tried to get a very small glimpse of a very vast field of study, the field of nationalism. In order to do so, we initially focused on getting some of the basic concepts clear, such as ‘nation’, ‘nation-state’, ‘country’ and ‘nationalism’. Then we briefly explored some of the major debates around the issue of nationalism, including the dual nature of the phenomenon (or its Janus-faced quality) as analyzed in the literature, before opening out the relationship of the concept to gender and sexuality. We then outlined some of the crucial ways in which nations and nationalisms are shaped and determined by the dynamics of gender and sexuality. In the process we covered some of the important interventions made by feminism and feminist theorists into the field. Finally we looked at some of the major issues that concern us when we explore questions of nation and nationalism as they are represented in literature and cinema. While we have only touched the surface of many of the issues we engaged with, we have been able to establish that

a) all nationalisms are always unfinished projects;

b) as such, as discourses of identity, their accounts of the past, present and future are continuously being re-written to ‘fit’ the immediate political requirements;

c) as a discourse on and about identity, issues of gender and sexuality necessarily become central to the articulation of nationalism, and are usually accompanied by and interwoven with other categories of identity formation like caste, race, class, etc.; and

d) all nations and nationalisms require narration, and being narrated, and hence must be studied not just as political phenomena possessing a material reality but as social and psychological phenomena with ideological manifestations in the realm of representation. The subsequent Units will seek to open out the significance of these points.

1.8 GLOSSARY

**Nation**

Etymologically, the word ‘nation’ descends from the Latin word ‘nationem’, meaning ‘birth, origin; breed, stock, kind, species; race of people, tribe’. The Latin ‘natio nem’ is itself derived from another Latin word, ‘nasci’, meaning ‘to be born’. This sense of the word ‘nation’ remains the dominant one, although in more recent times, it has gained another set of meanings. In this second set, it is more commonly thought of as a political formation.
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**Nation-State**: It is closely linked to the formation of independent states in Europe, especially after the eighteenth century. In fact, the term ‘nation-state’ is a specification of these two senses of the word ‘nation’, and ‘state’ with each part of ‘nation-state.’

### 1.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) What are some of the differences you can identify between the terms ‘nation’, ‘nation-state’, ‘country’ and ‘nationalism’?

2) Try to identify three more cases of nationalism without a nation-state, other than those provided in the Unit. Discuss each one of these in the context of what you have read.

3) What according to you is the most significant feature of nationalism, and why? Discuss.

4) What role did the bourgeoisie play in the formation of nationalism? Do you think they are essential to its existence? Justify your response.

5) Explain why gender and sexuality are central to the dynamics of nationalism.

### 1.10 REFERENCES


From the sixteenth century to the early twentieth century, Japan closed itself to all foreign contact, following ‘the shogunate’s policy of national seclusion’ under the Tokugawa regime. See Retrieved accessed August 13, 2012 from http://web-japan.org/museum/historyofjp/histjp.html

For a more comprehensive list, see the website accessed June 12, 2012 from http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_nationalism.html


1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS


