The Politics of Religion and the Place of Violence:
Critically Understanding Select Contending Perspectives on the Nation-State
in Indian Political Thought

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Introducing the Problem

Being in the beyond, then, is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell in the beyond is also, as I have shown, to be a part of the revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity, to reinscribe our human, historic commonality, to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space beyond, becomes a space of interaction in the here and now.[i]

<div align="right">Homi Bhabha (1994)</div>

The main concern of this study is to revisit the relationship between religion and nation-state, using the trope of violence, by critically reading select contending perspectives in Indian political thought. The aim in doing so is to suggest the inherently and essentially violent manner in which this relationship has been worked out by dominant perspectives and to possibly suggest a modest alternative. The relationship between religion and nation-state, particularly in the dominant discourses of the west has been conceptualized in an essentially definite institutionalized way, whether in terms of separation or juxtaposition: while separation is conceptualized in terms of the principle of secularism; juxtaposition is proffered in terms of the principle of cultural nationalism. Both these principles render the relationship between religion and nation-state as a closed, definite and institutionalized principle, which in turn is characterized by violence and injustice. Put differently, violence is characterized or witnessed both in terms of proposing and institutionalizing a secular narrative when secularism becomes increasingly apathetic and therefore violent towards the religious sensibilities of the people, as well as through cultural/religious nationalism that fails to be accommodative and tolerant of the religious others. Interestingly, this is not found so much in illiberal regimes as it is found in liberal regimes. This suggests that there is something that lacks in a modern liberal setup in the relationship between religion and nation-state, which needs to be understood. In a liberal setup, this relationship is often worked out on the promise of secularism. However, recent times have manifested a different picture of the promise. Over the years there has been an increasing degree of discomfort and aversion that has developed towards the efficacy of liberal secularism

in addressing the conflicting and contentious faces of religion and nation-state relationship. This discomfort has escalated to a greater degree of animosity and hatefulness getting channelized towards the legitimate basis that secularism holds on to, in providing people with liberty along with its security. This has been substantiated in the writings of thinkers within the Indian political tradition[ii] as well as contemporary theorists who have sufficiently established a critique of the secular-nationalist narratives and the secular framework.[iii] This promise that secularism would suffice for politics, to control violence in the society that emerges on account of differences in culture and ways of living, increasingly becomes charged with being irresponsive to the relationship amongst religions and cultures, their routine interactions which may create space for potential conflicts and perhaps appears as being disinterested in the role of humans in general as dynamic active functional agents/carriers of the cultural/religious/non-religious identities within a proposed secular[iv] space. One of the immediate ways of responding to this lack of deliverance of politics in addressing violence is to think and work a relationship out of religion and nation-state by being mindful of violence. The undesirability and perhaps impossibility of secularity explains the swing towards the increasing rise in cultural nationalist narratives. Violence is found in the site of these narratives where an ossification of identities grounded on culture/ religion shapes the psyche of the minds.[v]

However, both sites are extreme ends that entail the closing of the political. The current thesis proposes to open up this rigid fixation of the political that have been systematically institutionalized and conceptualized through different narratives over the ages. The opening of the political and the changing of the political goes in contradistinction to the fixating nature of politics. Politics teaches and presents an institutionalized and a rather fixed notion of the society. There is something that is lacking in a liberal individualized setup, idealized in contemporary societies, towards understanding the relation between religion and nation-state, which can be located in the contexts of Indian political thinkers.

The study, as mentioned above, argues that the understanding of both religion and the nation-state has so far been understood in purely institutionalized forms, which in turn constitutes the basis for the principles of separation and juxtaposition. This process of institutionalization renders the relationship definite and closed and in turn violent. Put differently, the relationship is based on a principle of politics and not as a political process. What then could be the bases of the relationship between religion and the nation-state in terms of a political process?

Interestingly, India is a society wherein the relationship between religion and state, constitutionally and in our everyday life experiences, is still rendered a procedural one; the relationship between religion and state is not conceptualized either in terms of the modern principle of secularism nor in terms of the principle of cultural nationalism. How then ought we, from within the Indian context, conceptualize the relationship between religion and the nation-state in a manner which would limit the place of violence? What is an alternative relationship of religion and the nation-state which is based on an open political reading of both these categories as 'political' categories?

In responding to these questions, which I think is imperative for addressing the increasing and routine experiences of violence justified by the principle of secularism and cultural nationalism, I in my study, examine critically some select Indian political thinkers. In this study I choose to study three thinkers, namely, Rammohun Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru and M K Gandhi. I justify my choice in terms of the deep influence these three thinkers have on the framing of the relationship between religion and the state as framed in the Constitution of India. While there are many more equally, if not more credible and important thinkers which could have been included in this study, I choose to limit the study to an examination of these three, mainly because I do see their arguments and understandings as playing a somewhat pivotal role in the constitutional

reading of the relationship between religion and the nation-state. I do not in any way suggest that the other thinkers are any less important. However, I do read the arguments of these three thinkers as underlying a political reading of the relationship between these two categories rather than one which is astutely politics. The latter has been consciously marked separately from the former,[vi] because this distinction between the politics and the political have been kept intact in many discourses, especially in the study of most of the current discourses on religion-state relationship. It would be important to briefly discuss the interplay between politics and the political.

The Politics-Politics Interplay

Once we accept the necessity of the political and the impossibility of a world without antagonism, what needs to be envisaged is how it is possible under those conditions to create or maintain a pluralistic democratic order. Such an order is based on a distinction between 'enemy' and 'adversary'. It requires that, within the context of the political community, the opponent should be considered not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We will fight against his ideas but we will not question his right to defend them. The category of the 'enemy' does not disappear but is displaced; it remains pertinent with respect to those who do not accept the democratic 'rules of the game' and who thereby exclude themselves from the political community.

<div align="right">Chantal Mouffe (1993)</div>

Interestingly, one of the emerging concerns of contemporary political theorizing, particularly in the discourses on Global South, Anthropocene, is of revisiting the relationship between politics and the political. While the distinction and interconnectedness of politics and the political was not a matter of concern or academic study till three decades ago, today, this has emerged as among the dominant and the most exciting of academic debates. While politics is regarded as a closed definite institutionalized category, the political is rendered open, discursive and plural. Put differently, while politics is characterized by the place it offers to violence and exclusion, the political is accommodative and inclusive, somewhat non-violent though not entirely free from the play or representation of interests and power.

Recent scholarship offers some excellent explanations of this distinction that has been conventionally legitimized between politics and the political, particularly by employing the concepts of we and them. "When the identity affirms its presence, it is carried out at the cost of affirmation of the 'other' that plays the role of a constitutive outside, and that makes it plausible for one to understand the antagonism and how it arises. In the domain of collective identifications, where what is in question is the creation of a 'we' by the delimitation of a 'them', the possibility always exists that this we/them relation will turn into a relation of the friend/enemy type". (Brown, 1988) In other words, it can always become political. (Schmidt, 1932) This can happen when the other, who was until then considered only under the mode of difference, begins to be perceived as negating our identity, as putting in question our very existence. From that moment onwards, any type of we/them relation, be it religious, ethnic, national, economic or other, becomes the site of a political antagonism. An exploration of the political, moral and politics in the light of the possibilities of the political as mentioned above, constitutes a conceptual grid for understanding various political thinkers in the current study.

I must clarify that the reason why state and nation-state, as terms, are used interchangeably is a conscious decision suggestive of the dominance of a certain kind of state infused with nationhood as overpowering other possible formulations of State. These two are the major sites where violence is played out. These sites of violence do suggest ways in which the theories and concepts of violence may get played out in different ways under the legitimate garb of modernity. This transition of the classical to medieval and then to modern suggests the increasing formidability of time and space in designing the narratives that have continuously defined the public. (Chakrabarty, 1992) Hence, I shall be resorting to a conscious interplay of the aforementioned terms manifesting the influence and institutionalization of modernity, while also rising above the politics-political distinction and holding on to its mutual conversational abilities. By using these terms interchangeably, I am also suggesting the need

to acknowledge the presence of routine practice of politics in the formation of the political and how in daily political conversations, these terms blur in their myriad manifestations.[vii]

Violence, Politics and the Political

What makes violence a potent force impeachable of facing an existential question of why it exists if it does, for the destruction of our sense and existence, is because of the unprecedented forms it assumes, harbors and operates itself in. Locating violence requires one to needs its history to be looked at politically in the context of examining the relation between religion and nation-state; which forms the concern of this research. Putting aside the metaphysical and philosophical question of violence, the pertinent challenge of conceptualizing and theorizing violence in both the substantive and structural relationship between the functioning of the modern nation-state apparatus and a pluri-religious society attracts significant attention. To comprehend the epistemological and evolutionary trajectory of violence with the baggage of history, suppression and injunction of modernity, calls for a realization of the perils, which the ideological nature of nationalism sponsored by either the state or the religion in public space have exhibited across centuries. This has led to escalating levels of 'human alienation' as being one of the most direct links and inexorable associations to violence in any form. As formless, eschatological and an incisive concept violence is, it is left out in the open to be exposited, generated into countless forms, right from interstate conflicts, wars, economic despotism, to epistemological control, thereby rendering the task of locating which of the two is more violent, completely unapproachable, if not understandable.

That violence needs to be analyzed and explored is not a novel concept. Much has been written on this by various scholars from different parts of the world. (Balibar, From Violence as Anti-Politics to Politics as Anti-Violence, 2020) However, the purpose and intent behind the production of literature on violence while invariably extolling certain select virtues securing the indigeneity of 'Indian' culture(s) made it difficult for the literature to be analyzed within

the framework of larger power narratives that stressed upon the 'lack' in nature of the Indian selfhood, if any. This 'lack' signified and legitimized the historical narratives which emphasized upon transition into modernity as the supremely sacred moment in time when a state and its culture(s) escapes the travails of its barbaric pasts and embraces the future that is pre-destined for itself. (Chakrabarty, 1992) Amidst this deep-rooted historicism, the 'third-world' narratives did subsume within the ideal legitimate past of capitalist history, where politics succeeded within the 'framework of nation-state' (Habermas, 1893).

When GWF Hegel writes, 'It has been the greatest blunder of our times to look upon these inseparables as capable of being separable from one another and even as mutually indifferent', (Hegel, 1894) the prophecy about the way religion and state has been conceptualized, captures this anxious need to decipher the relationship between two entities that shaped the understanding of the political both by law and in spirit. This study commits itself to an enquiry into the political, where the ways in which the political was constituted by various thinkers within the Indian political tradition, are studied. That there can be alternatives to the conventional understanding of the political that seems to hinge upon a natural branding of sociability and political-ness ingrained in individuals, as proposed by Aristotle, may suggest the very questioning of the basis of the political. Rather, it seeks to remain unexplored and unknown an aspect of human lives which awaits exploration by virtue of the process of living, especially living amidst diversities and cultural pluralities. This does not seem to underestimate or understate the importance of the natural in the constitution of the human in any manner and overrides the nature versus nurture debate which also creates more boundaries such as the city and state, state and society, public and private, human and non-human and therefore the very constitution of the political. As Prathama Banerjee states, this notion of the political as something that will now redirect politics also brands or grounds it into neat categorizations that are taken as given. Hannah Arendt's groundlessness does explain the problems of being

committed to such an understanding of political and politics, where one is conveniently unaware of the uncertainties involved in any conception of the political, while also being aware of the antimonic determinants within the existing political narratives of our times. Etienne Balibar, in his work titled, '*From Violence as Anti-Politics to Politics as Anti-Violence*', mentions about the necessity to rethink the scope of the political. It is the question of life or death because violence is actually a concern that is not just at the heart of politics but also that which may help redefine politics, especially its scope. It helps one reflect into the scope of the political and the question of what it entailed, so that politics is understood, realized and thought of as open-ended. The thesis reflects the possibilities of performing critical analysis and carrying out a substantive attempt at such a scholastic output which I humbly submit would begin with an exploration of the Indian political tradition through the eyes of a certain thematic, namely, violence.

There is a trust in the powers of politics to destabilize violence.[viii] Etienne Balibar resonates with this looming concern in political discourses as well as on the importance given to violence in the conception of politics and the political. This growing tendency to outwit violence, as just a theme one needs to emphasize upon, for its role in moulding politics will not suffice anymore. This is the reason behind using violence as a trope here that would engineer our very conception of politics, political and moral, through an analysis of the institutions such as Religion and Nation-State.

Recasting Hannah Arendt's concerns, this research work does concern itself with the larger enquiry which investigates into the very nature of the Political and its formation. Does the idea of the political concern itself with life in general or is there presence of a lack in the constitution of the latter?[ix] The virility of politics also seems to tangentially go hand in hand with the futility of human life. (Brown, 1988) This life which Arendt scathingly attributes as the mere life does emphasize on the need to comprehend this widening disconnect and distance in the meanings

governing the public and the private, the nature and the nurture, the political and the natural, as leading to a convenient situation of both separation and convergence between the political, moral and politics. The politics of this disconnect converges with the inefficacy of politics in creating a space that exudes moral concerns for a good human life. This question may be found in the writings of thinkers such as Roy, Nehru and Gandhi, whose exposition of the dilemma of the moral and the political may be explored when violence gets employed as the trope. The employment of violence, makes it possible for this question of the relationship between politics and the political to uncover itself. While investigating into the accountability, efficiency, nature and the possibility of these entities such as Religion and Nation-State to create political discourses in society, one is forced to encounter a dilemma that is posed invariably in front of the practitioner of politics. These entities have contributed to the definition, redefinition, formation and reformations of the politics, moral and the political. Gandhi, Nehru, Roy and others used and practiced politics with a certain disposition of moral values as its basis while contributing to the political. This interplay of politics, political and the moral, shows me to a great extent as to why state and religion may exude violence because they form key players in this aforementioned discourse. This becomes the reason behind these entities being sovereign entities of law. In any context, understanding the political, will show us to what extent was morality used consciously in its formation. This gap is what thinkers tried to define, explore and contemplate on. Gandhi wanted the gap to be the least which led him to emphasise on the possibility of a moral practice of politics. He, therefore, focused on the practice more than conceptualizing some definite idea/ ideas of the political. Either, one sounds too moral for politics and simultaneously not moral enough for the conception of the political. When violence is brought in as a conceptual trope, this exploration gets murky as its clouds the borders between politics, the moral and the political. When Gandhi uses non-violence as a tool, it does not suggest that it is not violent. Violence continues to remain the trope which can help one

look at the moral, politics and political as disconnected entities and also operating together without the conventional notion of distances amidst them, either through the use of overt violence from the State that is legitimate or from the violence imposed by religious/cultural nationalist elements in the society, or even in the moral practice of politics (Gandhi) as propagating the need to connect the three. I claim in the thesis that both separation and the juxtaposition of the politics, political and the moral may be studied using violence as the trope as the language of violence appears in both the conceptualizations.

Be it this disconnect and disenchantment[x] found in secular ethics strongly initiated and implemented by the Nation-State as found in Nehruvian thought, or the juxtaposition found in religious social reforms initiated in the society as in Rammohun Roy or the synthesis of the moral, political and politics through the use of nonviolence as in Gandhi, I claim the exploration of the moral, political and politics holds key to uncovering the ways in which these aforementioned thinkers have conceptualized Religion-State relationship. The separation and the juxtaposition expose the political and its fragility[xi] and manages to project the continuity of the ongoing discourse and its contemporary challenges. At times, politics has to now adhere to this rather innately restricted view of the political which frames and charts the scope of its very survival within some paradigms which may change (changing telos) or may not change (fixed telos). The parameter that decides the legitimacy of this change is rooted in the activity of sustaining a certain conceivable pre-determinable notion of the political through either strict separation from the moral or strict infusion into it. (Balibar, 2015) The sustenance of such an activity of locating/ fixating political, sometimes explicitly or implicitly, does locate the realm of politics within the realm of action and thought. This realm of action and thought, therefore becomes the cite of our enquiry into understanding the nature of the political and its constitution, the actions taken and deliberations made in order for politics to have been

construed through periods of uncertainties.[xii] Hannah Arendt's words do bring out this essence in the following words:

> *The reason why we are not able to foretell with certainty the outcome and the end of any action is simply that the action has no end. The process of a single deed can quite literally endure throughout time until mankind itself has come to an end. Man's inability to rely upon himself or to have completely faith in himself is the price human beings pay for freedom, and the impossibility of remaining unique masters of what they do, of knowing its consequences and relying upon the future, is the price they pay for plurality and reality, for the joy of inhabiting together with others a world whose reality is guaranteed for each by the presence of all.* (Arendt, 1958)

Politics, therefore, precludes the need to harbour itself on something of a definable kind that can merit its own existence. It always has to cater to larger idea/ideas of the political. This notion of the political finds expression in instrumentalized entities such as Religion and Nation-State which provide visibility to the execution of politics within certain ideas/notions of the political that gains prominence for its potential to make human life good. All this while, violence remains the untapped region that dictates the extent to which politics should execute the political and moral and vice versa. The instruments that execute these visibly and legitimately within the paradigm of democratic practices are religious institutions and nation-state. These entities thereafter contribute to certain kinds of political engagements where the necessity to read into their relations become inevitable in order to address various contemporary concerns of our times. An attempt to, therefore, understand the present, the pasts and their contributions towards the formations of dominant entities such as Religion and State, demand attention.

Concerns of the Research:

The main concern of this study is to explore the idea of the political underlying the relationship between religion and the nation-state by employing violence as a conceptual trope. The present times are increasingly characterized by violence, injustice and intolerance whereby peoples in their relationship with one another lack a degree of friendship, fraternity and freedom. This is interestingly at a time when the promise of modernity particularly in its liberal guise is one of accommodation and coexistence. How do we explain the upsurge of violence in liberal secular democratic regimes? What is the nature of the political in the relationship between religion and nation state in liberal democratic setups? Since religion and the state are really poised on the context in which they operate, the study is contextualized within the space of India. The architecture of the State and Society is impinged on this rather fixed notion of the political where the public and the private spaces get demarked with different set of characteristic features. These features are significant in determining and exploring the constitution of the political. However, the relationship has been through turmoil for a long period of time in the presence of the dire need to cater to religious and cultural diversities, acceptance, its legitimate presence in the society. My focus is on exploring the scope of the 'political' in the context of the relationship between Religion and Nation-State using Violence as a trope, within the Indian Political Tradition. The thinkers selected for the current research are Rammohun Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru and M.K. Gandhi.

In the current study, I explore the State-Religion relationship[xiii] within the Indian Political tradition from the trope of violence. There are thinkers outside the Indian context who have contributed immensely to the political theorization of the state and religion. The absence of these thinkers in the current study would render the project 'impossible' as it would require one to ignore the context in which this study is being carried out. The contextual reading here, is based on looking into the Constitution of India as a political context. The Constitution here,

is not looked at the law but as forming a political context that could provide sufficient contextual paradigm for the proposed analysis of the politics – political relationship. Towards this end, certain thinkers from the Indian tradition who have contributed to the existing Constitution and its political contextual reading, are selected. Since, the concern of this thesis is not just on the present political scenario, but on the contextual scene, I restrict the current study to only the three thinkers, Roy, Nehru and Gandhi. A detailed study of the other thinkers who have contributed to this above question is not suggested here, as being any less relevant than this.

My emphasis here through this thesis has been to allow for a researcher to explore the scope and the content of the political through such enquiries where the contemporary and the pasts interact through a certain thematic grid that then goes on to explain the present times and their potential futures. A conscious attempt has also been made to sufficiently question this increasing preoccupation as a researcher functioning within disciplines, to arrange knowledge and its compositions into tiny packets of analytical models that reinforce disciplines. During the course of the research, an attempt here was made to expose the problems involved in restricting the study of the aforementioned areas of human existence strictly within the political, without attending to the site of what constitutes or should constitute the political. This enquiry was possible and conceivable through the employment of violence as the trope that could assist one understand the dynamics of the interplay between Religion and Nation-State, which already have been epicenters of sovereign authority for long period in Indian societies. The larger focus of this research however has been to critically assess, enquire into and discern what constituted Religion and Nation-State in particular and the political in general.

Review of Literature:

The discourse on the relationship between religion and the nation-state is indeed voluminous, rich and substantive. For over half a century now, there has been focused and credible academic attention to exploring the bases of this relationship as well as offering some convincing alternatives. However, there has been a lack in the formation of languages and usage of tropes while enquiring into the nature of the political and possibilities of the relationship between the moral, political and politics. It was brought out extensively in the works of Neeladri Bhattacharya that secular histories ended up disconnecting from the routine politics in search of prefixed notion of the political that perhaps may avoid instances of violence, hurt, communal spectre, conflicts, aggression, hatred and anger. (Bhattacharya, 2008) The meaning of the political eventually gets disarmed from the idea and conception of the everyday, almost wanting to produce an explanation of the everyday. No idea may be able to develop that, but the lack of awareness of the extent to which it claims to show 'truth' through tropes such as factual rhetorics, reinterpretation of the memory and histories and pasts, becomes the cause of this problem. Thus academics perhaps may not be able to cater to these concerns which it seeks to raise, because it has a huge role to play in its perpetration. At a time when the relations between these entities continue to shape in various ways the character of the political, an enquiry into this relationship becomes an imperative to address the problematic that has increasingly been defining politics. This even applies to the rising dominance of the contra secular narratives, especially the religious/ cultural nationalist narratives, as they historicize the pasts through fixed paradigms that does not necessarily cater to addressing the religious Others.

Much has been written on the relationship between religion, nation-state and violence, particularly in the Indian context. There have been several scholarly works dealing with this issue seeking to clarify the nuances of this relationship. The following are the secondary sources of theorists whose major contributions towards analyzing the Indian political thought

in their conceptualization of religion and nation-state through the kaleidoscope of violence, have been worthwhile in understanding the nature of the ongoing discourse, the conceptual gaps, continuities, and the scope it defines and opens up for further theorizing. The existing literature emphasizes on the following narratives as possible solutions to the conundrum of the relationship between Religion and Nation-State.

To begin with the primary attempts made in dealing with this conflict, we have Rajeev Bhargava in '*The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism*' and '*Secularism and its Critics*', exploring the imperative of secularism in Indian societies that can solve the pertinent problem of religious presence and inter-religious conflicts that cripple the minds of the people and provide roots to violence in many forms. This conceptual position is in contradiction to the views elaborated by T.N. Madan, in his work titled, '*Modern Minds and Locked Myths*'. It is an enriching account of the political histories of religions: Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism and it seeks to chart its religio-political evolution in this pluri-religious societies of India. Right from presenting details on the shifting politics of religiously-informed identities which formed the basis of communalism, to attempting to realize the secularism-fundamentalism quandary; this book traces roots of violence back to the nature of colonial state and the legitimate formations of nation-state that have increasingly defined politics. The book stands testimony to a novel contribution to the discourse on the political, where religion is not placed as a threatening factor or an 'enemy' of the society or state, as they both harboured similar orientalist construction of 'communal' traits. The attempt was to theologize and scan the politics of religion and its influence in the formation of the Indian modern nation-state.

Criticizing and breaking away from the above theories proposing the model of secularism for India, Ashis Nandy, in two seminal articles titled '*The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Tolerance*' and '*The Twilight of Certitudes: Secularism, Hindu Nationalism and Other Masks of Deculturation*' presents a sharp critique of modernity and secular-nationalism

borrowed from the West. It opposes theorists like Rajeev Bhargava who, in his edited work titled '*Secularism and its Critics*', proposes a practicable model of secularism for a postcolonial nation-state like that of India. His works produce a series of indictments against the efficacy of modernity in bringing about a just structure. The "unity in diversity", again seeks to unify the cluster-headed communities within its fold as part of the secularization drive, which has fuelled violence and exploitation in the self v/s other form. Modernity has replaced the plurality of the society that had led to an emphasis, overtly or covertly, on the self-other divide and produced new dimensions of freedom, restraints, justices, injustices, and the like. This has redefined the horizons of identity and recognition. Nandy talks about the exclusionary principle of secularism which deems unfit those, from having complete citizenship and rights to decide the democratic principles, governance and religious tolerance, who do not subscribe to secular credos. In these articles, Nandy underscores the concerns mentioned above and doesn't seek to theoretically place violence; but interprets it from a very multi-layered concept of tolerance and the intimacy between religion and nation-state as potential enemies working perhaps in collusion with each other and presenting contesting claims over the moral and the political.

As a path-breaking work in this discourse, we have Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan's edited book titled, '*Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*' which explored and claimed the possibility of an alternative arrangement, which they call as the theologico-political. This signifies the need to radically change ways of perceiving an institutionalized concrete conception of the political -politics interplay through fixed institutions such as Religion and Nation-State. Instead, they emphasized upon the imperative to explore these institutions through their processes. They claimed that postsecular polity offers space for violence to be addressed sufficiently without subscribing to either of the extreme narratives of secular-nationalism or cultural-nationalism.

The contemporary political theory in its present manifestation is quite conscious of the impossibility and the incredulity of the universal narratives, which have also been rendered incomprehensible and inapplicable for an understanding of the wide diverse set of social spaces. That there cannot be any universal theorizing project today to explain these diverse spaces, have been well established in the writings of thinkers like Bhikhu Parekh in '*Ethnocentric Political Theory*', Dipesh Chakrabarty in '*Provincializing Europe*' and '*Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?*', Partha Chatterjee in '*Whose Imagined Community?*' and the like.

Research Methodology:

This study is mainly concerned with an analytical conceptual understanding and exploration of the possibilities of arriving at some alternative towards working out a relationship between religion and nation-state using violence as a conceptual trope. The research methodology which I have adopted in this study is mainly content analysis and a critical theory. In this study, a conceptual grid is worked out using violence as the trope where the distinction between the political and politics and factors widening it undercuts the imagery of the public in India today. The factors contributing to the formation of a distance between the principle-based institutionalized politics of our times and the relatively open-ended process-based idea of the political, have been found to feed into the formation and perpetration of violence in the modern liberal societies. Hence, the responsibility to interact with these structures by operationalizing from within the tradition that contributed to the historical political thought of India makes it significant a study. This study is rooted in a certain trope, namely violence, due to the need to thematically place the concerns as a researcher in an attempt to understand the political and rethink its scope. For this purpose, a constitutional context is chosen and few thinkers who have

contributed dominantly to the present formation of this context, have been selected for this study. This in no way suggests that other thinkers/ activists such as B.R. Ambedkar, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Savitribai Phule, Hansa Mehta, and the like have contributed any less to the formation of the Constitution on the aforementioned concerns. The thinkers chosen for this study marks the beginning of the study of Indian political tradition and its thought within a fixed thematic of violence which only suggests an analytical attempt that is non-exhaustive.

Organization and Chapter Scheme of the Study

The current study is divided into five main chapters where the attempt has been to try and situate the aforementioned discourse within the proposed site of analysis that is, the Indian Political Tradition.

The first chapter explores the need to carry out the proposed study and manages to elaborate on the conceptual grid of the study that is, opening up the politics-political interplay. The basic concerns of the study are explored and laid out in the subsequent sections explaining the relationship between religion and nation-state. The conceptual trope employed here to carry out the study is Violence. A detailed description of the ongoing discourse and different conceptual positions within it is done as part of this chapter. While doing so, the concerns and relevance of the study are emphasized upon and elucidated, which will open up possibilities for a detailed conceptual analysis in the subsequent chapters. The main concern of this study described in this chapter, is to explore the idea of the political underlying the relationship between religion and the nation state by employing violence as a conceptual trope. My focus here, is to study the site of Indian Political Tradition in order to delve into the possibilities it has to offer in dealing with this contemporary travails of understanding the relation between religion and state. The thinkers selected for the current research are Rammohun Roy,

Jawaharlal Nehru and M.K. Gandhi, who have contributed immensely to the existing constitutional context, despite there being many other significant thinkers, as mentioned above, who have influenced and characterized various political contexts across ages.

The second chapter is focused on Rammohun Roy, which begins with an exploration of Roy's political thought and his contributions to the definition and conceptualization of the understanding of the political and the nature of religion-state relationship in particular. Roy's project of social reforms which is state-imposed but society-determined, is emphasized upon. The separation of the society and the state or religion and state or the social and the political is studied keeping in mind the established conceptual grid. Thereafter, the space of violence is explored in this conceptualization and a study of how the above relationship has catered to the needs of eliminating violence in society, is studied.

The third chapter is focused on Jawaharlal Nehru who proposed for an essential separation between religion and state with the establishment of the liberal modern western secularity in the practice of religion in public space. This separation is studied in the light of the conceptual grid of the politics-political interplay and analyzed through an exploration of the presence of violence in this definition, implementation and location of secular principles as guiding the state-religion relationship. This relationship which is state-led and institutionalized in a dominant role assigned to the state is explored within the aforementioned grid.

The fourth chapter focuses on M.K. Gandhi, who proposed for a juxtaposition and synthesis of religion with politics. The looming absence of institutionalized bodies in the narratives Gandhi initiated, will be focused upon. In Gandhi's thought, the infusion of religion with politics is processed in methods that are distant from any fixed principled understanding of politics, while also simultaneously suggesting the possibility of one, is studied. This study, further, explores the space of violence in the relationship Gandhi intends for religion and state. Gandhi's

emphasis on a processual and not entirely a principled understanding of politics, is critically examined within the scope of the current study.

The study concludes in the fifth chapter with an exploration of the arguments and positions offered. The first section is devoted to a synoptic and summary reading of the main concerns of the study as well as of the different conceptual readings of the relationship between state and religion understood with the trope of violence, in the argument of Roy, Nehru and Gandhi. The section suggests the differences and contending perspectives of these three Indian Political thinkers. The last section of the study involves a modest attempt at offering a conceptual alternative of the relationship between religion and the state by rendering it political, yet not astutely violent. The section suggests that what is often considered as a tenuous relationship between two sovereign sources of law, namely religion and state, can be understood to bind in a moral-political relationship and somewhat, nonviolent relationship by categorizing this relationship as an open and essentially 'political' one.

With this study, I hope to contribute in a modest meaningful way to the ongoing discourse by offering a re-reading of the relationship between religion and state which is, at the same time, somewhat nonviolent yet a 'political' perspective. The political as a contemporary research is somewhat different although not entirely unrelated to the notion of politics. And it is perhaps the political which would facilitate a more just inclusive and sustainable relationship between religion and the state, one that is distinct from the dominant understandings of liberal secularism and cultural nationalism; one that is political, yet not exclusive.

Chapterization

Chapter 1:   Exploring the Underlying Thematic Relationship among Religion, Nation State and Violence: An Introduction

1.1 Understanding the Political: Introducing Religion, Nation-State and Violence
1.2 Religion, Nation-State and the Place of Violence: Introducing the Problem
1.3 A Review of the Ongoing Discourse: Exploring Select Conceptual Positions
1.4 Concerns and Relevance of the Study
1.5 Organization of the Study

Chapter 2:   The Imperative of Social Reform: Reading Rammohun Roy

2.1 Exploring the main concerns of Roy's Political Thought
2.2 Roy's Project of Religious Social Reform
2.3 Locating Violence in the Imperative of Social Reform
2.4 Some Concluding Remarks

Chapter 3:   The Imperative of Secular Reform: Reading Jawaharlal Nehru

3.1 Understanding the main concerns of Nehru's Political Thought
3.2 The Nehruvian Principle of a Secular Nation-State
3.3. Situating Violence in the Imperative of Secular Politics
3.4 Some Concluding Remarks

Chapter 4:   The Imperative of Critical Transcendence: Reading M.K. Gandhi

4.1 Engaging with the main concerns of Gandhi's Political Thought
4.2 Gandhi's Perspective on the Theologico-Political
4.3 Doing Nonviolence: Gandhi's Desire to be Different
4.4 Some Concluding Remarks

Chapter 5:   In Conclusion: Rethinking the Relationship between Religion and Nation State as a Response to Violence

5.1 An Overview of the Study
5.2 The Imperative of the Theologico-Political: Towards an Alternative Thematic

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[i] Homi Bhabha in 'The Location of Culture.' Page 7, Introduction.

[ii] Hedgewar, Golwalkar, Savarkar, Jinnah and the like have contributed towards this understanding of a cultural nationalist imagery of a society.

[iii] Ashis Nandy, T.N. Madan, Peter Van der Veer, Bhikhu Parekh, Jonathan Seglow, Andrew Shorten and the likes have sufficiently established critiques questioning the efficacy of secularism and have explored the possibilities of alternatives in cosmopolitan, republican and multicultural paradigms.

[iv] The intent, here, is not to fixate only a certain meaning to the ways in which secularism has worked out in Indian societies, but to go with the larger principle of disengagement with religion and the religious and the role of the state in looking at secularization as the desirable political.

[v] Thomas Blom Hansen, Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India, Page 3.

[vi] Carl Schmidt, Claude Lefort have held onto this distinction between politics and the political. This has been explained in Prathama Banerjee's work titled, 'Elementary Aspects of the Political: Histories from the Global South'.

[vii] Rohit De's account of the Constitutional usage by the citizens of India is an account of the influence of everyday politics in the formation of the political. Similar narratives are found in the discourses on Anthropocene, Climate Change, Global South and perhaps, discourses related to the current study.

[viii] Etienne Balibar, From Violence as Anti-Politics to Politics as Anti-Violence, Critical Times (2020) 3 (3): 384–399.

[ix] Arendt tries to adhere to this notion of the political that strips mankind out of the vestige of the need to exhibit and experience concern for life. Quoted by Wendy Brown in Manhood and Politics: A Feminist Reading in Political Theory.

[x] Akeel Bilgrami uses the term enchantment in the book, 'Secularism, Identity and Enchantment', (2014).

[xi] Arendt: The Fragility of Politics is a chapter in Manhood and Politics penned by Wendy Brown. Here, the notion of the political is a realm for Arendt that distinguishes the society into humans and non-humans and it sets the stage for this narrative where the political becomes too sublime a space for humans' survival and betterment, yet remains disconnected from emphasizing upon the essence of life, by subjecting politics to the political.

[xii] Arjun Appadurai's 'Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization' explores the connections between this uncertainty of the ethnic body as being the reason behind it becoming the theatre of analysis of ethnic violence within globalization.

[xiii] Refer page 5 of this document for an elaborate reason behind using the terms state and nation-state interchangeably.