

NPTEL
Nation and Narration

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Week1 Lecture 1
Transcript from the Video

Hello everyone, welcome to the course Nation and Narration. I have already given you an overview of this course in my introductory video. In addition to that, I also intend to give you an overarching idea about the major topics we are going to discuss this week. I am sure this will help you organize the major ideas that we will be discussing in our forthcoming lectures. Without much ado, let's begin.

In this week, you will have six broad lectures. These six lectures are further divided into smaller sections labelled A, B, C and so on for your convenience. Almost all these lectures run into around 15-20 minutes. The first lecture of this week is about the social and political circumstances that led to the origin of nation states in Europe. The primary texts that I will be mainly using for the first two lectures in this week are 'the introduction' and 'the first chapter' of Benedict Anderson's famous book '*Imagined Communities*.' These two essays will give you a bird's eye view of the major socio-political events that prepared the ground for the origin of nation states in Europe.

In the first lecture, you will see how the ideas of nation and nationalism came into being in the West primarily as a reaction against the authoritarian regimes of the monarchic rules. The emergence of nation states reflected the strong desire on the part of the common people to establish a rule based on popular sovereignty, that is a rule based on the will of the people, as opposed to the whims and fancies of the monarch. The origin of nation states in Europe was materialized by three major historical forces, namely Enlightenment, Revolutions and Print Capitalism. The first lecture in this week will briefly examine how the Enlightenment and Revolutions prepared the ground for an anti-monarchical movement in Europe and consequently led to the formation of nation states.

The second lecture will explore how industrial revolution and the resultant print capitalism forged a cultural atmosphere conducive for a nationalist sentiment among people in Europe. In this lecture, you will see how print capitalism played a crucial role in creating a sense of shared identity among the people residing within the geographical limit of a nation. Here, we will also see and unpack Anderson's definition of nation.

The third lecture will examine, how the ideas of nation and nationalism came to the colonies through the imperial project. Here we will explore how colonization was presented as a civilizing mission in the colonies and how the idea of civilizing mission played a crucial role in warranting the imperial project. The fourth lecture will expose the falsity of civilizing mission. The texts that you can refer to in this context are the 'introduction' to Edward Said's "Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient," and Homi Bhabha's essay "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" In this context, we will discuss, in addition to the notion of civilizing mission, the real imperial agenda behind the process of civilizing mission and its insincerity. The fifth lecture will be an explication of the politics of civilizing mission through Rudyard Kipling's famous short story "The Mark of the Beast."

The sixth lecture will talk about the interconnection between ideas of nationalism and modernity. This lecture is founded on Paratha Chatterjee's essay "Our Modernity." In this lecture, we will explore how the idea of modernity was conventionally conceived and the problems of applying the modular form of modernity to the Indian context. Modernity is

generally thought to be a clash between orthodoxy and liberal values, and the eventual victory of liberal values over orthodox values. But when it comes to the Indian context, we will see that the version of modernity that got wide was not strictly a complete rejection of traditional values to subscribe to the liberal, progressive values. It was a very clever negotiation between tradition and liberal values, as opposed to the rejection of the former for the latter.

Before we proceed, one more note: The lecture slides will contain minimal information. For more details, including the names of essays or quotes from texts, please refer to the transcripts. Now, let's begin our class.