FRAGMENTED MEMORIES

FRAGMENTED MEMORIES: *MUKTIJODDHA* MASCULINITY, THE FREEDOM FIGHTER, AND THE *BIRANGONA-MA* IN THE 1971 BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR

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TITLE: Fragmented Memories: *Muktijoddha* Masculinity, the Freedom Fighter, and the *Birangona-Ma* in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War

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LAY ABSTRACT

My dissertation focuses on the Bangladesh Liberation War that took place between East Pakistan and West Pakistan from 26 March 1971 till 16 December 1971. This war led to the independence of Bangladesh, former East Pakistan. During the war, Bangladeshi governmental documents and nationalist speeches portrayed the East Pakistani/Bangladeshi freedom fighter or *muktijoddha* as an ideal masculine figure who fought against West Pakistani soldiers with courage. I analyze memoirs by freedom fighters who show how they both conform to, and disrupt the nationalist portrayal of the courageous *muktijoddha*. I also examine personal recollections of *birangonas* (women survivors of sexual violence) who speak of their trauma, reveal narratives of their daughter's abuse by soldiers and their collaborators, and provide a reading of the wartime woman that challenges the nation's vested interest in the ideal male *muktijoddha*. Overall, my project encourages people to rethink the Liberation War from the perspectives of wartime men and women survivors who have witnessed violence and mutilation firsthand.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation intervenes in the fields of South Asian Masculinity Studies, Affect Studies, Critical Disability Studies, Feminist Cultural Studies, and Trauma as well as Memory Studies. The focus of this project is on the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, a nine-month long war between East Pakistan and West Pakistan, which started on 26 March 1971 and ended on 16 December 1971 with Bangladesh, former East Pakistan, emerging as an independent nation. I concentrate on East Pakistani/Bangladeshi *muktijoddhas* (freedom fighters) who fought in the war, and *birangonas* (survivors of sexual violence) who were abducted by military officials and their collaborators. Drawing on political speeches, parliamentary debates, press statements, and governmental news reports, I examine how these sources create a narrative of the manly *muktijoddha* who demonstrates his masculinity through exhibiting courage and disavowing his pain. I further analyze memoirs by freedom fighters who complicate this image of the courageous *muktijoddha* through recollecting moments of pain and fear during combat. Significant to my analysis are also survivor testimonies of gender, physical, and sexual violence of wartime women in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, which oppose a more singular nationalist rhetoric of the 1971 war that celebrates the male *muktijoddha* while marginalizing women's experiences. I delve into how *birangona* testimonies narrate the women's trauma of sexual violence and of witnessing their daughters' abuse by wartime soldiers. In analyzing women's stories, I highlight the importance of listening to the voices of *birangona-mas* (survivors who are also mothers), and thereby question the nationalist mythologizing of the *muktijoddha's* mother who sends her son to war. I

exploring the *muktijoddha*, the *muktijoddha's* mother, and the *birangona*/*birangona-ma*, I argue that there are multiple alternative readings of the war that are suppressed by nationalist discourse, which warrant recognition within Liberation War and South Asian history.

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Introduction: Remnants of a Forgotten Past: The Liberation War's Connections to the Colonial and Post-Partition Eras

Tokhon kar shomoi British ra shashon korto.
Tar por ei toh juddho shuro holo.
(In those days the British used to rule. Then there was the war).
—Sharifa Khatun, my *nanu* (grandmother)

Ghosh-mishtiala'r roktakto laash pawa galo, nodite bhashchilo.
Amader ke school er assembly te Urdu bhashai Pakistani jatiyo shongeet gete hoto.
Nanu tomar mama ke niye besh gorbo bod korten.
(Sweet seller-Ghosh's bleeding body was found floating in the river.
In our school assembly, we were made to sing the Pakistani national anthem in Urdu.
Your grandmother was proud of your uncle.)
—Shahnaz Mazid, my *ammu* (mother)

The 15 August 1947 Partition of colonial India split British India into two independent nations, India and Pakistan, along religious lines. This led to large-scale communal violence and the mass exodus of Hindus and Sikhs to India, and Muslims to Pakistan (Butalia 12; V. Das 18). Punjab and Bengal were the two Muslim majority provinces divided through this Partition (Kabir 8). Over a thousand miles of Indian landmass separated Pakistan's west and east regions, and in 1955 Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra (1953-1955) named these two wings West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Jaffrelot 66; P. Singh 54). West Pakistan or the western wing contained four provinces: North-West Frontier, West Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. East Pakistan or

the eastern wing comprised of a divided Bengal province. While the western part of Bengal remained in India as West Bengal, the eastern part of the province or East Bengal became Pakistan. The nation-state of Pakistan with its eastern and western wings had two capitals: East Pakistan's capital city was Dacca (present-day Dhaka), and West Pakistan's capital was first Karachi, and then Islamabad.[1] Thus, throughout this project, "Bengali" refers to colonized Bengali individuals of the imperial period whereas "East Pakistani" and "Bangladeshi" signify people who are from the eastern wing and Bangladesh respectively.

My dissertation, *Fragmented Memories: Muktijoddha Masculinity, the Freedom Fighter, and the Birangona-Ma in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War*, explores the historical legacies among East Bengal and East Pakistan which later became Bangladesh in 1971. It seeks to delineate how different kinds of masculinities, which became prominent during the colonial and post-Partition eras, established the formulation of a wartime Bangladeshi masculinity. It is significant that I provide some theoretical and familial context about my research to clarify the scope of my project. For this, I reflect on the generational, temporal, and experiential differences among my grandmother, mother, and myself. While my *nanu* (grandmother) experienced both Partition and the Liberation War, and my *ammu* (mother) grew up in wartime East Pakistan, I was born in 1989 which is nearly two decades after Bangladesh became officially independent. I belong to the post-liberation or post-war generation that emerged in the decades after 1971. I am

[1] The capitals for each of the wings were formed after the mid-to-late 1950s when, in the Pakistani constituent and national assembly, parliamentary members discussed the topic of establishing two capitals "at Karachi and Dacca" (*Sheikh Mujib* 229, 242).

privileged because, unlike my *nanu* and *ammu*, I did not have to witness the war and the destruction of lives firsthand. This very privilege enables me to think about Bangladesh's past in a way that is different from the two generations of my family immediately preceding my own. In this introductory chapter, I argue that the history of Bangladesh must be understood in connection to the histories of both Partition and the colonial periods. I begin with an examination of my family stories that craft specific and strategic memories of the past which omit the topic of Partition. I discuss how Bangladeshi nationalist ideals of the war generate this omission, and underscore the importance of comprehending the Liberation War in relation to the time periods of pre-and-post-Partition. In this respect, I argue that colonial and post-Partition depictions of the Bengali and East Pakistani man engendered the creation of the masculine war combatant. My work further aims to illustrate how personal accounts of war survivors illuminate internal bodily/emotional experiences to reveal the manifold traumatic memories that are significant to and are yet excluded from nationalist Liberation War history.

The Silencing of Partition in Family Stories

The harrowing affects of Partition are explored by scholars such as Urvashi Butalia, Veena Das, Ritu Menon, and Kamla Bhasin. These scholars analyze stories of survivors who at the time of Partition suffered sectarian atrocity, forcible displacement, and

abduction as well as sexual violence (V. Das 67; Menon and Bhasin 43).[2] My family stories, however, did not disclose any such details of the Partition era, whether these details were about my family possibly witnessing/enduring brutality firsthand or narrating someone else's experiences of going through such brutality. For instance, 1947 did not appear in my late grandmother's timeline or tale. In her stories, shared with me in the late 1990s, she briefly mentioned the twentieth-century colonial period when she was a child in Bengal, India. As a nine-year-old heavily focused on doing well in school and entering the upcoming Fourth Standard (Fourth Grade) poetry competition, I remorsefully admit to not asking my *nanu* (grandmother) more about her past. For me then, my *nanu's* recollections gave me respite from schoolwork. Her stories were what I had considered a leisurely pastime, not needing my full attention, and different from the more notable materials in my history textbooks on World War One and the Russian Revolution. The possibility that through her memories she was giving me access to her version of history based on her lived experience was a thought that had not crossed my mind. After losing my maternal grandfather and paternal grandparents at a very young age, my *nanu* was the only grandparent and elderly family member with whom I was close. Geographic distance affected my ability to cultivate close ties with extended elderly family members who might have been able to shed some light on their own and my *nanu's* pasts. These family members, most of whom have now passed away, lived in the southwestern region of Khulna in Bangladesh while I spent my childhood and teenage years moving from one

[2] Along with the mass exodus of people, violence during Partition also resulted in the abduction and sexual violence of women in both India and Pakistan.

place to another after a period of two or three years. Thus, I have no way of knowing what my *nanu* endured during the 1947 Partition period, and whether she migrated from West Bengal, India to East Bengal/ East Pakistan at the time. Additionally, I do not know if she experienced the series of violent events that occurred in Bengal during 1946 and escalated in 1947.[3] I recall her saying, "*Tar por ei toh juddho shuru holo* [Then there was the war]." My *nanu* used the Bangla word "*juddho*," which functions as a suffix to *Muktijuddho*, a term used in various Bangla sources to signify Bangladesh's War of Liberation or Independence.[4]

The *Muktijuddho* was a nine-month long war between East and West Pakistan, which officially started on 26 March 1971 and ended on 16 December 1971 (Alom 50; pt. 1; R. Kabir and Mehdy 70). The war occurred because of cultural, linguistic, and political disparities between the east and west wings of Pakistan (Payne 12-13; Saikia 35, 38-39). For example, dominant West Pakistani policy makers, along with East Pakistani government accomplices, rejected Bangla as a national language spoken in the eastern wing and marginalized East Pakistani people from national politics (Jahan 13, 29). The West Pakistani military and the East Pakistani army as well as paramilitary fought against each other in this war. This armed violence led to the massacre of civilians and the upheaval of lives and communities. A day before the war began, East Pakistan was

[3] On 16 August 1946, Calcutta (present-day Kolkata), West Bengal witnessed mass communal violence between Hindus and Muslims (Roy 158). This communal massacre is called the Great Calcutta Killing or Killings. Sectarian atrocities between Hindus and Muslims further occurred in other parts of Bengal such Noakhali, East Bengal in October 1946 (Ghoshal 27). In Chapter One, I explore in detail both the Calcutta Killings and the Noakhali Riot or Riots.

[4] Some of these sources include Alom, *Guerilla Theke Shomukkho Juddhe* ["The Guerilla Who Faces War"]; R. Kabir and Mehdy, *Muktijuddho O Nari* ["Women and War"].

proclaimed an independent nation and officially renamed Bangladesh. The *Muktijuddho Jadughor* (Liberation War Museum) in Dhaka contains a print of the declaration of independence (see *fig. 1* in Appendix) announced on 25 March 1971 by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (popularly referred to as Mujib), Bangladesh's first prime minister and an iconic political figure who led the country to its sovereignty. Mujib's message reads, "from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation [West Pakistani military] to the last" (*Declaration of Independence*; Dowlah 54). While many believe that a Bangladeshi army officer and later president Ziaur Rahman (Zia) announced the country's independence on Mujib's behalf (Iqbal 8; Nabi 175-176), others maintain that Zia, not Mujib, declared national sovereignty on 25 March (Dowlah 157). The East Pakistani government claimed Bangladesh as "completely liberated" after West Pakistan's formal surrender on 16 December 1971 (*Liberation Supplement,* see *fig. 2*; *The Surrender Document*, see *fig. 3*).[5]

Analyzing the stories shared by my *nanu* and *ammu* offers insights into why Partition era events are left untold by both my grandmother and mother who explicitly acknowledge the 1971 war. In my *nanu's* narration, the war happened right after the

[5] The historical contextualization of the formal surrender needs to be understood in relation to India's role in the Liberation War. As Bina D'Costa notes, "India provided political and logistical support, including military training and supply of weapons and intelligence to the [Bangladeshi] rebel soldiers" ("Once" 457). In November 1971, India engaged in armed intervention against Pakistani troops within Bangladesh's borders. Bangladesh characterizes the Indian army as "Joint Forces" to denote the Bangladeshi soldiers' and Indian army's collaborative effort at fighting against the Pakistani military. On 16 December 1971, a Pakistani lieutenant general, Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, surrendered "all Pakistan armed forces in Bangladesh" to Jagjit Singh Aurora, Indian army and "Officer Commanding in Chief of the Indian and Bangladesh forces" (*The Surrender Document*).

colonial period. She remembered the following in what appeared to be a linear account: "In those days the British used to rule. Then there was the war." Through my research for this project, the gaps in her memories have become more striking. She did not reveal how Partition led to East Pakistan's creation; nor did she disclose much about the period between 1947 and 1971. Perhaps she wanted to suppress memories of this period that triggered her trauma of possibly witnessing and enduring the violent splitting of a nation: British India into India and Pakistan. One can surmise that my grandmother did not delve into narrating descriptions of atrocities because by not talking about them she coped with her probable lived and embodied experiences of both Partition and the Liberation War. While the Partition did not appear in her telling at all, she also subtly signaled that the 1971 war was a distant thing that transpired "there" which signifies other parts of East Pakistan/Bangladesh and not the place she inhabited. She separated her life from the *juddho* (war) to suggest that it did not affect her or our family. She remembered *juddho* not as cataclysmic violence, but as an event that made Bangladesh independent.

While my *nanu* did not talk of East Pakistan, my *ammu* remembers the Liberation War (1971) and pre-Liberation War (1950s-1960s) periods in fragments. My mother was born in Bagerhat, East Pakistan in the year 1955. She has told each of her disjointed stories to me on a different day and year, some in person and others over phone. Specifically, she has spoken of the brutality committed against Ghosh-*mishtiala* or Ghosh the sweet seller, whose wounded body was "found floating in a river" (Personal interview). My mother says, "Ghosh-*mishtiala* used to sell *mishtis* [Bengali sweets]. They

killed him" (Personal interview). She connects the image of *mishtis* (sweets) with that of being harmless. In Bengal, *mishti* is food that cultivates strong community ties. In Bengali households, *mishti* is a key food that is offered to guests and relatives to make them feel welcomed. Seasonal *pitha* (dessert) and *mishti* festivals forge relations as people share sweets with one another; sweets are shared and distributed during religious festivals, and friends and family bring sweets when they visit each other. Ghosh-*mishtiala* was Bagerhat's local sweet vendor whose small business was central to the functioning of community rituals and practices. Like the *mishti*, Gosh-*mishtiala* connotes the mundane and the familial. For my *ammu*, all he ever did was make sweets for people, and he did not deserve a brutal death. She did not bear witness to the incident itself and therefore could not identify those who were involved in his killing. Instead, she uses "they" to implicitly label West Pakistani soldiers as the perpetrators. In her view, "the soldiers killed many in Bagerhat," possibly including Ghosh (Personal interview).

In another interview, when my mother notes, "In our school assembly, we were made to sing the [West] Pakistani national anthem," she suggests a lot without saying much. On one hand, she views the national anthem as the song of "those" who supposedly killed Ghosh. On the other hand, she sings the same song. My *ammu* and her peers sang in Urdu at their school assembly. She raises the matter of language to evoke East Pakistan's history in the 1950s and 1960s. In the western wing, Urdu was the main language; in the eastern region, it was Bangla. After the 1947 Partition, West Pakistani politicians, together with their eastern wing collaborators, declared Urdu as Pakistan's

national and state language.[6] Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1947-1948), the founder of Pakistan, and Abdul Monem Khan (1962-1969), East Pakistan's governor, proclaimed Urdu as the only official language (Jahan 163; "Quaid-e-Azam," 00:00:13-00:00:23). Moreover, the government institutionalized Bangla's "Urduisation" (Huq 19) where Urdu words replaced parts of the Bangla tongue. Pakistani policy makers legitimized Bangla's assimilation into Urdu thus, "'Without one State Language, no Nation can remain tied up solidly together and function'" (Jinnah qtd. in Jahan 37). This late 1940s policy claimed to uphold national unity through Urdu and Bangla's "Urduisation." Obaidul Huq describes such policy as "the first official assault on the Bengali culture and language and therefore the first step towards de-Bangalisation" (18). Here, "de-Bangalisation" signifies the systemic elimination of Bengali culture that is manifested through the suppression of Bangla. To resist such cultural erasure, East Pakistani students, social activists, and political leaders engaged in demonstrations across the eastern province. Among multiple demonstrations, the 21 February 1952 *Bhasha Andolon* or Language Movement was crucial because unarmed youth dissenters were killed by the police for protesting Bangla's exclusion as national language.

In the context of the Language Movement, my *ammu* gestures towards her fraught relation with Urdu. She states that she was "made to sing the Pakistani national anthem in Urdu" (Personal interview). The choice of the word "made" indicates that her school was a pro-government institution that coerced her and her peers into singing (and thus

[6] The East Pakistani collaborators were mainly provincial governors of the eastern wing who protected the interests of West Pakistani political leaders (Jahan 163). Some of these governors include Mirza Nurul Huda (1969-1969) and Abdul Monem Khan (1962-1969).

speaking) Urdu. Upon my asking her if she wanted to share more details of her past she replied, "*eithoh* [this is it]" (Personal interview). It is possible that she did not want to remember or preferred not to disclose certain aspects of her past. Perhaps particular memories of the war are too painful for her to recall and narrate. With recurring governmental violence in East Pakistan during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and my mother witnessing the impact of and being subjected to such violence (seeing Ghosh's bleeding body; coercive singing of national anthem), one is inclined to think that parts of her memories are suppressed.[7]

The missing pieces in my *ammu's* and *nanu's* recollections echo literary and cultural historian Ananya Jahanara Kabir's use of the term amnesia, to describe one's act of forgetting their experiences of Partition and the Liberation War. According to Kabir, "forgetting certain attachments was essential in the aftermath of 1947 and 1971" (30). She suggests that Liberation War and Partition survivors collectively forget parts of the past. Scholars note that nationalist narratives celebrate the war and the Bangladeshi citizens' emancipation from Pakistan (Mookherjee 40; Saikia 3-4) but do not acknowledge that the 1947 Partition formed Pakistan out of which Bangladesh emerged. In Kabir's view, "when 1971 is interpreted as the conclusion of a two-stage process [Partition and Liberation War], memorialization has also to grapple with the paradox of 'East Pakistan' as the nation's foreshadowing. [. . .] The collective response to this paradox within Bangladesh has been to memorialize 1971 as a sealed moment" (57). In this context, to

[7] In the 1960s, East Pakistan witnessed the killing of youths at the hands of the military (Iqbal 3). These youths opposed certain governmental policies in the eastern wing which I discuss in detail in Chapter One.

seal means to establish "a complete and pivotal break with the past" (Kabir 57). Such a break evokes a metaphorical erasure of time. In effacing 1947 from national memory, the citizens in their everyday lives unwrite Bangladesh's initial birth as East Pakistan. For example, my *nanu's* memories displayed this form of figurative sealing through omitting Partition as well as East Pakistan and celebrating a liberated Bangladesh by means of recalling the war.

The reason for this erasure of Partition and East Pakistan can be understood through the emphasis on the Bangla language in Bangladesh's struggle for liberation from West Pakistan. The opposition between the Urdu and Bangla languages associated Urdu with Pakistan and Bangla with Bangladesh. This resulted in the impetus to forget Pakistan's formation and remember Bangla and martyrs who died for Bangla/freedom. This is evident in nationalist artworks and songs, which heavily focus on the Bangladeshi person's connection to Bangla. For instance, a mosaic art piece located between Dhaka University and Ramna Gate, depicts students who died in the Language Movement. Next to the students' mosaic images are mural placards with Bangla inscriptions like "recognize Bangla as an official language" (McMorrow, "Riots"—my translation). This illustrates a figurative link between body and language where the students become at one with the Bangla tongue. Such metaphorical oneness affirms the students' detachment from Urdu and (a governmentally Urdu-centric) Pakistan as they imagine an independent Bangladesh. Further, the national song "*Ekushey February*" ("Twenty First February"), mourns the death of Dacca/Dhaka University dissenters who were killed during the 1952 Language Movement. Bangladeshi lyricist Abdul Gaffar Choudhury wrote this song

before Bangladesh's independence. The chorus reads, "How can I forget / the blood markings of twenty first February" ("*Amar*" lines 1-2, 00:01:02-00: 01:17—my translation). Here, the phrase "blood markings" links Bangla to the idea of collective sacrifice. The people renounce their lives to not only inscribe Bangla as one of the national languages but to highlight the Language Movement as a key event that resulted in the East Pakistani peoples' demands for national liberation, which I discuss at length in Chapter One. The line, "How can I forget" (line 1), urges one to remember how those in the eastern province were coerced into speaking and singing in Urdu as the "enemy's" tongue (a narrative similar to my mother's recollection). The "enemy's" tongue metaphorically morphs into Pakistan being the "enemy's" nation whose history of emergence and independence cannot be celebrated in the Bangladeshi cultural production and national realm. This form of celebration renders one a traitor to Bangladesh and a patriot of Pakistan. This type of rhetoric omits the East Pakistani people's ambiguous ties with Urdu, a language they spoke in schools and government workplaces.[8] My mother portrays this form of forgetting in tongues where her Bangla stories un-tell peoples' affinities with Urdu. We see this complex attachment to Urdu in the character Rehana from Tahmima Anam's 2007 novel, *A Golden Age*. The novel is based in East Pakistan in the late 1950s until its independence as Bangladesh in 1971. Anam writes that Rehana "spoke, with fluency, the Urdu of the enemy. She was unable to pretend, as she saw so many others doing, that she could replace her mixed tongue with a pure Bengali one"

[8] In the eastern wing, East Pakistani "Urdu-speaking candidates were preferred for jobs in the state bureaucracy" (Guhathakurta and ven Schendel 181).

(47). Rehana's Urdu, the language's "lyrical lilts" (46), merges with her Bangla and forms a tongue that blurs linguistic demarcations premised upon nationalist rhetoric.

In keeping with this idea of nationalist narratives omitting certain aspects of Partition and wartime histories, my dissertation explores the gender politics present in the national sphere's memorialization of the 1971 male war combatants and simultaneous erasure of women's experiences of the Liberation War. I interrogate how nationalist discourse venerates the Bangladeshi male war combatant as an ideal masculine hero (Chapters One and Two) while depicting the woman as either a mother who must champion her combatant son's masculinity or a "passive" (D'Costa, *Nationbuilding* 111) victim of sexual violence, whose plight affirms Pakistani soldiers as the perpetrators (Chapter Three). Chapter One focuses on the national conditions of post-1947 Pakistan, which ultimately led to the formation of the ideal male *muktijoddha* also known as a freedom fighter or resistance fighter who fought for Bangladesh's independence. In Chapter Two, I investigate how this figure of the ideal *muktijoddha* gets disrupted by freedom fighters themselves who narrate their experiences of 1971. Chapter Three analyzes how women question the nationalist eulogization of both the *muktijoddha* and *muktijoddha's* mother through confirming themselves as mothers of rape survivors or *birangonas* who are castigated in national and social settings. Through my project, I hope to carry the conversation of the *muktijoddha* beyond the domain of valorization and scrutinize how the nation turns the resistance fighter into an object "that" is meant to serve the nation. I further aim to understand the ways in which the

woman/mother/*birangona* narrates her wartime contributions and sacrifices that oppose the "skewed" (Saikia 4) representation of Liberation War history.[9]

The following questions steer my inquiry: under what political circumstances did the freedom fighter emerge? What is at stake for the freedom fighter who conforms to the nationalist image of war hero? How do nationalist narratives construct the *muktijoddha* and the mother of the *muktijoddha* in relation to the *birangona*? What connection does the 1971 resistance fighter have with the colonial era? In what way does the freedom fighter signify East Pakistan's place in Bangladeshi national history? These questions stem from my strong yearning to investigate the historical and affective conditions that shaped freedom fighters who were ready to die or suffer war injuries. In this dissertation, I analyze different forms of texts such as speeches, parliamentary discussions, government documentaries, press releases, memoirs, novels, songs, and collections of women's testimonies to unpack the critical issues involved in the nationalist constructions of the *muktijoddha* and the *birangona*.

My generation is not only one of post-liberation but also post-amnesia. I classify my research as a work of post-amnesia which builds on Kabir's idea of the term. She describes post-amnesia as "a symptomatic return to explorations of places lost to the immediate post-1947 and post-1971 generations" (26). Kabir adds, "A space that existed in history, but was subsequently blanked out by amnesia, is retrieved by the generation (in both senses) of post-amnesia" (62). Here, "blanked out" reiterates a "break with the past"

[9] Nationalist narratives shape what Saikia calls a "peculiarly skewed, officially backed representation of the war" (4).

(Kabir 57) through the figurative effacement of both time (1947) and space (East Pakistan). My work not only recovers lost connections among the 1930s colonial period, post-1947 East Pakistan, and the 1971 Liberation War (Chapter One); it also near retrieves forgotten stories of war combatants (Chapter Two), abducted women (Chapter Three), and mothers (Chapter Three), to make a case for comprehending the differentiating bodily as well as emotional accounts of various survivors of the war.

It is crucial to note that some aspects of survivors' memories remain hazy and perhaps even irrevocably lost. All three chapters of my dissertation concentrate on why and to what degree these memories of the war and the post-Partition era are fragmented. The partial retrieval of fragmented memories makes it possible for my chapters to ruminate on the following questions: what is at stake for those who narrate accounts of their pasts that differ from nationalist war discourse? Are the missing pieces from survivors' testimonies intentional, inadvertent, or both? I offer more details of individual chapters of the dissertation in the next section that specifies how my family stories inform my project. I also explore in detail the existing research on the Liberation War and my contribution to this topic.

The Male *Muktijoddha* and Missing Pieces from Liberation War History

My family stories reveal remnants of the past and the missing pieces in these stories shared with me stimulate my research. It is important to clarify why a particularly gendered and generational storytelling illuminates my dissertation. At the initial stages of

my doctoral research in 2017, I asked my father about his memories of the Liberation War. He offered a succinct description of when the war had started and ended but preferred not to reveal his personal stories of 1971. His silence regarding his individual experiences was accompanied by a sorrowful expression on his face. I reckoned he did not want to recall the (possibly painful) past, and thus deemed it appropriate not to ask him further. In this scenario, my *ammu's* memory of my *nanu* and my *mama* (maternal uncle) gives meaning to my research. A few years ago, my mother spoke about my grandmother who knew that her son, my maternal uncle, Mizan, had left home to fight in the war. News travelled to my grandmother that my uncle had suffered an injury while engaging in combat. My mother told me, "your *nanu* worried about your uncle very much" (second epigraph, Personal interview). It appears that my grandmother's worried state increased after someone reported my uncle's injury to her. Perhaps she imagined my uncle in a wounded condition for which he had no means to undergo healing and recovery. The phrase, "very much," hints at my grandmother's fear of losing her son. If, for my *nanu*, there is a possibility that my uncle, her son, was wounded, then there is also the possibility that he could have died. After talking about my uncle's injury, my *ammu* paused for a moment. Maybe she felt pain upon remembering or imagining her brother's wound. After a short silence she said, "*tomar nanu tomar mama ke niye besh gorbo bod korten* [your grandmother was very proud of your uncle]" (Personal interview). My *nanu* was both proud and worried because my uncle was a *muktijoddha*. My mother's account of my grandmother reflects both familial and national pride that the Bangladeshi

government and citizens feel towards freedom fighters. In this section, I discuss more about this form of pride and offer some contextual details on freedom fighters.

During the Liberation War, the East Pakistani/Bangladeshi *muktijoddhas* and the West Pakistani army fought against each other. These *muktijoddhas* came from different professional and financial backgrounds. Some were former army officers who worked for pre-1971 military services such as the East Pakistan Rifles and the East Bengal Regiment (Ar-Rashid 57; Safiullah 13-14). Others were "varsity [university] students, juveniles and adults" (*A Freedom-Fighter*), as well as rural farmers who were recruited in various *muktijoddha* sectors across East Pakistan (*Muktir Kotha*: *Words of Freedom*). The present-day Bangladeshi government praises freedom fighters as "[war] heroes" (*Mujibnagar* 167) who fought and sacrificed their lives for the nation. *Joi Bangla* ("Victory to Bengal"), a 1971 pro-liberation governmental newspaper, contains an article with an image of Bangladeshi national leader Syed Nazrul Islam "saluting the *muktijoddhas*" ("No Soul," see *fig.* 4— my translation) to articulate his appreciation for them.

The nation's admiration for the *muktijoddha* figure is evident in multiple arenas such as political speeches, museums, newspapers, and war photographs. In 2017 I took a short research trip to Dhaka where I visited the *Muktijuddho Jadughor* (Liberation War Museum). The museum largely displayed photographs and brief descriptions of martyred *muktijoddhas* who fought in *Muktijuddho* (Liberation War) (*Seven War Heroes*, see *fig.* 5). Further investigation, conducted by my research assistant Oliullah Al Mamun during October-November 2021, gave me access to more photographs of the war (photographers

unknown) that are available in North South University's Central Library in Dhaka. I briefly mention here a few of these images to solidify my point about the national depiction of the *muktijoddha* as heroic.[10] A number of these images carry similar titles like *The Victorious Freedom-Fighters at the Liberated Zone* or *Victorious Freedom-Fighters Crossing the Jessore Border* (North South University Central Library, see *figs.* 6 and 7).[11] Nationalist rhetoric attributes West Pakistan's official surrender to Bangladesh's triumphant resistance fighters. As the Liberation War (*Muktijuddho*) and the freedom fighter (*muktijoddha*) collapse into one another, it becomes impossible to imagine the war without talking about the freedom fighter. The Bangla language evokes this connection where *mukti* (freedom) ties *juddho* (war) and *joddha* (fighter) together. This *mukti juddho* and *joddha* link is reiterated in national records. For example, published in 2005, *Mujibnagar Government Documents 1971* is a collection of speeches and news articles on the freedom fighter's experience in the warzone. In this collection, numerous press statements depict the resistance fighter as "*mukti pagol* [freedom crazy]" (502). The Bangla word "*pagol*," which means "crazy," risks pathologizing the freedom fighter. In the war's context, however, the phrase "*mukti pagol*," affirms the male war hero's patriotism that causes him to both kill and die for freedom.

[10] The travel restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic prevented me from taking an initially planned research trip to Bangladesh in 2021. I hired a research assistant, Oliullah Al Mamun, who conducted research on my behalf in various libraries within Dhaka including Dhaka University Library and North South University Central Library. Al Mamun is a fourth-year undergraduate student about to complete his degree. He will soon be pursuing graduate studies.
I have been given permission by Librarian Md. Zahid Hossain Shoeb to use Liberation War images and books from North South University Central Library.

[11] Liberated zones were those areas in wartime Bangladesh that were no longer under Pakistani military control because of *muktijoddha* intervention.
Jessore is a city in south-western Bangladesh.

While male *muktijoddhas* are extolled, women who both participated in and suffered from the war remain unacknowledged in Bangladesh's nationalist history. This includes women *muktijoddhas* who fought, who were survivors of rape and sexual violence, and who experienced both.[12] The woman, writes Bina D'Costa, "played a significant part in that story [of the Liberation War], yet many such experiences were either struck out entirely or homogenized in such a way that very few individual women were highlighted" (*Nationbuilding* 110). D'Costa's point finds backing in *Narir Kotha* ("Woman's Story," 2000), a Bangla documentary that focuses on personal accounts of economically underprivileged women who recall the war. In one such account, an anonymous woman from a village called Paitkandi, Bangladesh asks, "*bitira juddho kore shohid hoye gese, tader ki hobe*? [what will happen to the women who fought for the nation?]" (00:21:38-00:21:41—my translation). The speaker alerts one to the doubly marginalized state of poor women *muktijoddhas* in post-war Bangladesh. Not only are they denied national recognition as freedom fighters but are also deprived of financial assistance and necessary resources from both the government and local politicians. This speaker in *Narir Kotha* echoes Komola Begum who self-identifies as a "'freedom fighter'" (qtd. in Bulbul 55) and whose story is recorded in a 2017 collection of women's testimonies *Birangona Noy Muktijoddha* ("Freedom Fighter not War Heroine"). Begum recalls that the post-liberation government provided her with "modicum funds" and "tin for her house" (54 —my translation). She states, "'I received my money but not my tin.

[12] Women also contributed to the Liberation War by "providing [freedom fighters] with food and medicine […] [and taking] care of the wounded" (D'Costa, *Nationbuilding* 111). My project concentrates on women *muktijoddhas* and more specifically *birangonas*/mothers.

Our village chairman, Halim Master gave my tin to someone else'" (54-55—my translation). An intersection between gender and power differentials is evident here in that a local, influential male politician misuses his position as village chairman to extract money and essential living supplies from Begum who is both "financially" and "socially" (54) disenfranchised. She laments her village status as "'*kharap mey* [a wicked woman]'" who "has no place in society" (54—my translation). Begum's words evoke Shahin Afroz's statement that contests gender divisions in warfare. In connection to the 1971 war, Afroz comments, "The warzone is rendered a male domain. War, battle, these belong to men. What are women doing in the warzone?" ("*Ronokhetre Nari* [Women on the Battlefield]," 00:00:17-00:00:23—my translation). Afroz's question invokes gender privilege and gender hierarchy wherein men hold the right to ask what women are "doing in [our] warzone." The phrase "war, battle, belong to men," inscribes fighting for the nation as an ability inherent in men through which they can demonstrate their masculinity. In this framework, women like Begum are not only unappreciated as *muktijoddhas* but are also shunned for taking on the role of a resistance fighter and entering the "male space" of the battlefield.

Like Begum, *muktijoddha* Taramon Bibi "never received any kind of monetary benefit from the government till date. She [Bibi] feels that she was ignored because she is a woman and people don't take women freedom fighters seriously" (Amin et al.). Bibi's point highlights the absence of archival material that portray women's experiences of and contributions to the war. *Mujibnagar Government Documents*, for example, mention in passing the phrase "women freedom fighters" (435), but discuss at length men who have

sacrificed their lives for the nation. National records of 1971 purport to demonstrate gender inclusion in war but do not provide (more) names or reveal details/stories of women *muktijoddhas*.

The academic research on wartime Bangladeshi women mainly focuses on women who suffered atrocities such as rape, abduction, and torture by West Pakistani soldiers along with East Pakistani collaborators (Bulbul; Ibrahim). This singular focus on the survivor of sexual violence is what D'Costa underscores when she speaks of the homogenization of "women's experiences" (*Nationbuilding* 110). Post-war Bangladesh classifies the rape survivor as *birangona*, which means "war heroine." Bangladesh's first prime minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, coined the term *birangona*, to "'acknowledge' the 'sacrifice' of women for the freedom of Bangladesh in 1971" (D'Costa, *Nationbuilding* 120). Postcolonial literary and cultural studies scholars of South Asia examine how the nation-state and society stigmatize *birangonas* and neglect their wartime memories (D'Costa; Mookherjee; Saikia). Despite the availability of such scholarship, according to Saikia, "although 1971 is considered to be one of the most intense cases of the brutalization of women in twentieth-century conflicts, the story has been largely unacknowledged, especially by the scholarly community in the west" (53). Saikia states that an in-depth engagement with the stories of *birangonas* is key for Humanities scholars. Such engagement is part of our larger commitment, as Humanities researchers, to produce work that addresses the lives and experiences of disenfranchised populations.

Saikia's notion resonates with Mookherjee's idea of "talkable history" (57). Mookherjee alerts us to the importance of listening to *birangonas* when they speak instead of dismissing *birangona* testimonies as irrelevant to 1971. "Talkable *itihash* [history]" describes *birangonas'* fragmented wartime stories that are nationally and socially viewed as "*altu faltu* [nonsense]" (Mookherjee 57). Mookherjee contends that the nation turns talkable *birangona itihash* (war heroine history) into untalkable narratives that are "consigned to amnesia" (46, 57).[13] Nationalist discourse generates public forgetting of *birangona itihash* because women's experiences of wartime violence, be it as targets, witnesses, combatants, or all three, are seen as "separate problems" that should not be construed as part of Liberation War history.

Indeed, Liberation War history is conventionally narrated with a tight focus on the history of male freedom fighters. This form of history excludes the bodily and affective experiences of freedom fighters who disrupt the courageous *muktijoddha* as the marker of wartime Bangladeshi nationalism (explored in Chapter Two). This type of nationalism, according to Nehal Karim, takes place when "people [come] together in a group with a strong political will to have […] self-rule" (9). N. Karim foregrounds "*mukti pagol*" *muktijoddhas* (*Mujibnagar* 502) who adhere to Bangladeshi nationalism through engaging in war to achieve their shared vision of national freedom. Like Karim, other Bangladeshi writers praise this form of nationalism and the valiant *muktijoddha*. For instance, Jahanara Imam asserts, "a patriot's death is a death of glory" (125). Imam states the names of a few martyred *muktijoddhas*, namely, "Rumi, Altaf, Jewel, Bodi, Bashar,

[13] Mookherjee's conceptualization of "amnesia," parallels that of Kabir.

Hafeez [and] Azad" (195), so that the nation could remember them as heroes. Freedom fighter Bodiul Alam, alias Bodi, from Imam's memoir *Of Blood and Fire* (1990, q1998), is fictionally showcased as the protagonist in a 1994 Bangla film, *Aguner Poroshmoni* ("The Spirit of Fire") directed by Humayun Ahmed. While *Of Blood and Fire* briefly mentions Bodi's death, *Aguner Poroshmoni* depicts an imaginary story where freedom fighter Bodi (played by Asaduzzaman Noor) seeks shelter from a Bengali family in Dacca during the war. Noor as Bodi gets shot by Pakistani soldiers who come to know about his hideout (01:39:25-01:39:32). A wounded Bodi dies as soon as Bangladesh becomes free (1:39:32-02:03:46) signaling that he lived only to liberate the nation. On a similar note, Faruq Aziz Khan holds, "Many young boys were trained, inspired and motivated by the FFs [freedom fighters] […] many of these unsung heroes laid down their lives to liberate the [motherland]" (194). Further, scholar and activist Muhammed Zafar Iqbal writes, "The freedom fighters had unlimited courage and unparalleled love for their motherland" (12—my translation). Both F.A. Khan and Iqbal fetishize the nation as a woman who needs to be freed by her son, the *muktijoddha.* This gender dichotomy between the liberator and the liberated unwrites the woman *muktijoddha* and indicates that only a man as resistance fighter can free the nation from the Pakistani army scripted as "enemy" (*Mujibnagar* 566). There is a familial affective rhetoric here whereby the courageous *muktijoddha* son loves the mother/motherland to the extent of sacrificing himself for "her" independence. This framing continues to represent the woman as victim who needs to be saved because if women can fight or die for the nation, it undercuts the privileging of the male savior.

In referring to the male *muktijoddha*, Sukumar Biswas asks, "Will we not talk about the war, the war heroes' heroic battle? Is this where we stop? Stay silent?" (11—my translation).[14] Biswas urges us to create collective awareness of *muktijoddhas*. He believes that a form of shared silence on resistance fighters erases the history of their gallantry. His questions, though poignant, appear redundant amid the vast historical documents and evident national recognition of the male *muktijoddha*. Biswas's Bangla alliteration, "*birder biruttopurno* [the war heroes' heroic battle]" (11), emphasizes the laudatory narrative about brave men in battlefields but does not quite highlight the *muktijoddha's* suffering, which my dissertation aims to inquire into. This inquiry is important as it draws attention to the freedom fighter's story that signals the contentious representation of the war hero in Bangladeshi nationalist discourse. I scrutinize the works of national leaders, journalists, activists, freedom fighters, war heroines, and war heroes, all of whom depict connections between the nation and the freedom fighter. Chapter One focuses on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led Bangladesh to its independence. I study select works of Mujibur, or Mujib, in which the ethos of Bangladeshi nationalism emerges and prompts the creation of the 1971 resistance fighter. I illustrate that "Mujiban masculinity," a term I use to describe Mujib's portrayal of the martyr who sacrifices his life for freedom, becomes imperative in shaping the masculine *muktijoddha*. In Chapter Two, I read in detail government press releases which affirm the model *muktijoddha* as informed by Mujiban masculinity, and personal accounts of freedom fighters who try to

[14] Biswas makes this inquiry in his edited anthology, *Muktijuddho O Muktijoddhader Bola na Bola Kotha* ("Told and Untold Stories of the Liberation War and Freedom Fighters," 2017). This anthology was accessed from Dhaka University Central Library. I have been given permission to use this book as a reference in my dissertation by Monoara Begum, Deputy Librarian, Dhaka University Central Library.

approximate this model. My research project not only analyzes the political situation that created the *muktijoddha*, but also freedom fighters' emotional and bodily experiences of conforming to the war hero ideal. I trace how the resistance fighter's complicated links to the idea of the model *muktijoddha* muddy his image as normatively masculine. Subsequently, in Chapter Three, I discuss how nationalist narratives draw on gender constructions to shape male and female participation in nation- making. More precisely, I depict the *muktijoddha's* mother who is responsible for upholding her son's image as national war hero. This final chapter also makes explicit how post-independent Bangladesh differentiates between the *muktijoddha's* mother and the mother/woman who is a *birangona.*

Masculinities Across Time: Colonial and West Pakistani Discourses on the Effeminate Bengali and East Pakistani Man

This dissertation, *Fragmented Memories: Muktijoddha Masculinity, the Freedom Fighter, and the Birangona-Ma in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War*, seeks to facilitate critical dialogue on the muddled interlinks among India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It aims to situate the Bangladesh Liberation War as significant to South Asian literature and culture. More precisely, my project illustrates the crucial value and necessity of analyzing archives of the war with attention to the complex role of gendered discourses and affects. The war and its aftermath remain understudied in academia. A Scholars Portal database search for peer-reviewed sources on 26 November 2020, for the topic "Bangladesh 1971

War," revealed seven essays and two books that concentrate on the war's aftermath. The search also showed other books that briefly mention the war and Bangladesh's formation. "Bangladesh 1971 War and Women" displayed one book on wartime women, and "Bangladesh 1971 War and Masculinity" listed no sources at all which are pertinent to gender formation during the war period. The Liberation War must not be left out of South Asian scholarly discourse. In particular, the personal accounts of *muktijoddhas*, *birangonas*, and mothers, must be listened to and understood as they foreground the idea that there is no one normative celebratory history of the Liberation War. Otherwise, there remains a gap in knowledge of how India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are interconnected through multiple cataclysmic events of which the Independence War is only one example. Further, we risk overlooking the traumas of people who, divided across the above three countries, bear complex relations to places and people that/who are perhaps now lost to them (either physically or emotionally). Through my project, I urge people to look beyond the nationalist construction of the Liberation War as simply an event detached from colonial and post- Partition history that made Bangladesh independent.

In order to do this, I clarify in this section how the 1971 war is connected to the 1905 Bengal partition in the colonial period, the 1947 Partition that formed India and Pakistan, and post-1947 Pakistan. I focus on how the communal mass killing of Hindus and Muslims after the 1905 Bengal partition created a community united through sectarian violence. This violence became a way for colonized Muslim men to affirm their masculinity in a context where colonial discourse rendered them effeminate. I further

examine how this idea of exhibiting violence to assert masculinity is pertinent to 1971 *muktijoddhas* to dispel West Pakistani narratives of the effeminate East Pakistani. I use the term "*muktijoddha* masculinity" in this dissertation to denote the freedom fighters' attempts to challenge their historical emasculation by colonial and post-1947 political and cultural discourse. I elucidate how wartime Bangladeshi *muktijoddha* masculinity takes shape from Mujiban masculinity that is based on recuperating the masculinity of the East Pakistani/Bangladeshi man. This section explores how the freedom fighter is doubly effeminized in both colonial and mid-twentieth century West Pakistani narratives. It carefully attends to the religious and political condition in the early twentieth century colonial era with the goal of theorizing *muktijoddha* masculinity. I argue that *muktijoddha* masculinity must be understood in relation to the nineteenth-and twentieth-century image of the "effeminate" Bengali because the imperial rhetoric of the colonized, emasculate Bengali lingers into the Liberation War period. Therefore, I begin with contextualizing how such rhetoric functioned in colonized Bengal, provided in the following paragraph.

Colonial writers and administrators classified the colonized Indian Bengali man as "effeminate" (Hunter; Macaulay). Analyzing the imperial discourse on the Bengali Hindu, scholars like Sikata Banerjee, Mrinalini Sinha, and Chandrima Chakraborty discuss how colonial officials formulated a hierarchy of masculinity wherein the Bengali Hindu is situated as the "most potent" symbol of effeminacy (Banerjee 29; Chakraborty 40; Sinha 2). These scholars explore how the colonized Hindu man resists his emasculated status by constructing and inhabiting different notions of nationalist masculinity. For instance, Sinha examines ways in which the colonial government limits

Bengali men within professions that are deemed "unmanly." She argues that the Bengali male as effeminate is a dominant stereotype that the colonial government uses to prevent Bengalis from "manly" occupations, namely military service. Banerjee adds to Sinha's point through exploring the Indian Hindu "martial hero" (11) figure who through masculine violence seeks to overthrow colonial rule. Chakraborty extends this conversation through paying attention to how Hindu asceticism offers a mode to recover lost masculinity which was threatened by colonial dominance and discourse. The male nationalist ascetic body becomes an important site of masculinization that calls male nationalists to "perform one's dharma [religious duty] to protect oneself, one's family, and one's country" (Chakraborty 52). Chakraborty further concentrates on Bengali/Indian novelists and political leaders who contest ascetic nationalist masculinity for its exclusive representation of an upper-caste Hindu masculine identity. My dissertation aims to expand this body of scholarship through a sustained scrutiny of the Bangladeshi *muktijoddha*. To lay the groundwork for my analyses in the chapters, I need to first establish *muktijoddha* masculinity as a political construct that intersects with culture, ethnicity, and religion. I divide this historical and discursive discussion into three consecutive subsections: 1905 Bengal partition and the Assertion of Muslim Bengali Masculinity, 1947 Partition and Muslim Nationalist Masculinity, Post-1947 Militarized West Pakistani Masculinity and the 1971 *Muktijoddha*. All three subsections depict how Islam is utilized as a tool to instigate communal, gender, and ethnic atrocities.

1905 Bengal partition and the Assertion of Muslim Bengali Masculinity

In this subsection, I firstly interrogate how Hindu and Muslim activists, politicians, and songwriters came together to oppose the Bengal partition that was initiated by the British on 16 October 1905 and then annulled by them on 12 December 1911 (Azad 46). In examining the history of 1905, I portray how the early twentieth century period witnessed Hindu-Muslim hostility that led to the creation of a Muslim Bengali masculinity exhibited through violence. On 16 October 1905, George Nathaniel Curzon, the Viceroy of India, divided the Bengal province into West Bengal for Hindus and East Bengal for Muslims (Azad 23). The Bangla term for this split is *banga-bhanga*, which means broken Bengal. As a result of this division the provinces of West Bengal and East Bengal ended up having two separate administrations. As Gyanendra Pandey states, there were "other partitions still to come before [the 1947] Partition became a settled fact" (25). The 1905 Bengal partition escalated public condemnation and led to Bengal's *Banga Bhanga Andolon* or Movement Against a Broken Bengal. Anti-partition protests and meetings were held across Bengal in 1905, including multiple meetings in Calcutta Town Hall (West Bengal), protest meetings at Barisal Brojomohun College (East Bengal), and demonstrations in Bagerhat (East Bengal) (Azad 23). According to Bipan Chandra et al., "The strength of this protest can be gauged from the fact that in the first two months following the [1905 partition] announcement 500 protest meetings were held in East Bengal alone, especially in Dacca, Mymensingh and Chittagong" (126). When Curzon visited Dacca in East Bengal to gather support for the partition proposal, he "met with stiff opposition [from] both the English and the Bengali press and from the general

public" (Azad 23). Protesters on the streets of Dacca held up placards that read, "Pray do not sever Bengalis" and "Divide us not" (Baig 112-113). The partition, based on religious difference, neglected the Bengali peoples' shared culture and was vociferously opposed.

This form of cultural cohesion is depicted through songs, poems, food, and the Bangla language, which is shared across the two Bengals. Key commonalities include the celebration of *pohela boishakh* (Bangla new year) on 14 April when Bengali individuals bond over rice, fish, and Bangla songs. The Bangla tongue also makes way for affective connections to develop between East and West Bengalis. This affect comes from being able to share certain emotions and nuanced meanings through words spoken in the same language. The anti-partition struggle gave prominence to this cultural relationship where Bengali activists sang Bangla songs while they engaged in mass demonstrations on the streets of Dacca and Calcutta ("The Heritage"). Hindu and Muslim protesters generated solidarity through singing *Amar Shonar Bangla* ("My Golden Bengal"), a song written by the twentieth-century Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore ("The Heritage"). Tagore depicts a united Bengal in "*Amar Shonar Bangla*" which he wrote in 1905. The song portrays one's love for the land that is Bengal. The singer develops a lingering emotional attachment to the *amer bon* (mango groves), *bhora khet* (abundant paddy fields), and *boter mul* (banyan trees) which are key images in the song ("*Amar Shonar Bangla*," 00:00:06-00:01:09—my translation). "My Golden Bengal" depicts Bengal's division from an environmental angle. The singer implicitly mourns the separation of the mango groves from the banyan trees, which is a metaphor for the province's partition. This 1905 song on the Bengal partition eventually became the national anthem of 1971 Bangladesh.

In the words of Jashodhara Bagchi, "They [wartime Bangladeshis] took as their battlecry [the] tender […] song of Tagore" (63). Language was a vital reason for the Liberation War (discussed in Chapter One) where "My Golden Bengal/Bangla" echo both the fracturing of Bengal's land and the song's adoption as the national anthem of Bangladesh in April 1971. This form of echoing traces older lineages through a song that manifests linguistic, cultural, and emotional connections across territorial demarcations.

Further, Tagore lamented the Bengal partition in writing thus, "'Bengal is going to be severed by law on 30th Aswin (16 October), but God has not separated them. Remembering this and for proclaiming this we shall observe the day as a day of unity of all Bengalees [alternate spelling: Bengalis]'" (qtd. in Azad 24). It is important to note Tagore's implication of "God." He refers neither to a Hindu deity nor to the Muslim god Allah. In Tagore's view, "God" is not a specific divine figure, but rather a synonym for the word religion. He declares that religious differences cannot divide Bengal or its people ("'God has not separated them,'" qtd. in Azad 24). Like Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, a well-known Bengali poet and musician of the twentieth century, wrote against the Bengal split. Islam's song "*Mora Eki Brinte*" ("Of the Same Stalk"), contests the spatial difference between Hindus and Muslims. The chorus reads, "*Mora Eki Brinte Duti Kushum/ Hindu Musalman/Muslim tahar noyon moni/Hindu tahar pran* [We are two flowers on the same stalk/Hindu and Muslim/Muslims are the bejewelled eyes/Hindus are the heart]" ("When was Bengal First Partitioned," 00:04:23-00:05:55— my translation). Nazrul Islam depicts the province as a body that functions via the synergy between

Hindus and Muslims who represent the eye and heart of Bengal. The separation between Hindus and Muslims (heart and eye) signifies violence through the metaphorical cutting and killing of the province imagined as body. The stalk and flower images symbolize the co-existence of Muslims and Hindus who are culturally united.

Apart from activists and songwriters, both Hindu and Muslim politicians campaigned against the 1905 Partition. Many such Bengali politicians were from the Indian National Congress, an anticolonial nationalist party that emerged in 1885 and became the leading organization in India's independence from British colonial rule. Examples would be Surendranath Banerjee, a founding member of Indian National Congress (henceforth referred to as Congress), political leader Pritwishchandra Ray, and journalist Krishna Kumar Mitra. These and other leaders "launched a powerful press campaign against the partition proposals" (Chandra et al. 126). In addition, Congress associate and religious leader Maulana Liaquat Ali went from Calcutta to Barisal, East Bengal, to join Hindu schoolteacher and philanthropist Ashwini Kumar Datta in conducting various anti-split rallies (Azad 32).

While many took part in the Movement Against a Broken Bengal, numerous Bengalis withdrew from it. According to Salam Azad, "the open identification of the motherland […] with [the Hindu] goddess Durga […] served to drive away large sections of Muslims from the anti-partition agitation which they had initially joined" (37). The anti-partition movement included protesters who personified the land as Durga, thereby portraying Bengal as a Hindu province. Several Muslim protesters, thus, felt alienated from the rallies which they saw as a Hindu movement. Other Muslims supported the

partition for reasons connected to education, employment, and masculinity. According to Anwesha Roy,

> Disparities in middle-class development amongst Muslims and Hindus in education and, consequently, in appointment in government jobs also constituted a fertile source of divisions. […] Exposure to western education amongst Bengali Muslims began in the nineteenth century. By this time there was quite a sizeable English-educated Hindu middle class. Hence the anxiety of the Muslim elite and their efforts to extract at least some concessions from the Government to counterbalance the advantages gained by educated Hindus. (117)

In the eyes of many middle-class Muslims, the English-educated Hindu has privileged access to administrative jobs. "English-educated" also suggests that the Hindu Bengali is "anglicized" which is equated with mimicking the colonizer and becoming an English-speaking government official or *shaheb* (gentlefolk). In this sense, the Hindu *shaheb* is the sort of colonized sycophant that British imperialists had wished to create: one who abides by colonial governance. The middle-class Hindu's knowledge of western/British literature and politics—their colonial ("western") education as Roy implies—is scorned, while simultaneously the Muslim male feels disgruntled at their inability to obtain such education. The Muslim Bengali deems the Hindu-Muslim employment difference as inequitable; the Hindu enters government service with more experience in western education than the Muslim who feels they would have narrow chances of getting employed. So, for many Muslims, the 1905 partition that turned East Bengal into a Muslim-majority province was welcomed because it would offer middle-class Muslims an opportunity to successfully outnumber Hindus in government occupations.

Moreover, the middle-class Muslim Bengali man's status as a government employee disrupts his effeminate illustration in colonial discourse. On Muslims in

Bengal, Mrinalini Sinha writes, "The vast majority of [them] were among the labouring classes and were also underrepresented in the Western-educated community" (16). Sinha's point evokes a comment by William Wilson Hunter, a twentieth-century British historian and a magistrate of East Bengal. Hunter claims, "Nobody takes any notice of their [Muslim Bengalis'] helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence" (167). Here, "helpless" does not simply denote the financial plight of Muslim Bengalis but inscribes them as effeminate because of their supposed incapability of earning a living.[15] The emasculated Muslim is deemed financially dependent on the "masculine" colonial regime that is governing them.[16] The Muslim Bengali thus purports to reclaim his masculinity through ensuring financial income by working for the same colonial government that proclaims him to be effeminate. This type of masculinity is further demonstrated through violence against Hindus to stake claim to the province of East Bengal.

In the six years of Bengal's Partition (1905-1911) anti-Hindu hate became rife in East Bengal. For example, Azad notes that in multiple East Bengali cities such as Dacca and Comilla, "Muslims indulged in looting Hindu shops, burning down the houses of the Hindus, [and] indiscriminately beating up Hindu men and women" (32). The annihilation of Hindu spaces and communities confirms East Bengal as an Islamic province. Within

[15] Colonial administrators like Hunter state that the Muslim Bengali is poor but make no mention of the colonial laws that caused such poverty. One example of this kind of law is the Permanent Settlement Act which was formulated in 1793. The act fixed a high amount of land-rent that mostly poor Muslim laborers had to pay to their landowners. According to Mohammad Golam Rabbani, "The Permanent Settlement was […] a settlement for the land-rent collecting agents *i.e.,* the *zamindars* (the colonial term is 'revenue farmers') for being the permanent pillar of the British political supremacy in Bangla [Bengal]" (88).
[16] I discuss in more detail the link between masculinity and colonialism in the upcoming sub-section titled *Post-1947 Martial West Pakistani Masculinity and the Effeminate East Pakistani.*

this province, the Muslim man showcases his masculinity through enacting gender-based violence by not only physically attacking Hindu men but also "their" "women" (Azad 32). Thus, Muslim Bengali masculinity works to effeminize Hindu men for their inabilities to save Hindu women. I investigate this notion of gender violence under the guise of religion in Chapter Three of this dissertation where I argue that during the 1971 war West and East Pakistani Muslim men committed atrocities against the Hindu *birangona*. For now, in this introduction, I depict how certain Muslims in East Bengal imagined the province as an Islamic nation, a focus that will allow me to lay the foundation for my analysis on *muktijoddha* masculinity.

The imagining of East Bengal as an Islamic nation is clear in Salam Azad's description of a pamphlet called *Lal Ishtahar* which was widely circulated in the eastern region. *Lal Ishtahar* commands Muslims to do the following: "'shun studying with the Hindus as far as practical and start national business and do not make purchases from the shops of Hindus. Start your own industry and do not touch the goods produced by the Hindus'" (33). The pamphlet recommends Hindu-Muslim segregation where the two religious groups should have their own schools and stores. The term "national" marks East Bengal as a separate nation for Muslims, and thereby foreshadows Pakistan's creation.

1947 Partition and Muslim Nationalist Masculinity

In 1905, Hindu and Muslim protesters and politicians came together to challenge the Bengal partition, but in 1947 the demand for Partition became more vocal among certain

politicians. This subsection explores how particular politicians were strong catalysts for the communal onslaught that occurred in 1946 and prepared the ground for the 1947 Partition.[17] It also analyzes how an Islamic political group mobilized religion to consolidate a Muslim nationalist masculinity and the rationale for an Islamic homeland or the nation-state of Pakistan. My examination of the formation of Muslim nationalist masculinity during the 1947 Partition is relevant to my analysis of how a militarized West Pakistani masculinity and subsequently *muktijoddha* masculinity came into existence.

Among different political groups that emerged during the colonial era (such as Congress and The Hindu Mahasabha or Grand Assembly) one political party called the All-India Muslim League, referred to as the Muslim League or the League, advocated for the Partition of British India and formation of a sovereign Islamic nation-state called Pakistan (N. Karim 49-50; Pandey 21-22). The Muslim League was formed in Dacca on 31 December 1906 and represented the Muslims of India. In 1938, the League's president Muhammad Ali Jinnah upheld the Two Nation Theory (N. Karim 50) which led to the separation of East Bengal from India and the creation of East Pakistan. Jinnah explains the Two Nation Theory in an article called "Time and Tide" (1940). He holds, "'the difference between the two [Hinduism and Islam] is not only of religion in the strict sense but also of law and culture'" (qtd. in N. Karim 50). He presents a singular idea of how Hindus and Muslims understand their place in the world. Muslims see themselves as sharing a universal culture that differentiates them from Hindus and the supposed

[17] Scholars like Yasmin Khan (14, 18-19) and Salam Azad (90-91) assess how the 1946 sectarian belligerence in British India ignited the 1947 Partition.

monolithic Hindu culture. Jinnah's theory does not provide details about the connection between Islam and Islamic culture, nor does it portray Muslims as having distinguishable cultural traits. Jinnah underscores the rhetoric of one religion and one culture to create the ground for demanding the creation of Pakistan. In writing about Jinnah, N. Karim notes, "[he] gave the first open reference to the Hindus and Muslims as two separate nations during a session of the Sind Provincial Muslim League in October 1938" (49-50). Jinnah's Two Nation Theory subsumes Muslims and Hindus within the larger framework of (Muslim) Pakistan and (Hindu) India.

Under Jinnah's leadership, the Muslim League legitimized a five-day communal massacre that took place between 16 and 20 August 1946 in Calcutta and came to be known as the Great Calcutta Killings (Roy 149, 158), an event which I discuss at length in Chapter One. Bengali Muslim League political leaders like Khwaja Nazimuddin and Hasan Shaheed Suhrawardy were responsible for instigating the Great Calcutta Killings (Roy 149). On Suhrawardy, Anwesha Roy notes the following: "Suhrawardy pointed out that Direct Action Day was the first step towards Muslim emancipation" (149). Direct Action Day was announced by the League on 16 August 1946 when Muslims nationwide were to observe complete hartal to demonstrate support for Pakistan's sovereignty. The League's call for this hartal occurred as a response to the imperial Cabinet Mission Plan's rejection of the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan.[18]

[18] Imperial Cabinet Mission officials went from Britain to India in 1946 to discuss power transfer from the colonial government to Indian leaders (Chandra et al. 489-494). The officials, along with Archibald Wavell, India's viceroy in 1946, created a formal document called the Cabinet Mission Plan which rejected the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and confirmed a united independent India with Congress as interim government (Congress stood for a sovereign India where Hindus and Muslims can co-exist, Karim 45). The

In the context of Direct Action Day, Suhrawardy's phrase "first step" (Roy 149), invokes the ominous foreshadowing of sectarian massacre as part of the Great Calcutta Killings whereby, according to Azad, "Muslim gangs went on hunting isolated Hindus and looting Hindu shops […] Muslims [hoisted] a Muslim League flag [at a college in Calcutta]" (67). The Calcutta Killings ignited the onslaught of people in Noakhali which came to be known as the Noakhali Riots that "started on 10 October 1946 and continued in a sporadic form till December 1946" (Roy 184). As part of the Noakhali carnage, crowds of Muslim male farmers, shopkeepers, and rickshaw-pullers attacked Hindus and chanted slogans like "*Allah-hoo-Akbar, Pakistan Zindabad* [Allah is the Greatest, Long Live Pakistan]" (Roy 192). The dissenters embody Muslim nationalist masculinity through community and sacrifice. Muslim farmers and shopkeepers establish a form of community that does not depict the coming together of Muslims as much as it propels brutality against Hindus. In hoisting a League flag, male Muslim dissenters showcase their patriotism to Pakistan and confirm that they are ready to die and kill for the nation which is a prominent ethos of both Mujiban and *muktijoddha* masculinities that I scrutinize in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

Post-1947 Militarized West Pakistani Masculinity and the 1971 Muktijoddha

Finally, it is crucial to consider how the colonial narrative on the effeminate Bengali man is reiterated in mid twentieth-century West Pakistani political and military discourse and

Cabinet Mission's decision was disputed by Jinnah and the Muslim League. In Roy's words, "the non-acceptance of Pakistan by the Cabinet Mission had frustrated Jinnah to the point of eventually issuing the war cry of Direct Action" (149).

the consequent emergence of *muktijoddha* masculinity. The valorized masculinity of British bureaucrats and soldiers generated what Sikata Banerjee calls "the construction of a gendered norm commonly known in that era as Christian manliness" (22). Banerjee adds, "Christian manliness was a Protestant construct. It emerged in the mid-nineteenth century when British imperial power was at its zenith and drew upon various traits— self-control, discipline, confidence, martial prowess, military heroism, and rationality" (23). This form of colonial masculinity lauded the white Christian male for displaying exceptional fighting techniques in warfare. On this link between the martial and the masculine, Banerjee further notes, "Within the discourse of imperialism, the Christian man at arms represented empire and national glory" (24). Thus, the "masculine Christian" could engage in war to conquer nations and perpetuate the violence of imperial rule with impunity.

This figure of the masculine Christian was upheld by colonial officials (Macaulay 7) who denied masculinity to the colonized Hindu Bengali. For example, imperial administrator Thomas Babington Macaulay (1839-1841) asserted, "Whatever the Bengalee does he does languidly. His favourite pursuits are sedentary. He shrinks from bodily exertion […] and scarcely ever enlists as a soldier. We doubt whether there be a hundred genuine Bengalees in the whole army of the East India Company. There never, perhaps, existed a people so thoroughly fitted by nature and by habit for a foreign yoke" (36-37). Macaulay's conceptualization of Bengalis has been cited and thoroughly contested by scholars like Banerjee (29-30), Chakraborty (42), and D'Costa ("Once Were Warriors" 464). Here, I too incorporate his above comment because it functions as

relevant historical background for my project. Macaulay's words parallel the historian James Mill (1773-1836) who insisted, "The timidity of the Hindoo may, in general, prevent his fighting, boxing, or shedding of blood" (310-311). The colonial soldier's "bodily exertion" signifies his ability to not only engage in combat but also sacrifice his life for the empire through "shedding blood" in World War One.

Mill and Macaulay assert that the Hindu Bengali possesses neither the courage nor the physical strength to fight but do not state how the colonial regime excluded Bengali recruits from joining the imperial army. Potential Bengali army volunteers in the 1880s were not only rejected but also mocked. Sinha gives the following details of this form of mockery: "An orgy of ridicule followed, directed mainly at the prospect of effeminate Bengali volunteers: Anglo-Indian critics suggested that 'Ram Jam Tunga Ghose and Company could (not) be induced to fire at a target much less an enemy'" (77). The rhyme "Ram Jam," precedes two distinctively Hindu Bangla names, "Tunga Ghose." These names are meant to carry a comic overtone that seals the "*babu*" image; this image depicts the colonized Hindu Bengali as a desk-bound office clerk who, "although [considered] a valiant wielder of the pen, is [rendered] not so handy with the sword" (Sinha 80). The *babu's* dexterity with the pen further strengthens his subservience. He becomes the subjugated office worker who helps reinforce colonial rule. Unlike the Muslim Bengali whose government job confirms his masculinity, the Hindu Bengali government employee corresponds to Macaulay's notion of the effeminate "sedentary"

babu whose "favourite pursuits" (36) happen to be working lengthy hours at an office.[19] Colonial discourse contradicts itself. It considers the Hindu Bengali an adept employee yet scorns him for being sedentary. This illustration of the "Bengali *babu*" as subservient, apathetic, and non-martial is an apparent argument in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation where I portray the figures of the "East Pakistani *babu*" (Chapter One) and the "Bangladeshi *babu*" (Chapter Two).

To comprehend the idea of the East Pakistani and Bangladeshi *babu* figures it is crucial to first understand how Muslim Bengalis, along with their Hindu counterparts, were effeminized in colonial narratives, and then to focus on how Hindu and Muslim East Pakistanis were emasculated in West Pakistani rhetoric. While the colonial figure of the Hindu Bengali was marked by emasculation, the Muslim Bengali was not near exempt from the colonial discourse of effeminacy. For instance, in William Wilson Hunter's view, "[Muslim Bengalis] drag on a listless existence in patched-up verandas or leaky outhouses, sinking deeper and deeper into a hopeless abyss of debt" (147). Imperial notions connect the Muslim's dilapidating state to their seeming shortage of courage. To provide an example, James Dunlop Smith (1858-1921), a British army officer, holds, "'The Bengalis are a low-lying people on a low-lying level with […] the grit of a rabbit'" (qtd. in Baig 128). Smith describes East Bengal as "low-lying," and thereby close to water level with silt-rich delta. He links place to people where a low-lying East Bengal

[19] I write on the colonial period Muslim Bengali masculinity and its connection to government employment in the subsection titled, "*1905 Bengal partition and the Assertion of Muslim Bengali Masculinity."*

bears the "inferior" Muslim farmer and sharecropper whom Smith considers cowardly. The timid *krishak*'s or farmer's sub-human status is clear through his comparison to a rabbit which is seen as gritless. For Hunter, "in every [East Bengal] District the descendant of some line of princes sullenly and proudly eats his heart out among roofless palaces and weed-choked tanks" (147). Hunter evokes a precolonial past when Muslim rulers governed Bengal during the early Mughal period in the 1500s (Karim 36). As Mughal rule declined, British colonizers took control of India in the late eighteenth century. The descendants of Muslim rulers are considered gluttonous and a "hungry crowd" (147). Hunter implies that these descendants imagined having financial luxury but were oblivious to their looming poverty. He reiterates Macaulay and affirms that such oblivion renders the Muslim appropriate "for a foreign yoke" (37). In this sense, the effeminate Bengali Muslim could neither provide for himself nor govern his people and thus must be governed by the British. In addition, Hunter posits that apart from being descendants of Mughal rulers many Muslims from East Bengal are "originally" low-caste Hindus (145). The Hindu Bengali convert to Islam is not only seen as socially and morally impure for belonging to a lower caste but also effeminate and cowardly because of their Hindu origins.

The contradictory colonial narrative on the effeminate Bengali man spills over into twentieth-century West Pakistani military memoirs. For instance, in his memoir *Friends not Masters*, Mohammad Ayub Khan, a West Pakistani army general and Pakistan's president (1958-1969), writes of the East Pakistani Muslim: "It would be no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan, they had not known any real

freedom or sovereignty. […] they have all the inhibitions of down-trodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of new-born freedom" (187). M.A. Khan connects effeminacy with class and subjugation, whereby the East Pakistani Muslim is the successor of the poor emasculate East Bengali farmer who is inherently fitted "for a foreign yoke" (Macaulay 37). He reckons that East Pakistanis would rather remain colonized but does not seem to take into consideration the 1940s when East Bengali Muslim farmers and laborers (Roy 192) put their own and others' lives in danger for an autonomous Pakistan. Khan continues, "The people of Pakistan consist of a variety of races each with its own historical background and culture. East Bengalis, who constitute the bulk of the population, probably belong to the very original Indian races. […] they have been and still are under considerable Hindu cultural and linguistic influence" (187). The phrase "original Indian races," echoes Hunter (145) and indicates that the East Pakistani comes from a lineage of Hindu converts to Islam.

Ayub Khan's statement reinforces the iconography of the "Hindu-like" or "Hinduized" East Pakistani. "Hindu-like" (39) is a term used by Saikia to signify East Pakistani cultural aspects that West Pakistani Muslim politicians and military officials view as "Hindu." For example, West Pakistani politicians and their East Pakistani collaborators render Bangla a "Hindu" language. Abdul Monem Khan, an East Pakistani governor (1962-1969) declares, "Bengali is a non-Muslim language and the [bogey] of cultural domination by Calcutta" (Jahan 163). Monem Khan undermines Bangla's complex history and presence as common language in Bengal. He views Bangla as the tongue of the Hindus. Bangla betrays an Islamic Pakistan where Urdu is the national

language. Monem Khan's notion is reminiscent of Jinnah's speech at a 1948 Dacca University convocation where he proclaims, "Urdu [is] a language that has been nurtured by hundreds and millions of *Mussalmans* [Muslims] of this subcontinent, a language understood throughout the lengths and breadths of Pakistan, and, above all, a language which, more than any other provincial language, embodies the depth that is in Islamic culture and Muslim traditions" ("Quaid-e-Azam," 00:02:10-00:02:36). Jinnah considers Bangla a provincial language that is solely spoken in the East Pakistan province. In contrast, he confirms Urdu as a language spoken by all Muslims in the subcontinent. He forms a primordial association between Urdu and Islam.

It is further important to note the very subtle interlink Jinnah makes between religion, language, and masculinity. His use of the term *Mussalmans* signals the non-Bengali martial Muslim of the colonial era. Imperial discourse categorized certain colonized groups as martial. According to Chakraborty, "the so-designated martial races, which included the Sikhs, Pathans, Marathas, Muslims, and Gurkhas, were represented as merely martial, not *manly*. They were considered physically brave, but also dangerous, aggressive, and hypermasculine. They lacked the attributes of the typical British soldier, such as self-control, morality, leadership and patriotism" (43 —emphasis in original). For Jinnah, the Muslims/Muslim Pathans of West Pakistan are not simply martial but also manly. Politicians and army officials including Jinnah and Ayub Khan demonstrated militarized masculinity by speaking Urdu, a manly Muslim tongue that symbolizes national and military leadership. The Urdu-speaking patriotic soldier showcases fealty to Islam and thus Pakistan (translated as land of the pure). Urdu and Islam are turned into

moral policing tools that signify Bangla as the effeminate tongue of the "impure Hindu-like" East Pakistani.

The "Hindu-like" East Pakistani was also deemed non-martial by (manly) West Pakistani military officials. The practice of excluding Bengalis from the military service in the colonial era (Sinha 77) was also evident in Pakistan when men from the eastern wing were either kept out of the army or relegated.[20] The East Pakistani man's effeminacy and lack of soldierly prowess were used as justifications for his inability to become a military officer and exhibit militarized masculinity. For example, West Pakistani army general Rao Farman Ali Khan notes the following in his memoir, *How Pakistan Got Divided*: "Colonel M.A.G. Osmani, an East Pakistani, had held the DDMO [Deputy Director of Military Operation] post for the last eight years [since the 1960s]. […] he was not considered fit for promotion in the Pakistan Army. He was a Bengali and perhaps not trusted by the higher-ups. […] Even *chaprassies* (peons) did not pay any heed to him" (8). Osmani's ethnicity otherizes him as a Hindu-like traitor to Pakistan, who must be regulated by "the higher-ups." Ali Khan forms a hierarchy that ascribes "*chaprassies*" as lowly and Osmani as lower than lowly for being both non-martial ("not […] fit," 8) and of Bengali descent. West Pakistani army officials draw upon the portrayal of the Bengali without making any distinction between colonial depictions of Hindu or Muslim Bengalis. This is evident when Ali Khan adds, "The lower representation of Bengalis in the civil and armed forces was also rooted in history. […] The lack of proper

[20] According to Nehal Karim, "during the 24 years of Pakistan Armed Forces, [the] only Bengalee [to] rise [up to] the rank of Lieutenant-General […] was Khwaja Wasiuddin" (132).

representation in the armed services was mainly because the British considered them a 'non-martial race'" (17). West Pakistani lieutenant general Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi affirms Ali Khan's opinion: "Our opponents, the Bengalis were not considered a fighting class by the British. They had no military traditions and background or war experience. They were not enlisted in the British Army, particularly in fighting arms" (54-55). Niazi represents what major general Khadim Hussain Raja states: "They [West Pakistani army and government officers] considered themselves the successors of British rulers" (108). In echoing Macaulay and Mill, Niazi takes on the role of a masculine military colonizer who abides by the idea of barring "effeminate" East Pakistani soldiers from the army.

Additionally, martial West Pakistani army officers enacted military violence in East Pakistan to stake claim to the province and its people, and to affirm their masculinity. Military brutality intensified in East Pakistan after the province proclaimed sovereignty from Pakistan and emerged as Bangladesh. On 26 March 1971 West Pakistani army officials launched Operation Searchlight, a planned military crackdown on East Pakistani civilians, namely teachers, students, and politicians who supported the creation of an independent nation (Iqbal 7, Nabi 171). Student and later *muktijoddha* Nuran Nabi witnessed firsthand the aftermath of Operation Searchlight. He provides an account of his witnessing where, "Corpses were scattered in front of the shops. They dangled from rickshaws, carts, and blanketed the pavement. […] I came across the slums adjacent to Iqbal Hall. They too, had been turned to ashes. […] While on my way towards Salimullah Muslim Hall (S.M. Hall), I found several corpses lying in a row on the pavement of Iqbal Hall" (171). Soldiers perpetrated the ethnic cleansing of East Pakistani nationalist youths from both Salimullah Muslim Hall and Iqbal Hall,

men's student residences at Dacca University. The mass killing of students was legitimated as eliminating "effeminate Hindu-like" East Pakistani youth separatists to prevent the disintegration of a manly Muslim Pakistan. This form of legitimation is substantiated by Khadim Hossain Raja when he states, "I felt that we were playing into the hands of the secessionists" (15). Raja depicts West Pakistani military officials as "pure" Muslim men and ideal citizens of Pakistan who feel threatened by emasculate "Hinduized" east wing dissenters determined to split the nation. Raja's phrase, "falling into the hands of the secessionists" (15), hints at how secession is perceived as an emasculating experience for West Pakistani army officers whose masculine leadership is in danger of being disrupted, if acquired by the "effeminate" East Pakistani.

Along with classifying the East Pakistani man as non-martial, Hindu-like, and incapable of leading a nation, army officers mapped his physical differences to consolidate his ethnic and racial differences from themselves. For instance, Aga Muhammad Yahya Khan, a military general and Pakistani president (1969-1971) holds, "'Don't worry, we will not allow these black bastards [East Pakistanis] to rule over us'" (qtd. in Salik 29). Yahya Khan's colleague, general Siddiq Salik, shares a similar view where he notes, "The [East Pakistani] men were short and starved. Their ribs, under a thin layer of dark skin, could be counted" (3).[21] Both Salik and Khan substantiate

[21] Like Hunter (147), Salik speaks of the Bengali's/East Pakistani's poverty ("starved," 3) without acknowledging the economic disparity between the two wings or the role of the British in creating the 1770 Bengal famine or destroying traditional industries in East Bengal, such as textiles. The eastern wing endured what Zafar Iqbal calls "*orthonitik nipiron*" (2) or economic repression, as most of the country's revenue went to the western wing (2). Shazia Rahman makes a similar point to Iqbal accordingly, "West

Mookherjee's argument thus, "The West Pakistani army apparently saw [Hindus/Hinduized Muslims of the eastern wing] as small-boned, short, […] dark, lazy, effeminate, *bheto* (rice-and fish-eating and cowardly) […] Bengalis of the river plains" (164). Images of place, diet, and physical attributes collapse into one another and reiterate colonial metaphors of the emasculate Hindu Indian/Bengali who is "languid," "slothful," "sedentary," and feeble as "[h]is food consists almost wholly of rice" (Mill 312). The notion of the "black" and "dark" Hindu/Hindu-like East Pakistani retains the colonial representation of the Bengali Hindu who, for Christian missionary William Ward, is morally depraved and "licentious" because of his act of worshipping: "The filthy appearance of [the Hindu deity] Shiva as a mendicant covered in ashes" and the Hindu goddess Durga "who stands upon two deities in an attitude so abominably indecent that it cannot be described" (xxix, xlvii; bk. 1). Ward creates a racial distinction between pure European Christianity and polluted Hinduism through implying that Shiva's and Kali's "darkness" ("covered in ashes," xxix) signify their "filthiness." This hierarchical association between color/race and religion is present in West Pakistani military discourse through army officers viewing themselves as "broad-boned, tall, fair, wheat-eating, warrior-like, resilient, manly, brave Muslims" (Mookherjee 164). The pure "fair" Muslim is presented as being superior to the "black" (Salik 29) Hindu/Hindu-like East Pakistani. The East Pakistani's "darkness" denotes his "polluted Hindu-ness" which is apparent

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Pakistan was reaping the economic benefits from East Pakistan's jute, a vegetable fiber used to make burlap or gunny cloth. […] East Pakistan considered itself to be a colony of West Pakistan because its resources were being exploited" (87-88). Apparently, as stated in a newspaper article titled "Pakistan Plunges into Civil War," Yahya Khan "was the first West Pakistani leader to openly admit that East Pakistan had never received its fair share of political power and economic resources in the Pakistani union [Pakistan]" (31).

through Yahya Khan's confirmation that impure "kafers" (Mookherjee 164; "black bastards," Salik 29) will not secede Pakistan.

The West Pakistani army committed selective massacre of Hindus in the eastern province as part of Operation Searchlight because, according to the army, the Hindu, more so than the "Hindu-like," must be effaced (Salik 29) from an Islamic Pakistan. I speak of the selective killing of Hindus and circle back to my mother's haunting memory of Ghosh-*mishtiala* to underscore the main argument of this dissertation that is centered around *muktijoddha* masculinity. Bangla writer Zafar Iqbal provides details on the targeted onslaught of Hindus during Operation Searchlight. He writes,

> a group of soldiers arrived at Dacca University and slaughtered the students of Iqbal Hall (currently Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall) and Jagannath Hall. Prior to killing the students, the soldiers made them dig a mass grave in front of Jagannath Hall. The students' dead bodies were buried in this grave. […] The soldiers used machine guns to destroy civilians. They attacked majority-Hindu areas in Dacca's Old Town, demolished temples, burnt down houses. Those who tried to escape got killed by the army. (8 —my translation)

Dacca University's Jagannath Hall is a Hindu student residence. Armed Muslim soldiers obliterate the Hindu ritual of cremating the deceased whereby Hindu youths are forced to dig a grave in which their dead bodies are later buried. Deceased Hindu students, annihilated temples, and wrecked houses bear testament to the narrative that Hindus do not belong in Pakistan.[22] Many Hindu houses at the time were "'painted with yellow

[22] During the Liberation War, many civilians, mostly Hindus, went from East Pakistan to India to save themselves from genocide. As per Iqbal, "One million [1 crore] East Pakistani refugees went to India. Bangladesh's population then was seventy million [7 crore]. This means that 1 out of 7 people sought refuge in India" (10).

patches marked 'H' [as acronym for Hindu]'" (Kennedy qtd. in Sarker, "How Hindus Were Targeted").

This notion of marking selective Hindu houses is similar to a story my mother shared with me a few years back. She told me that *rajakars*, who were East Pakistani collaborators of the army, marked Hindu houses with the letter "H" to facilitate anti-Hindu military atrocity (Personal interview; I talk about *rajakars* in Chapter Two). Differentiating Hindu houses from Muslim ones made it easier for the army to target and kill Hindu civilians. My *ammu's* (mother's) stories signal how state and army brutality against Hindus was evident in the 1950s when Ghosh the sweet seller's bleeding body was "found floating in the river" (Personal interview). Ghosh is a distinctively Hindu name. His wounded body testifies to anti-Hindu carnage in Pakistan before the 1971 Operation Searchlight. Various possibilities remain as to how Ghosh-*mishtiala* died and who killed him. He was killed close to or during the 1952 Language Movement. My mother's disjointed tales subtly evoke that some local collaborators/*rajakars* vandalized Ghosh-*mishtiala's* house with an "H." His bleeding body inscribes his identity as the effeminate Bangla-speaking Hindu East Pakistani who became the "object" of abhorrence among *rajakars* and self-proclaimed masculine soldiers.

In the context of a nationalist history that idealizes the "wounded man" (Chapter One) and the "heroic" (Chapter Two) *muktijoddha*, Ghosh-*mishtiala* is a forgotten figure. The oral history of Ghosh-*mishtiala* further propels my research on people who witnessed the Liberation War and whose affective and embodied stories remain unacknowledged within national as well as social domains. I formulate my argument through scrutinizing

the political construction and championing of *muktijoddha* masculinity. I show how this type of masculinity is an offshoot of the Mujiban masculinity that ensued in 1971 as a ramification of a militarized West Pakistani masculinity represented by army officers enacting atrocity against East Pakistani/Bangladeshi civilians. The masculine *muktijoddha* carried out guerilla warfare to destroy the West Pakistani army, end Operation Searchlight, and attain independence. I examine how, through fighting for national sovereignty, the freedom fighter embodies Mujiban and *muktijoddha* masculinities, and ruptures the West Pakistani illustration of the effeminate East Pakistani. I argue that language, and not religion, becomes the main ethos of Mujiban and *muktijoddha* masculinities that uphold the figure of the Bangla-speaking Hindu and Muslim masculine war hero (Chapter One). In doing this, the ideal of *muktijoddha* masculinity harks back to the cultural-linguistic bond evident during the 1905 Bengal partition and the 1952 Language Movement. I also portray how the notion of sacrifice in war is pivotal to the figure of the masculine *muktijoddha* and how the wounded man is aestheticized in nationalist narratives. This dissertation seeks to comprehend how Mujiban and *muktijoddha* masculinities' validations of the ideal war hero erase the pain and trauma associated with the following: men performing such masculinities (Chapter Two), women aiding men in their performance (Chapter Three), and women whose testimonies do not fit the mold of nationalist history (Chapter Three).

Chapter Outlines

Fragmented Memories: Muktijoddha Masculinity, the Freedom Fighter, and the Birangona-Ma in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War seeks to intervene in the fields of South Asian Masculinity Studies, Affect Studies, Critical Disability Studies, Feminist Cultural Studies, and Trauma as well as Memory Studies. This dissertation draws on the works of scholars who focus on theories of South Asian masculinities, including Bina D'Costa, Chandrima Chakraborty, Mrinalini Sinha, and Sikata Banerjee. While Chakraborty and Banerjee examine the various physical and cultural practices via which the colonized Indian/Bengali man recuperates masculinity, D'Costa concentrates on how West Pakistani military officials demonstrate a form of "genocidal masculinity" (466) through killing/violating East Pakistani civilians under the rhetoric of saving Islam and Pakistan (Banerjee 23, 29; Chakraborty 40, 50-51,122; D'Costa, "Once" 466-467). Through my analysis of *muktijoddha* masculinity, its forgotten dimensions and disremembered others, I aim to contribute to existing knowledge on the various kinds of South Asian masculinities which emerged from and in contestation with colonial discourse and were embodied by Indian/Bengali, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi men.

Chapter One explores the political and cultural milieu of East Bengal and East Pakistan focusing on the works of Mujib who created the conditions for the emergence of *muktijoddha* masculinity through his assertion of Mujiban masculinity. I investigate the changes in Mujib's nationalist ideologies throughout his political career from youth Muslim League campaigner to Awami League leader. In his personal recollections, *The Unfinished Memoirs* (2012), Mujib advocates for Pakistan's independence and a pan-

Pakistani brotherhood between Muslim politicians from the east and west wings. Affect theory and nationalism studies inform the discussion in this chapter. I employ Sara Ahmed's argument on love and fraternity (125) to explore Mujib's claim of a pan-Pakistani brotherhood. His imagining of Muslim fraternal solidarity is based on the exclusion of Hindus from Pakistan. In aligning with Gyanendra Pandey's point on how the Muslim League championed a two-nation and two-religion discourse (28), I argue that Mujib's idea of an exclusive brotherhood was influenced by the League which significantly set the premise for the series of communal violence that occurred in Bengal during 1946.

From defending Muslim brotherhood to later asserting a secular Bangladeshi fraternity, Mujib's political shift occurred because of his exclusion from Pakistani nation-making. Mujib was treated as the "Hindu-like *babu*" by West Pakistani leaders. His ideological transformation is apparent through his 1950s parliamentary speeches and the 1971 speech at East Pakistan's Ramna Racecourse Ground. In *Sheikh Mujib in Parliament* and the "7th March 1971 Speech," Mujib explicitly blames West Pakistani leaders for East Pakistan's political alienation and calls on Bangladeshi *muktijoddhas* to engage in warfare to overcome the West Pakistani military regime. To explore Mujib's political shift, I integrate Anne Anlin Cheng's argument on how affect has an impact on one's internal state whereby one could not "get over" a particular loss (8). Cheng's point is helpful in investigating how Mujib generated within the East Pakistani/Bangladeshi people a collective affective response through recalling narratives of loss and killings in the eastern wing (for example, the death of protesters during the 1952 Language

Movement). The relationship between affects and the shaping force of nationalist ideology, I hold, engenders the formation of *muktijoddha* masculinity.

It is important to note how nationalist narratives eulogize Mujib as a singular hero responsible for Bangladesh's freedom (Ali 44; Sheila 56-56) while turning individual *muktijoddhas* into anonymous and collective bodies engaged in the struggle for national liberation. Hence, in Chapter Two, I demonstrate how the concept of "Mujiban masculinity" leads to the inaugurating of *muktijoddha* masculinity. Mujib's call to war led to the nationalist construction of the ideal freedom fighter who strived to embody *muktijoddha* masculinity on the battleground. Archival research drives my analysis here as I investigate Bangla war books accessed from Dhaka University and North South University, to posit how men's wartime history is predicated on the dominant notion of the masculine *muktijoddha*. These war archives include Zafar Iqbal's *Muktijuddher Itihash* (Liberation War's History, 2008) and Sukumar Biswas's edited texts, *Muktijuddho O Muktijoddhader Bola na Bola Kotha* (Told and Untold Stories of the Liberation War and Freedom Fighters, 2017) and *Bangladesh Liberation War: Mujibnagar Government Documents* 1971, 2011). *Mujibnagar Government Documents 1971* is a nationalist text that defines the model resistance fighter and illustrates how young recruits are conditioned to perform *muktijoddha* masculinity. Approximating such masculinity becomes corporeally and affectively fraught for freedom fighters who are prepared to renounce their lives for national liberation.

I further analyze *muktijoddha* memoirs like Nuran Nabi's *Bullets of '71* and Shahzaman Mozumder's *The Guerilla* that narrate the stakes of being a young male in

wartime Bangladesh. Both Mozumder and Nabi articulate emotions considered "manly" according to nationalist rhetoric. They also reveal how certain emotions place them in danger of being perceived as the effeminate Bangladeshi. The freedom fighter's body as a site of heroism gets complicated as Nabi and Mozumder draw connections between masculinity and the mutilated body. Sara Ahmed's and Joanna Bourke's discussions of internal and external subjectivities (S. Ahmed 27; Bourke 189) are relevant to my exploration of how the freedom fighter's body visibly articulates specific emotions and to what extent these emotions are discursively and materially policed by either the nation-state, peers of *muktijoddhas*, or *muktijoddhas* themselves. Important to my work, too, is the connection I draw between *muktijoddha* masculinity and disability. I engage in dialogue with critical disability studies scholars like Nirmala Erevelles and Jasbir K. Puar, who focus on how the disabled body intersects with race, class, gender, and geographical location (Erevelles 122, 128; Puar 64). Both scholars establish a link between disability and the nation-state, which is crucial to my inquiry into how the wartime Bangladeshi government formulated a rhetoric around disablement and the able-bodied *muktijoddha*.

I extend the conversation of *muktijoddha* masculinity in Chapter Three to explore the relationship between the resistance fighter and the mother figure. Nationalist songs and novels illustrate how a freedom fighter's masculinity is based on his connection with both the physical mother and the motherland. Bangla war songs like "*Maago Bhabna Kano*" ("Mother Why Worry") and "*Bhebo Naa Go Maa*" ("Mother Do Not Worry") police the *muktijoddha's* masculinity through evoking the motherland. Further, the novel *Freedom's Mother* by Anisul Hoque regulates the wartime physical mother's duty of

making a *muktijoddha* out of her son. Through an analysis of these songs and novel, this chapter interrogates how the woman/mother is placed within a nationalist context. My analyses reveal that the nation benefits from conceptualizing the *muktijoddha's ma* as patriotic while disavowing the intersectional identities of wartime women. I substantiate my argument through exploring the figure of the *birangona-ma* who is both a mother and a survivor of sexual violence. An examination of the 2017 Bangla collection of survivor testimonies called *Birangona Noy Muktijoddha* ("Freedom Fighter not War Heroine") by Sharifa Bulbul allows me to explore how the *birangona-ma*'s fragmented storytelling is connected to how she responds to her trauma.

My discussion on the *birangona-ma* develops a sustained conversation with scholars Nayanika Mookherjee and Yasmin Saikia who examine the 1971 wartime South Asian woman in relation to sexism, nationalism, colonialism, and much more. Both theorists speak of the varying ways in which the Bangladeshi government, media, and the public shun the Liberation War survivor of rape and sexual violence. In some instances, survivors are turned into "objects" of public scrutiny whereby the nation, without the women's consent, discloses their identities and stories which "serve a larger purpose in the name of this or that ideology" (Mookherjee ix). In other cases, survivors are physically abused by the police or other government officials who, as actors of the nation-state, perpetuate gender discrimination (Saikia 121). Both Mookherjee and Saikia argue that the survivor's memory of the war and how she speaks of the war have a connection with her trauma (Mookherjee 108, 110; Saikia 8). I expand on their arguments through a detailed analysis of how the survivors' memories and testimonies of the war reflect the

complex ways in which women cope and live with trauma. Overall, this chapter highlights how women's historical representation of war and trauma is different from the dominant narratives of men's participation in war.

Through *Fragmented Memories* I am hoping to make a case that how the people of Bangladesh communally recall the past matters. As a post-independence South Asian, I am calling for a shift in the way Bangladesh's wartime and post-war generations remember the Liberation War and commemorate the war hero by prompting a holistic, collective remembering of the gendered, bodily, and affective aspects of the war. Decolonial work by and with Bangladeshi/South Asian people is required to encourage dialogue about the losses and atrocities of the othered bodies of 1971. Talking about the *birangona's* and *muktijoddha's* wartime violence is deeply painful, but necessary—their voices must be heard, acknowledged, and remembered as part of not only Bangladeshi Liberation War history but also South Asian post-Partition history. The severe impact of war violence on the *birangona*/*birangona-ma* and *muktijoddha*, as well as on those who witnessed such violence, is difficult to register. It is important that we lean into such difficulty and speak about past (and present) wounds of othered bodies for their collective healing to happen and for their acceptance in communal war memory. This emotional and ethical work might offer us a way of forming human interconnectedness through a shared (even if contested) response to the past.

Chapter One: Mujiban Masculinity and Affective Male Solidarities: Tracing the Political Trajectory of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Emergence of the Wounded Man

The citizens of Bangladesh remember the late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as an exemplary leader who "gifted freedom to Bangladesh's people" (Sheila 54—my translation). Author Oloka Debi Sheila addresses Mujibur Rahman or Mujib in her poem in the following way: "Dear Mujib wake up/Everyone wants you to wake up/ […] The sky is pouring raindrops of pain" (lines 55-56, 61; 17—my translation). Sheila depicts how the entire nation mourns Mujib's loss. Mujib and many of his family members were assassinated on 15 August 1975.[23] Sheila's poem indicates the Bangladeshi peoples' pain upon Mujib's death through the image of "raindrops" (17) that evokes tears. Along with pain, the people bear a collective imagined hope that Mujib will return. This is apparent when Sheila narrates, "Everyone wants you to wake up" (17). For most Bangladeshis, notes S.M. Ali, "Sheikh [Mujib] is the real hope for Bangladesh, a hope they do not wish to give up" (44). Mujib, according to Caf Dowlah, "outshined all others in articulating, propagating, and representing the interest of the people of East Pakistan" (14). Dowlah upholds Mujib as the only politician who opposed the West Pakistani government and ignited the Bangladeshi people to fight for national liberation.[24] Thus, the citizens of

[23] A key convict in the killing of Mujib and his family members is an army captain Abdul Mazed (Haider and Talukder, "Bangladesh Hangs Abdul Mazed").
[24] Dowlah highlights Mujib as East Pakistan's and Bangladesh's primary leader without stating much about other politicians from the eastern wing, such as Moulana Bhashani, who contributed to the nation's independence.

Bangladesh envision Mujib as the sole leader who could govern the nation that he himself founded. Similar to Dowlah, Zulfikar Newton lauds Mujib as "the architect of the nation. [He] is the essence of epic poetry and he is history" (11). Newton classifies Mujib as one who not only "makes" but personifies history. "Makes" suggests that he singlehandedly created the conditions for Bangladesh's freedom, and thus embodies the "epic" history of national sovereignty. Newton venerates the loss of Mujib over the many other losses during the 1971 Liberation War, thereby pushing to the margins peoples' sacrifices for and contributions towards national sovereignty. The near worship that Mujib commands from the people overshadow any criticism of his leadership. I discuss how there is very little disapproval of his political pursuits to lay the ground for outlining in this chapter how Mujib constructed Mujiban masculinity and Bangladeshi nationalism.

In assessing the peoples' disapproval of Mujib's administration, Ali explores the Bangladeshi citizens' viewpoint on the government in 1972 post-war Bangladesh when Mujib became the country's first prime minister: "while criticising the administration and discussing all its shortcomings, many would avoid all mention of the Sheikh [as in Mujib] as though the Prime Minister and the government stood apart" (43). Ali continues, "While a few would say, a little defensively, 'Maybe [Mujib] is not fully aware of [specific national] problems,' some would assert, 'The administration has let down the Sheikh'" (43-44). The people mythicize Mujib as a flawless leader and separate him from what they deem a faulty administration. In their view, it is not Mujib but bureaucratic officials who have failed to run the country since its independence.

Further, some politicians and writers question Mujib's self-surrender to the West Pakistani army on 26 March 1971. On this date, Mujib was arrested and imprisoned in Pakistan (Rahman xxiv). He was released on 8 January 1972 after which he returned to Bangladesh (Rahman xxv). On Mujib's self-surrender S. A. Karim writes, "[his] last-minute decision to allow himself to be captured proved to be a colossal blunder. […] He preferred Pakistani captivity rather than [leading] the impending liberation struggle in person" (386-387). Likewise, Moudud Ahmed observes, "During the entire period of the independence war, Mujib was absent, and the war was won without his direct participation" (314). Both M. Ahmed and S.A. Karim believe that Mujib abandoned the Bangladeshi people during wartime. They contradict Sheila's and Newton's emphasis on Mujib actively leading the way towards national liberation (Newton 11; Sheila 54). Neamat Imam adds to M. Ahmed and Karim through remarking on Mujib's leadership post Bangladesh's independence. In his 2015 novel *The Black Coat*, N. Imam depicts the precarious living conditions of poor people who moved from rural areas to urban cities during the famine which took place from early till late 1974 (111). The devastating famine primarily affected villages, towns, and sub-districts that witnessed poverty, starvation, and death.[25] The official estimate of deaths is 26,000, but the *Bangladesh Genocide Archive* claims that "over a million people died" between July 1974 and January 1975 ("1974"). In talking about the famine, *The Black Coat's* narrator, Khaleque

[25] In *The Black Coat*, Imam describes the peoples' plight during the time. The text's narrator says, "In May 1974, hundreds of refugees [who came to Dhaka from Bangladeshi villages] took over the Mrittunjoyee Primary School in our neighbourhood. […] Those who did not fit inside the buildings pitched small tents in the field, against the boundary walls. They dug the ground to make temporary ovens as well as holes for toilets; they made small canals to wash dishes and clothes, hung their ragged quilts from ropes in front of the tents and reserved a corner of the field to dispose of their daily rubbish" (111).

Biswas, asserts, "I would say it was the fault of Sheikh Mujib, who did not see people dying, because he did not want to accept that death could exist in Bangladesh as long as he led the government" (115). N. Imam, through Biswas, illustrates a morbid connection between wartime and post-war Bangladesh. While in 1971 people were killed fighting for freedom, in 1974 people died of food shortage in the free nation. Imam's novel holds Mujib culpable for romanticizing a Bangladesh free of deaths amid staggering death rates.

From a review of extant texts, it is evident that most scholarly literature on Mujib either venerate his pre-war leadership or criticize his post-war governance. To date, there are no scholarly, creative, or artistic contributions that ruminate on the problematics of Mujib's call for Bangladeshi men to fight in the 1971 war. Bina D'Costa's article "Once Were Warriors," concentrates on questions of masculinity and Bangladeshi men who fought in the Liberation War (458) but does not examine the significant role Mujib played in determining the path they should take. Mujib's notion of the Bangladeshi man shapes *muktijoddha* masculinity and generates the formation of the freedom fighter. Therefore, analyzing Mujib's masculine political ideals becomes a necessary component of my project that investigates the nationalist construction of *muktijoddhas*. This chapter traces Mujib's political trajectory from his entry into politics in the 1930s to his emergence as East Pakistan's leader in the 1970s. I explore Mujib's shifting ideals on nationhood throughout his political career and his ultimate affirmation of what I call "Mujiban masculinity." I discuss how the ethos of Mujiban masculinity is based on a narrative of affective brotherhood whereby Mujib establishes an emotional connection with his "East Pakistani and Bangladeshi brothers" ("7th March"). Mujib's bond with his "brothers"

engenders their shared emotional response of anger towards the West Pakistani government and prompts them to become freedom fighters.

Mujib's 2012 text *The Unfinished Memoirs* is critical to my analysis in this chapter because it portrays his experiences as a youth politician who shifts political parties according to his varying national beliefs during the time span of 1930 to 1970. These changes in his political viewpoints create the conditions for his proclamation of Mujiban masculinity. *The Unfinished Memoirs*, as its title suggests, is incomplete. There is a gap in the memoir between the 1950s and 1971 which was a crucial period that marked Mujib's turning point from a staunch supporter of Pakistan's independence to the founding leader of Bangladesh. Exploring his anti-West Pakistan stance in the 1950s and 1960s is imperative to understanding the political circumstances that led to Mujiban masculinity and ultimately the Liberation War. Thus, in addition to *The Unfinished Memoirs*, I examine a collection of Mujib's parliamentary discussions titled *Sheikh Mujib in Parliament* (1955-58). This collection picks up where *The Unfinished Memoirs* leaves off and addresses the gaps in Mujib's text. More precisely, *Sheikh Mujib in Parliament* concentrates on the early-to-late 1950s when Mujiban masculinity had started to emerge. I emphasize how this form of masculinity is elaborated at greater length in Mujib's 1971 Ramna Speech at East Pakistan's Ramna Racecourse Ground (present-day Suhrawardy *Udyan* or Park). The speech merits careful attention for its role in motivating *muktijoddhas* to wage war.

My analysis in this chapter illustrates how religion and language are key in Mujib's conceptualization of masculinity. I argue that Mujib champions communal

harmony among Hindus and Muslims only to vouch for a singular Muslim brotherhood. This form of brotherhood aligns with the late 1940s political rhetoric of an Islamic Pakistan. Mujib's concept of Muslim brotherhood erupts soon after Pakistan's creation when the government marginalizes Bangla, the language spoken in East Pakistan. I investigate how Bangla's governmental acknowledgement as national and state language becomes the main reason for Mujib's major shift in his political standpoint from a Muslim brotherhood to an East Pakistani brotherhood. This is evident from my examination of Mujib's parliamentary discussions where he overtly blames West Pakistani leaders for preventing Bangla from becoming a national language. He further subverts the West Pakistani rhetoric of the effeminate East Pakistani by both positioning himself as a masculine politician and triggering the emergence of the manly *muktijoddha*. Overall, I contend that Mujib, in his Ramna Speech, connects Mujiban masculinity with the East Pakistani man's ability to sacrifice himself in war.

In turn, my chapter focuses on how emotions function in Mujib's political rhetoric. I pay close attention to the complexities in Mujib's belief in himself as a politician who "loves" (Rahman, epigraph) the people. He is not simply a leader who articulates love, but also grief and anger, which become his means to recuperate the East Pakistani's masculinity. I engage with Anne Anlin Cheng's theory on melancholia to formulate my argument that grief helps Mujib to establish a brotherhood between himself and East Pakistani/Bangladeshi men. Relevant to my contention, too, is Chandrima Chakraborty's discourse on anger and violence in the context of the "angry Hindu" (169-

170) figure in India. I draw on Chakraborty's idea to develop my discussion on anger as a manly emotion that ruptures the iconography of the effeminate East Pakistani.

Man of Emotion and the Narrative in Fragments: *The Unfinished Memoirs*

In this section, I examine readers' responses to *The Unfinished Memoirs,* and how these relate to Mujib's construction of himself and his masculinity in this text. Some of the readers of Mujib's account include Sumit Mitra, Sheikh Rehana, and Asif Nazrul, all of whom have either spoken of or written on *The Unfinished Memoirs*. Their reviews and responses are available online in the form of videos or newspaper articles. Analyzing these reviews to Mujib's text adds to the rationale for my focus on his memoir which illustrates the changes in his political ideologies and his ultimate affirmation of Mujiban masculinity.

At the 9 July 2012 book launch ceremony of *The Unfinished Memoirs,* which took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Sheikh Rehana, Mujib's younger daughter, gives a speech on her father's memoir. Rehana describes *The Unfinished Memoirs* as a book that "does not conceal any parts of her father's life story" ("Book Launch," 00:06:20-00:07:12— my translation). Mujib, on the other hand, notes in his memoir, "All I am presenting here [in *The Unfinished Memoirs*] are the parts I can still recall" (39). Mujib does not provide a complete account that captures every necessary detail of his life's experiences. He substantiates Anshu Malhotra's concept of the "inward eye" (207). According to Malhotra, the memoirist makes a "boundary transaction to gain [an] inward eye" (207).

They imagine a metaphorical border between the past and the present. The memoirist transcends this past-present boundary using the figurative inward eye that looks within as a means of recalling previous experiences. This imaginary eye "sees" and thereby recollects an incomplete past which Avishai Margalit describes as "altered, improved, or animated" (66). The abbreviated memoir title "*Unfinished*," reflects that Mujib remembers his past in fragments as his metaphorical inward eye omits certain aspects of his life from his narrative. His memoir is unfinished precisely because it tells a partial story focused on a specific period in Mujib's life. In Sumit Mitra's view, "Far from taking the story anywhere near its climax of Bangladesh's birth, the narrative vanishes somewhere in the 1950s ("Review: The Unfinished Memoirs"). Thus, "*Unfinished*" signals that in the memoir Bangladesh and the Liberation War are not yet a reality. This results in readers such as Mitra wanting to know more about Mujib's account of the 1971 period of Bangladesh's independence.

Readers of *The Unfinished Memoirs* strongly believe Mujib's recollection of the past to be the unhidden truth. In speaking of the memoir, Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's current Prime Minister and Mujib's elder daughter, echoes her sister Rehana and claims, "Those who have been misled by the fictions of people who distort history will now have the opportunity to discover the truth" (Rahman x). Here, telling the truth denotes the idea of completely disclosing one's life in writing. In Hasina's view, fiction signifies a fabrication of the truth. She not only suggests an absolute demarcation between memoir and fiction, but also considers Mujib's text as the master narrative of the Liberation War. Hasina's notion finds backing in Asif Nazrul's following point: "no effort was made to

mask or distort Mujib's story [by the book's publishers]" ("The Unfinished Memoirs," 00:03:02-00:03:26—my translation). The text has an emotional impact on Nazrul who records, "the memoir brought me to tears" ("The Unfinished Memoirs," 00:01:55-00:01:59—my translation). In speaking of the text's ability to evoke certain emotions, Sumit Mitra reckons that it brings one "closer to [Mujib's] felt reality" ("Review: The Unfinished Memoirs"). Mitra appears to vicariously experience Mujib's life events through which he develops an affective bond with the memoir and perhaps an imagined tie with Mujib.

A similar bond is evident when Rehana sheds tears at the memoir's launch ceremony. She quivers and finds it difficult to finish her speech about her and Hasina's memories of her father's death ("Book Launch," 00:11:22-00:12:23). Audience members at the event are bodily and emotionally affected by Rehana's speech, quivering phrases, and silent tears. Paralleling her, some people cry while others bear a sorrowful expression on their faces when they hear Rehana talk about Mujib, who is no more. In witnessing Rehana, the audience feels the coming together of both her pain and their own. This collective pain is made possible through shared memory. Rehana shares Mujib's memory of the past when she reads out sections from his memoir to the audience. This form of mutual affect glosses over the memoir's construction of a filtered past that leaves out realities of anti-Hindu violence during the 1946 Great Calcutta Killings legitimized by Muslim League politicians, an issue which I discuss below.

Nonetheless, *The Unfinished Memoirs* is the only text where Mujib self-identifies as an Indian and Pakistani/East Pakistani youth politician before he became a Bangladeshi

leader. This is an important point to note because nationalist discourse portrays Mujib as solely a Bangladeshi icon, thereby creating a "pivotal break" (Kabir 57) with the pre-Bangladeshi past and neglecting his previous political identities and experiences. While Hasina, Nazrul, and Rehana categorize *The Unfinished Memoirs* as a key nationalist text, they barely acknowledge the differentials in Mujib's national identity and ideology during the colonial times as well as the post-1947 era. The disavowal of Mujib's shifting past caters to a nationalist narrative which memorializes "1971 as a sealed moment" (Kabir 57, see "Introduction" pp. 10-15). In this sense, Mujib is imagined and turned into a leader who emerged during the "sealed moment" of the 1970s to guide the nation's transition from East Pakistan to Bangladesh. This idea consolidates Mujib's identity as a national leader in Bangladesh by metaphorically erasing his life story in East Bengal and East Pakistan, which worked towards shaping him into a Bangladeshi leader. Concentrating on Mujib's overall political career is important because many of his ideas as a youth Indian and later Pakistani politician bear trace in his later conception of a Bangladeshi Mujiban masculinity.

In his memoir, Mujib presents himself as an affective politician. He maintains, "As a man, what concerns mankind concerns me. As a Bengalee, I am deeply involved in all that concerns Bengalees [alternate spelling: Bengalis]. This abiding involvement is born of and nourished by love, enduring love, which gives meaning to my politics and to my very being" (epigraph). He feels ethically compelled to do political work that benefits "mankind." However, this concept of ethical responsibility quickly shifts when Mujib self-identifies as a Bengali man who loves and works for fellow Bangladeshis. His love is

an affect premised on ethnic and territorial divisions, directed specifically at Bangladeshi Bengalis. I use the expression "Bangladeshi Bengalis" to accentuate two points. Firstly, not all Bengalis are Bangladeshis, nor do they identify as such. Therefore, to avoid singularizing Bengalis in this context, it is important to specify nationality along with ethnicity. Secondly, Mujib insists that all Bangladeshis must view themselves as Bengalis. This is further clarified through D'Costa's argument wherein she contends, "Following independence, […] Bangladesh required that all those who belong, or want to, must be united through a common nation-building process as "Bengalis'" ("Once" 469). Therefore, indigenous and non-Bengali people in Bangladesh are made to systemically erase their community and ethnic identities. D'Costa continues, "On 15 February 1972, Manabendra Narayan Larma, the only representative of the indigenous community in the first government of Bangladesh met Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to advocate for the recognition of indigenous communities. It is said that Mujib advised, 'you all should become Bengalis (*tora shob bangalee hoiya ja*)'" ("Once" 470). Mujib expresses his love for those who conform to the dominant ideal of being both Bangladeshi and Bengali despite their ethnic, individual, and embodied identities. This kind of homogenizing is left out of social discourse as Bangladeshi and Bengali become interchangeable terms in post-war Bangladesh.

Anticolonial Fraternity and Muslim Brotherhood: Mujib in the 1930s and 1940s

Mujib's expressed love for the people, contingent on a particular nation and ethno-national identity in South Asia, differs from his very early affective ethos as a youth

politician. This section explores the fraternal relations Mujib develops with fellow Indian-Bengali youth politicians who vouch for anticolonialism, and later with Muslim student leaders who support Pakistan's creation. In his youth, Mujib's engagement in nationalist politics and his development of fraternal comradeship transpires from attending multiple anticolonial meetings in his hometown Madaripur, East Bengal, India. These meetings of the mid-to-late 1930s allowed him to familiarize himself with the prevalent and the emerging forms of nationalist movements for India's independence and they led to his public espousal of anti-imperial sentiments (see Introduction for details on anti-colonial movement in India). The political scenario in India during Mujib's youth was rife with militant manifestos as well as moderate anti-imperial discourse across the Bengal province and other parts of India.[26] In this nationalist era, the dictum of the 1930s *swadeshi* (one's own nation) movement spread to Madaripur. This call for s*wadeshi* was initiated by Subhas Chandra Bose, a then prominent leader of the Indian National Congress, and later Congress president.[27] Mujib recalls that Bose's "Swadeshi movement

[26] The Indian National Congress Party (mentioned in Introduction) was said to have upheld a moderate ideology. The East Bengal Congress working committee was active in regions like Comilla and Noakhali, East Bengal. Militant activities in Bengal escalated during the early-to-mid 1920s and 1930s. Bengali anticolonial revolutionaries like Jatindranath Mukherjee, Khudiram Bose, and Prafulla Chaki, dissented against colonial officials (Bhattacharya 23). For more on 1930s Bengali anticolonial revolutionaries, see *Chittagong: Summer of 1930* by Manoshi Bhattacharya, *Do and Die: The Chittagong Uprising 1930-34* by Manini Chatterjee, and *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State in India* by Durba Ghosh.

[27] Bose's call for *swadeshi* was inspired by the 1905 *swadeshi* movement, which was a response to the July 1905 colonial legislation to split the Bengal province into East Bengal and West Bengal. The partitioning of the province, commonly attributed as *Banga Bhanga* ("a Broken Bengal"), heralded an ideology of shared identification between Bengalis through language, culture, and literature, thus overriding the British prioritization of Hindu-Muslim division (see Introduction for details on Bengal's anti-partition protests). The 1905 *swadeshi* movement, which went together with the anti-partition protests, boycotted British goods for domestic products (Azad 30). Bose was said to have been inspired by the philosophy of Hindu-Muslim camaraderie during the anti-partition era and implemented several strands of *swadeshi*-based politics into his *Azad Hind* (Free India) movement of the 1940s (Rahman 8). For more on the Bengal Division and Bose, see Joya Chatterji's book, *Bengal Divided*: *Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947.*

for self-rule had spread to every part of Madaripur and Gopalganj [Mujib's home district]" (Rahman 8). Daily anticolonial meetings, discussions, and party slogans, helped to shape a masculine political space in Madaripur and other parts of Bengal, and this then facilitated the call for nationalist participation among Bengali male youths. This is evident when Mujib says, "Boys who were still in their teens flocked to join [in]" (Rahman 8). His narrative recollections portray the emergence of a Bengali youth masculinity which is demonstrated through many young members who cultivate fraternal ties via a shared obligation to achieve national independence through the Bose-inspired concept of revolt for freedom.

Additionally, Mujib asserts, "I began to harbour negative ideas about the British in my mind. The English, I felt, had no right to stay in our country. We had to achieve independence" (Rahman 8). His hostility towards the imperial government resonates with Elie Kedourie's assessment of nationalism. Kedourie refers to the nineteenth-century Italian politician Joseph Mazzini's ideology. Mazzini focuses on the connection between youth insurgency and nationalist achievement in a European, specifically Italian context. He contends that an imperial regime provides "young men" with an eradicated past which not only agitates them but elicits their determination to bring "change" (Kedourie 93). This type of yearning for change is apparent in Mujib's commitment to recuperating a colonized India through a revolutionary struggle for sovereignty. Mujib's aversion towards the colonial administration predominantly stems from political conversations at the Madaripur meetings that seek to change the minds of Bengali youths by cultivating nationalist consciousness. The meeting space, which witnesses the gathering of male

politicians and youth leaders from Subhas Chandra Bose's party, becomes an arena for potential national transformation reinforced through anti-British discourse.

Mujib, like numerous youth participants, adhered to Bose's principle of communal harmony (Rahman 24, 38). This form of harmony was based on the nationalist prioritization of Bengali language and culture over the colonial enactment of religion and class divides within Bengal during the period of early-to-mid twentieth century. As a nationalist subject dedicated to anti-imperial politics, Mujib wants absolute emancipation from colonial rule. He holds, "We had to achieve independence" (Rahman 8). He uses "we," to signal the unity of Hindu and Muslim men who collectively resist "the British" (Rahman 8) as common enemy. The imperial archetype of the colonized Bengali as languid and apathetic to political action (Frick 12; Macaulay 26) is challenged at the meeting by Mujib and his fellow members who come to adopt ideas of revolution to reclaim the nation and rewrite the colonial construction of Bengali effeminacy as explained in the Introduction. The Madaripur social meeting site not only recuperates the Bengali man but helps to situate Mujib's youthful masculinity in fraternal nationalism which he articulates throughout his political career.

Mujib's 1930s nationalist ideal, which was based on communal unity, shifted in the early 1940s when he moved from Madaripur to Calcutta, West Bengal, as a student at Islamia College. At the college, he joined the Islamia Muslim Students' League, a student branch of the Muslim League/the League which catered to the political objective of creating Pakistan for Muslims. During this era, Mujib went from championing a free united India for Hindus and Muslims to supporting the formation of an Islamic Pakistan.

He states, "I believed that we would have to create Pakistan and that without it Muslims had no future in our part of the world [Bengal]. […] I used to believe with my heart and soul that Muslims would be wiped out in an undivided India" (Rahman 14-15, 38). Mujib does not mention whether this change in his political stance happened suddenly or gradually. Perhaps Muslim political associations and student-led organizations in Bengal were key in generating this shift in his view. He also does not note why he steadfastly believes Muslims would be marginalized in an independent India, or how this marginalization would possibly take place (for example, at social, financial, or professional levels). Mujib's "heart and soul" (38) no longer carries the inter-communal fraternal sentiments he once had for his fellow youth politicians in Madaripur. Instead, he signals how a narrative of religious division is now embedded within him.

This religious division becomes more apparent as Mujib externalizes his internal biases through campaigning for the Muslim League. He recounts his experiences of being the Islamia College Muslim Students' League spokesperson. He narrates, "I took my [party members] to [Natore and Balurghat, East Bengal] and campaigned tirelessly. […] This college was at the heart of the student movement for the freedom of our country [Pakistan]" (Rahman 15-16). Mujib portrays the college as an affective space ("heart") that illustrates the student politicians' love for nation-building. On this kind of affect Sara Ahmed contends, "love […] has often been theorised as a sticky emotion that sticks people together, for example, in discourses of fraternity and patriotism" (125). S. Ahmed focuses on the functioning of love in relation to multiculturalism and racialization in the diaspora. Her contention is useful in comprehending the fraternal connections that Mujib

develops through his political activity at Islamia. He classifies Pakistan as "our nation." Not only does he prefigure Pakistan prior to its emergence but envisions the nation as collectively belonging to his male Muslim peers characterized as brothers. He romanticizes both Pakistan's creation and the shared love that male Muslim youths have towards a new Islamic nation. This becomes more evident through Mujib's use of the possessive pronoun "my" (15) to describe his brothers of the Muslim League. Mujib suggests that he and his brothers must politically and communally stick together by detaching himself/themselves from their Hindu peers. This form of physical, territorial, and affective detachment makes way for a friend versus enemy binary that both foreshadows and creates the conditions for sectarian violence.

Mujib, along with his party members, worked towards the common goal of constructing Pakistan to challenge colonial illustrations of the Bengali man. As discussed in the Introduction (pp. 33-34), colonized Muslim Bengali men occupied a liminal identity as "under-represented" (Sinha 16) individuals from the working classes, who were never quite exempt from the imperial discourse of the effeminate Bengali. Islamia College enables the construction of an educated, politically conscious class of Muslim youth members. These members, while actively vouching for Islam and Pakistan, also re-present Bengali Muslims as arduous campaigners and organizational leaders. In taking on the role of a campaigner Mujib inscribes his body as a proactive member of the Muslim Students' League. He and his colleagues move through provinces in East Pakistan to gauge and elicit the people's support for Pakistan's creation. They appear to oppose the colonial rhetoric of the "sedentary" Bengali who "shrinks from bodily exertion"

(Macaulay 39), through their campaigns for Pakistan's independence that renders the Bengali capable of attaining political freedom.

Mujib's commitment to Pakistan is entrenched on his notion of Hindu-Muslim co-existence. He reckons the following:

> Both Hindus and Muslims could live [side-by-side] in India. Both communities could be given equal rights. Hindus could live as citizens in Pakistan just as Muslims could live freely in India. The Muslims of Pakistan would embrace the Hindus who lived with them as brothers just as the Hindus of India would with the Muslims who lived amidst them. (Rahman 38)

On one hand, Mujib believes that Hindus and Muslims could not live together which consolidates the call for Pakistan that would protect the rights of Muslims. As he declares, "without [Pakistan] Muslims had no future in our part of the world" (15). On the other hand, he states that Hindus and Muslims can co-exist with "equal rights" in Pakistan as well as India. A relevant question to ask is: if Hindus and Muslims can live harmoniously in a free India, then why the call for Pakistan's creation? The response to this query is apparent in Gyanendra Pandey's argument: "'Divide to unite' was the [Muslim] League's paradoxical battlecry. Once the Muslims were free and secure in Pakistan, and Hindus in Hindustan [India], the two could come together in many areas: communications, defence, foreign affairs, civil rights" (28). This only raises more questions as to how the two nations planned to immediately function together at a governmental and administrative level after being partitioned because of religious violence. Missing from Mujib's theorization of a nation for his Muslim brothers and harmonious co-existence are the peoples' traumatic experiences that have resulted from coercive mass displacements.

On a further note, Mujib believes that "The Muslims of Pakistan would embrace the Hindus who lived with them as brothers" (38). The term "embrace" evokes inter-religious amity. It signals homosocial affection among "brothers" who shelter each other from danger. The idea of embracing, however, also signifies the covering over of violent events. Mujib speaks of communal brotherhood without detailing the sectarian atrocities that occurred in Bengal in 1946 which ultimately led to the August 1946 Great Calcutta Killings and the October 1946 Noakhali Riots. The atrocities which happened during the Great Calcutta Killings are narrated by Roy thus:

> 20 August saw the city strewn with dead bodies and life showed no signs of returning to normalcy. […] There were 'odd bodies' in sacks and dustbins and the troops discovered a 'wholesale slaughter' in Shobhabazaar Market. The market was strewn with corpses. At the rickshaw [two-to-three-wheeled vehicle] stand at the west end of the bazaar, all the rickshaw pullers had been massacred. (158)

The hostility between Muslims and Hindus instigates one to dehumanize the other into a disposable "thing." "Odd bodies in sacks and dustbins" appears as a statement that captures facts without quite registering the gruesome mass destruction of people, families, homes, and communities. Roy states that "the Jorasanko Police station [North Calcutta] reported disturbances at 7:30 am" (154). Without revealing much about the deaths that took place, the police mitigate the killings by describing them as "disturbances" which reduces communal bloodshed to mundane conflicts.

Burnt and mutilated human bodies also haunt the aftermath of the Noakhali Riots which occurred in Noakhali and Tippera, East Bengal. The Noakhali Carnage, according to Anindita Ghoshal, "came as a multiplier effect, a direct repercussion of the Calcutta Killings" (27). Ghoshal adds, "Muslims were panicky after the first major day of rioting

[on 16 August 1946], and thought they would be finished off in Calcutta, so many left the city [for Noakhali]" (27). Those who managed to escape brought with them "stories of their Muslim brethren suffering in Calcutta" (Ghoshal 27). These stories ignited the massacre of Noakhali Hindus. As evident in the Introduction, both the Noakhali and Calcutta massacres were the outcomes of the 1940s nationalist politics and the marginalization of Muslims in jobs, education, and businesses.

One crucial aspect which is absent from Mujib's memoir is how major Muslim League politicians enabled communal violence during the mid-1940s (Roy 149).[28] To the contrary, Mujib's memoir emphasizes how these politicians seek to establish "permanent peace amongst Hindus and Muslims" (106). Mujib offers a skewed past that disrupts the dominant conceptualization of his text as the unhidden truth ("The Unfinished Memoirs"). He highlights the Muslim League's political agenda of nation-building along religious lines by eliding sectarian violence and not foreseeing the ramifications of peoples' national unbelonging in Pakistan on the basis of ethnicity, gender, language, and religion.

The Tongue-Truncated East Pakistani

In independent Pakistan the ideal citizen adhered to the nation-state's concept of belonging that was defined by Islam and Urdu. I examine in this section the nation's

[28] It is said that Muslim slum leaders were hired by the Muslim League to lead processions on 16 August 1946 and get involved in protesting and killing (Roy 160, 162).

formation of the model manly citizen and the militarized policing of the effeminate other. I further analyze Mujib's response to the League's characterization of the Muslim man established under the leadership of Pakistan's first president and governor-general Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In writing on Jinnah and the Muslim League Yasmin Saikia notes, "Immediately on the birth of Pakistan, Jinnah downplayed the exclusive Muslim identity and a somewhat tempered rhetoric of inclusion was publicly announced" (34). It is accurate that Jinnah, on 11 August 1947, announced to the people of Pakistan that they "'may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State'" (qtd. in Saikia 34). He affirms that Pakistan, which was consciously established as an Islamic state, would not interfere with peoples' religious beliefs and identities. Jinnah, however, contested his own announcement in 1948 when he declared Urdu as the national and state language of Pakistan (Rahman 104). This proclamation was legitimated on religious grounds where Jinnah insisted that Urdu represents Islam and vice versa ("Quaid-e-Azam's Speech"). In Jinnah's view, the Pakistani public "could belong to any religion" in the private spheres of their homes as long as they publicly assimilate to "Islamic culture and Muslim traditions" ("Quaid-e-Azam's Speech") through speaking Urdu in official and governmental settings.

Jinnah's link between religion and language is opposed by Mujib. At the time of the 1948 state language declaration Mujib was a law student and the founder of the East Pakistan Muslim Students' League at Dacca University. He asserts,

> Urdu was not spoken in any of the provinces of Pakistan, but if this was the language our brothers in West Pakistan wanted as a state language, why should we oppose their wishes? But those who wanted Urdu as the only state language had

> just one argument to back them: it was, they said, an 'Islamic language'. But we could not figure out how Urdu had ended up becoming an Islamic language. Muslims in different parts of the world speak different languages. (104)

Mujib, the Muslim League youth campaigner at Islamia College, here emerges as challenging his party's use of religion and language as key determinants of Pakistani citizenship. His previously quaint idea of masculinity that was based on pan-Pakistani fraternal ties (Rahman 14-16) gets subverted by the state which differentiates the model Urdu-speaking West Pakistani citizen from the Bangla-speaking East Pakistani other. Mujib finds himself in a space of conflict as he speaks against the very ideologies espoused by his "Muslim brothers," the governing body of West Pakistani Muslim League politicians including Jinnah himself. Mujib notes that Muslims are not singular across "different parts of the world" (104). He brings up variations in language among Muslims, including the fact that the four provinces of West Pakistan each had their individual languages, as one of many factors that deflate the uniform rhetoric of a primordial Islamic-Urdu past and its enshrinement of the Urdu-speaking citizen.

To underscore the notion of plural Muslim identities, the homogenous construct of the ideal Pakistani citizen does not go without public opposition in East Pakistan or the eastern wing. Mujib describes in his memoir how during Jinnah's 1948 visit to Dacca he and other students from various districts of the eastern province gathered to protest the declaration of Urdu as "the only state language of Pakistan" (104). Mujib writes,

> Some four or five hundred of us students were sitting in one corner of the field [where Jinnah delivered his speech]. Many of us raised our hands in protest and shouted, 'No, no.' Later when he [Jinnah] went to Dhaka [Dacca] University's Convocation Centre and again announced Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan the students sitting in front of him shouted out, 'No, no, no.' (104)

Youth solidarity is established through a collective denunciation of Jinnah's speech in which he does not proclaim Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan**.** This governmental decision with regards to Bangla must be read in relation to colonial history. Imperial historians and administrators like James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay viewed the colonized effeminate Bengali as "litigious" (Mill 311) and "voluble in dispute" (Macaulay 36-37). The Bengali man is defined in colonial discourse by his ability to speak and debate rather than his martial prowess (Macaulay 36-37). In this context, when the East Pakistani is officially denied his Bangla tongue, he is comically and doubly emasculated in West Pakistani political and military rhetoric. Far from being deemed an articulate speaker the East Pakistani man is ridiculed for being both non-martial (R.F.A. Khan 17; Niazi 54-55) and a symbolically tongue-truncated effeminate other. This image of the "tongue-truncated" East Pakistani evokes the bleeding body (tongue) to signify a painful institutional relegation of Bangla. This marginalization of language signals the ruling regime's systemic replacement of "Hinduized" Bangla with "Islamized" Urdu to make an ideal manly Muslim out of the effeminate Hindu-like and Hindu East Pakistani as discussed in the introduction.

The "manly Muslim" could be produced either via the metaphorical elimination of the Bangla tongue that made Hindu-like Muslims less Muslim, or through circumcision of the Hindu male convert to Islam. Thus, religion and masculinity were inscribed on the East Pakistani man's body. Both his tongue and phallus were subjected to West Pakistani military scrutiny. For example, a war survivor Abdul Momen recalling the 1971 period narrates, "They [the Pakistani army] ordered me to get undressed and checked my penis

to ascertain whether I am a Muslim (as if, if you do not have circumcision then you are not a Muslim)" (4). Momen is stripped off his masculinity through coercive undressing and checking. The image of the comical East Pakistani is evidenced through Momen's body that becomes an object of mockery for the military officials who "make sarcastic remarks" (4) while scrutinizing him. Momen's (silent) endurance of militarized sexual violence augments his effeminacy through confirming his status as the non-martial tongue-truncated East Pakistani who could fight neither physically nor verbally.

The near total social silence on East Pakistani/Bangladeshi men's bodily and sexual violation during the war is examined in Nayanika Mookherjee's *The Spectral Wounds.* During several interviews with war survivors, which Mookherjee conducted in Bangladesh, "people mentioned the violation of men in passing" (161). Perhaps the people are aware of wartime brutality that men endured but are hesitant to disclose anything. This unwillingness to reveal much adheres to the nation that only wishes to remember Bangladeshi men as *muktijoddhas*. Nationalist narratives uphold a homogenous image of what men's history should look like: manly freedom fighters who battled for independence, not effeminate male war survivors who suffered physical and sexual violence. The nation forms a masculine-effeminate division wherein the "unmanly" survivor is indirectly blamed for disrupting the singular iconography of the martial war hero. In this sense, the survivor should have fought for the country's liberation instead of reinforcing the image of the effeminate East Pakistani.

Some war-related Bangla films, unlike government documents, address the interconnections among religion, language, and men's violation. For example, in a 2004

Bangla film *Joyjatra* ("Path to Victory") a West Pakistani soldier coerces a Hindu sweet seller Foni into reciting a verse from the Quran, the religious book of Islam, to prove his identity as Muslim. Foni's voice trembles as he enunciates each non-Bangla word from the verse. The figurative absence of his Bangla tongue echoes the rhetoric of the tongue-truncated East Pakistani who struggles to finish a verse that is said to illuminate a connection between Islam and Urdu. Foni's distressed facial expression articulates his pain as his tongue gets scrutinized. The soldier slightly grins at Foni's recitation and thereby renders him a comic effeminate who fails to prove his masculinity through his quivering Urdu. The soldier's scornful remark to Foni, "you are a true Muslim" foreshadows military-perpetrated sexual violation. "See beneath his clothes," commands the soldier to one of his sergeants who drags Foni to "check" if he is circumcised. A bullet shot at a near distance echoes Foni's death. His uncircumcised penis marks his identity as Hindu and thus a traitor to Islamic Pakistan. Thus, a symbolic resonance is produced between the Hindu castrated body, on the one hand, and linguistic disenfranchisement, on the other.

In a scenario where the Bangla-speaking Hindu and Hindu-like East Pakistani undergoes systemic violence and effacement, the emphatic interjection, "No, no, no" (Rahman 104) during Jinnah's 1948 Dacca University speech signifies the recuperation of a denied masculinity where youths resist in Bangla. The expression, "No, no" by both Hindu and Muslim East Pakistanis cuts across systemic "checking" that relies on circumcision as proof of Pakistani citizenship. Here, Mujib, in defying Jinnah's speech in the state language of Urdu, upholds a Hindu-Muslim East Pakistani fraternity which

differs from his vision of a pan-Pakistani Muslim brotherhood. He once again reflects the notion of communal comradeship that he had vouched for during the 1930s. Only this time his contestation is not anti-British but anti-West Pakistani.

Anger, Grief, and The Wounded Martyr

The change in Mujib's political viewpoint resulted in his expulsion from the Muslim League during the late 1940s (Rahman 97). His dismissal from the League was followed by his entry into the new political party the Awami League or People's League. The Awami League emerged in 1949 in Dacca at a time when the East Pakistani governor-general Khwaja Nazimuddin (1948-1951) declared Urdu as the state language (Huq 20, 25). The Awami League represented the people of East Pakistan and challenged the policies enacted by the ruling Muslim League. The People's League welcomed Mujib as a key member for his continuous efforts to make Bangla one of the state languages of Pakistan (Rahman 97). As an Awami League representative, Mujib became an elected member of "the Constituent Assembly and the National Assembly of Pakistan" (*Sheikh Mujib* x-xi). His position as elected member enabled him to participate at the Pakistan parliament where the country's leaders from various political groups were present. These parliamentary sessions were held in Karachi, West Pakistan and Dacca, East Pakistan during the period of 1955-1958. This section explores how Mujib demonstrates Mujiban masculinity through his participation in the parliamentary debates. It focuses on how anger and grief become emotions that affirm his position as the manly political leader

who uses speechifying to formulate his ethos of Mujiban masculinity. In this connection, I read in detail the 7 March 1971 Ramna Speech wherein Mujib uses anger and grief to establish an East Pakistani brotherhood premised on a narrative of masculinity and sacrifice. But I begin with an analysis of Mujib's 1950s parliamentary debates as they set the premise for his explicit articulation of Mujiban masculinity in the Ramna Speech. His parliamentary deliveries are available in an edited collection titled *Sheikh Mujib in Parliament*. I focus on the 21 January 1956 and the 25 August 1955 parliamentary sessions both of which took place in Karachi and which help to establish the entanglement of national language and masculinity.

After student opposition to Jinnah's 1948 language declaration in the eastern province, the Pakistani government framed a draft constitution for Pakistan in early January 1956. The constitution had numerous articles one of which was Article 31 that proposed the enactment of two official languages (Urdu and Bangla) and one national language also called state language (Urdu). The 21 January 1956 parliamentary session focuses on the circulation and discussion of Article 31. Mujib questions the draft article's unclear distinction between the terms national/state and official. He challenges the Pakistani foreign minister Hamidul Huq Chowdhury who deems "State" and "Official" interchangeable terms. The session contains a series of back-and-forth conversations between Mujib and Chowdhury. A section of their communication occurs accordingly,

> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: […] What is this draft? [T]wo official languages? [A]nd the [P]rovincial Government and Central Government will try to make a national language. Here is [the] provision for official language and here is [the] provision for national language. One of my honourable friend, a member of this House, who is the Foreign Minister, told in Dacca that this means State language.

> The Honourable Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury: Official language means State Language.
>
> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Official language does not mean State language. Official language means official language. If that is not so, why [is there] this provision about national language in Article 31, which reads: 'It shall be the duty of the Federal and [P]rovincial Governments to take all possible measures for the development and growth of a national language[?]' What is national language and what is official language, is it not a bluff, Sir? […] They [East Pakistanis] have asked for two State languages for Pakistan. (114-115; "Karachi Session," 21 January 1956)

For Mujib, "official" becomes a fallacy word that makes Bangla appear authoritative without legalizing it as a national or state language. Mujib reiterates this idea at the 7 February 1956 parliamentary session that was held in Karachi. He holds, "there was some ulterior motive in keeping these words 'official language'" (167). By "ulterior motive" Mujib suggests that "official" is a term used by the nation's leaders to appease the East Pakistani public who would be under the impression that Bangla has (officially) been made a national language. Article 31's adherence to the countrywide "growth of a national language [that is Urdu]" (114) repeats Bangla's earlier state suppression (Rahman 104) in 1948.

Further, at the 25 August 1955 session, Mujib makes blatant remarks about the Muslim League as the ruling party that seeks to sanction Article 31 under the constitution. Here is an example,

> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: […] But my friends, we have never seen you struggling for Pakistan the persons who are occupying the "Treachery" Benches today.
>
> Mr. Speaker [of the parliament]: The Honourable Member should withdraw that word. That is an unparliamentary expression and is an insult to the House itself.
>
> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: It is what the people say.
>
> Mr. Speaker: You should withdraw it. (5; "Karachi Session," 25 August 1955)

The possibility of cohesive diplomatic relations across East Pakistan and West Pakistan seems to be falling apart due to the ongoing language crisis. In this setting, Mujib uses "friends" in an ironic sense. "Friends" here portends demarcations between Urdu-Bangla, masculine-effeminate, citizen-other. In Mujib's view, the only friends at the parliamentary session are those who occupy the "Treachery Benches," whom he considers an elite coterie of Muslim League politicians who perpetuate oligarchic control in Pakistan. Not only does Mujib hold League politicians culpable for not listening to the East Pakistani masses who want Bangla as a state language, but also for deceiving them. He harks back to his point about the government's act of "[hoodwinking]" (Rahman 104) the East Pakistani people through accentuating an Urdu-Islam link ("Quaid-e-Azam").

In deeming Mujib's statement an "insult" (5), the parliament's speaker otherizes him as the angry intruder in a masculine setting that comprises elite, mostly West Pakistani politicians. In this situation, parliamentary masculinity works through the speaker's act of keeping an emotion "check" on Mujib's public anger that is rendered "unparliamentary" (5) and thus unmanly. The parliament strives to make a better man out of Mujib through attempting to unmake his anger by regulating his tongue. Mujib, in contrast, denounces his position at the parliament by responding in the following way: "You [are asking] me to get out! I am physically stronger than you. I can ask you to get out" (389). He demonstrates Mujiban masculinity through a retort that affirms his bodily strength and his capacity to hold the floor with his spoken rhetoric. He makes his body the site of resistance by affirming his potential to engage in physical and verbal combat. His vocalization of martial prowess ruptures the rhetoric of the physically "weak" East

Pakistani (Niazi 54-55) who is no match for the martial Punjabi/Pathan/West Pakistani. The parliament becomes a space of subversion where the martial and non-martial binary is flipped when Mujib verbally characterizes himself as "stronger" than his West Pakistani counterpart.

He displayed masculinity not only through confirming his physical prowess but also via his national leadership which some of his contemporaries believed he lacked. Mujib, according to noteworthy West Pakistani politicians, was a "political *babu*" who paralleled the colonized Bengali "*babu*;" vociferous in speech but submissive and incapable of leading a nation. In Dowlah's observation, a few examples of such West Pakistani politicians include Yahya Khan (1969-1971) and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1963-1966, 1967-1971). Y. Khan was the Pakistani president from March 1969 till December 1971 and Bhutto was the founder of a democratic association called Pakistan People's Party which was formed in November 1967. It is said, claims Dowlah, "that [a secret] meeting was organized by top Pakistani generals in order to hatch a 'sinister alliance' [between Bhutto and Y. Khan]" (37). This alleged Bhutto-Khan union was formed soon after Mujib won the general elections in December 1970. Despite having won the elections Mujib was left out of major national decision-making (Dowlah 37-38). Additionally, Y. Khan kept on postponing a mandatory national assembly with Mujib while Bhutto refused to attend the assembly (Dowlah 38, "7th March"). Y. Khan admits to delaying the assembly because in his view, "the man [Mujib] and his [party] are enemies of Pakistan" ("Pakistan Plunges" 29). Y. Khan's use of "the man" contains ironic overtones that foreground Mujib as the Hindu-like effeminate *babu* who is a traitor to the

Islamic state. He also implies that Mujib's Awami League party caters to the Hindu-like and Hindu East Pakistani and must therefore be kept in "check" so that it does not become the ruling party. Likewise, Mujib's political pursuits are invalidated (through assembly cancellation) to prevent him from becoming Pakistan's prime minister and to keep him (in check) as a petty politician from the eastern wing.

Mujib, in contrast, implements speechifying to reinforce his political leadership and interrupt the West Pakistani concept of the "tongue-truncated" East Pakistani who is rendered inept in public speaking. Mujib's public rallies across East Pakistan are labeled as "fiery" (29) by Syed Badrul Ahsan. "Fiery" suggests that he delivers speeches rife with anger directed towards the very ruling regime that seeks to curb his anger. Ahsan notes that Mujib employed "down to earth, often rustic language […] [to explain] the ground realities to his essentially rural audience" (*From Rebel* 29). The term "rustic" evokes a rural Bangla dialect that Mujib uses to discuss state affairs with the masses in more accessible prose. Through Bangla speeches Mujib seeks to establish camaraderie with the public and convey the need for a shared obligation to collectively resist the state's language legislation. In one of his post-war speeches Mujib expresses to the masses, "whenever I see your faces, whenever I visualize your expressions, I forget how to deliver a speech" ("*Bangabandhu* [Nation's Friend]," 00:00:06-00:00:22—my translation). He adds, "seeing your faces allows me to talk without having to prepare a speech" ("*Bangabandhu*"—my translation). Merely thinking of the people causes him to speak impromptu from the "heart" (Rahman 16) to *his* people which contrasts with delivering a formally scripted talk before an audience. In "talking to" the audience by using informal

words interspersed with local banter, Mujib attempts to form an emotional relation with his listeners at the local, personal, and familial levels as a friend and brother from the eastern wing who ensures his audience members that he would bring changes to state policies.

Mujib's bond with the public is illustrated well in N. Imam's novel *The Black Coat*. Imam narrates how Mujib utilizes speech to connect with the masses in such a way that they themselves start to imitate him. The novel is based on a character Nur Hossain who attracts several crowds per day by impersonating Mujib and chanting his speeches on the streets of post-war Dhaka during 1974-1975 (43-44). In doing this, Hossain depicts how Mujib's deliveries still carry the same affective impact as they did during the war period. On a somewhat similar note, a colossal audience at the 1971 Ramna Speech mirrors Mujib's affective state. Mujib enunciates his emotions through the speech thus,

> My Dear Brothers, Today, I appear before you with a heavy heart. […] the streets of Dhaka [Dacca], Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Rangpur are stained with the blood of my brothers. Today, the people of Bengal [East Pakistan] want emancipation, they want to live, they want their rights. […] It is with profound sorrow that I speak of the pitiful blood-entrenched history of Bengalis [East Pakistanis] being tortured in Bengal [East Pakistan]. It is a history of haunting cries. A history interwoven in blood. We sacrificed blood in 1952. […] During the Six-Point Movement of 7 June 1966 my boys were gunned to death [by the West Pakistani military]. […] If the military fires a single bullet, then remember to fight the enemy with whatever you have. […] In this province, Hindus, Muslims, Bengalis, non-Bengalis are our brothers. […] We have sacrificed blood in the past, we will do so in the future, we will seek emancipation. ("7th March, 1971 Speech," 00:00:35-00:14:16)[29]

[29] I have translated some parts of the speech and referred to the English subtitles in the video for the other parts.

Mujib's salutation, "Dear Brothers," no longer echoes pan-Pakistani relations. Instead, "Brothers" here signifies East Pakistani men while West Pakistani politicians and army officials become the "enemy." Mujib declares that "In this province, Hindus, Muslims, Bengalis, non-Bengalis are our Brothers" ("7th March").[30] This is a timely rhetoric amid the country's political crisis and human suffering. With the military's continuation of anti-Hindu killings in East Pakistan, Mujib, as Awami League leader, formulates a new brotherhood based on communal and ethnic harmony tied to the land. He ironically reiterates Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who, states Dowlah, wanted "'two majority parties,' and 'two prime ministers' in one country" (40). Dowlah records Bhutto's statement: "Pakistan had two majority parties—the Awami League in East Pakistan and the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] in West Pakistan […] the power of the center should be transferred to the majority parties of both wings; and in the provinces, it should go to the majority parties of the respective provinces" (40). Bhutto describes the Awami League as the central party or "the center" because it won in the December 1970 general elections. He insists that the Awami League should share power with the Pakistan People's Party; the former party would lead East Pakistan and the latter would lead West Pakistan where a majority of the people voted for Pakistan People's Party. Similarly, Mujib illustrates the eastern wing as governed by the Awami League and autonomous of West Pakistan. His speech excludes the western province altogether while placing strong emphasis on the deaths that occurred in East Pakistan.

[30] Mujib claims that non-Bengali indigenous people are his brothers while marginalizing their ethnic identities post-independence under the rhetoric that they too should "become Bengalis" (D'Costa, "Once" 470).

More specifically, Mujib's speech underscores how the streets of East Pakistan were "stained with the blood of [his] brothers" ("7th March") during the 1950s and 1960s. He notes two key periods of violence when numerous East Pakistani men lost their lives: one during the 21 February 1952 *Bhasha Andolon* or Language Movement, and the other in the 7 June 1966 *Choi Dofa Andolon* or Six-Point Movement. The Language Movement witnessed youths who protested the Pakistani parliament's (*Sheikh Mujib* 114-115) and the Muslim League's (*Sheikh Mujib* 5) systemic subordination of Bangla. In particular, Dacca university students dissented the ruling regime and faced dire consequences: "Four students, [namely] Salam, Barkat, Rafique, and Jabbar were killed on the spot and many more were injured and arrested" (Nabi 65). The Six-Point Movement was launched by East Pakistani youths and students. During the movement student politicians vehemently protested the government's rejection of Mujib's and the Awami League's Six-Point Program or Charter for the east wing's provincial autonomy (Iqbal 3; Nabi 50). The program was created in January 1966 and laid out six ways in which East Pakistanis could contribute to the nation's politics, economy, and armed force. These included: the establishment of a non-military government to withdraw military rule, a set of political responsibilities dedicated to each province, the creation of two separate currencies for East and West Pakistan, tax collecting rights vested in provincial governments, development of two foreign exchange earnings accounts for the two wings, and separate

army for each province (Ahsan 86-87). Participating in the Six-Point Movement also resulted in the killing of youth by the military.[31]

Mujib does not mention in the Ramna Speech the names of the youth killed. Instead, he refers to the demised youths as "my boys [who] were gunned to death" ("7th March"). Mujib as patriarchal leader presents to his listeners a macrocosmic male family which consists of his "boys" (the youth) and his "brothers" (adult men). He visualizes a near-familial connection with deceased East Pakistani youths whose losses he grieves. Mujib expresses his pain in the following manner: "I appear before you with a heavy heart […] with profound sorrow" ("7th March"). His articulation of sorrow can be understood in relation to Anne Anlin Cheng's framing of melancholia, or unresolved grief, as a dynamic that structures both marginalized and dominant racial identities. With particular reference to the late-twentieth century United States, Cheng describes white racial melancholia as "teetering between the known and the unknown, the seen and the deliberately unseen, the racial other constitutes an oversight that is consciously made unconscious—naturalized over time as absence, as complementary negative space" (16). Cheng's emphasis on how despite being "unseen," the "absence" of the "racial other" structures identity and memory, needs to be framed with a few caveats for it to be applicable to Mujib's grief.

[31] A youth protester, Nuran Nabi, witnessed the death of a student leader Asad who was "killed at point blank by police" (89) for protesting the nation-state's refusal of the Six-Point Charter. Additionally, Mohammed Zafar Iqbal notes that another youth, "a young Motiur" (3), too was shot by the military while taking part in the Six-Point Movement.

Cheng draws on Sigmund Freud's notion of melancholia to formulate her argument on grief and how the identity of the racial other is structured via absences and exclusions. For Freud, writes Cheng, "'Melancholia' […] is interminable in nature and refuses substitution (that is, the melancholic cannot "get over" loss)" (8). Hence, white racial melancholia depicts a form of perpetual grief among the "dominant white identity in America" (Cheng 11). This form of grief is complex, ambiguous, and steeped in power relations. It operates through a simultaneous acceptance (seen) and denial (unseen) of the racial other, their histories, and their lived experiences. Cheng provides the example of certain institutions such as workplaces in the United States that "often do not want to fully expel the racial other: instead, they wish to maintain that other within existing structures" (12). Thus, the racialized individual is tokenized within a dominant and often exclusionary structure. This type of system operates on white racial melancholia that straddles between not completely excluding (unseeing) the racial other to maintain (or to be seen as maintaining) inclusivity. For Cheng, the idea of "racial melancholia for the raced subject" (Cheng 17) functions in an ambiguous, complicated manner whereby the racial other experiences an acquiescence and opposition of their absence and exclusion from dominant white discourse on race. For instance, Cheng analyzes Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* whereby the black American child narrator, she argues, is angry at "the debased value placed on her blackness," while also stating that socially "there is no place for such anger and grief, which must go into hiding" (18). Thus, the melancholic raced subject affectively negotiates dominant white spaces and institutions through suppressing

specific emotional responses evoked because of perpetual white racial melancholia that renders them almost "unseen."

Though Cheng examines melancholia in the context of race discourse in the United States, her insights are relevant to Mujib's affective ambiguity as he delivers the Ramna Speech. Mujib evokes East Pakistan's past as one that is "interwoven in blood" ("7th March"). He uses terms like "blood," "interwoven," and "entrenched," to firmly establish the violent history of youth killings in the East Pakistani collective consciousness. He urges the public to hear metaphorical echoes in the form of "haunting cries" of students who were "gunned to death" ("7th March"). Mujib not only calls on the people to acknowledge but to "see" and "hear" the past. He invokes the ghostly image of wounded youths, tormenting screams, and gunshot sounds to kindle a poignant public response. Mujib longs for the people to both recognize and feel *his* lingering "profound sorrow" ("7th March") so that it can embolden action and protest. He employs grief to regulate East Pakistani men both internally and externally through his speech. He hopes to elicit the following effect: if Mujib has a "heavy heart" then so should his male listeners. Mujib's concept of a new brotherhood necessitates the cultivating of this type of regulatory homogenous grievance that differentiates the bereaved "brother" from the non-grieving "enemy."

This "Mujiban" grief contains further complexities. It triggers Mujib to remember the killings of 1952 and 1966 in a particular way. His "heavy heart" evokes memories of how "Dhaka [Dacca], Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Rangpur are stained with the blood of [his] brothers" ("7th March"). According to the geographic representation of East

Pakistan, Chittagong is situated in the south-east region, Khulna is in the south-west, Rangpur is located in the near northern peak, Rajshahi falls in the north-western region, and Dacca is placed in the central east. Mujib's panoptic mapping aestheticizes the figure of the wounded man whose blood marks the entire wing of East Pakistan. He praises the bleeding male for recuperating masculinity through renouncing himself for the eastern province. Mujib holds, "we know how to die for freedom [provincial autonomy]" ("7th March"), which ruptures the iconography of the effeminate East Pakistani who is inherently (A. Khan 187) subservient. Mujib recollects the deceased youth only to subsume him within the larger framework of collective sacrifice. The wounded martyr is at once seen and "deliberately unseen" (Cheng 16), whereby he gets a fleeting mention in the Ramna Speech that unwrites the actuality of his suffering. In Mujib's speech, the wounded martyr's ambiguous depiction as both seen and unseen has connections with Ananya Jahanara Kabir's critique of amnesia which is examined in the Introduction. The idea of "seeing" and thus recognizing the wounded martyr denotes his aestheticization in national memory. The martyr's voice, the story of his mutilation, is relegated to a form of national amnesia and left forgotten (Kabir 30), unseen. In Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation, I discuss in detail how individual stories are omitted from the East Pakistani collective consciousness that idealizes death as national sacrifice. Here, I continue to analyze how Cheng's theory on melancholia is useful for comprehending Mujib's illustration of the romanticized wounded man.

Mujib's romanticizing continues the nationalist legacy of the wounded man. He summons East Pakistani men to engage in warfare thus, "fight the enemy with whatever

you have" ("7th March"). He upholds his ideal of "Mujiban masculinity" which is demonstrated through a patriot's ability to give blood for East Pakistan. Mujib declares, "We have sacrificed blood in the past, we will do so in the future" ("7th March"). Here, blood does not draw attention to one's pain and suffering. Rather, it bears testament to a wounded and deceased man's demonstration of Mujiban masculinity. Mujib's grief does not function in the form of Freudian melancholia because he can substitute the loss of his boys with more loss ("Melancholia [for Freud] … refuses substitution," Cheng 8). His grief entangles with his firm belief that his boys' recurring death is a valuable loss.

Mujib elicits grief within the people gathered at Ramna with the intent to produce angry men as patriots. This idea of angry men coincides with Chandrima Chakraborty's argument on the "angry Hindu" (168). Chakraborty contends that the Hindu Right rewrites "histories in order to create the conditions for the emergence of angry Hindus" (175). She examines Hindu Right groups in India whose leaders produce distorted histories to cultivate Hindu men's anger against the Indian Muslim who is fabricated as "the enemy." Such groups justify the angry Hindu's enactment of violence against Muslims to both challenge colonial notions of the "non-martial Hindu" (Macaulay 37; Mill 310-311) and transform India into a Hindu nation. In the context of the Ramna Speech, Mujib explicitly focuses on the Language and Six-Point Movements to convince East Pakistani men of their "blood-entrenched" history ("7th March"). Though such history is accurate whereby East Pakistanis died at the hands of the military, Mujib's intention is to reiterate the past to motivate anger among men that can prompt nationalist participation. For Mujib, his brothers should lament the death of youths but, more

importantly, they should generate collective anger against West Pakistani bureaucrats "who have kept them under political subservience for years" ("7th March"). Mujib legitimizes bloodshed under the notion of righteous manly anger that subverts the figure of the non-martial emasculate East Pakistani.

There have been various interpretations of the Ramna Speech by people who were present at the Racecourse Ground on the day it was delivered. For instance, a *muktijoddha* Shafi Imam Rumi claims that "'Sheikh [Mujib] disappointed everybody'" (qtd. in J. Imam 20). Rumi had expected Mujib to make an epochal announcement of Bangladesh's sovereignty in his Ramna Speech and deems it anticlimactic when Mujib merely confirmed provincial autonomy. This pronouncement of provincial autonomy hinged on Mujib's and the Awami League's 1966 Six-Point Charter. As stated in Jahanara Imam's memoir *Of Blood and Fire,* Rumi converses with his family peer Fakir about East Pakistan's political situation in 1971 (20-21). Rumi asks Fakir, "'Didn't you see how many people attending the [Ramna] meeting today were carrying the flag of independent Bangladesh? People want independence and right now. Otherwise, in only six days they could not have devised this intricately designed flag and carried it defiantly in processions'" (qtd. in J. Imam 21). Rumi speaks of Awami League youth and student leaders who, in June 1970, created a national flag that was green with a red circle in the center and within the circle a yellow map of an envisioned sovereign Bangladesh.[32] The

[32] In 1971 there were two national flags of Bangladesh: one with a map, the other excluding the map (7th March). The map was officially removed from the flag in 1972 (Siddiqua, "The Man").

flag foretells national liberation before Bangladesh's formal proclamation of independence on 25 March 1971.

This national flag became a key object that cultivated the East Pakistani people's desire for freedom. The Ramna Racecourse Ground mobilizes a colossal gathering of individuals who bellow the word "*shadhin* (free)" as they wave flags amid the crowd ("7th March"). *Shadhin* becomes a term that is metaphorically imprinted onto the flag to solidify its representation of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. The flag, with a visible map of an independent Bangladesh and a non-visible metaphorical inscription of "s*hadhin*," provides the basis for the people to identify as Bangladeshis, citizens of a free nation. The crowd chants slogans like, "*bir Bangali ostro dhoro, Bangladesh shadhin koro* [heroic Bengalis take up arms, make a free nation of Bangladesh]" ("7th March"—my translation). The slogan, like the flag, is a manifestation of their strong yearning for national emancipation. The repeated chorus, "take up arms" ("7th March") reinforces the collective need to fight against the Pakistani military regime. This is further apparent through flags attached to sticks that symbolize weapons and foreshadow the Liberation War.

The foreshadowing of the war is further echoed in a message by an Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed. On 1 March 1971, in a rally at the Paltan Maidan Field in Dacca, T. Ahmed enunciates that "'From now on, our struggle is not for the six or eleven-point charters, but rather, for a one-point charter: The Independence of Bangladesh'" (qtd.

In Nabi 138).[33] T. Ahmed's announcement prefigures the people's slogan on 7 March 1971: "make a free nation of Bangladesh" ("7th March"). His use of "one-point charter" signals that the war is the one and only way to liberate the country. He kindles public support for warfare without explicitly stating the term "war." His exclamation, "'a one-point charter: The Independence of Bangladesh'" (qtd. in Nabi 138) prompted numerous pro-liberation demonstrations across various cities in East Pakistan, namely Sylhet, Rangpur, and Chittagong ("March 2, 1971;" "March 3, 1971"). Moreover, Mohammed Zafar Iqbal records, "the streets of Dacca were rife with people. It was a city of protests and demonstrations. People recited refrains of liberation: 'victory to Bengal,' 'take up arms, free the nation'" (5—my translation). The expression, "take up arms" becomes a powerful motto during the Ramna Speech where the crowd anticipates Mujib to proclaim national independence and declare a call to engage in warfare.

On witnessing firsthand Mujib's Ramna Speech, freedom fighter Abdul Qayyum Khan states, "he did not close the door for negotiations [with West Pakistani leaders] if that was still possible" (28). Qayyum Khan's point is substantiated through the Ramna Speech where Mujib holds, "If we can solve things in a peaceful manner, we can still live as brothers" ("7th March"—my translation). Mujib believes that there is some likelihood for engaging in political negotiations with Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on

[33] The eleven-point charter was formulated on 5 January 1969 by members of the *Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad* ("All-Party Student Action Committee"), a coalition made up of students from four different East Pakistani youth organizations. A "successor to the [1966] Six-Point Movement led by [Mujib], the [eleven-point] charter basically called for wider reforms" (Bhattacharjee and Bay, "Mass Uprising"). Many of these additional reforms were related to bringing parity and equity in education, particularly within colleges and technical schools across the two wings of Pakistan.

maintaining pan-Pakistani unity between the eastern and western wings of Pakistan. Qayyum Khan suggests that Mujib announced national sovereignty after the government's launch of the 25 March 1971 Operation Searchlight, a military onslaught in East Pakistan that resulted in the deaths of civilians and disrupted any hope that Mujib had of a pan-Pakistani cohesion.

Qayyum Khan's observation, however, does not quite address the ambiguities in Mujib's Ramna Speech. Mujib wishes to maintain inter-wing relations, but he also claims the following: "The struggle now is the struggle for liberation, the struggle now is the struggle for emancipation" ("7th March"—my translation). His call for warfare and proclamation of sovereignty is strategically interspersed with his overt affirmation of provincial autonomy. In Salam Azad's view, "In the Speech of 7th March [Mujib] declared independence unofficially" (139). Azad's idea hints at Mujib's use of the terms, "liberation (*mukti*)" and "emancipation (*shadhinota*)" which carry rhetorical significations of national separation. "Struggle (*shongram*)" functions as a synonym for war which is conspicuous through Mujib's command to the public to combat against the Pakistani army ("fight the enemy with whatever you have," "7th March"). The Ramna Speech, writes Iqbal, "ignited the people's unflinching determination to go to war. […] Men began participating in war training" (6— my translation). Iqbal contradicts Rumi's take on the speech as anticlimactic and instead maintains that Mujib's deliverance spurred East Pakistani/Bangladeshi men to become freedom fighters. Likewise, a war survivor Dulu Begum notes, "following the 7 March address, many youths and students started to prepare for the war" (Bulbul 50—my translation). Both Begum and Iqbal parallel Azad

who reckons that the speech "virtually made the whole nation [*muktijoddhas*]" (139). This image of the "whole nation" directs attention to the vast number of *muktijoddhas* who are willing to fight for a free nation in microcosm. The *muktijoddhas* showcase fealty to Mujib through abiding by the following ethos of Mujiban masculinity: shed blood for the sake of independence, be the wounded man, which positions the *muktijoddha* as an ambiguous figure who is at once heroic and martial as well as injured and vulnerable.

Conclusion: The Affects and Effects of Mujiban Masculinity

In the epigraph of *The Unfinished Memoirs,* Mujib describes his politics as being "nourished by love" (Rahman). "Nourish" symbolizes love as a metaphor for food that sustains Mujib's politics. In a figurative sense, Mujib suggests that he "consumes" love that the people have for him. Here, affect functions in an external-to-internal manner where the people's love for Mujib strengthens him from within and allows him to carry out political activities. Motiur Rahman Choudhury elaborates on Mujib's idea of affect and politics, stating that "*The Unfinished Memoirs* showcases how politicians functioned on an ethos of love for one another" ("The Unfinished Memoirs"). Choudhury's observation is arguable. Mujib's memoir depicts more instances of hostility and violence than love. One example is the sectarian atrocity during the 1946 Great Calcutta Killings when different party politicians "picked up whatever bricks or stones [they] could find and started to attack [each other]" (Rahman 67). Therefore, Mujib's epigraph does not

accurately reflect the contents of his personal narrative. His politics is not simply determined by love, but also loathing and anger.

Such affects are much more explicit in his parliamentary discussions and the Ramna Speech. While Mujib articulates grief in the Ramna Speech, his anger is also conspicuous in his delivery. Rage reverberates through what Nabi describes as Mujib's "thunderous" (143) voice that bellows across the racecourse ground. In his speech Mujib vehemently holds, "As the majority leader of Pakistan, I requested President Yahya Khan to conduct the national assembly on 15 February 1971 [because the election system stipulates that a new constitution must be framed during the national assembly within 120 days of the elections]. He did not listen to me. Rather, he yielded to Bhutto's demand [of assembly postponement]" ("7th March"—my translation). Mujib's anger comes from feeling betrayed by Y. Khan and Bhutto whom he once viewed as his "brothers." Bhutto and Y. Khan assert a form of dominant masculinity as national leaders who exclude, and thereby emasculate Mujib. In this context, Mujib expresses anger at being turned into an effeminate political *babu* while trying to recover a lost masculinity through leadership as prime minister.

While love, for Mujib, functions through an outer-to-inner concept, anger works via an internal-to-external means. An angry Mujib hails the Ramna crowd as patriots who are prepared to "sacrifice blood" ("7th March"), while unseeing and forgetting (Cheng 16; Kabir 30) the pain and mutilation of the wounded man who dies for freedom. In Mujib's conception, wrath will trigger East Pakistani men to die ("give blood") while fighting against the West Pakistani "enemy" ("7th March"). Mujib calls on "his brothers" to

"nourish" themselves with the inner anger that he outwardly exhibits. Neamat Imam's idea of men "imitating" Mujib (43-44) resonates with the Ramna speech's implication that angry East Pakistanis should embody and approximate Mujib's fury. Through manifesting Mujiban anger via violence, these men can seek autonomy and salvage their masculinity. The Ramna Racecourse Ground becomes an affective arena where angry East Pakistanis raise *lathis* or sticks in the air ("7th March") with the intention of launching an attack on the military. In this scenario, Mujib subtly presents himself as the only man who is able to affectively propel East Pakistani men to unwrite their longstanding effeminacy. Mujib's national representation as "the real hope for Bangladesh" (Ali 44) adheres to the championing of a masculine nationalist ideal that functions on upholding (seeing) a particular narrative of the war and the wounded man while "deliberately [unseeing]" (Cheng 16) the haunting near absence of his voice from national memory.

This chapter has attended to what/who has been absented and forgotten in Mujib's narration and the place he holds in masculine nationalist ideology. My analysis has portrayed how Mujib's shifting ethos of nation-building and brotherhood effaces stories of the people who have endured violence amid Partition and the Liberation War. More accurately, the argument formulated in this chapter creates the basis for the next chapter where the primary contention is that the Ramna Speech produces a transition from Mujiban to *muktijoddha* masculinity that erases from nationalist discourse the individual affective stories of wounded freedom fighters or freedom fighters who have witnessed firsthand the mutilated bodies of their peers.

Chapter Two: Interrogating and Reframing *Muktijoddha* Masculinity: Ambiguous Affects and Mutilated Bodies in Twenty-First Century Freedom Fighter Narratives of 1971

In March 1971, *muktijoddhas* joined the *Mukti Bahini*, or Bangladesh Liberation Force, an armed organization which comprised of military officers, paramilitary combatants, and civilians who fought against the Pakistani military which has also been characterized as the "occupation forces" (Dowlah 54). The *Mukti Bahini* consisted of eleven sectors and sector commanders. The most well-known sectors were the Z Force headed by Ziaur Rahman, the K Force by Khaled Mosharraf, and the S Force by Kazi Mohammed Safiullah (U. Singh 82). In addition to the *Mukti Bahini*, other militia groups were established by Awami League ("People's League") politicians and student leaders. Some of these groups include, *Mujib Bahini* ("Mujib's Force") formed by student leaders Tofael Ahmed and Sheikh Fazlul Haque Mani, *Kaderia* or *Kader Bahini* ("Kader's Force") led by politician Abdul Kader Siddiqui, *Hemayet Bahini* ("Hemayet Force") created by militia leader Mohammad Hemayet Uddin, and *Afsar Bahini* ("Afsar Force") organized by politician and army officer Afsaruddin Ahmed (Dowlah 62). Many of these groups, mainly the *Mukti Bahini*, functioned under the political guidance of the Mujibnagar Government, a provisional Bangladeshi government which was founded in Meherpur, Bangladesh during the early periods of the Liberation War. In April 1971, the Mujibnagar Government Office was formally stationed in Calcutta, India, and was run by Awami League politicians. According to Sukumar Biswas, "[the] Mujibnagar Government was recruiting freedom fighters, […] giving them training and making and implementing war

plans" (*Mujibnagar* x-xi). The provisional administration coordinated *muktijoddha* leaders who trained new recruits for warfare (*Mujibnagar* 508). Further, the Mujibnagar office issued frequent newspaper reports and press releases to disseminate information to the Bangladeshi public, international diplomats, and government officials both inside and outside of Bangladesh, about the ongoing struggle for independence.

This chapter analyzes select press releases from *Mujibnagar Government Documents 1971* edited by Sukumar Biswas. In doing so, it examines how the legacy of the wounded man, invoked in Mujib's 7 March 1971 Ramna Speech, continues to inform Bangladeshi nationalism. I argue that the Ramna Speech generates a doctrine of *muktijoddha* masculinity that branches from Mujiban masculinity discussed in Chapter One. In his speech, Mujib elicits East Pakistani/Bangladeshi men to fight for provincial autonomy and possible independence. *Muktijoddha* masculinity elevates this image of the freedom fighter as courageously giving up his life for the nation. Nationalist discourse shapes the male war hero into a key symbol of *muktijoddha* masculinity. This war hero figure is acclaimed for his ability to both abide by Mujib's ideal of renunciation and conform to the governmental illustration of the courageous *muktijoddha*. In embodying *muktijoddha* masculinity, the wounded war hero bears pain and injury which are politically euphemized as shedding blood for national emancipation.

In the latter half of the chapter, I examine the *muktijoddha's* physical and emotional involvement in the battlefield, which Mujibnagar press releases overlook to maintain a model image of the war hero. I do this through my analysis of two personal narratives, namely *Bullets of '71: A Freedom Fighter's Story* (2011) by *muktijoddha*

Nuran Nabi and *The Guerilla: A Personal Memorandum of 1971* (2013) by *muktijoddha* Shahzaman Mozumder. Nabi's *Bullets of '71* and Mozumder's *The Guerilla* warrant careful examination because they present the complexities of the Liberation War through affective descriptions of tense and contradictory moments. These descriptions depict how Nabi and Mozumder both witness the injuries of their peers and experience their own fears as well as pain as they endeavor to emulate the courageous *muktijoddha*. Other freedom fighter accounts, such as *Journey to Freedom* (2013) by M. Harun-Ar-Rashid and *Bangladesh at War* (1989, q1995) by Kazi Mohammed Safiullah, provide strategic details about the warzone and battle equipment. While Rashid narrates how *muktijoddhas* destroy certain landmarks to attack and counterattack Pakistani troops (138-139), Safiullah highlights the importance of receiving political and military support from other nations during the war (87).[34] In his narrative recollections, *Bittersweet Victory: A Freedom Fighter's Tale* (2013), *muktijoddha* Abdul Qayyum Khan briefly offers glimpses of death and horror in the battlefield: "Death was all around us, people were getting killed left, right and center" (69). He briefly mentions witnessing the war's horrors before quickly shifting his discussion to war tactics. On a similar note, freedom fighter Ziauddin M. Choudhury, in his account titled *Fight for Bangladesh* (2011), delivers a historical overview of the political circumstances that resulted in the struggle for independence, without revealing how the war affected him and his peers. Of these texts, Nabi and Mozumder's recollections stand out because they direct attention to the

[34] Bangladesh received political and arms support from both India and The Soviet Union (Safiullah 245).

fissures in the construction of *muktijoddha* masculinity as they struggle to embody the national freedom fighter.

Many readers and reviewers of *Bullets of '71* and *The Guerilla* exalt the authors for their valor. For instance, in his review of *The Guerilla,* Mohammad Shafiqul Islam praises Mozumder's "heroism" and "indomitable spirit" as qualities which "made him fight against the Pakistani military" ("A Freedom"). Likewise, a 2015 article in *The Daily Star*, an English newspaper published in Bangladesh, defines Nabi as a "valiant freedom fighter of Bangladesh's Glorious Liberation War" ("Dr. Nuran Nabi"). Further, Bilayet Hossain acclaims Nabi's "genuine nationalism" (Nabi ix). Hossain confirms Nabi as a *muktijoddha* who has taken an oath to sacrifice his life for Bangladesh's sovereignty. He differentiates Nabi from supposed imposter freedom fighters who claimed to have fought in battle.[35] Newspaper articles and reviews include praiseful commentaries on Nabi and Mozumder, and fall short of analyzing the authors' bodily and emotional conditions that complicate their uniform nationalist identity as gallant freedom fighter. In investigating Nabi and Mozumder's war experiences, I contend that their personal recollections oscillate between conforming to and disrupting the nationalist trope of heroic martyrdom. Even as the authors castigate the expression of emotions of pain and fear, which are considered effeminate and opposed to heroism in nationalist rhetoric, they point to the pressures to confirm to the heroic nationalist discourse. Through an analysis of their

[35] Hossain seems to insinuate that Nabi was truly a freedom fighter and not a member of the 16th Division of the *Mukti Bahini*, a mocking reference to those who, after 16 December 1971, "[posed] as freedom fighters [and] took to the streets" (Nabi 408). The idea here is that these members were under the pretense of being freedom fighters from the *Mukti Bahini* when they did not appear as combatants in the warzone.

narratives, I hope to normalize conversations about the *muktijoddha's* fear and pain, a pressing reality which remains unacknowledged in the national and social spheres. My effort is to weave these texts that delineate pain and fear into existing conversations about the Liberation War to reframe the dominant understanding of the *muktijoddha* as simply heroic.

In what follows, I examine nationalist documents which provide a chronological narrative of the *muktijoddha*, a narrative that omits descriptions of their pain and fear. I argue that a linear representation of the freedom fighter's successive engagement in combat allows nationalist rhetoric to champion *muktijoddha* masculinity through the iconography of the courageous war hero. In this context, how Nabi and Mozumder remember the war is important to analyze because they attempt to abide by the nationalist notion of chronological telling while also recounting fragmented memories of pain and fear that contest the courageous *muktijoddha*. Both *Bullets of '71* and *The Guerilla* straddle the boundary between autobiography and memoir. On one hand, the texts provide a chronological autobiographical account that begins with Nabi's and Mozumder's childhoods in 1949 as well as 1956 and ends with Bangladesh's liberation in 1971. On the other hand, the books are characterized by episodic recollections of their war experiences that include inscriptions of pain, fear, and injured bodies. I go on to read in detail, excerpts from their texts that not only reveal their fear and chastisement of fear, but also their delineation of the pain of fellow comrades whose injured bodies challenge the nationalist aestheticizing of the wounded man. I reflect on the extent to which Nabi and Mozumder conform to nationalist ideals even as they reveal accounts of mutilated

combatants. In analyzing their recollections of large-scale death, I interrogate the interlinks between *muktijoddha* masculinity, mutilation, and disability, and develop a conversation with theorists who engage with the topic of disability and warfare, namely Nirmala Erevelles and Jasbir K. Puar.

Both Erevelles and Puar discuss how institutions, such as the state, are responsible for disability that is produced by war (Erevelles 18-20; Puar 63). Erevelles explores how war results in bodily disablement as well as "emotional trauma" (137). She concentrates on how soldiers who have undergone physical disablement in the battlefield have also been "diagnosed with … posttraumatic stress" (135), thereby interconnecting physical disablement with mental and emotional trauma. I incorporate Erevelles's argument in my work to analyze how Nabi and Mozumder's bodily responses in the warzone are interwoven with their emotional trauma that distorts their embodiment of the courageous masculine *muktijoddha*. Further, I integrate Puar's claim that certain bodies are made "available for injury" (64) through war as a state-constructed mechanism that generates maiming and mutilation. I expand on Puar's point to illustrate how the nation-state attests the *muktijoddha's* disability and mutilation as proof of his masculinity. More accurately, I argue that the nation-state mandates the *muktijoddha's* disability by valorizing his ability to endure pain, be a man, and return to the battleground despite suffering injury and mutilation.

It is essential to clarify the concepts "disability and mutilation," both of which I use in this chapter. In the context of my work, disability is used to describe bodily impairment caused by war. I examine how the idea of bodily impairment is treated in

nationalist reports as well as in the accounts of Nabi and Mozumder both of whom intertwine physical disablement with mental and emotional impacts of the war. This chapter builds on the concept of mutilation in relation to Erevelles's idea about how bodies in war endure violence to the extent that they become non-recognizable (122). Erevelles portrays how certain bodies/bodies of color in regions of Central Asia experience impairment because of war, but are barely acknowledged in dominant western media (122). She formulates a case on the othering of bodies and their stories based on race and location. Erevelles's idea of the othered body is relevant to my exploration of Nabi's and Mozumder's explicit descriptions of the mutilated bodies of their comrades that have gone unrecognized by the nation-state. I delve into how Nabi and Mozumder depict their own pain and the pain of their comrades as they both grapple with their ambiguous stance on nationalism.

An additional point to note is my use of the term "soldiers," which encompasses Pakistani troops and military officials as opposed to *muktijoddhas*. It is accurate that the *Mukti Bahini* included former East Pakistani/Bangladeshi soldiers who were mainly *muktijoddhas* of the Z-Force, K-Force, and S-Force. My purpose in differentiating between "soldiers" and "*muktijoddhas*" is to maintain a clear distinction between my discussion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi war combatants in this chapter.

Constructing and Idealizing the Supra-Human *Muktijoddha* in Nationalist Discourse

In this section, I study the image of the ideal *muktijoddha* which is evident in Mujibnagar press statements and newspaper reports. The Mujibnagar Government prepared press releases and newspaper articles from 24 April 1971 to 22 December 1971 (17, 416). Many of these statements provide brief statistics of the *muktijoddha's* "superb efficiency" (226) and martial capability that are assessed via the following factors: the number of soldiers killed, the quantity of military vehicles destroyed, and the capture of arms that belonged to Pakistani troops (192, 227). The nine-month long Liberation War history is presented in quantifiable terms, where the total figure of "soldiers killed" increases each consecutive month. For example, the number of deceased soldiers rose from 319 in July 1971 to 390 in August 1971 (181, 227). Through these numerals, the provisional government delivers a chronological record of the wartime freedom fighter whose current martial prowess excels that of the previous months. This numerical data is supplemented with articles from *Joi Bangla*, a nationalist newspaper funded by the Mujibnagar Government. One article, titled "*Ronangone* [On the Battlefield]," reports, "soldiers lost their lives from gunshots fired by deadly freedom fighters" (4 — my translation). The article uses the Bangla alliteration, "*mritanjoyi muktijoddha*" (3) which translates to "deadly freedom fighter." The concept "*mritanjoyi*," can be separated into "*mritan*," which echoes "*mrittu*" or death, and "*joyi*" that is synonymous with "*joi*" or victory. In this sense, the freedom or resistance fighter is a near immortal figure who achieves victory over death.

While newspaper articles venerate the *muktijoddha* as near immortal, the Mujibnagar Foreign Minister, Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed, praises their death. In a press statement that was published on 6 December 1971, he writes, "We own our thanks and congratulations to the heroic men and officers of Mukti Bahini […] who have written this new page of history not in golden words but words stained with their blood. Glory belongs to them" (*Mujibnagar* 131, No. PR/79). Moshtaque Ahmed echoes Mujib's illustration of the wounded man. As examined in Chapter One, Mujib characterizes the history of East Pakistan as "blood-entrenched" ("7th March") and illustrates East Pakistani men as wounded patriots who gave up their lives for provincial autonomy in the 1966 Six-Point Movement and the 1952 Language Movement. Moshtaque Ahmed's message above portrays the Bangladeshi freedom fighter as a patriot who contributes to the "blood-entrenched" history of sacrifice and continues the legacy of the wounded man. His message about the heroism of the freedom fighters works to increase the Bangladeshi people's trust in them. It also raises the people's hope for an end to military violence. Moshtaque Ahmed's press announcement celebrates a bloodied redemption while at the same time promising an end to bloodshed.

He inscribes the *muktijoddhas* as valiant warriors who are ready to encounter injury. In focusing on how war injuries are encoded via language, Elaine Scarry argues that "the inflicting of damage can be registered in language without permitting the entry of the reality of suffering into the description" (66). Scarry continues, "the fact of injury is […] so successfully enfolded within the language that we cannot even sense its presence beneath the surface of that language" (69). Sara Ahmed elaborates on Scarry

thus, "So that which seems most self-evident – most there, throbbing in its thereness—also slips away, refuses to be simply present in speech, or forms of testimonial address" (22). It is important to pay close attention to "throbbing," a term which invokes the body that is visibly or non-visibly in pain. Through using the word "throbbing," S. Ahmed verbalizes pain within language. "Most there" and "most self-evident" (S. Ahmed 22) mark the urgency of recognizing this pain. S. Ahmed's and Scarry's discussions of pain are helpful for understanding Moshtaque Ahmed's shaping of bodily wounds into words. The repeated image of "blood" (131) in his press release depicts the injured freedom fighter through the very act of effacing his pain. Blood is aestheticized as the body's ink which the resistance fighter uses to figuratively "write" their wounds on a "new page of history" (*Mujibnagar* 131). In equating blood with ink, Moshtaque Ahmed omits the *muktijoddha's* pain from nationalist history while maintaining a cursory linear narrative of first their combat and then their sacrifice ("stained with blood," *Mujibnagar* 131). The blood-to-ink equation elevates the *muktijoddha* to a supra-human status. Supra connotes the idea that the freedom fighter surpasses the realm of suffering where the concept of being aware of pain itself disappears. Moshtaque Ahmed visualizes the warzone as a site where the freedom fighter is wounded but does not experience any form of physical or emotional pain.

On the topic of pain and the *muktijoddha*, Chaity Das notes, "The eligibility of some of these aspirants was tested by subjecting them to caning since the ability to withstand pain manfully was one of the ethics of combat" (155). C. Das's comment pertains to freedom fighter trainees recruited by Kader Siddiqui, a *muktijoddha* sector

commander of *Kader Bahini* or Kader's Force. C. Das suggests that Siddiqui deemed this form of punishment a justifiable method to gauge a recruit's pain threshold. Subjecting the trainee to this degree of violence becomes a means to lessen, and eventually eliminate his capacity to feel pain. He endures harsh punitive measures as a trainee to combat pain as a *muktijoddha*. This approach to discipline the body is premised on the transcendence of a soldier's pain which makes men of boys and turns new recruits into supra-human *muktijoddhas*.

The nationalist exclusion of the *muktijoddha's* pain functions concurrently with the erasure of their possible fear of combat. A Mujibnagar news article titled "Mujib's Men," reports the story of a *muktijoddha* leader and former judicial magistrate Nurul Kader who directed a group of fifty freedom fighters into battle in Meherpur district, southwestern Bangladesh in April 1971 (508). In the context of an arms shortage in Meherpur, Kader highlights the importance of using a symbolic weapon as a means of counterattack. He asserts that "'Courage is our weapon […] when we can get hold of a rifle we give it to a man and tell him to go to the front and get himself killed but first to kill as many Punjabis [soldiers from the Pakistan army] as he can'" (qtd. in "Mujib's Men" 508). For Kader, courage metaphorically emerges as a crucial weapon of war and marks *muktijoddha* solidarity. His signification of "our weapon" (508) represents a collective warrior ethos of courage that disrupts the West Pakistani narrative of the "timid" East Pakistani (Niazi 54-55, Raja 96).[36] Kader does not validate his comrades'

[36] A West Pakistani army major, Rahim Khan, believes that "Bengalis [East Pakistanis] were timid people and should have been subdued long ago" (Raja 96). Rahim Khan does not clarify the parameters of "long

fear of combat; nor does he appear to elaborate on training approaches to help freedom fighters cope with their fear. Instead, he suggests that courage is devoid of fear, which implies that a *muktijoddha* is expected to fearlessly kill and also be ready to be killed.

In corroborating Kader's notion, Sukumar Biswas narrates the story of a freedom fighter Shohid Mohammad Abdul Momin. Biswas notes, "Momin asked his comrades to protect themselves from enemy fire during the war. He, however, was hit by a bullet. […] He died for the country" (*Muktijuddho* 14—my translation). Momin exhibits masculinity via comradeship. He renounces his life not only for the nation but also to protect his fellow *muktijoddhas* from getting killed. He parallels Mujib's words thus, "*amra* […] *morte shikhechi*" ("we have learnt how to die") ("7th March"—my translation). The Bangla term "*morte*" ("to die") echoes the rhyming Bangla word "*lorte*" ("to fight"), where "*amra* […] *morte shikhechi"* ("we have learnt how to die") evokes "*amra* […] *lorte shikhechi*" ("we have learnt how to fight"). This idea is relevant to Momin who "was firing at West Pakistani soldiers before a bullet injured his chest and caused his death" (*Muktijuddho* 14—my translation). Momin's sacrifice confirms his status as the wounded war hero who fights and kills dauntlessly before he dies. Thus, the ideal war hero occupies an ambiguous state as both supra-human and a non-human object. He could disavow his injuries and simultaneously symbolize a weapon, an object, that harms and kills.

ago," but he does parallel Ayub Khan who ascribes East Pakistanis to a state of perpetual submission (Khan 187; also see Introduction).

Disjointed Tales Within Chronological Narratives: The Personal Recollections of *Muktijoddhas* Nabi and Mozumder

The iconography of the ideal war hero is evident in Nuran Nabi's *Bullets of '71* and Shahzaman Mozumder's *The Guerilla*. This section explores how the authors remember the war and how their personal narratives have a connection with nationalist narratives. On his experience of writing his account, Nabi states,

> There is a certain risk in writing something from memory after more than three decades. […] the memories still stored in my mind reflect those most important to my life. […] In spite of trying for days, I had a great deal of difficulty recollecting some of the events or names of the past. Then suddenly, these memories would resurface. And with each recollected thought, came a slew of other related memories that would, eventually, find their way into these pages. (xviii)

Nabi describes an intricate connection between remembering and forgetting. His memories of the war, "stored in his mind" (xviii), are the same memories he seems to forget. The notion of forgetting, for Nabi, does not indicate a complete loss of past recollections from his memory. In fact, he emphasizes that his wartime experiences are "important to [his] life" (xviii), thereby suggesting that they mean something to him or affect him in some way. His remembrances of 1971 lurk in the mind without explicitly integrating into his present life. These recollections become hazy with the passage of time, whereupon Nabi struggles to recall minute details like peoples' "names" (xviii) or dates of specific historical events.

Nabi's depiction of recollecting and forgetting aligns with Yasmin Saikia's perspective on memory. In Saikia's view, "Memory, at least what is retrospectively remembered, is a frontier between the verbal word and the historical event. It is not

always easy to go there" (90). Saikia refers to survivors of the Liberation War and depicts the idea of recalling through the image of a figurative border. This border illustrates a demarcation between the past ("historical event") and the telling of the past, which she deems personal history. Her assertion, "It is not always easy to go there" (90), illustrates the emotional difficulty a survivor undergoes when remembering, and thereby metaphorically crossing the figurative border into verbalizing recollections of the war. Saikia reckons that the survivor's experience of a violent historical event could not be fully captured via words as recalling itself could be painful enough to rupture a survivor's ability to speak. The concept of rupture indicates that a survivor can only narrate their past in fragments through remembering snippets of their memories.

Though Saikia does not directly discuss the texts by either Nabi or Mozumder, her idea about speaking of the past in fragments is relevant to Nabi who admits, "with each recollected thought, came a slew of other related memories that would, eventually, find their way into these pages" (xviii). For Nabi, a particular remembrance of 1971 offshoots other disjointed memories of the war period. He mentions how "suddenly, these memories would resurface" (xviii), which depicts the idea of suppressed recollections sporadically reappearing in a way that makes them more present, more apparent. The very instance of recalling involves an intertwining of Nabi's past with his present, whereby each fragmented memory reopens old wounds that remind him of his pain. Nabi subtly evokes the pain of recollecting the past in a 2021 interview on a podcast channel called *The Other Half* (written as: *Th3 Other Half*). In the interview, Nabi encapsulates parts of his autobiography that focus on the political situation in East Pakistan, namely the 1966

Six-Point Movement and early 1971 pro-liberation rallies led by youth politicians which is analyzed in Chapter One. He summarizes the parts of his memoir that provide a clear timeline of the political events which took place from Pakistan's formation in 1947 till the Liberation War in 1971 (00:08:21-00:48:40). On his personal experience of the war, however, he says, "[the] moment of that time, […] I do not have enough words to describe that moment" (00:52:53-00:53:02). Describing the war period as "the moment," Nabi claims that words are no match for his visceral emotions. He undertakes a form of near silence where the expression, "the moment," hints at his unwillingness to speak of, and delve deeper into his memories. Nabi's near silence on his personal experience signals his reluctance to give an oral account of the past. Nabi's process of writing involves reconstructing fragmented memories into a chronological narrative, whereby his flashbacks would "eventually find their way into [the] pages [of his text]" (xviii). "Eventually" gestures towards the final written product that has a beginning, middle, and an end.

Like Nabi, Mozumder writes in sequential form. His war memories are embedded within the larger arc of an autobiographical narrative that begins with his childhood, depicts the 1970s political scenario in East Pakistan, narrates his time as a *muktijoddha*, and ends with a note on Bangladesh's independence. Unlike Nabi, Mozumder suggests that he provides a complete personal account of the past without any missing elements. In a 2020 interview with a Bangla television channel called *Maasranga TV*, he notes, "*The Guerilla* is a memorandum of what I witnessed around me during the time of 1971. The book contains specifics of only those atrocities which I saw" ("Shahzaman Mozumder,"

00:20:13-00:20:18—my translation). In his text, he appears to disclose miniscule details of what he observed, almost as if he does not want any remnants of his wartime memories to go unrecorded. In the preface to his account, Mozumder reveals, "I could write this book because I survived the war when many of my comrades did not. I am deeply indebted to all those comrades who shielded me from harm and sacrificed their lives for the liberation of this country. In more ways than one this book belongs to them" (*The Guerilla*). He holds himself accountable for his comrades' deaths, as if to indicate that they would have been alive if it were not for him. Writing his book becomes a means for Mozumder to cope with this self-accusation and establish ethical responsibility towards his peers by creating among his readers a sense of collective awareness of their renunciation. In recalling his fellow combatants, Mozumder pays tribute to them and ensures that some parts of their stories, the parts he witnessed, are not lost.

Both Mozumder and Nabi share the same purpose for writing. Nabi believes, "the history of the Liberation Movement has not been accurately recorded, nor has it been properly evaluated" (xvi). He comments on the shortage of historical archives on the Liberation Movement that encompasses multiple political events, such as the 1952 Language and the 1966 Six Point Movements which, he believes, led to the buildup of the Liberation War. *Bullets of '71* provides details of his firsthand experience of the Liberation Movement, which he "hopes" (xvi) would add to existing nationalist history. His telling of the past echoes Chaity Das's remark on how men write war narratives. C. Das does not address Nabi's and Mozumder's books, but focuses on select memoirs of soldiers, freedom fighters, and male survivors of the Liberation War. She notes, "they all

have in common the fact that personal history is securely bound with the nation's formation in the narration [of the 1971 war] […] In accounts by men, the major events of the day appear in almost all memoirs making them political and historical documents of a different kind" (139). C. Das posits that men's accounts are treated as nationalist narratives because they are tethered to the idea of heroism and sacrifice that the nation celebrates. In expanding on government chronicles of the war, male memoirists showcase their loyalty to the nation. C. Das's argument is applicable to Nabi and Mozumder whose texts bear testament to their national fealty. Along with mimicking chronological narratives evident in government documents, these authors commit to approximating the national *muktijoddha*. In discussing their adherence to nationalism, I study how they narrate the economic and political circumstances which caused them to become *muktijoddhas*.

Visceral Responses of Witnessing Violence: Bodily and Emotional Events that Produced the *Muktijoddha*

Nabi and Mozumder joined the *Mukti Bahini* during the 1971 army oppression in East Pakistan. Both authors write about the economic and political situation as well as military violence which occurred in the eastern province. Nabi, for example, writes that the people of the province endured significant poverty in the 1960s (34, 55). Local political leaders under President Mohammad Ayub Khan's (1958-1969) regime received monetary

benefits and exploited financially underprivileged rural communities (Nabi 34).[37] This led to a declining economic condition in Nabi's village, Khamarpara which is located in the Tangail district of East Pakistan, present-day central Bangladesh. Nabi bemoans, "It hurt me to see my village in these dire circumstances. […] I have noticed that the poverty that plagued my village had spread throughout East Pakistan" (55). He also states, "[people] began selling their lands [and properties] to make ends meet" (53). He does not mention who buys these properties, but suggests that once sold, the lands were often neglected and therefore did not yield any crops. Nabi expresses sadness on seeing withered crops and the villagers' misery (55).

Nabi channeled this pain into political action during his youth years in Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh, East Pakistan. As a student, he became a member of the Ananda Mohan *Chhatra* (Student) League. The *Chhatra* League was, as Nabi describes, "a pro-Bengali nationalist student organization [of the Awami League] that fought against the military dictatorship of President General Ayub Khan and East Pakistan Governor

[37] Ayub Khan established a political program called "Basic Democracy," which aimed to maximize grassroots participation in local affairs by setting up individual union councils in rural areas across East Pakistan (Jahan 110-126). These union councils served as liaisons between the government and the people. Ayub Khan notes that "'this type of [Basic] democracy will not be foisted upon the people from above. Instead it will work from below gradually going to the top. […] people will not have to go far from their neighborhood to elect their representatives'" (qtd. in Jahan 111). Nabi gives an outline of the process involved in electing local representatives. He states, "the ward members [a group of basic democrats] would select the chairman [representative] of the Union Council. This system now enabled a candidate to become chairman by simply gaining the support of a simple majority of ward members" (34). Nabi further says that "The chairmen were no longer elected by the masses. […] Instead of serving the people, these basic Democrats built their own fortunes. Thus began, the never-ending corruption and exploitation of the common people [especially in the rural areas]" (35). Basic Democracy worked to reinforce hierarchical bureaucracy and heighten poverty under the pretense of fostering democratic practice and consciousness among the masses. For a more detailed explanation about the political objectives of "Basic Democracy," see Rounaq Jahan's 1972 book, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*.

Monayem Khan" (46).[38] As part of the Student League, Nabi participated in meetings to discuss possible ways of doing "something as a nation" (55) to put an end to the Ayub-Monayem regime. He joined the 1962 anti-Ayubian movement, when East Pakistani youths dissented against Ayub Khan and his administration (65). Nabi got further involved in the 1970-1971 political movement as a student at Dacca University, East Pakistan, which was the center for nationalist student politics (105, 121, 143). He also went to the Ramna Racecourse Ground to hear Mujib's 7th March 1971 speech. Nabi notes in *Bullets of '71* that Mujib's speech galvanized him into fighting the war.

Nabi remembers the "historic moment" (144) when he witnesses firsthand Mujib's call for national resistance against the West Pakistani military as follows,

> 'My Brothers.' […] With his thunderous voice he [Mujib] began to speak. […] Such a huge gathering was unimaginable. That scenery and emotion of the day simply could not be described by words. Rather, it could be felt. It could be felt within the deepest pulse of my heart. […] In my opinion, [Sheikh Mujib] had declared the independence of Bangladesh on that day. […] The liberation of the Bengali nation [East Pakistan] had become my obsession. It flowed deep within my blood. (143-145, 156)

Mujib's bellowing voice and words reach the depths of Nabi's heart. Nabi describes the Ramna Speech as "*goddo kobita*" (*The Other Half*) or prose poetry. He depicts Mujib as a poet who induces within him an emotion that cannot be expressed in words but "felt" in the body, within the heart. The specific name or nature of this emotion remains a mystery

[38] Abdul Monayem Khan, also known as Monem Khan, was the Governor General of East Pakistan from 1962 till 1969. An article in a Bangladesh online newspaper, *BD News*, states that "Monem Khan routinely made sure that a goodly part of the budgetary allocation for East Pakistan was returned to the centre [West Pakistan] because, in his view, all that money was not necessary [in East Pakistan]" (Ahsan, "Monem Khan"). Therefore, it is important to note that the eastern province's economic deprivation was a result of a collaborative political strategy facilitated by both West Pakistani leaders and their East Pakistani counterparts.

to Nabi even as he becomes conscious of it. The hyperawareness of his beating heart signals the workings of the interior body. Nabi holds, "my obsession […] flowed deep within my blood" (156). Hence, both obsession and a "felt" obscure emotion seem to integrate with Nabi's blood. Here, blood has a double meaning. It not only portrays Nabi's internal bodily state but functions as a romanticized trope for his patriotism ("my obsession," 156). Body, emotion, and voice work to forge a relation between Mujib as leader and Nabi as his disciple. Mujib triggers Nabi's nationalist pulse through this speech act and transforms Nabi into a *muktijoddha*, a combatant of the *Kaderia Bahini* ("Kader's Force") also called the Tangail *Mukti Bahini* which operated from the Tangail district of Bangladesh.

Mujib's call for necessary combat against the Pakistani army convinces Nabi that the only way to fight against the military is through warfare. In Nabi's view, Mujib "had declared the independence of Bangladesh on that day [7th March 1971]" (156). He recollects how Mujib's "address to the people [at Ramna] was broadcasted over Dhaka [Dacca] Radio the next day on March 8th [1971]. This added more heat to the nationwide agitation" (145). Nabi considers the 21 February 1952 Language Movement as "a turning point in the Bangladesh Liberation Movement" (65). He believes that the Language Movement testifies to the public's initial desire for national independence, which becomes stronger and more apparent in 1971, especially after Mujib proclaims national freedom in his Ramna Speech.

Mozumder, on the other hand, asserts, "there was no outright declaration of independence [in Mujib's Ramna Speech], no clear-cut unambiguous, 'Today Bangladesh

is an independent country and no longer part of Pakistan'" (14). Mozumder was born in Dinajpur, East Pakistan in 1956 and moved to Dacca in the late 1960s for his studies (Mozumder 1-2). A high school student in the 1970s, Mozumder was inspired by public debates about provincial autonomy and national emancipation, which prompted him to attend the Ramna Speech (Mozumder 5, 13). He describes Mujib's delivery as "fiery," "thunderous," and "incomparable, like the greatest of symphonies" (13). Mozumder, like Nabi (*The Other Half*), describes Mujib as an impromptu artist or orator who "said all that without the aid of a script" (13). He deeply admires Mujib's words because they summarize the ongoing violence in East Pakistan and hold up the possibility for provincial autonomy (13-14). However, the speech itself did not motivate Mozumder to participate in the Liberation War. While Nabi's dedication to fight came from listening to Mujib's verbalization of the atrocities committed in East Pakistan, Mozumder's decision to join the war was a result of seeing such violence firsthand.

In his memoir, Mozumder narrates how he witnessed numerous dead bodies on Dacca's streets after Operation Searchlight, a military attack against East Pakistani civilians that took place on 26 March 1971 (Iqbal 7). Mozumder remembers seeing a burnt body that "sat leaning against the wall" (21) inside a familiar barbershop. He writes,

> It [the body] was completely charred! Strangely, I was not afraid. I went in [the barbershop] and touched the body. It was charcoal. I had never seen a human being burnt so completely. It was entirely possible I knew the person and he may even have given me a haircut, perhaps more than once. […] As I stared at the body, the dying embers, something inside me seemed to ignite. It was a clear surge of feeling: this has to be paid back and in kind. A deep hatred for the perpetrators was growing in me and I silently swore vengeance more than once. (21)

The "charred" body becomes residual evidence of military brutality that mutilates flesh and blood into some-thing that is no longer traceable. Initially, for Mozumder, the body is "it," "embers," and "charcoal" (21), anything but a deceased person. By touching the body, he endeavors to touch reality. He seeks to discover traces of blood, flesh, and bodily vestiges that could bear testament to the subjectivity of what is deemed a charred object. Mozumder portrays how the tactile and the visual senses work together. His touch enables him to metaphorically "see" remnants of the dead person's past. Mozumder notes, "It was entirely possible I knew the person and he may have given me a haircut, perhaps more than once" (21). His metaphorical eye, triggered via tactile connection, symbolically metamorphoses the body into a particular barber he might have known. Here, metamorphosis signifies an imagined transformation of the "charred" (21) object into human flesh. Mozumder inscribes both a professional and a gender identity onto the body, thereby classifying him as a barber that is a man. This gender specification makes room for the reader to construe the barbershop as an exclusively male domain. Mozumder visualizes a story of an intermittent fleeting fraternity between himself and the unnamed barber. His periodic visit to the barbershop is apparent through the idea that the person "may even have given [him] a haircut, perhaps more than once" (21). The mundane nature of this violence is apparent whereby a neighborhood barber is charred to death, not an army officer or soldier fighting in the war.

Mozumder embodies the vengeful freedom fighter through establishing a connection with the imagined barber. He claims, "As I stared at the body, the dying embers, something inside me seemed to ignite. […] this has to be paid back and in kind"

(21). Mozumder's imagery evokes his pledge to nationalism which turns him into a *muktijoddha*. He engages in, and thereby legitimizes nationalist inspired violence to recuperate a seceded province/nation from politico-military brutality.

Inscribing the Masculine *Muktijoddha* and the Fear of the Effeminate

Mozumder's text has implicit slippages that complicate dominant nationalist history. His ambivalence about nationalist narratives is evident through his viewpoint on fear. Both he and Nabi normalize fear in the warzone even as they try to be the norm. In this section, I analyze how the authors' depictions of fear interrupt their attempts to emulate the ideal *muktijoddha*. In Nabi's case, he narrates his encounter with the Pakistani military thus,

> For the first time in my life, I knew the sound of gunfire, up close and aimed directly at me. Arguably, we were [face-to-face] with the first bullets of the Bangladesh genocide. I tried to keep running, but I was losing my will. My legs were becoming rubbery. I felt as if I had been shot. […] I checked my body for bullet-wounds. Luckily, aside from some bruises, I escaped unscathed. […] [Mixed feelings] of anxiety [and] fear […] burdened me. (165-166)

Nabi's affective response to military danger could be understood in relation to Sigmund Freud's notion of fear and anxiety. In discussing Freud, Joanna Bourke states, "a distinction is often made between 'fear' and 'anxiety.' […] [A]ccording to most commentators, the word 'fear' is used to refer to an immediate, objective threat, while anxiety refers to an anticipated, subjective threat" (189). Thus, fear is induced by an external influence which then becomes the object of fear. Anxiety, on the other hand, is created from within by the subject. As Bourke notes, Freud maintained that "'*Anxiety* relates to the condition and ignores the object, whereas in the word *Fear* attention is

focussed on the object'" (189—emphasis in original). Freud's use of "condition" indicates the occurrence of a probable situation that engenders one's anxiety. Nabi blurs this distinction between fear and anxiety through depicting them as mixed feelings. For him, fear and anxiety do not simply occur together but mingle and become one emotion.

Both anxiety and fear make Nabi vulnerable in front of armed military officials, which ruptures the nationalist illusion of the courageous *muktijoddha* who does not hesitate to "kill the enemy" (*Mujibnagar* 508). The word "bullets," is a synecdoche for the military, and points to an "immediate, objective threat" (Bourke 189) that affects Nabi's bodily constitution both internally and externally. Nabi asserts, "My legs were becoming rubbery. [. ...] It was scary. […] My blood froze" (165, 167). He fears the very fear and anxiety that usurp his body. This dual endurance of fear works via the connection between emotion and bodily sensation. Nabi recounts, "I felt as if I had been shot" (165). A fearful Nabi senses a somatic wound that leads to a "rubbery" sensation in his legs. His "feeling" (166) of being shot evokes an external bleeding wound that contrasts with the following description of his internal state: "My blood froze" (167). Fear and anxiety cause Nabi to think of the self as an outwardly bleeding yet "unscathed" (166) *muktijoddha*, whose blood is "frozen" from within. Hence, the emotionally perturbing experience of suffering military-afflicted injury is elevated and idealized.

This complex self-representation of Nabi could be further comprehended by examining Nirmala Erevelles's theory on war and its link to disability. Erevelles explores how broader institutional and social mechanisms generate disability, which differs from an individual getting diagnosed with or identifying as having a disability (19). These

mechanisms include the nation-state that facilitates the death and mutilation of populations through "wars and the consequences of wars" (18). Erevelles argues, "war produces disabilities that include loss of limbs, paralysis, emotional trauma" (137). The notion of "paralysis" is insinuated by Nabi and intertwined with "emotional trauma" through his statements, "My legs were becoming rubbery" and "My blood [and body] froze" (165, 167). Nabi's states of "frozen" and "rubbery" seem to be more fleeting because he could escape by running. This disrupts the initial allusion to Erevelles's implication of long-term "paralysis." His act of checking his "body for bullet-wounds" (166) indicates his anticipation and fear of wartime injury and disability. Nabi reveals that he "escapes unscathed" (166), which reminds him of his luck and, simultaneously, his stigmatized status as the *muktijoddha* who flees from the site of war. A sarcastic use of the adverb "Luckily" (166), signifies Nabi's self-castigation where he is alive with remnants of "some bruises" (166) as opposed to a bullet-ridden body that attests to his sacrifice for the national cause.

Like Nabi, Mozumder narrates his fear when he encounters military bullets. He writes, "The instinctive reaction when bullets are coming at you is irrational fear. Irrational, as fear is a primal instinct and rationality a learned behaviour. Uncontrolled fear, if not resisted and overcome, […] [can result] in anything from hysteria to catatonia" (125). Mozumder's notion of fear is akin to nineteenth-century western psychiatric discourse that connects effeminacy to hysteria. For example, Elaine Showalter states, "[a neurologist] John Russell Reynolds wrote in *A System of Medicine* [1886] that hysterical men and boys were 'either mentally or morally of feminine constitution'" (289).

Reynolds considers hysteria a "disorder" (Showalter 289) that only women and effeminate men undergo. The expressions "mentally" and "morally," otherize the female/emasculate "hysteric" as both psychologically and sexually deviant. Here, "morally" becomes a means to police the bodies of those who engage in "immoral" physical and sexual intimacy because of hysteria. Many physicians of that period, according to Chandak Sengoopta, back Reynolds's belief that "hysteria affected only delicate, effeminate males" (105). Moreover, Showalter notes, "In his case studies of male hysteria at the end of the nineteenth century, [doctor] Emile Batault affirmed that hysterical men were thought to be 'timid and fearful men'" (289). While Showalter concentrates on nineteenth-century European institutional and medical discussions, her case study is beneficial for reading the "effeminate hysteric" within nineteenth-century colonial and twentieth-century West Pakistani narratives of the "cowardly" Bengali and East Pakistani (Streets-Salter 10; Smith qtd. in Baig 128). The Bengali/East Pakistani man's "hysteria" reinforces his status as effeminate. Mozumder insists that a fearful comrade's "irrationality" results in his failure to demonstrate *muktijoddha* masculinity, and thus dispel the stereotype of the emasculate East Pakistani.

Mozumder attests that fear could be mitigated through "continuous training" (125). He substantiates his point through recalling the rifle and grenade training which he acquired before joining the *Mukti Bahini* in Teliapara, northeastern Bangladesh. Mozumder writes about an anonymous instructor who implemented training with grenades to gauge how a combatant responds to bomb explosions (43-44). He recalls, "I was so occupied watching the grenade [being thrown from a trench] and so elated seeing

it cross the line I forgot to duck. […] He [the instructor] thought I was very brave because the others had been so desperate to duck that they did not bother to see where the grenades were landing" (44). Mozumder's bravery is read onto his body and action by the instructor, irrespective of his statement that he did not remember to duck. Thus, valor is inscribed by external sources which might not match the interiority of the subject deemed valorous. The instructor evaluates Mozumder's courage upon his ability to approximate a grenade, a weapon that is prepared to explode. To "duck" (44) not only signifies an act of self-protection but corresponds to a bodily gesture that renders the freedom fighter incapable of resembling a weapon: an object which does not move unless made to move. The *muktijoddha*, who is imagined as a weapon, has his movement regulated on the battleground. It is acceptable if he moves to kill and be killed, but not to protect himself from getting killed.

The warzone, in Mozumder's text, turns into a space where certain colonial and West Pakistani ideals get reiterated even as *muktijoddhas* attempt to contest the trope of the effeminate East Pakistani. As discussed in the Introduction, both the colonial administrator Thomas Babington Macaulay, and the West Pakistani military official Rao Farman Ali Khan, classify the Bengali and East Pakistani as a non-martial *babu* (office clerk) who is inept at warfare (R.F.A. Khan 8; Macaulay 36). *The Guerilla* reconstructs the figure of the *babu* in the context of the Liberation War, whereby Mozumder's instructor differentiates the martial *muktijoddha* from the non-martial *babu*. The model *muktijoddha* not only engrosses himself in using arms and ammunitions but commits to foregoing his life during training. This is clear through Mozumder who concentrates on a

grenade to the extent where he almost suffers injury and death (125). The *babu,* to the contrary, resonates with the *rajakar*.

Rajakar is the Bengali variation of *razakar* which, notes Nayanika Mookherjee, "means volunteers or helpers in Persian and Urdu" (8). Mookherjee adds, "Numbering around fifty thousand, razakars are deemed to be those who spoke Urdu, came to East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) during the 1947 partition, and were members of the religious reactionary parties like JMI [*Jamaat-e-Islami* or Islamic Party] […], *Al Badr* [The Moon], and *Al Shams* [The Sun] (which formed "peace committees" during the 1971 war)" (8). In present-day Bangladesh, *rajakar*, unlike the Urdu and Persian meaning of *razakar,* is used as a pejorative term to describe the East Pakistani/Bangladeshi collaborator who worked with the West Pakistani army during the war. The *rajakar* formed peace committees to help the army commit atrocities against civilians under the pretense of maintaining peace. The *rajakar* figure is predominantly derogated in Bangladeshi national media. To provide an example, *Ora Egaro Jon* ("A Team of Eleven"), a 1972 Bangla film by Chashi Nazrul Islam, depicts three *rajakars* who hear footsteps as a signal that *muktijoddhas* are approaching them. The *rajakars'* fear is hyper-visible. They shiver, crouch, and try to hide behind one another. One *rajakar* shakily aims his rifle butt towards a bush as he thinks a freedom fighter might be hiding in there (1:09:18-1:11:06). While crouching, he utters "*Joi Bangla* (Victory to Bengal)," a "thunderous slogan" (Nabi 140) that Dacca University youth politicians created and chanted in the 1970s to advocate their desire for an independent Bangladesh. The *rajakar* deflates the slogan's political significance into a ludicrous expression. The background music emphasizes the comic

nature of the scene wherein the *rajakar* is shown as a figure that deserves scornful laughter. The fearful *rajakars'* collective repetition of *Joi Bangla* confirms their image as traitors who waver between helping the West Pakistani army and feigning their support for Bangladeshi freedom fighters.

Like the filmic *rajakar* who crouches, the *babu* provides amusement through his "desperate" (44) act of ducking in fear. In Mozumder's words, "they [the trainees seen as *babus*] did not bother to see where the grenades were landing" (44). Mozumder, along with illustrating the *babu* as non-martial, one who can barely handle explosives, insinuates that the *babu* is "irrational" (125) which functions as a synonym for hysteric. The *babu's* desperation to protect himself reflects his inability to exercise "rationality" (125) to eliminate his hysteria and make a man of himself. The *babu* is marked as a traitor who abides by the West Pakistani stereotype of the effeminate hysteric East Pakistani, and is thus considered unworthy of being a war hero.

While illustrating the fearful comrade as a hysteric *babu*, Mozumder struggles to regulate his fear despite his initial bravery as a trainee. He holds, "Uncontrolled fear, if not resisted and overcome, is crippling, devastating. […] It spreads exponentially and the afflicted person can be dangerous to his comrades. […] I was terrified the first few times I went under fire. The whizzing by of bullets all around was extremely scary. My limbs froze" (125). Unlike Nabi, who views fear as an occurrence of external causes (165-166), Mozumder deems fear an infection that develops from within. His notion aligns with Bourke's analysis of fear among Second World War combatants. Bourke argues, "soldiers who witnessed their comrades give way to terror were often rendered

'ineffective' themselves. For this reason, fear was often described as a 'virus', insidious and infectious" (200). Mozumder too ties the idea of fear-as-infection to emasculation. He pathologizes himself as "the afflicted person" (125), the *babu* who demasculinizes his peers through disseminating his fear to them. Through self-rebuke, he complicates nationalist discourse that glorifies him. For instance, Mohammad Shafiqul Islam praises Mozumder for conquering his fear in battle and displaying "indomitable spirit" ("A Freedom"). Islam elevates Mozumder to an imagined supra-human status, whereby the "enemy" could not kill him while he can destroy the enemy. Islam's standpoint contrasts with a frightened Mozumder's endeavor to evade the "whizzing by of bullets" (125) and prevent himself from becoming a dead or wounded *muktijoddha*.

Mozumder, like Nabi, describes how fear affects his physical constitution. He mentions that his "limbs froze," which inscribes bodily incapacitation and reiterates "crippling" (125), a term which has pejorative connotations of disablement. Mozumder's view on disabled combatants is apparent through his statement thus, "I only prayed […] I don't have to suffer the ignominy of a cripple" (150-151). This idea of "ignominy" not only invokes Mozumder's fear of becoming disabled but also effeminate. Mozumder connects the significance of being able-bodied to *muktijoddha* masculinity which is premised on the exclusion of the "crippl[ed]" (151) *babu*. In this sense, a disabled *muktijoddha* is an effeminate *muktijoddha*, one who has failed to demonstrate masculinity by forfeiting his life. This notion differs from the nationalist celebration of the disabled freedom fighter who combats despite getting wounded in battle, an issue that I explore in the next section.

Narrating Pain and Depicting the Disabled and Mutilated *Muktijoddha*

To comprehend the nationalist depiction of the disabled *muktijoddha,* it is important to first scrutinize how Nabi and Mozumder narrate the combatant's pain. Their descriptions of pain serve as a transition point to my analysis on how the nation romanticizes both the disabled and mutilated *muktijoddha*. Nabi remembers his comrade Hatem who was injured during combat against the Pakistani military at Dhalapara, Tangail. He writes, "Hiding in a bush, Hatem fired ceaselessly at the enemy. He killed four Pakistani soldiers and wounded seven more. Just as he emptied the last round from his Chinese [or SKS] rifle, three enemy bullets hit him and he fell to the brush" (296).[39] Nabi was not present at the battlefield where Hatem lost his life, and thereby did not observe his death firsthand. Nabi's personal account is based on other witnesses who reported Hatem's death to him. Thus, the hero is created through the sharing of accounts of his martyrdom, through the iteration of the narrative. In Saikia's view, one's interpretation of a past event comes with possible factual inaccuracies. She posits, "The problem of accuracy of personal memory notwithstanding, […] this memory is regarded as true by the individual" (90). To Saikia's point Chaity Das adds, "[war narratives represent] memory's trick, which may transform things in the imagination" (151). By highlighting "memory's trick," C. Das signifies how recalling new details about an episode from the past shifts and reshapes present memories

[39] The "Chinese rifle," also called the SKS 44 rifle, a semi-automatic weapon, was said to have been used mostly by Pakistani troops ("Freedom's Arms"). In some instances, *muktijoddhas* would "take SKS and other rifles from fallen Pakistani soldiers on the battlefield" ("Freedom's Arms"—my translation).

of that specific episode. Both Das's and Saikia's arguments are relevant to Nabi who interprets details of Hatem's death, which he considers to be the truth.

Some of these details include, "killed four Pakistanis and wounded seven more," "emptied the last round from his Chinese rifle," and "fell to the brush" (296). Nabi is cognizant of the number of soldiers Hatem killed as well as the precise type of rifle he had. Nabi not only remembers Hatem as an arms-bearing martial *muktijoddha* but portrays oneness between him and the weapon he uses to kill Pakistani troops. The pronoun "He," signifies both Hatem and the rifle thus, "He killed […] he fell to the brush" (296). In using a gendered pronoun to refer to the rifle, Nabi reinforces the ascription of the warzone as exclusively male-dominated where both comrades and their armaments are deemed masculine. Ironically, the figure of the personified rifle is juxtaposed with Hatem's status as object, weapon. At the same time, his objectification gets complicated by Nabi's description of Hatem as a "rare example of a patriot" (297), an extraordinary warrior who fought in a manner unparalleled by any other freedom fighter within the Tangail *Mukti Bahini*. Hatem's emulation of the ideal *muktijoddha* who kills and injures Pakistani soldiers before getting killed himself, substantiates his classification as supra-human. Nabi displays Chaity Das's idea of the "memory's trick" (19) where his episodic recollections ("slew of […] memories," Nabi xviii) shape Hatem's death into a worthwhile sacrifice as opposed to a disturbing aftermath of wartime violence. In doing so, Nabi demonstrates his own allegiance through his participation and contribution to nationalist storytelling and the nationalist memorialization of the martyr.

His memory of Hatem is shifting because of its ambivalence. Nabi recounts, "His [Hatem's] wounded body was still hidden behind the bush. […] Three bullets had hit Hatem. Two pierced through his right shoulder and a third bullet hit his lower chest and was still lodged in his back peeking through his skin" (297). "Lodged" depicts the bullet as embedded in the flesh, straddling the boundary between the internal and external. The bullet's intrusion in the skin corroborates the somatic origin of Hatem's pain. Nabi personifies the bullet as a living entity with eyes, "peeking" (297), as though it wants to be seen. The bullet turns into a symbolic eyewitness of the conditions that resulted in Hatem's painful death. It peers "through the skin" (297) as if to reveal itself as an extension of Hatem's bleeding body. In doing this, the peeking bullet debunks the nationalist glossing of bodily pain while making a mockery of the romanticized weaponizing of the *muktijoddha*.

Hatem's body invokes Veena Das's commentary on how pain functions through language in fictional texts based on the colonial period in India and spoken testimonies of the 1947 India-Pakistan Partition. According to V. Das, "Pain […] is not that inexpressible something that destroys communication or marks an exit from one's existence in language. Instead, it makes a claim on the other—asking for acknowledgement that maybe given or denied" (40). V. Das's insight is helpful in reading what Nabi thinks of the "lodged" (297) bullet. He communicates Hatem's pain by speaking of the bullet, which is implied through his text's title, *Bullets of '71: A Freedom Fighter's Story*. The title itself hints at Hatem as bullet-ridden, which not only glorifies him as the bleeding martyr but signals how he suffers in war. Nabi imagines Hatem and

the bullet as one; in a ghostly sense, a demised Hatem, through the "peeking" (297) bullet, attempts to register his pain via Nabi who verbalizes each gory detail as would a witness. Words like "pierced" and "lodged" accentuate a graphic inscription of Hatem's torture. Here, Chaity Das's concept of the "memory's trick" (151) is worth noting again. Nabi's earlier characterization of Hatem as an exceptional war hero who experiences no pain ("rare example of a patriot" 297) gets complicated by the minute scrutiny of his body. Multiple bullets which "pierced through" (297) Hatem's flesh attest to the pain of the bleeding martyr. While acknowledging Hatem's pain, Nabi continues to objectify him through depicting his association with the bullet. Nabi grapples with (the tricks of) his own memories which obscure the very nationalist sentiments that he supports.

Nabi's recollection overlaps with Mozumder's memory of a fellow *muktijoddha* Rafiq. Mozumder writes, "A shell had exploded inside Rafiq's trench and he had been ripped apart. […] I could not stop crying. When we buried him, I was still crying. I was crying when we returned home to the trench after his *janaza* [Islamic burial rites]" (150). According to *muktijoddha* Imam, when a comrade sheds tears in the warzone it means that he is "'chickening-out about joining the war'" (qtd. in Nabi 187). Imam ridicules the tearful and thus fearful combatant by equating him to a chicken, a synonym for *babu*, that makes cacophonous sounds of fear. Imam implicitly parallels the "chickened-out" *babu* to the fictional *rajakars* from the film *Ora Egaro Jon* ("A Team of Eleven," discussed earlier in this chapter pp. 130-31), who repeat dissonant chants out of terror. The *babu* in tears overcome by fear displays a lack of self-restraint and, like the terrified *rajakar*, becomes a traitor to *muktijoddha* masculinity and its ethos of "courage" (*Mujibnagar*

508). Imam alludes to the voice of the teary comrade whose shrill cries in the warzone render him effeminate and differentiate him from the manly *muktijoddha*, a disciplined war hero who does not shriek or cry.

Imam's illustration of the tearful *babu* differs from the context in which Mozumder weeps. He commemorates Rafiq as a "courageous" and "exceptional" (150) warrior, like the remarkable Hatem (Nabi 297), who "stood his ground [in battle] and had no hesitation to confront the enemy" (150). Mozumder not only pays respect to an intrepid Rafiq but positions himself within the temporary brotherhood of bereaved *muktijoddhas* who gather to perform Rafiq's burial rites and continue his legacy. Tears shed for a fellow *muktijoddha* reflects comradeship, and Mozumder considers it imperative to convey appropriate sentiments (i.e., sorrow) during Rafiq's funeral. Mozumder and his comrades' sorrow symbolizes the nation's grief which converts subjective pain into collective suffering.

Further, Mozumder has an intricate connection with Rafiq's pain. It is worth analyzing this connection by delving deeper into Veena Das's conceptual framework on pain where she engages in conversation with Ludwig Wittgenstein and Stanley Cavell. V. Das quotes Cavell's elaboration of her argument that she formulates through examining Wittgenstein's idea on pain. Cavell states, "'This seems to me a place Veena Das finds company in work of mine, especially that on Wittgenstein. […] I am necessarily the owner of my pain, yet the fact that it is always located in my body is not necessary. This is what Wittgenstein wishes to show—that it is conceivable that I locate it in another's body'" (qtd. in V. Das 41). Both V. Das and Cavell augment Wittgenstein's contention

that one's pain can imaginatively reside in another's body. She uses this idea to examine how one person's pain could be expressed through another person's body and language.

Veena Das's assessment of an individual's suffering felt through a different body illuminates Mozumder's description of Rafiq wherein, "he had been ripped apart" (150). The expression "ripped apart" affirms an extreme form of mutilation which suggests that blood and organs spill beyond Rafiq's body, thereby reinforcing his pain as real. Mozumder debunks his initial nationalist aestheticization of Rafiq's heroic sacrifice through revealing the gruesomeness of his death. He provides a subsequent description of events, whereby Rafiq's wounded body results in Mozumder's inability to "stop crying" (150). He imagines Rafiq's agony as residing within his own body, causing him to shed tears. Words like "ripped" and "torn" (150) connote Mozumder's affective condition. He feels torn as he brings into language the pain of Rafiq's death. Through narrating this intersubjective pain (both his and Rafiq's), Mozumder challenges the nationalist rhetoric that the *muktijoddha* undergoes no form of affliction.

Both Rafiq's and Hatem's deaths can be analyzed, I want to suggest, in relation to the mass mutilation of bodies that Mozumder and Nabi describe. For instance, Mozumder records the following:

> It was a boot. I took a closer look. It was completely drenched in blood. To my horror, blood was still oozing out! An entire foot, cleanly severed at the ankle, as if by a meat cleaver, was still inside the boot! […] The guts of at least two splattered the ditch; parts of faces and heads were missing, the brains still spilling out; one body was missing from the waist down. What had once been a human leg was now only white bone and tendons, as if a butcher had scraped off the flesh. (54)

On a similar note, Nabi provides an account of what he witnesses on the Pungli Bridge in Tangail. He narrates,

> The corpses of hundreds of enemy soldiers were littered on the road. Their bodies sprawled from one side of the bridge to the other. […] We found limbs separated from torsos. Bodies of enemy soldiers in jeeps were found tangled and twisted. The corpses were amalgamated to their vehicles. […] several bodies decapitated from the impact of [close-range] blasts. It was mind-boggling. Never in my life had I seen so much death in one place. (369)

The "severed ankle" (Mozumder 54) becomes a perpetual part of the boot, making it impossible to differentiate flesh and blood from object. The boot, like the bullet "lodged" (Nabi 297) in Hatem's back, is personified. It represents flesh that "[oozes] out" (54) blood as if to capture the vestiges of somebody's pain, of a person injured in war, whose ankle is still inside their boot while their identity remains unknown. This subject matter about the identities of those mutilated in conflict zones is examined by Erevelles who writes, "disabled people who are confined to [Third World] spaces run the risk of almost complete erasure, and, subsequently, face the most extreme dehumanization on account of this non-recognition" (122). Erevelles deploys the concept "Third World," to reveal the problematics of the west's otherizing of certain countries and bodies.[40] Her discourse on the effacement of individual identities is relevant to both Mozumder's and Nabi's narratives on bodies in warzones which, for the most part, are unrecognizable.

[40] Erevelles focuses on the United States War in Iraq and Afghanistan where the destruction of lives is rendered a "natural phenomenon" (122, 128). In this scenario, "natural" ascribes bodies of color, in Western and Central Asia (deemed Third World), as prone to war and disability caused by war. The notion of war to target and eliminate terrorists works to justify the disablement of othered bodies. Erevelles argues that people living under war conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan get "scarcely noticed by the mainstream [western] media" (122).

Mozumder states, “The guts of at least two splattered the ditch” (54). He does not mention that “the guts” belong to people. He indirectly refuses to recognize internal organs as part of human bodies. Mozumder concentrates on describing inner organs such as brains that “[spill] out” (54) and guts that remain splattered but barely mentions anything about external body parts like “faces” (54). The ditch bears no traces of faces that might reveal identities of the dead. Moreover, Mozumder denies his identification of Rafiq’s body even as he mourns his death. He claims that Rafiq’s “humanity and individuality had been erased” (150) without acknowledging his enablement of this erasure. He classifies Rafiq as a “lifeless heap” (150) that is like the faceless bodies in the ditch. The obliteration of Rafiq’s individuality is further apparent through his categorization as “ripped” (150) flesh and blood heaped upon brains and guts. The martyred *muktijoddha* Rafiq is anonymized in death.

Rafiq’s death occurs because a shell explodes inside his trench (Mozumder 150). His remains intermingle with the exploded shell, which parallels Nabi’s remembrance thus, “Bodies of enemy soldiers in jeeps were found tangled and twisted. The corpses were amalgamated to their vehicles” (369). “Amalgamated” evokes the impossibility of differentiating the human (Rafiq and corpses) from the object (shell and vehicle). The alliteration “tangled and twisted,” indicates that the “enemy” must not simply be killed but also be severely mutilated by the *muktijoddha* who must be prepared to undergo a similar form of mutilation. Body parts of soldiers and *muktijoddhas* demystify the nationalist myth of “Pakistani” versus “Bangladeshi” (*Mujibnagar* 228, 508). The soldiers’ bodies are homogenized as nameless “corpses” that are disposable.

"Littered" portrays the bodies as scattered debris on the Pungli Bridge. "Sprawled" illustrates remains that dangle beyond the bridge and echoes internal organs that spill out of Hatem's and Rafiq's bodies. The term "sprawled," like "amalgamated" (Nabi 297) and "ripped apart" (Mozumder 150), are terms that bear evidence to the mutilation that took place during the Liberation War.

The occurrence of both the soldier's and the *muktijoddha's* deaths are reported in a statement by the Mujibnagar Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmad, who proclaims, "Our freedom fighters are busy devising death for the invaders in the marshes, jungles, rivers and roads with their blood and are fighting to defend our new-found statehood, that is our future" (49). "Death" and "blood" become indifferent words that do not quite capture the brutalities of warfare. The soldiers' decapitations and separations of limbs from torsos (Nabi 369) are scripted as simply "death" that the "enemy" deserves for intruding in East Pakistan and launching Operation Searchlight. Likewise, "blood" both maintains and erases the *muktijoddha's* mutilation from nationalist chronicles. It denotes the freedom fighter as injured ("their blood," 49) without delving into the gory details of injury. The phrase, "a butcher had scraped off the flesh" (54), which is evident in Mozumder's text, becomes a metaphorical implication of the erasure of mutilation from nationalist documents. "Butcher" invokes nationalist leaders who "scrape off," and thus efface the pain of combatants. The use of the word scraped underscores this effacement in relation to the body. Mozumder's personal recollection reads, "What had once been a human leg was now only white bones and tendons" (54). Bones and tendons, like brains and guts, are turned into objects, whereas flesh signifies the human. "Scraped off the flesh" symbolizes

the *muktijoddha's* dehumanization from nationalist discourse that eliminates individual names of freedom fighters and celebrates collective heroic sacrifice.

Moreover, the state functions as a mechanism for causing disability during the Liberation War. In this connection, I explore Jasbir Puar's argument on bodies that are targeted for war. Puar posits, "the war machine of the state predisposes those who are to be mutilated, and those who are to be killed" (64). She affirms that certain populations are scripted as being "available for injury, whether through laboring or through warring or both: laboring in the service of war that mutilates both national bodies and foreign entities denoted as enemies; or laboring as an inverted form of warfare against a disposable population ensnared as laborers-consigned-to-having-an-accident" (64).[41] Puar notes that war itself is a form of labor, an idea that is pertinent to my discussion of the state's role in the 1971 war. The Mujibnagar Government represents the state as an agency that legitimizes its recruitment of able-bodied *muktijoddhas* who are made "available for injury" (Puar 64) in warfare. This type of woundedness takes place in the form of mutilation or physical disability. Tajuddin Ahmad substantiates this point where he declares, "they [*muktijoddhas*] are fighting, despite many handicaps" (49). The use of the term "handicaps," signals war-generated disability that does not prevent the *muktijoddha* from engaging in battle. Ahmad indicates that the manly *muktijoddha* does not allow his injuries to stop him from killing the enemy. He both normalizes and necessitates the

[41] To state an example of Puar's point, a factory employee's workplace injury is considered a part of the job. Puar speaks of capitalist enterprises in the "global north," such as multi-national firms, which engender the disability of economically underprivileged laborers within particular countries in the "global south" (65, 66, 73).

freedom fighter's disability produced in war. He venerates labor in the service of war, which a combatant performs to confirm his fidelity to the nation. The *muktijoddha's* body, visibly disabled by battle, testifies to this form of fidelity. The disabled or mutilated combatant, specifically those who revert to the battlefield, represents the wounded nationalist male who embodies *muktijoddha* masculinity.

Conclusion: The Modification of *Muktijoddha* Masculinity

Nationalist press releases and government reports demonstrate the ideal *muktijoddha* as one who undergoes mutilation without fear or pain. One such report reads, "Today's Government of Bangladesh springs from an extraordinary movement and a [bloodstained] background of suffering millions" (*Mujibnagar* 363). The report evokes an aesthetic image of the freedom fighter's mutilation. This is apparent through the expression "[bloodstained] background," which symbolically maps the atrocities of the warzone onto an imagined canvas that does not visually capture the combatant in pain. The phrase "extraordinary movement," becomes a euphemism in the name of liberation, while "suffering millions" cursorily denotes dead or disabled *muktijoddhas* whose names do not appear in nationalist archives. The anonymized freedom fighter is said to sacrifice "streams of Blood" (*Mujibnagar* 92), and is thereby glorified for bleeding profusely and redemptively.

The description of the bleeding boot in Mozumder's text is worth stating. Blood "was still oozing out" (Mozumder 54) of the boot as testament to the consequences of

warfare propagated by the very state that lauds the mutilated *muktijoddha* while fending off the realities of mutilation. As witnesses to this reality, Mozumder and Nabi pick up where nationalist press statements leave off. They provide explicit narratives of severely injured bodies while revealing their own struggles of displaying courage and disavowing fear. Both authors straddle between national allegiance and ethical responsibility. While striving to maintain their loyalty to the state they consider it an obligation to disclose details of their late comrades. For example, Nabi writes, "Today, most Bangladeshis may not know of Hatem's sacrifice to the liberation struggle. […] Future generations deserve to know his story" (297). "Deserves" signals an urgent necessity for the post-war generation to know the stories of not only Hatem and Rafiq, but also Nabi and Mozumder.

In fact, the ambiguities present in *The Guerilla* and *Bullets of '71* demand that post-independent Bangladesh reframe its version of the masculine *muktijoddha*. In castigating the self for failing to approximate the courageous freedom fighter, Mozumder and Nabi inevitably modify the ethos of *muktijoddha* masculinity. This reframed modified masculinity is demonstrated through the *muktijoddha's* fear and courage as well as pain and sacrifice. The injured bodies and emotions of war combatants inform this masculinity. The *muktijoddha's* body articulates his affective state, whether it is through "freezing" in fear (like Nabi and Mozumder) or experiencing pain because of war injuries (like Hatem and Rafiq). This version of *muktijoddha* masculinity urges one to question the nationalist idealization of the disabled freedom fighter and recognize the broader frameworks of disability/disablement. For instance, the "rubbery" sensation in Nabi's legs

(165), along with the "freezing" effect in Mozumder's limbs (125), gesture towards different forms of disablement, whereby both authors claim that they could not "move" for a certain period. This complicates the dominant notion of the resistance fighter as able-bodied and making himself available for physical disability as a service to the nation.

The nation-state acclaims the masculine *muktijoddha's* disablement as his adherence to the motherland. The nation is personified as the motherland in dominant Bangladeshi war narratives (F.A. Khan 194; Iqbal 12), which becomes a crucial component for further interpreting the conception of *muktijoddha* masculinity. In Chapter Three, I critically engage with how the freedom fighter's relation with the mother figure underpins *muktijoddha* masculinity. I also explore how women's stories dismantle the nationalist exaltation of the resistance fighter and his mother, and offer a varying reading of the 1971 war.

Chapter Three: *Muktijoddha* and Motherhood: The Patriotic Mother and Memories of the *Birangona-Ma*

The nationalist iconography of the ideal *muktijoddha* is celebrated in Bangladeshi historical fiction produced during the war and post-war periods. However, these fictional works pay very little attention to the *muktijoddha's* mother, the wartime rape survivor, and the mother who is a survivor of sexual violence. For example, the 1994 Bangla film *Aguner Poroshmoni* ("The Spirit of Fire"), concentrates on the wounded *muktijoddha* protagonist Bodi who forsakes his life for national freedom, but barely portrays the affective story of Bodi's mother who longs for her son to return home from the battlefield. Similarly, the 1992 Bangla short story collection *Muktijoddhar Ma* ("The Freedom Fighter's Mother"), by Anwara Syed Haq, focuses on resistance fighters who display *muktijoddha* masculinity through their dedication towards fighting and sacrificing their bodies for the nation. Haq's short stories narrate the life of the *muktijoddha's* mother post liberation but do not reveal much about her role during the war. Moreover, a 2019 Bangla novella called *Ekattorer Birangona Nilanjona* ("Nilanjona: The 1971 War Heroine"), by Minu Rani Das, presents the fictional story of a woman freedom fighter Nila who tells her mother that "she is going to war to free the motherland" (26—my translation). Nila approximates her male counterparts who vow to fight for the motherland while her mother's tale and experience remain unknown to the readers. In another instance, the 2000 documentary titled *Narir Kotha* ("Woman's Story"), directed by Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud, includes an unnamed woman's testimony about her mother-in-law. She states, "my mother-in-law fought against the Pakistani soldiers

with bricks and stones. She got hit by a bullet and died. […] It was not only men who fought. We fought too. My mother-in-law gave her life for the country. Nobody talks about that" (00:20:03-00:22:00—my translation). The speaker confirms her late mother-in-law's status as freedom fighter, thereby disrupting the notion that only men can be war combatants. She uses the pronoun "we," to establish a sense of solidarity among women freedom fighters. Her firm words, "we fought too," attests to the urgency that women feel about having their war contributions recognized by the nation. The documentary, however, does not offer insights into the complex ways in which women remember their rape and sexual violence in relation to their role as mothers who witness their daughters' suffering at the hands of the military and their collaborators.

This chapter examines fictional portrayals of the *muktijoddha* in connection to their mother to understand how women are positioned in Bangladeshi nationalist narratives. I explore how the wartime patriotic mother contributes to national independence through sending her son to battle. My interrogation of the patriotic mother in nationalist discourse becomes a catalyst for delving into discussions about wartime mothers who are left out of nationalist remembering. Some examples include mothers who are rape survivors, have/had daughters who were physically and sexually violated during the war, and do not have *muktijoddha* sons. Through my examination of the politics of representing wartime motherhood, I seek to foreground how women's stories become relevant only to the extent that they revere men.

In this chapter, there are three focal sources of analysis: novel, wartime songs, and survivor testimonies. Firstly, I show how the novel and songs emphasize the figure of the

patriotic mother who contributes to the creation of a masculine *muktijoddha*. I then discuss how survivor testimonies disrupt this nationalist depiction of the patriotic mother by concentrating on stories of sexually violated women and their daughters, which are excluded from Liberation War history. I start by examining Anisul Hoque's 2012 novel *Freedom's Mother*, which is one of the very few available texts that illustrates a *muktijoddha's* mother who embodies patriotism by sending her son to war. *Freedom's Mother* showcases the idea that women during the war period deemed motherhood their sole purpose, especially if they are mothers to sons. I scrutinize how Hoque's notion parallels wartime songs that demand that the woman forego her son and suppress her personal desires in order to be hailed as the ideal mother. Both wartime songs and Hoque's novel serve as nationalist texts that expand on the dominant historical representation of the ideal freedom fighter.

However, the testimonies of the woman who is both a rape survivor and witness to her daughter's abuse provides an alternate historical understanding of the mother's role during the Liberation War. I argue that the mother who is a survivor narrates her memories in fragments because the severity of her trauma has left her not knowing how else to speak. For her, remembering results in bodily pain which makes her speech more disjointed, particularly when she talks about her daughter. I analyze how her body, emotions, and inchoate memories become her way of asking that the nation acknowledge her and her daughter's stories. In this connection, I analyze select testimonies of rape survivors, which are recorded in the following Bangla testimonial collections: *Ami Birangona Bolchi* (I am the War Heroine Speaking, 2018), edited by Nilima Ibrahim, and

the Sharifa Bulbul-edited *Birangona Noy Muktijoddha* (Freedom Fighter, Not War Heroine, 2017). I pay close attention to women's stories in *Ami Birangona Bolchi*, to portray how the rape survivor is situated in national and social discourse. This helps to develop my analysis of how survivors, whose testimonies are in *Birangona Noy Muktijoddha*, remember their brutal encounter of rape through speaking about their social expulsion and their children's harrowing death in war.

I begin my analysis through an examination of how *Freedom's Mother* depicts the human mother and the motherland as they are related to the male *muktijoddha*. The novel concentrates on the affective relationship that Safia Begum shares with her son Azad. While she loves him dearly, she is also willing to sacrifice him for the freedom struggle. I illustrate how *Freedom's Mother* expands on the nationalist ideology of *muktijoddha* masculinity through affirming Azad's unwavering loyalty to the land that is imagined as mother. I also show how Safia upholds her son's masculinity through her dedication to the motherland.

Additionally, this chapter interrogates how the patriotic mother in Hoque's novel parallels the mother figure in songs that were produced by Bengali artists during the early months of the 1971 war. On 26 March 1971, an East Pakistani/Bangladeshi radio station called *Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* (The Free Bengal Radio Center) was established under the leadership of the Mujibnagar Government (Chowdhury, "*Swadhin*"). This radio station initially operated from Kalurghat in Chittagong, southeastern Bangladesh, and later from Kolkata, eastern India (Chowdhury, "*Swadhin*"). The station released numerous wartime songs which, in Syed Badrul Ahsan's words, "became part of the

Bengali political consciousness" ("1971 and the Songs"). Ahsan continues, "it was Shwadhin [also spelt Swadhin] Bangla Betar that let […] music flow into Bengali homes, into the hearts and souls of Bengalis" ("1971 and the Songs"). Wartime songs invoked patriotic fervor among the Bangladeshi people through metaphorically seeping into their "hearts and souls." The phrase "let […] music flow" signals the songs' ubiquitous connection with souls whereby similar lyrics trickle into the hearts of many. The prolonged effect of the lyrics helped to cultivate within the people a sense of shared hope for liberation.

From the existing repertoire of popular wartime songs that focus on martyrdom, I analyze those tracks which place emphasis on both the *muktijoddha* and the icon of the patriotic mother. The songs I examine are: "*Bhebo Naa Go Maa*" (Mother Do Not Worry) by composer Samar Das, Gobinda Haldar's "*Mora Ekti Fulke Bachabo Bole Juddho Kori*" (I Fight to Save a Single Flower), and "*Maago Bhabna Kano*" (Mother Why Worry) by songwriter Gauriprasanna Majumdar. These songs situate the human mother in relation to the motherland and the son. I conduct a close reading of the lyrics that specify how the mother gives up her son for the motherland, a common theme that connects the songs to Hoque's novel. In turn, I investigate the ways in which these select songs expand on the novel's rendering of the patriotic mother figure as well as the imagined union formed between the *muktijoddha* and the motherland.[42]

[42] The current *Bangladesh Betar* (Radio Bangladesh) website does not include these mentioned songs under its music library or archive sections. Thus, I have accessed the songs via YouTube and translated the lyrics from Bangla to English.

The wartime songs selected for analysis in this chapter generate a singular public remembering of the mother who laments her son's loss. The lyrics do not address the mother who has lost her daughter in warfare, or the *birangona*. To offer a more expansive and in-depth reading of the wartime mother, the final section of this chapter delves into testimonies by *birangonas* and *birangona-mas*, which complicate the uniform representation of the patriotic mother. The term *birangona*, in Bina D'Costa's words, "is used only to identify women who were subjected to rape and sexual violence during the war" (*Nationbuilding* 120). The discussion of rape survivors as *birangonas* or war heroines is brought up in Nayanika Mookherjee's reference to Gayatri Spivak's comment on the word. She states, "Spivak critically pointed out to me that the justification behind the term *birangona* constructs rape as a sacrifice in exchange for which the country gained independence" (150—emphasis in original). Mookherjee adds, "Spivak pointed out that, ironically, *bir* is etymologically a male term, used here to bestow heroism on women raped during the war" (150—emphasis in original). The wartime rape survivor's sexual violence is incorporated into a narrative of heroic sacrifice made by women. The use of *bir* in the expression *bir muktijoddha* ("valiant freedom fighter") has a nationalist signification that differs from the term *bir-angona*. As Fayeza Hasanat notes, "The masculine meaning of the word *bir* represents gallantry and valor of the freedom fighters; to the contrary, the feminine synonym *birangona* becomes the signifier of a raped woman of war. The gap between these two words is not only that of gender, but also of ideologies of suppression, silence, and erasure" (10). Since the Liberation War is premised on men demonstrating *muktijoddha* masculinity, gender determines who gets silenced and who

does not. The *bir muktijoddha* is visible both on the battlefield and in nationalist archives while the *birangona's* voice is left out of dominant war discourse.

How the *birangona* remembers and speaks of the war is explored in the works of South Asian scholars like Yasmin Saikia (2011), Nayanika Mookherjee (2015), Fayeza Hasanat (2022), and Bina D'Costa (2011). While D'Costa close-reads women's written testimonies (*Nationbuilding* 110-143), Saikia concentrates on the affective state of women who recount traumatic war memories while speaking with her (109-157). Saikia provides testimonies of survivors who are astonished that someone would listen to their story (141). One survivor, who goes by Taslima's mother, states, "They have all forgotten us" (141). The pronoun "they," points to both political officials and the general people. Further, Mookherjee draws attention to the importance of what is left untold by women survivors (20, 108). She focuses on how women's trauma lives within their body (115), and how these women hint at their trauma through speaking of other forms of pain such as menstrual cramps (110). Hasanat offers an additional research perspective to both Mookherjee's and Saikia's accounts through discussing how women's trauma is classified in dominant narratives as the nation's trauma which reinforces the *birangona's* erasure from nationalist history (9-10). I expand this body of scholarship through examining the figure of the *birangona-ma*.

I use the expression "*birangona-ma*," to address the intersectional identity, embodied experience, and memory of the mother who is also a survivor of wartime sexual violence. The *birangona-ma* is the mother and survivor who witnessed firsthand her daughter's abuse by military officials. Her trauma, I argue, is inscribed through her

doubly painful act of remembering her sexual violence and her child's death. Overall, this chapter explores the suppression of women's/mother's lived experiences and who or what, according to nationalist rhetoric, is worth fighting for. Critiquing the nationalist ideal of maternity is an important step towards acknowledging excluded voices of and writings by women who endured the war. Engaging with women's stories is crucial for creating a space where issues of gender disparities can be addressed through collective dialogue as well as action.

The Mixing of "Memory and Myth" in *Freedom's Mother*

This section focuses on *Freedom's Mother* and illustrates the possibilities that fiction creates through mingling with fact. In her definition of fiction, Shazia Rahman notes, "Rather than represent only what *is*, fictions represent what *can be*. […] After all, fictions are what help us imagine and think in new ways" (16, 173—emphasis in original). Rahman's idea is useful for comprehending the role of fiction in Hoque's novel. According to Hoque, "Memory and myth mix to spice up the past, make their collective remembrance heady. The recollection, legends, history, fables, paleontological bullet marks on the walls of the Moghbazaar house" (11). The bullet marks are depicted as "paleontological," which suggests that they are a form of permanent relic that ossifies the past within the present era. The perpetual bullet marks metaphorically inscribe the past of Safia Begum and her son Azad, which remains unknown to the public. The description of bullet-ridden walls causes one to create their own interpretations of Safia's and Azad's

past. Perhaps, they were both attacked by army officials or guerillas at their house in the Moghbazaar neighborhood of Dacca, East Pakistan. Or, it is possible that bullets, fired from outside, entered the house where they either pierced through or lodged in the walls? The bullets themselves are missing from the walls which broaches the questions: were they removed? If yes, by whom and for what purpose? Fossilized bullet holes disclose a "history" that is incomplete, which engenders one to imagine different probabilities and ask questions about Safia and her son.

In reviewing the novel, Nahid Khan notes that Hoque's "natural flair in telling a story did need a few threads of fiction here and there" ("The Tears"). N. Khan reckons that the novel significantly documents past reality with some traces of fiction. In addition, Syed Badrul Ahsan describes *Freedom's Mother* as "powerful fiction that [Hoque] weaves out of the twilight struggle Bengalis [East Pakistanis/Bangladeshis] went through in 1971" ("Waiting"). "Weaves out" echoes an image of Hoque creating and putting together a work of fiction based on the war. While N. Khan and Ahsan describe the novel as fictional, they do not quite explain what fiction does for the text. Fiction works to "spice up the past" (Hoque 11), which evokes adding imagined elements. Traces of fictional details, such as, "Safia Begum came home [to] the collapsed bed […] [and] the steel almirah" (294), invokes Hoque's vicarious presence within the characters' past via which he can access their story. It is almost as if Hoque senses a ghostly connection with Safia and Azad which allows him to narrate what might have happened. The mythical overtones of the bed and almirah are a representation of Hoque's memory, of how he visualizes "what can be" (Rahman 16).

The idea of "memory" and "myth" (11) in *Freedom's Mother* has a more complex meaning which could be analyzed through focusing on the novel's intertextual significance. Hoque includes within his novel portions of the 1990 personal account *Of Blood and Fire,* by Jahanara Imam, a writer and activist who lost her son Shafi Imam Rumi in the Liberation War. In her text, she tells Rumi, "I sacrifice you to the cause of the nation. You may join the war" (66). Imam here embodies the ideal mother of the *muktijoddha*, who champions her son's commitment to fight in war. She renounces Rumi and thereby offers him to the nation that is imagined as mother. Imam illustrates that it is the mother's responsibility to urge her son to fight the "enemy" and be a man.

Hoque pays homage to Imam who becomes an inspiration for *Freedom's Mother*. He portrays her as the first mother of a freedom fighter who, through her personal narrative, captures the collective story of all mothers. Hoque compliments Imam's narration thus, "Jahanara writes like a woman [who] holds close her son's picture" (349). He poignantly describes how in her heart Imam carries the inscription of Rumi's memories. Her text is a testament to these memories preserved in writing. She not only wishes for the public to recognize her son's sacrifice but also how she played a role in his martyrdom. In Hoque's view, Imam's book is an original contribution to Liberation War history, wherein she recovers a "lost" tale (Hoque 349). "Lost," in Hoque's opinion, indicates how nationalist history abandons the mother's story evident in Imam's text. In a paradoxical sense, this emphasis on "the mother's story" erases Imam's individual wartime experience that is separate from her son's sacrifice while foregrounding her as an ideal national figure.

Imam's *Of Blood and Fire* contains a pre-existing mythologizing of maternity that *Freedom's Mother* intensifies. Apart from praising Imam's fidelity to the nation, Hoque utilizes her words, "'I sacrifice you for the cause of the land'" (213), to transition into his portrayal of Safia who also sends her son to war. He brings Imam and Safia together as the two ideal mothers of *muktijoddhas*. In doing this, he reinforces the mythical mother figure within collective national memory ("Memory and myth mix" 11). Hoque's fiction elaborates on the ideal mother through tracing the emotional trajectory of Safia's life that creates the conditions for her to first protect her son Azad from the war, and then relinquish him for national freedom. In the next section, I concentrate on the mother-son relation between Safia and Azad and their interconnectedness with the nation in the backdrop of the Liberation War.

The Ideal Mother of the Martyr

To understand Safia's and Azad's experiences in 1971 it is important to contextualize their individual lives within the larger framework of the war's history. Both characters live in Dacca, East Pakistan during the mid-twentieth century and the war period. Upon discovering her husband Yunus's extramarital affair, Safia leaves him, shifts into a small apartment with Azad, and sells her jewelry to pay for his education (42-43, 56). In renouncing her ornaments, she gives up the opulence that comes with being the wife of "one of the richest men in Dhaka" (11). For many South Asian mothers, writes Jasjit K. Sangha and Tahira Gonsalves, "their identity becomes intertwined with the needs of the

family to such an extent that they may often feel a strong sense of duty and obligation, and understand their role as that of providing selfless service to the family while putting their needs last" (2). Thus, according to societal standards, the "good mother" is simultaneously a good wife and daughter-in-law.

Safia's role as good mother, in contrast, does not come with displaying steadfast devotion to her husband and in-laws. Instead, the novel portrays how she directs her love and selfless service towards Azad. She discloses to him, "you are what I am living for. I would have died by now. I am alive to bring you up" (55). Through her prefigured self-erasure ("I would have died by now") Safia internalizes her status as a possible ghostly pariah. She draws attention to how separated and divorced South Asian women undergo a form of social death that marks their ostracization from their families and the wider community. From the "good wife" or "good mother" the woman turns into the other who is blamed for failing in her marriage and abandoning her family. Safia, however, redeems herself through her stated dedication to Azad. Otherwise, symbolically, she "would have died by now" (55). She takes on the financial and emotional labor of raising Azad while suffering from the sorrow of Yunus's extramarital affair that results in his second marriage. Hoque narrates her predicament thus, "she traversed the long journey of her life alone, carrying all her troubles within her, never letting others know the pain within. Intrepid, indomitable […] Amma, Ma" (86). Hoque turns Safia into a metaphorical soldier through romanticizing her hardship into an "epic battle" (86). Safia embodies both the ideal *muktijoddha* who articulates courage and suppresses grief, as well as the ideal mother who can educate her son to subdue his pain. This is clear when she tells Azad to

"Be strong when the attack comes" (302). Here, Safia asks her son to become the manly *muktijoddha* who bravely withstands injuries in the battlefield. Safia's intrepidity, though, is limited to a quality that only enables her to fight the "mother's war" (57). She battles, not for the self, but for the son who is metonymically a figure of sacrifice for the nation and its future.

While fighting for the son, and by extension the nation, Safia expresses sadness for fellow mothers who "have lost their children over this *Joy Bangla* [Victory to Bengal] thing" (173). *Joy Bangla*, also spelt *Joi Bangla*, is a pro-liberation slogan chanted in the streets of 1970s East Pakistan ("7th March"). In debunking the refrain's significance, Safia questions the nation's way of conditioning youths into forsaking their lives for the country's freedom. Fearing the loss of her own son in war, she states, "If something happens to you, Azad, how does the country matter to me?" (137). Safia wishes "with all her heart that she could take her child back within herself to protect him against the evils of the world. She would insulate him from all dangers" (305). Safia evokes the womb that the novel fetishizes as the innermost realm of the home which shelters the male offspring from the nation's violence. She imagines the womb as a site that makes possible her ghostly reunification with Azad, wherein she envisions taking him "back within herself." In slightly varying from Imam, who explicitly confirms that she sacrifices Rumi "to the cause of the nation" (66), Safia metaphorically carries a part of Azad within her body. Through this imaginary reconnection, Safia does not resist, but adds a layer to the singular depiction of the ideal mother who is expected to forego her son. She could both give up the son for the nation and hold onto his imagined remnants for herself.

Azad, on the other hand, reprimands himself for "hiding in the safety of his home" (231) which is both a physical element and a figurative representation. He mockingly implies seeking shelter within Safia's womb-as-home to affirm his shame of living under his mother's protection during war. Azad claims, "Ma, I want to go with them [his peers] for the next [*muktijoddha*] strike. […] out there our people are being butchered— it's disgraceful. […] Ma, please don't say no" (231). For Azad, the external realm of the warzone is where the "strong, young man" (231) proves his masculinity in battle. He views his peers as strong because, in opposition to him, they are visible as combatants in the warzone. In deeming himself "disgraceful" he signals his demasculinized state as a national traitor who neglects the battlefield to stay at home where his mother can safeguard him.

Safia's idea of wanting to protect her son aligns with Ana C. Garner's and Karen Slattery's description of "the Good Mother who tries to keep her child safe from harm" (5-6). Garner and Slattery point to how World War Two mothers in the United States of America reflected the archetypal image of the good mother. They were accused by the government and people "for failing to raise men fit for the service by refusing to cut their 'apron strings'" (Garner and Slattery 13). In keeping with Garner's and Slattery's point, the image of the mother and the apron string establishes the patriarchal belief that a woman belongs only in the kitchen, which I contest. I am, however, interested in analyzing how the idea of the "string" articulates the maternal-filial bond between Safia and Azad. In wanting to join the war, Azad decides to cut ties (strings) with his birth mother for the motherland. Here, severing connections denotes directing love and

affection from the human mother towards the land that is envisioned as mother. Azad not only asks Safia to let him fight, but subtly implores the motherland to accept his sacrifice as follows: "Ma, please don't say no" (231). He becomes the nation's offspring, a *muktijoddha* who encodes masculinity through his devotion to the allegorical motherland that can potentially replace his birth mother.

While Azad commits to war, Safia undergoes internal struggle and emotional conflict thus,

> Her face quivered. […] *What do I tell my child? Go to war? If something happens to him?* She was torn apart. […] The country demanded her child, how could she insulate him? Could she possibly say, 'Please spare my son, I have no one else in the world?' […] *The motherland beckons my child.* […] Tears flooded her eyes, her thoughts. (231-233—emphasis in original)

Safia quivers to signal the upheaval in her life. Earlier, she condemns the war because it produces deep personal losses for people, especially for mothers who have lost their children, which she deems "terrible" (173). Now, she feels as though she must renounce her role as protective mother and become the patriot's mother. In her view, the "country demanded her child" (232). Though conscription did not exist in the Liberation War, the verb "demanded" invokes Azad's compulsory engagement in combat. In permitting her son to fight, Safia gives her son to the motherland, and thereby fulfills the ideal duty of substituting the human mother with the land-as-mother. This euphemistic concept of transferring the male offspring mitigates Azad's gory death in battle and foregrounds Safia as the model *Shaheed Janani* ("Mother of Martyrs") who emulates Jahanara Imam. The nation remembers the late Imam as *Shaheed Janani*. She is described as an "iconic figure" (Naznin, "The *Shaheed*") who became the epitome of the ideal mother through

her wartime and post-war roles. Imam not only sent her son to war but produced conditions for legally punishing Bangladeshi *rajakars* or collaborators of the Pakistani army, who are characterized in post-independent Bangladesh as war criminals.[43] *Shaheed Janani* becomes an accolade that illustrates Imam as a patriot whose selfhood merges with the nation's interest.

Imam's patriotism, according to Hoque, is embodied by Safia who declares, "The motherland beckons my child" (232). Her figurative connection with the land-as-mother would rupture if Azad does not respond to the nation's call. Breaking this normative mother-to-motherland link would render Safia a woman who has failed to live up to her exemplification as an "iconic figure" (Naznin, "The *Shaheed*"). Hence, she "knew that her son had to fight this war. It was as if an oracle had spoken to her" (226). The oracle personifies the mother-nation as one who not only calls on Azad to join in battle but foretells his death in war. Therefore, Safia shudders when Azad tells her that he wants to participate in a *muktijoddha* strike. Her quivering portends double death: Azad's martyrdom followed by her symbolic death.

In giving up Azad for the nation's cause, Safia foregoes her reason for living. Her double renunciation causes her pain which lives within her body as apparent through the image of tears that exist in "her thoughts" (233). In writing of *Freedom's Mother*, Nahid Khan maintains that Safia carries "anguish" in her "heart" ("The Tears"). N. Khan depicts

[43] A coordinator for the 1992 *Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee* ("Committee for the Elimination of War Criminals"), Imam gathered sufficient support from the people for putting war collaborators in prison, most of whom were influential leaders from various Bangladeshi political parties (A.R. Chowdhury and Abid 55). She dedicated her post-war life to bringing *rajakars* to trial for being accomplices to the killing of *muktijoddhas* and unarmed civilians ("Today's Verdict").

her lingering anguish as an emotional burden on the body, which recalls Sara Ahmed's discussion on pain. S. Ahmed argues, "Pain involves the violation or transgression of the border between inside and outside, and it is through this transgression that I feel the border in the first place" (27). Likewise, Safia's tears manifest pain encoded in the body. Her tears touch her face, which trembles with anguish. Her quivering face signifies the boundary between her tears that "flooded her eyes, her thoughts" (233). She intertwines external and internal pain through feeling "torn apart" (231), and this inner feeling translates into an outer becoming as Safia reiterates Hoque's concept of the "mother's war" (57) through imagining her body as wounded.

In Hoque's fictionalized account, Safia's sorrow and sacrifice turn her into the Bangladeshi patriotic mother. An affective differentiation exists between the Bangladeshi mother and the figuration of the World War One patriotic mother. The latter was rendered a "good fit for a culture during [the First World War]" (Garner and Slattery 14) because she willingly sent her son to war and accepted his death during combat. She "limited the emotions she expressed in public to cheerfulness and pride. Her cheerfulness required that she be stoic and silent about her apprehension or sadness [of her son's death]; she neither cried nor mourned in public" (34). She writes out her son's death as a necessary sacrifice for the country and challenges the mother who publicly grieves over personal loss.

The Bangladeshi patriotic mother, to the contrary, visibly demonstrates how her sorrow occupies an ambivalent space in nationalist history. It is this sorrow that Hoque exalts: "Will you find another mother like Jahanara Imam? […] Will there ever be a mother like Azad's? […] The fighters' blood, the mothers' tears" (347). The nation plays

up Imam's and Safia's image as the deeply affective mother whose body bears testament to her internal suffering. Both mothers embody patriotism through foreseeing and withstanding the ordeal of relinquishing their sons. Safia and Imam portray how the "Mother of Martyrs" deliberately takes on pain and sorrow for national freedom, even if such pain destroys them from within.

Praising the Motherland, Policing the Human *Ma*: The Portrayal of Motherhood in Wartime Songs

Every new [song and poem] that reached the Melaghar camp created a sensation.
—Freedom's Mother

Melaghar camp *muktijoddhas* are not only skilled in the use of arms but are avid listeners of wartime songs that are broadcasted from the Free Bengal Radio Center.[44] These songs generate an internal bodily response within *muktijoddhas* who feel "shivers down their spines" (219). Internal shivers testify to the existence of a non-visible "secret weapon" ("Liberation War Songs") within the body. Figuratively, this weapon is accessed by freedom fighters through listening to and cultivating a collective affective response to war songs, whereby "Every [*muktijoddha*] member […] was deeply moved" (218). The lyrics become metaphorical weapons of affect that ignite war spirit among recruits at Melaghar

[44] Hoque refers to the period between May and June 1971 when *muktijoddha* training camps were formed in certain parts of India, including Melaghar which is in the northeastern state of Tripura (U. Singh 82). Indian army officials, along with former Bangladeshi military officers of the East Pakistan Rifles army force mentioned in Introduction, were responsible for "training, equipping, and providing logistical support to Mukti Bahini" (R.P. Singh "How the Mukti Bahini").

camp and turn them into martial patriots who demonstrate *muktijoddha* masculinity in the warzone. This section offers a critical reading of wartime lyrics by showcasing how they uphold a *muktijoddha*-motherland dyad while regulating the actions and emotions of the human mother.

Certain song choruses in Hoque's novel establish the *muktijoddha* and the mother as key symbols of national freedom. For instance, a few lines from a song by an anonymous author reads, "I have come with a lot of hope / Do take me into your arms, Mother / Don't turn me away" (lines 1-3, 336). The lyrics portray the *muktijoddha's* death as his way of embracing and becoming at one with the motherland, which is clear through the line, "take me into your arms, Mother." His plea, "Don't turn me away," indicates that he has no home to return to other than the motherland. The human *ma* does not appear in the song that emphasizes the bond between the *muktijoddha* and the mother-nation. The song's cursory illustration of the *muktijoddha* and motherland link is expanded in other wartime songs which this section explores.

One such song is the Samar Das composed "*Bhebo Naa Go Maa*." Das was one of the "chief organisers of the Shadhin [Swadhin] Bangla Betar Kendra" and received several accolades post liberation for producing wartime songs (Akbar, "Remembering"). Das begins "*Bhebo Naa Go Maa*" through the voice of an anonymous singer who speaks to the human mother as follows:

Bhebo naa go maa,
tomar chelera hariye giyeche pothe.
. . . . . .
Ora giyechilo raater adhare

shurjo anar jonno,

sharadesh jure rokto poddo
fotano je ononno.

. . . . . .

Ora eke geche shobuj matite

shojib praner shopno

. . . . . .

Dukkho korona,

ma go amar,

cheye dakho ranga prathe. . .

(Do not worry mother,

your sons are lost on their way to war.

They went, in the darkness of the night,

to bring the sun

and bloomed into red lotuses across the land.

They etched their spirited dreams

into the green soil.

Do not mourn,

my loving mother,

look closely at the red rising sun). (lines 1-2, 7-10, 15-16, 19-21—my translation)

"*Bhebo Naa*" depicts the mother's emotional state after her sons join the *mukti bahini*. The chorus reads, "Do not worry mother / your sons are lost on their way to war" (lines 1-2). The singer's act of consoling the mother appears ironic because they tell her not to mourn while holding up the possibility of her son's death. "*Bhebo Naa*" dictates the mother's emotions. It suggests that her pain reflects her inability to relinquish her ties with her sons, and thus differs from Hoque's veneration of the patriotic mother who

visibly articulates her sadness. The expression "Do not mourn" (line 19) implicitly cautions the mother against hoping for her son's mythical return.

We hear the singer extolling the *muktijoddhas*: "They went […] / to bring the sun" (lines 7-8). The sun represents freedom which only the male resistance fighter can bring to the nation. The sun's "red" (line 21) rays on the landscape symbolize the freedom fighter's blood. Here, the image of blood mitigates wartime violence and death by integrating it into the resistance fighter's aesthetic journey towards becoming one with the sun. "*Bhebo Naa*" urges the mother to "look closely at the red rising sun" (line 21) that writes out her son's demise. The lyrics idealize the mother who, in staring at the sun, comes to know about and accept the death of her son because it is rendered a worthwhile loss. The rising sun implies that through his death the son has contributed to the birth of a new future, the new nation.

Das's song accentuates the son's unification with both the sun and the motherland. This is apparent through the following lines: "[they] bloomed into red lotuses across the land. / They etched their spirited dreams / into the green soil" (lines 9-10, 15-16). These lines evoke Tanika Sarkar's theory of mythicizing the motherland. According to early twentieth-century Indian nationalist discourse, the colonized had a "desire to break out of colonialism's iron frame by a return to a past. This meant a return to one's mother, a reversion to the womb, to a state of innocence and pleasure, to a zone where the infant is as yet undifferentiated from the mother" (Sarkar 253). The fetishized womb comes to stand for the motherland, the "inner, hidden nation" (Sarkar 39). The idea of returning to

the womb showcases the colonized son's filial piety to the motherland which is based on re-producing an imagined time, that is, the pre-colonial past.

The concept of the son's undifferentiation from the mother, as elaborated by Sarkar in the context of Indian nationalism, resonates with how the wounded *muktijoddha's* blood seeps into the soil (*mati*) that is depicted as mother ("*Bhebo Naa*"). This form of blood and soil connection is a figurative representation of the son's reversion to the womb. The *mati* or soil, which is fantasized as home/womb, carries and nourishes the son's blood that blooms into "red lotuses across the land" (lines 9-10). The son's union with the soil does not denote "a return to a past" (Sarkar 253) but rather an echo of the future where blossoming lotuses symbolize the burgeoning nation. Red lotuses across the green soil invoke Bangladesh's flag which has a red circle on a green background. The martyred *muktijoddha* and the motherland are metaphorically scripted onto the flag. Das's song implicitly illustrates the flag as a national emblem which unfurls the tale of the "spirited" ("*Bhebo Naa*") sons of the soil who morph into lotuses (drawn as a red circle) as if to place their ghostly roots within the free nation deemed "green soil" ("*Bhebo Naa"*).

In "*Bhebo Naa*," the martyred son's association with the motherland echoes the lyrics of the war song "*Je Matir Buke*," or "Bosom of the Soil," composed by music director Selim Ashraf during the war period. In the 1960s Ashraf worked with a broadcasting channel called the East Pakistan Television, which is now known as Bangladesh Television ("Music Arena"). His song's chorus is as follows: "smear my body with the same soil / in the bosom of which rests numerous freedom fighters" (1-2,

"*Je Matir*" —my translation). The mother figure is represented by "the bosom" as a gender normative symbol of nurture, with the lyrics euphemizing dead resistance fighters as sons who are under the motherland's protection. Ashraf conflates the *mati* with the *muktijoddha* so that one cannot be differentiated from the other. The chorus of "*Je Matir Buke*" finds elaboration in the Gobinda Haldar-produced war song "*Mora Ekti Fulke Bachabo Bole Juddho Kori*" ("I Fight to Save a Single Flower"). Haldar worked with the Free Bengal Radio Center in Kolkata. The radio's editor Kamal Lohani recalls, "While we [Lohani and his colleagues] were searching for a lyricist who could capture the essence of our country's struggle, Gobinda Haldar appeared like a saviour with two notebooks loaded with 24 to 30 songs" (Yusuf, "Gobinda"). Lohani sees Haldar as someone whose written words articulate the suffering and sacrifices of the people. His famous song, *Mora Ekti*, illustrates a *muktijoddha* singer who believes that he must die for a flower. He asserts,

> *Mora ekti fulke bachabo bole juddho kori,*
> . . . . . .
> *je matir chiro momotae amar onge makha,*
> *jar nodi jol fule fole mor shopno aka,*
> . . . . . .
> *sharati jonom shei matir dane bokkho bhori. . .*
> (I fight to save a single flower,
> I smear my body with love that the soil offers,
> the soil whose river, water, flowers, fruits carry my dreams,
> I fill my heart with the soil's abundant love). (1, 4-5, 7—my translation)

The singer describes his emotional attachment to the soil. He says, "I fill my heart with the soil's abundant love" (line 7). The *muktijoddha's* heart becomes the site where his love for the soil and the soil's love for him meet. The singer's act of smearing soil on his body marks the external manifestation of this love while also gesturing towards the allegorical *muktijoddha*-to-motherland link. The soil reproduces the martyred *muktijoddha* singer into a flower amid multiple "red lotuses" ("*Bhebo Naa*") that symbolize his peers who died in war. In addition, this metaphor demonstrates how the singer becomes a part of the collective nationalist ideal.

The flower, moreover, represents the motherland as "delicate" and in need of rescuing. There is a gender-based power hierarchy at play here. The *muktijoddha* lays claim over the feminized land through suggesting that the "flower" is his to recover and love. This self-affirmation as the motherland's male savior is a theme that is also apparent in "*Maago Bhabna Kano*" ("Mother Why Worry") by Gauriprasanna Majumdar who is well-known for his lyrical contributions to many Bangla films of the 1960s. A riveting tune turns "*Maago Bhabna Kano*" into a significant wartime track which is sung by a group of *muktijoddhas*. In the words of the singers:

Maago bhabna kano

. . . . . .

tobu shotru ele ostro haate dhorte jani

tomar bhoy nei ma amra protibad korte jani

. . . . . .

tomar matir ekti konao charbona

. . . . . .

Bhirur moto ghorer kone roibona. . .
(Loving mother, why are you worried?
when the enemy strikes, we take up arms,
do not fear mother, we know how to fight,
we will protect every corner of your land,
we will not hide in our homes like cowards). (1, 3- 4, 6, 10—my translation)

The freedom fighters use the Bangla term "*maago*," mother dear or loving mother, to express their emotional connection with the mother figure. In the song's first verse, the freedom fighters seem to console the human *ma* who is afraid of losing her son in the war. The second verse disrupts this idea and replaces her with the motherland as evidenced through the lyrics: "mother […] we will protect every corner of your land" (lines 1-6). The resistance fighters vow to defend the land from the West Pakistani army. In focusing on the motherland and rejecting the protection of their mothers in their homes, the singers marginalize the human mother as well as their lived experiences of coping with their son's loss.

The singers declare, "We will not hide in our homes like cowards" (line 10), which portrays a normative gender demarcation. The *muktijoddha*s in *Maago*, like Azad, feel the need to be out in the public sphere as soldiers, versus their mothers who are firmly placed within the private realm of the home. The song reveals a double meaning of home; one signifies the physical house while the other connotes the mother's womb. The iconographies of the mother and the patriotic son are deployed around the image of the womb that is at once glorified and stigmatized. On one hand, the ideal *Shaheed Janani*

("Mother of Martyrs") serves the nation with her body that begets the martial son. On the other hand, the mother's womb becomes a site that must be rejected, the emphasis of which is clear in *Maago*. The singers render the womb as a place for the cowardly effeminate other who fails to fight for the motherland, their "real" home.

The warriors in *Maago* further declare, "do not fear *ma*, we know how to fight / […] we will protect every corner of your land" (lines 4, 6). The lyrics allude to the rape of the motherland personified as the female body. In critic Yasmin Saikia's words, "The rhetoric of sexual violence against Bengali [Bangladeshi] women now stood for the rape of Bangladesh. Preposterous as it may sound, these narratives enabled a mystic unity between woman, land, and nation. A powerful continuity between the land and nation was made and emphasis was shifted to the violation of Bangladesh by Pakistan" (76). Saikia's remark is crucial for examining *Maago* where the *ma* is asked to neither "worry" nor "fear" (lines 1, 4) the Pakistani military that is deemed the perpetrator, the land's abductor. *Ma* becomes the "mystic" (Saikia 76) illusion of the abducted woman. Saikia's adjective signals the way in which the land magically transforms into the flesh-and-blood woman. The singers' apostrophe to the motherland discloses their appeal to this illusion of a human woman, a homogenous maternal figure who waits for her sons to rescue her from the captivity of the military. The *ma* (woman) and *mati* (soil) unite with one another in a manner that prioritizes the recuperation of the land while dismissing the recovery of raped and sexually violated women. The singers misidentify their pledge to protect the land with the vicarious recuperation of women. They contemplate that in liberating the land they are also rescuing women without addressing how such rescuing takes place.

This insignificance placed on the raped woman in nationalist discourse is the topic of discussion in the next two sections where I analyze the figure of the *birangona* and *birangona-ma*.

Social Discourse on the Survivor and The Self as *Birangona*

To examine testimonies of the *birangona-ma*, it is important to first contextualize how the *birangona* is situated within social, familial, and gendered discourse. In this vein, I close read the first-hand account of a survivor, Shefali, in Nilima Ibrahim's 2018 testimonial collection *Ami Birangona Bolchi* (I am the War Heroine Speaking). Ibrahim was a social worker, writer, and teacher. She was part of the *Nari Punorbashon Kendro* (Women's Rehabilitation Organization), a 1972 women's association that worked to recover and provide shelter to wartime rape survivors ("As a War Heroine"). Ibrahim first published *Ami Birangona Bolchi* in 1994 and it was the only available collection of survivor testimonies in print at that time. Among the multiple accounts in Ibrahim's book, I examine Shefali's story because she not only offers insights into how the society views her, but also discloses how she owns the term *birangona*. Concentrating on how Shefali claims the term becomes vital for my discussion in the next section as it clarifies the way I use the expression *birangona-ma*. I suggest that Shefali's survivor testimony reveals how *muktijoddhas* legitimize a stigmatizing discourse deployed around the raped woman.

Shefali, who also goes by Shefa, recalls her freedom fighter brother Shantu who comments on himself and other *muktijoddhas*. Shantu remarks, "Shefali, how can anyone

blame you for getting abducted? We are the ones who failed to rescue you and other women, but we sure can denounce rape survivors to mask our own weakness" (107—my translation).[45] Shantu turns into a gallant war hero by virtue of fighting for the motherland, but Shefali's abduction is not celebrated as a heroic sacrifice for the nation. She is labelled as an "impure woman" (94—my translation) by the country's people. The abducted woman's existence reminds Shantu and his fellow *muktijoddhas* of their effeminacy generated through their "own weakness" or failure to save women from violence. This experience of emasculation is felt even as the *muktijoddha* becomes the masculine warrior through fighting for the nation.

Shefali elaborates upon the figure of the *rajakar-muktijoddha* through her recollection of a collaborator, Faruq. The *rajakar-muktijoddha* is different from the *rajakar*. He trains to become a freedom fighter and combats alongside his comrades. He also showcases loyalty to the Pakistani army, perhaps by providing information on the whereabouts of a freedom fighter camp or on the war strategies utilized by Bangladeshi sector commanders. In Shefali's words, "I bit into his [Faruq's] arm with all my strength. He screamed in pain. […] He tied his loincloth tightly over my mouth and took me directly to a West Pakistani military bunker. […] Now, when people ask him about the scars on his arm, he feigns it as an injury he underwent while combating against the

[45] The idea of condemning abducted women is also apparent in an example provided by Saikia. One unidentified freedom fighter, in a conversation with Saikia, claims that "'I did not join the Mukti Bahini to save women. I joined the Liberation War to save my country"' (79). The *muktijoddha* finds it rather difficult to fathom how one could compare the idea of saving the glorious nation ("my country") with recuperating sexually violated women. He implies that in rescuing raped women he would tarnish his reputation as a "prominent freedom fighter and decorated solider" (Saikia 79), the nation's ideal war hero.

military" (98—my translation). Faruq fabricates his identity as a wounded *muktijoddha* who hurt his arm while fighting for the nation. Specifically, he states that his "arm was struck by a bayonet and that is why it started to bleed" (97-98—my translation). Faruq's visible scars unwrite his wartime reality while imprinting his male privilege onto his body. As a man, he can display his scars and inevitably turn into a war hero whom the people laud. In addition, Faruq's professional position as a district level "judge" (98), an upper-middle class government worker with legal connections and official communication networks, prevents him from becoming the source of suspicion among people. In this sense, one would not question the legitimacy of a judge and thereby risk disparaging Faruq's status as both a government official and a national hero.

On Faruq's status Shefali notes in scorn, "See for yourself, the nation's *muktijoddhas*!" (98—my translation). She ridicules Faruq to confirm his role as the *rajakar-muktijoddha*, a wartime collaborator who "took her directly to a West Pakistani military bunker" (97-98—my translation) yet claims to be a freedom fighter in post-independent Bangladesh. Shefali's assertion, "See for yourself" (98), is an ironic response to people who uphold Faruq as a *muktijoddha* and an honorable judge, and do not query the truthfulness of his wartime tale. The continuation of gender-based power structure is evident as Shefali indicates that Faruq used coercive means to silence her and prevent her from revealing her story, and now Bangladeshi citizens are also refusing to listen to her narrative. This form of silencing is signified through the image of the "loincloth" that Faruq ties "tightly over [Shefali's] mouth" (97). While normatively associated with the male genitalia, the sexed body, the loincloth here is turned into an object of physical and

sexual violence against women. It further denotes the people's way of clothing (hiding) and thus discrediting Shefali's memories as false allegations meant to defame the "heroic" (98) Faruq. The illustration of the loincloth not only veils Faruq's perpetration of Shefali's suffering but displays her as the chastised *barangona*.

Shefali proclaims, "you all turned me into barangona" (94—my translation), alternately spelt as *barangana,* a pejorative term in Bangla which means impure woman. In D'Costa's view, "a term phonetically similar to 'Birangona' – *barangana* – means a prostitute or a loose woman, and has been used in some instances to mock the survivors" (*Nationbuilding* 120 —emphasis in original). In discussing the similarity in sound between *birangona* and *barangona,* Hasanat states, "I find this wordplay quite fascinating because it shows how easy it was for *birangonas* to slip through history's dungeon, and, at the same time, how difficult it was for them to escape that slippage" (10—emphasis in original). Hasanat, in a similar manner to D'Costa, argues that the nation's formation of the term *birangona* resulted in the offshoot of the expression *barangona*. At the social level, both words are deemed substitutes of one another. *Birangona* and *barangona* are used by the people to remind the survivor of her brutal encounter of rape which inevitably turns her into a woman of loose reputation. A social shaming of both the survivor and the sex worker takes place through the linking of one with the other whereby they are categorized as what Hasanat calls "[women] of the market-place (or brothel)" (10). Hasanat's use of "market-place" depicts the *birangona's* double objectification. During the war period, she was a commodity that sacrificed herself in exchange for national freedom. In the post-war era she is some-thing that could be purchased and dehumanized

through sexual abuse. Moreover, Mookherjee holds, "people […] referred to them [survivors] derogatorily as *barangonas, bara*, a crude obscenity for 'penis' (thus they were calling them 'women of the penis'), thereby branding the women with the words of the penetration and rape they had been subjected to" (150—emphasis in original). *Barangona* not only ascribes war heroines as raped but "rapable" (Saikia 100).

This social and ideological construct of the survivor is evident in Shefali's testimony. For her, the *rajakar-muktijoddha* Faruq "violates her body and inscribes her as rapable" (94—my translation). Shefali subtly backs Saikia's following point: "To know oneself as not only raped but rapable has a distinct affect on women's notion of self" (100). The term becomes an integral part of what Shefali calls her *ontorer porichoy* or "heart's identity" (94). It figuratively usurps her heart and destroys her selfhood from within, thus effacing the person she once was. This form of effacement reflects her symbolic and social demise which she confirms through her statement, "Shefa is dead" (98—my translation). She points to the people who, in classifying her as *barangona*, shuns her to the peripheries of society where she exists within a life-death boundary ("you all turned me into barangona," 94). Her "physical and emotional scars" (101) exceed the national imaginary and must therefore remain hidden (outside of "history's dungeon," Hasanat 10) to upkeep a homogenous nationalist narrative of the Liberation War.

Shefali self-identifies as a *birangona* without internalizing the social castigation that comes with the word. She rewrites her "heart's identity" (94) through affirming herself as "invincible" (98). Her "body, soul, and heart" (94) work together to inscribe her as a *birangona*, one who refuses to be marginalized and effaced by the nation and its

citizens. She reinforces who she, as a *birangona*, is not: a "rapable" (Saikia 100) woman. Shefali reclaims and confirms *birangona* as her word, the survivor's word, while underscoring *barangona* as a concept that testifies to the lack of collective compassion for survivors like her.

Recalling in Snippets: Disjointed Narratives of the *Birangona-Ma*

In this section, I analyze the intersectional identity along with the bodily and emotional experiences of the *birangona-ma*. My use of *birangona-ma* adheres to Shefali's reclamation of the term as opposed to state-based and social definitions that either romanticize, efface, or stigmatize survivors. I focus on a *birangona-ma* Komola Begum's remembrances of the war in Sharifa Bulbul's *Birangona Noy Muktijoddha* ("Freedom Fighter Not War Heroine"). Begum's first-person account is interspersed with third-person reportage by Bulbul who documents the following:

> Firstly, they slap Komola Begum and throw her into a lake. She manages to get up, but they kick her violently on the back. One of them kicks Begum's child three times with his boot. The daughter is half dead. One [soldier] remains with Begum while the other takes the semi-conscious child elsewhere. While speaking of her memories Begum's eyes become rife with tears. (52—my translation)

Bulbul presents a narrative form that depicts a linear connection of consecutive events. She begins Begum's story with the Bangla word "*prothome*," which translates to "firstly" (52). Bulbul records, "firstly, they slap Komola Begum and throw her into the lake. [then] She manages to get up, but they kick her violently on the back" (52). Bulbul incorporates into her writing sporadic moments of Begum's visible affective response where she cries

profusely. Begum, according to Bulbul, articulates her pain through tears on recounting sequential details of what had occurred.

Bulbul's work of bringing attention to *birangona-mas* like Begum must be acknowledged. At the same time, how she construes Begum's wartime suffering is reminiscent of a larger political framework that glosses over the survivor's pluralized wartime experiences. As Mookherjee suggests, "[several survivors] were promised a meeting with the chairman of the Central [Liberation War] Council, who would help with jobs and education for their children. But these promises would be fulfilled only if the women 'cry their own tears,' represent their pain, and be a birangona. Here, going public is what gained the women the identity of war heroines" (58). The phrase, "be a Birangona," is important to note because it corroborates that there exists a nationalist illustration of the model war heroine. She displays her pain not to her benefit but for the nation's interest. Her tears inscribe her status as a victim whose overt suffering invokes the urgency of eliminating war collaborators from post-war Bangladesh.

The pain and victimization of survivors are used as leverage to punish collaborators. Rhetorically, the model *birangona* wants the nation to incarcerate *rajakars*, the country's traitors who helped the Pakistani military to commit atrocities against women. Thus, male nationalists, such as *muktijoddhas* and pro-liberation politicians, appropriate women's wartime experiences to eradicate male enemies who are *rajakars*. These agents of nationalism construct a notion of what the model *birangona* wants (which is for collaborators to be punished) without listening to the war heroine when she speaks. The ideal *birangona* abides by the nationalist illustration given to her by men. In

this context, the survivor who blurs the *muktijoddha-rajakar* demarcation through her testimony (like Shefali, Ibrahim 97-98) fails to emulate the model *birangona*.

Begum, as Bulbul indicates, represents this image of the ideal war heroine through demonstrating her pain: "Begum's eyes become rife with tears" (52). Begum adds to the ideal *birangona* iconography not only through shedding tears but by telling her story in a step-by-step way. Firstly, Begum gets "slapped" and then "kicked," after which her daughter gets hit (52). Finally, a soldier "takes the semi-conscious child elsewhere" (52). While speaking of the brutality that the soldiers committed Begum hints at war collaborators who were complicit in her and her daughter's abuse. Bulbul reports that "Begum tried to leave her village to escape the Pakistani army but was unable to do so" (52—my translation). Bulbul subtly gestures to the missing gap in Begum's story: she could not escape the army because a *rajakar* informed them of her whereabouts. The *rajakar's* role in Begum's abuse and rape provides the nation with the impetus for punishing collaborators. The linear account of her physical and sexual violence reinforces Begum's status as passive victim for the purpose of accentuating the *rajakar's* treachery to the nation. In this scenario, Begum's tears not only convey her pain but express her longing for the *rajakar's* death and, by extension, the death of all Liberation War collaborators.

Bulbul's notion of Begum's pain and the way she narrates her memories do not quite capture the complexities of how the rape survivor remembers the past. One wonders if Begum, while speaking with Bulbul, provided a chronological account of her physical violence that led to her sexual violence. In Saikia's words, "Retrieving survivors'

memories is, of course, not an easy, straightforward process. The memories of violence are inchoate; there is nothing coherent about the violence that has left survivors asking how to tell the experiences" (8). Saikia's claim pertains to women who underwent rape and sexual violence during the Liberation War. She describes survivors' memories as "inchoate," and thereby fragmented. Saikia argues that women's "trauma of violence" (8) results in their forgetting or suppression of parts of their memories. This form of forgetting happens at the individual level and is distinct from the national marginalization of women's stories. The survivor copes with her trauma through both an unintentional as well as conscious unremembering of certain aspects of the past.

This interconnection between trauma, remembering in fragments, and not remembering at all, is relevant to understanding Komola Begum's testimony and its contexts. During her communication with Bulbul, Begum indicates how narrating her past for people to know would only worsen her already existing societal ostracism. Begum recounts, "'it is difficult to live in the village. […] Many people classify us as wicked women who should be expelled from the village'" (qtd. in Bulbul 54—my translation). Through using "us," Begum suggests that there are other *birangonas* and possibly *birangona-mas* in her village, Bindupara, northern Bangladesh. The phrase, "should be expelled," signifies a sense of collaborative duty among the people to rid the village of *birangonas*. The members of Bindupara imagine a moral boundary that separates the "respectful" village community from *birangonas* ascribed as "wicked women." It appears that Begum does not want to explicitly disclose her memories of 1971 in fear of complete physical exclusion from her home along with her becoming a subject of social scrutiny. If

Begum speaks of the past, she does so in non-linear fragments and through implicitly referring to the violence meted out to her and her daughter; speaking tacitly would at least not result in her expulsion or possible harm by village members.

In recalling the war period, Begum narrates how military officials "kick her [daughter] violently on the back. One of them kicks Begum's child three times" (52). She witnesses her daughter's physical assault while getting violated herself. She undergoes multiple modes of pain: that of being abused, seeing her daughter being harmed, and recalling these memories. In witnessing her daughter's suffering, Begum turns it into her own. Her daughter's pain lives through her body that is also the bearer of her own pain. This form of double affect is complex. On one hand, it connects her to a traumatic past while on the other, it symbolically ties her to her daughter. The very memory of her daughter being physically harmed is one that she could not forget. Bulbul cites Begum verbatim accordingly, "'they [the military] torture me in the lake itself. […] My daughter was right by my side. They did not even spare my one-and-a-half-year-old child. They hit her. They tortured a lot'" (53—my translation). The absent pronoun "us," in the phrase "they tortured [us] a lot" (53), presents Begum's narrative as one in which the subjects who bear the impact of repeated torture are themselves effaced. The missing pronoun also depicts Begum's story as fragmented in both memory and language.

To understand this link between memory and language, it is important to explore Mookherjee's discourse on how the *birangona* verbalizes and makes sense of her past. The *birangona's* expression of traumatic memories via language signifies for Mookherjee "words that trickle out, showing the impact of violence […] by means of everyday idioms

rather than articulating it explicitly" (108). Mookherjee provides the example of a survivor, Kajoli, who recalls that "when the military left, they took the 'life' out of her" (110). Kajoli's expression, "life out of," denotes both a violent erasure of her selfhood and a suffering of social death whereupon she lives as a pariah. Kajoli further mentions the word "*toofan* [cyclone]" (Mookherjee 110), not only to comment on the environment but to connote how rape has destroyed her sense of self and her ability to speak of the past in a way that is not in disjointed smatterings.

Kajoli's fragmented account is key for analyzing Begum's testimony. Begum uses the word "*ottachar*," or "torture" (Bulbul 53), which has the connotation of rape. Post-war Bangladesh signifies rape with certain expressions. For instance, according to Mookherjee, "the war heroines themselves referred to it as 'secret words,' 'the event' and 'loss'" (109). She adds, "The Bengali word for rape—*dhorshon*—was rarely used" (109—emphasis in original). The term "*dhorshon*," is not just socially forbidden but elicits certain stark memories of the past that Begum would rather not remember. *Ottachar*, instead of *dhorshon*, becomes her "secret word" (Mookherjee 109) that allows her to allude to her sexual violence without overtly classifying the self as raped. It is this reference to her violation that turns *ottachar* into a word which enables Begum to cope with her trauma as she recalls remnants of the past. Her narrative appears even more disjointed as she speaks of her daughter using the following phrases: "boot," "tortured a lot," and "hit her" (52-53). The soldier's "boot" (52) becomes both an object used for physical violence and an ominous prefiguration of sexual violence. The image of the boot not only suggests the action of "kick[ing]" (52), but also trampling and other forms of

atrocities that Begum could not verbalize, a set of associations that substantiates Saikia's point that "the violence […] has left survivors asking how to tell the experiences" (8). Begum's observation that "they did not even spare my one-and-a-half-year-old child" (53), implies that her daughter might have also been raped. She provides another evocation of her daughter's suffering of sexual brutality when she narrates, "*onek ottachar koreche* ("they tortured a lot")" (53). Terms such as torture (*ottachar*), kick, and hit, which conspicuously affirm violence, become quotidian words for Begum that reflect her painful memory with snippets of muddled accounts and missing pronouns.

Begum's trauma could be further comprehended through Mookherjee's contention on how the *birangona's* body carries traumatic memories. Mookherjee writes, "The metaphors of everyday activities signal the inexpressibility of the trauma encoded in the body" (115). This form of trauma includes pain and suffering which lives within the body and becomes a reminder of the survivor's wartime rape. For instance, a survivor, Rohima, recounts that "this monthly nightmare would not let her forget 'the incident' even if she wanted to" (Mookherjee 113). The idiom, "monthly nightmare," evokes Rohima's menstrual cramps. Her menstrual pain exacerbates her bodily pain that is triggered through her traumatic memories of sexual violence which she refers to as "the incident." Rohima describes her menstruation in the following manner: "it was like when a goat or cow is slaughtered and the blood comes out in a spurt" (113). "Slaughtered" and "blood" invoke an extreme degree of wartime violence wherein Rohima suggests that one could not fathom what she went through. She states the word "slaughtered" to covertly question

the nationalist romanticization of the *birangona* as the sub-human/non-human war heroine ("a goat or cow," 113) who sacrifices herself for freedom.

In a similar way to Rohima, Begum's trauma resides within her body in the form of double pain, whereby she bears the memories of both her and her daughter. Her "rife" (52) tears not only attest to her internal double suffering but metaphorically inscribe her pain and trauma externally on the skin. In this respect, it is worth revisiting Sara Ahmed's notion where "pain involves the violation or transgression of the border between inside and outside" (27). Begum's skin symbolizes a boundary-in-flesh that enables her pain to straddle between the inner and the outer. She speaks her story in both tongues and tears, pausing amid verbal snippets as she starts to cry (52). In doing this, Begum narrates her traumatic testimony via both language and body where not only words but tears "trickle out" (Mookherjee 108). Begum's embodiment as the tearful *birangona-ma* ruptures the uniform image of the patriotic mother who laments the loss of her *muktijoddha* son (Hoque 233). Begum is not only a *birangona* but the mother of a possible *birangona* whose story lives through her *ma*.

Begum's portrayal of the *birangona-ma* is comparable to the testimony by a survivor, Rajubala Dey, who comes from a village called Chandpur, near southeastern Bangladesh. Dey, as interpreted by Bulbul, recounts the following:

> Suddenly, there was the Pakistani army. […] Rajubala took her daughter on her lap and tried to escape. One military officer pushed her to the ground. She fell on top of her daughter. Rajubala got up, took her daughter, and started to run. The army officials snatched her daughter from her lap and threw her to the ground, which crushed her skull and wounded her mouth. […] The army took Rajubala to an adjacent forest. Three soldiers took turns raping her. […] They not only raped

> her, but they also hurt her body. She has punch marks on her face and scars on her body. She is wounded in both body and heart, she is devastated. (65-66—my translation)

Dey's scars are an apparent indicator of her suffering, which places her within the category of the model *birangona*. She turns into the ideal war heroine whose injuries are aestheticized as battle scars. Her body as a site of trauma brings attention to the nation's demarcation between the wounded freedom fighter and the wounded war heroine. The masculine freedom fighter's injuries are nationally lauded while the model *birangona's* visible scars consolidate her abject status as the sexually violated woman. The ideal wounded *birangona* is at once socially shunned while stories of her injuries are utilized to serve a nationalist rhetorical purpose. However, Dey speaks of her wounds not to cater to a nationalist agenda but to subtly offer an alternative depiction of the mother figure.

She elaborates on the image of the *birangona-ma* through illuminating connections between gender and religion. She talks about her socially and politically excluded status whereby,

> she is not permitted to set foot in temples. People say that they cannot have her pray or take part in any voluntary service in the temple. Nobody allows her to work. Rajubala now lives on her own. […] She begs and waits for people to distribute alms. […] The *birangona* title brings her more shame than respect. […] People in her neighborhood curse at her. (67—my translation)

A Hindu *birangona*, Dey becomes a triply marginalized figure whose existence is denied by the nation-state, the people of her village, and the village's local Hindu community. The state, along with portraying Dey as a figure of sacrifice, lacks judicial policies to protect her and other Hindu women in Bangladesh. For example, Sadeka Halim, in discussing Bangladeshi Hindu women, writes, "there is no marriage registration system

for Hindu people in Bangladesh. […] Therefore, if any Hindu woman suffers in the hands of her in-laws [or husband], she does not get legal help" (174). In addition, if she wishes to end her marriage for reasons not related to family and domestic abuse, she does not have the option of doing so.[46] In relation to Hindu women's property ownership in Bangladesh, Halim says, "[Upon her husband's demise she] can deal with her property in any way she desires, which after her death will pass on to her own heirs" (173). This rule was an extension of pre-colonial Hindu Law that became prominent during the twentieth century colonial period and the post-Partition era in East Pakistan (Halder and Jaishankar 665-667). Since independence, the Bangladesh constitution made no amendments to Hindu women's property rights that are under the jurisdiction of personal laws of the Hindu community. Thus, both the patriarchal nation and religious leaders maintain laws that disenfranchise the Hindu woman.

This inheritance law of Hindu people is applicable to Dey who "now lives on her own" (67). Neither Dey nor Bulbul give details of her living condition. One is inclined to believe that Dey did not inherit any property from her deceased husband, Horipod. She "begs and waits for people to distribute alms" (67), which indicates that her *birangona* status, along with her religious identity, not only deprive her of owning property but also prevent her from receiving any kind of monetary support from the government. It appears that the state exempts itself from providing funds to Dey under the pretense that she is receiving financial assistance from the Hindu community. The Hindus of her village, on

[46] The Bangladesh government passed a Hindu marriage registration law on 18 September 2012, but a lawyer Nina Goswami believes that the law is "only a token gesture to placate mainstream Hindu women without angering Hindu men" ("Bangladesh's Hindu Women").

the other hand, refuse to provide her with paid employment and ban her from entering the temple (67).

Her expulsion from Chandpur's Hindu community has a link to her social shaming. Hindu members of Dey's village "curse at her" (67), which suggests that they label her as a *barangona*. Not only is Dey held culpable for her rape, but she is seen as adding a layered meaning to the term *barangona*: a Hindu woman who is raped by Muslim men. Such a notion is apparent through the following statement: "during the war she did something with the [Muslim] military" (67). Her abduction bears a connection with the Pakistani military discourse on religion and gender brutality. D'Costa states, "the publicly declared intention of the military to make 'true Muslims' out of the Bengalis [Bangladeshis] contributed to particular targeting of Bengali women regardless of their religion. […] Some evidence indicates that members of the Pakistani armed forces and the para-militia boasted of impregnating Bengali women and making 'pure Muslims' out of Bengalis" ("Once" 468). The army claims to committing mass rape to create a new generation of the "true" (468) Muslim. The woman's body turns into the site of "genocidal masculinity" (D'Costa, "Once" 466) that makes use of Islam as a tool to legitimize the wartime sexual violence of women. Impregnation via rape becomes a means to make a pure Muslim of the impure Hindu woman. In this context, Dey is considered a traitor to the Hindu religion through what is deemed her conversion to Islam. A *barangona* and traitor, she could no longer "pray […] in the temple" (67) which is not only a space of faith and community but serves as a moral boundary that determines who belongs and who does not belong.

Dey is further considered treacherous because of the subtle indication that she had possibly given birth to a child and contributed to the new generation of Muslims. Her intertwined status as *birangona* and probable mother to a (war) baby underscores not only her impurity but her imagined attempts at continuing the legacy of such impurity. Her explicit derogation at multifarious levels, specifically by the military, village individuals and Chandpur's Hindu population, along with her national legal marginalization, depict how the Hindu *birangona-ma* becomes the figure of perpetual otherization from the war period to the post-war era. The almost complete effacement of Dey's and her daughter's stories go together with the military-and-society-enforced erasures of her religious identity. This form of multiple dismissal results in punishment meted out to Dey for being alive as a shadowy presence as opposed to being physically dead.

Conclusion: Embodied Stories: The *Muktijoddha's* Mother and the *Birangona-Ma*

The testimonies of Rajubala Dey and Komola Begum affirm that nationalism benefits from characterizing the patriotic mother rather than acknowledging the intersectional identities and fragmented memories of wartime mothers and women. The nationalist historical fiction, *Freedom's Mother*, like the wartime songs it references, is replete with notions of patriotic motherhood. This ideal mother is a strategic figure that national discourse shapes and implements to marshal *muktijoddha* recruits. The mother becomes the *Shaheed Janani* ("Mother of Martyrs") who is complicit in the nation's goal of recuperating a denied masculinity through giving her son permission to fight. Through

establishing a connection between the human mother and the motherland, the patriarchal state premises *muktijoddha* masculinity upon a narrative of motherhood. According to this narrative, the mother wants her son to become at one with the mother-nation. His refusal to fight would render him a traitor to his mother (both human and allegorical). The affective rhetoric of the sorrowful *Shaheed Janani* euphemizes the state's legitimizing of the resistance fighter's mutilation and suppresses mothers who are required to send their sons to undergo such mutilation.

The nation's visible recollection of freedom fighters makes mythologizing the *muktijoddha's* mother much more necessary in comparison to the model *birangona* and the *birangona-ma*. The *birangona-mas,* Begum and Dey, are not nationally and socially glorified like the *muktijoddha's* mother, for example, Safia in Hoque's novel. Moreover, Dey's and Begum's categorizations as model war heroines do not unwrite their shaming by village community members. By contrast, Safia is remembered as "Mossammat Safia Begum, Mother of Martyr Azad" (Hoque 6). In Hoque's words, "That is all. She needs no other tag. The gravestone says nothing more, does not describe her in any way" (6). This inscription on her tombstone carries a double meaning with regards to Azad. "Azad" is not only her son's name but also the Bangla term for freedom. Mythically, Safia is the mother of the liberated nation. The book's title, "*Freedom's Mother*," illustrates this play on words. Nonetheless, in a context where women's pain and bodily wounds mark them as the ideal mother/model *birangona,* it is important to explore how Safia, Begum, and Dey use their bodies to write a counter narrative, however subtle.

The lived and embodied experiences of women, and specifically mothers, are illustrated despite all the ways in which they are mythologized and marginalized. For example, vestiges of Safia's voice lurk beneath Hoque's explicit representation of her as the patriotic mother of Azad. Safia tells Jahanara Imam, "Apa [sister], my son did not die. He is alive and is going to return one day" (339). Safia hints at Azad's metaphorical reversion to the womb through the phrase, "return one day." Her firm belief, "He is alive," connotes the idea that she is keeping Azad protected within her body which echoes her earlier determination to "insulate him from all dangers" (305). Her internal body carries the secret of a figurative reunion which remains unknown to the nation that confirms Azad as the son of the motherland. Through her assertion, "my son did not die," Safia somewhat interrupts her depiction as the patriotic mother who is meant to accept her son's demise. She further complicates the novel's portrayal of her "torn" and teary (231-233) state as simply the mother's expression of pain that the nation demands. "Torn" gestures towards the nation that tears Safia's son away from her and leaves her in tears, which she reiterates through evoking lament, "Oh, so many mothers have lost their children over this *Joy Bangla* thing" (173). Safia upholds that the nation has caused numerous women to grieve while also signaling how the woman's body becomes the site that finds indirect and secretive ways to inscribe her identity as much more than that of being the ideal mother.

The idea of the body's secret is applicable to the stories of Begum and Dey. Both survivors implicitly speak of how their daughters' memories reside within their bodies. In Begum's case, these memories exacerbate the pain she already experiences on

remembering her own torture, thereby forming a sense of double pain. For Dey, pain becomes a form of double wound. Her recollection of her daughter's wounded state worsens her bodily and emotional wound which leaves her scarred in "both body and heart" (Bulbul 66). Their bodies' affective ties to their daughters and their stories foreground an intersectional identity that is further complex. The *birangona-ma* not only bears but reproduces her *birangona*-daughter's story via inchoate speech as if to subtly ask the nation: what happens to the daughter who got violated and the raped mother who carries her abused daughter's memories? Dey and Begum reveal their bodies' secrets in tacit trickles, never quite explicitly articulating their daughters' tortures. Perhaps they do not want the daughters to be further shamed as "*barangonas*" (Ibrahim 94) while, at the same time, hoping that their published testimonies would help to make visible their and their children's stories as a step towards facilitating their rightful acceptance in both national and social life.

Conclusion: Connecting Forgotten Histories: The Wounded Martyr and the Abducted Woman

This dissertation explores how dominant nationalist leaders and memorial practices in Bangladesh both shape and produce a selective understanding of the *muktijoddha*. It showcases how national rhetoric on the 1971 war portrays a gender and social demarcation among the *muktijoddha*, *muktijoddha's* mother, and the *birangona*/*birangona-ma*. I illustrate how freedom fighter memoirs and women's testimonies disrupt this selective gender construction of the *muktijoddha* and the *birangona*, and thereby make a case for listening to survivors' varying experiences of the war. Chapter One examines the ways in which nationalist discourse, in the form of memoirs, parliamentary debates, and governmental speeches, constructs the ethos of Mujiban masculinity that informs *muktijoddha* masculinity which champions a singular iconography of the ideal male freedom fighter. This idealized figure embodies *muktijoddha* masculinity in war through mutilating/killing the "enemy" and becoming mutilated/getting killed. From a careful analysis of select personal accounts of *muktijoddhas* in Chapter Two, however, the wounded and mutilated freedom fighter emerges as a site of ambiguity. His "torn" body (Mozumder 150) attests to his masculinity via sacrifice while simultaneously underscoring his pain and possible fear which are emotions that nationalist leaders as well as some *muktijoddhas* consider "effeminate." The romanticized *muktijoddha* further showcases courage through his love for the motherland that generates his separation from the intimate realm of family and his birth mother as he dedicates his life to the allegorical mother-nation. Through my analysis

of the *muktijoddha's* mother and the intersectional embodied experiences of the *birangona-ma* in Chapter Three, I went on to argue that Liberation War history and fiction focus on the woman in so far as she helps to reinforce the image of the masculine *muktijoddha*. In this context, fictional texts (such as novels and songs) on the war establish a myth surrounding the freedom fighter's mother who abides by the nationalist notion of sending her son to war. The overall objective of this inquiry into the embodiment and ambiguity of *muktijoddha* masculinity is to draw attention to men who put themselves up for mutilation and women who suffer from pain, sexual violation, religious discrimination, and losses that could only be spoken of in fragments.

In this coda, I reflect on the importance of remembering bodies that are marginalized from national memory and South Asian history. I seek to elucidate (possible) inter-generational, inter-communal, and affective connections across India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, with the hope of fostering human relations and creating interpersonal bonds that work to dispel the present-day religious conflicts in Bangladesh. The 13-19 October 2021 anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh was reported in various national and international newspapers (*The Daily Star*; *The Hindu*; *The New York Times*). My first thought upon reading newspaper coverage of the conflict in 2021 was: *again*! Again, a continuation of the cyclical occurrence of religious violence in South Asia, which had created the nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. This recurring violence is substantiated through news coverage by Anbarasan Ethirajan who focuses on the 2021 events in Bangladesh. Ethirajan reports the death of Hindu college student Pranta Chandra Das in Noakhali, Bangladesh: "His [Chandra Das's] body was found a day later

in a nearby pond. It was marked by injuries" ("Bangladesh's Hindus"). Reading this description of Das's wounded body found floating in a pond, evoked memories of my mother's story of her neighborhood sweet seller Ghosh's body that was similarly, mysteriously, "found floating in the river" (Mazid, Personal interview) during the 1952 military violence in East Pakistan, which is stated in the Introduction of this project. Both Das's and Ghosh's deaths, separated by almost seven decades, makes it clear that the wounded Hindu neither belonged nor belongs in a military-dominated East Pakistan or present-day Bangladesh.

Following the event of Chandra Das's death, several Hindus interviewed by a Bangladeshi newspaper noted that "The series of attacks […] [remind them of] the brutality of the 1971 Liberation War" ("Role of Awami League"). The interviewees affirm that the anti-Hindu assaults which took place on October 2021 were not isolated events; rather, these events harked back to the sectarian conflicts that occurred in East Bengal and East Pakistan, which perpetuated the notion that Hindus do not belong in an Islamic province or nation.[47] The interviewees appear to not only carry the traumas of the present violence of 2021 but also of past sectarian brutalities. This accumulated trauma of cyclical violence reinforces the Hindu community's lingering sense of unbelonging to the same nation that once called on Hindu and Muslim men to sacrifice themselves for national independence.

[47] During the periods of the Bengal partition (1905-1911) and pre-Partition (1946), East Bengal witnessed anti-Hindu atrocity whereupon many Hindus were killed (Azad 32), and Hindu-owned shops and houses destroyed (Azad 33; Roy 184). For a detailed analysis of anti-Hindu atrocities during the colonial and post-1947 periods, see Introduction Chapter.

Hindu and Muslim *muktijoddhas* were marshalled for war upon Mujib's declaration of independence, as discussed in Chapter One. Mujib's narrative of Hindu-Muslim accord during the Liberation War needs to be comprehended in the context of a shared Bangla culture. The *muktijoddha* is explicitly presented in nationalist narratives as exclusively Bangladeshi, as historically ruptured from the colonial period. However, the 1952 Language Movement, which consolidated the struggle for Bangladesh's liberation, signals a shared cultural-linguistic bond with Bengalis/Indians of the colonial era. Protesters of the 1952 Language Movement muddy the territorial boundaries of India/Pakistan/Bangladesh through the tongue, while gesturing towards a ghostly affective camaraderie with 1905 Bangla-speaking protesters of the Movement against the British to divide Bengal based on religion. According to Ghulam Sarwar Murshid, "'Young men of another generation fought for the liberation of their soil in 1971 with their legacy in their bones'" (qtd. in C. Das 2). Here the phrase "legacy in their bones" suggests that the *muktijoddha* hails from the double lineage of wounded East Pakistani patriots and Bengali/Indian revolutionaries. Murshid implicitly thinks back to the early twentieth-century colonial period when anti-colonial revolutionaries such as Khudiram Bose (1889-1908) and Surjya Sen (1894-1934) engaged in militant activities in Bengal. Murshid's overt reference to this ancestral legacy of the *muktijoddha* is similar to Minu Rani Das's statement that reads, "men who fought the Liberation War are Surjya Sen's sons" (63—my translation). This statement establishes an inter-generational tie between a Hindu Surjya Sen and a Muslim Mujib and his *muktijoddha* men. Examples of such trans-

Bengali inter-communal brotherhood can be found in historical records of the anti-colonial struggle for India's independence and the Bangladesh Liberation War.[48]

This idea of a trans-Bengali inter-communal bond across time and nations foregrounds the necessity of understanding the *muktijoddha* in connection with the Bengali/Indian anti-colonial revolutionary. Journalist Manini Chatterjee records that Bengali/Indian revolutionaries like Hari Gopal Bal Tegra (1915-1930) and Naresh Ray (unknown-1930) died in a battle against the imperial army while trying to free the "entire Motherland [India]" (97) from colonial domination (133).[49] Another revolutionary Ananda Prasad Gupta (birth year unknown) is celebrated by Chatterjee for upholding martial masculinity by fighting against imperial soldiers and thus disrupting the colonial rhetoric of the effeminate or "Timid Bengali" (Gupta 88). Thus, both East Pakistani Language Movement protesters and Liberation War *muktijoddhas* contribute to the history of masculine Bengali men who have fought, killed, and died for the nation. Comprehending the *muktijoddha* as a revivified wounded patriot with brotherly ties to both the Indian revolutionary and the East Pakistani language martyr ruptures the conventional idea that this figure emerged solely to represent Bangladesh and its Liberation War history.

Along with men's patriotism, women's memories link the 1971 Liberation War to the 1947 Partition. I engage with how *birangonas* and *birangona-mas* bear a connection

[48] To provide some details of these examples, a Muslim revolutionary called Nawab Meah took part in the 1930 anti-colonial raids with his Hindu counterparts (Dutt 71), while Hindu *muktijoddhas* like Chitta Ranjan Dutta (Hasan, "War Hero") and Moni Singh (Dey, "Tribute") fought alongside Muslim comrades.
[49] On 22 April 1930, a battle took place between anti-colonial revolutionaries and soldiers of the imperial army at the Jalalabad Hill in Chittagong, British India (Chatterjee 126-135).

with women who were abducted and raped during 1947. I argue that this connection is established through women's traumatic memories of sexual violence and how they speak of their traumas that the nation-state does not address. The 1947 Partition resulted in the mass abduction and rape of women from India and Pakistan (V. Das; Menon and Bhasin). Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin describe how survivors of sexual violence during Partition talk about the past: "Fragments of memory, shards of a past, remembrances bitter and sweet are strung together in a sequence that often has no chronology" (18). The Partition survivor's fragmented way of narrating the past echoes the Liberation War period *birangona* and *birangona-ma* who, as I explored in Chapter Three, also tell their stories in fragments. On the Partition survivor, Menon and Bhasin add, "the 'fragment' is significant precisely because it is marginal rather than mainstream, particular (even individual) rather than general […] The perspective such materials offer us can make for insights into how histories are made and what gets inscribed, as well as direct us to an alternative reading of the master narrative" (8). According to Menon and Bhasin, the master narrative of the Partition is evident in Indian official records and government information in which "the numbing details of violence against women […] [are] invisible" (11), much like the government chronicles on the Liberation War from which the *birangona's* embodied and affective experiences are missing. The significance of retrieving forgotten stories of the *birangona* and *birangona-ma* needs to be considered within the larger historical context of women's stories of Partition and the Liberation War, which offer counter archives or different stories that question the singular dominant nation-building histories of these two events. The disjointed memories of individual

survivors help in contemplating the profundity of women's collective trauma that offers another dimension to the two South Asian historical cataclysms (Partition and Liberation War), and blurs the exclusive contours of national narrativization of women's pain and trauma.

The embodied and affective stories of women survivors and wounded men, when interwoven with marginalized histories of the colonial times, the Partition era, and the period of East Pakistan, produce an alternative perspective on Liberation War history. This alternative rendering urges Bangladeshis of the wartime and post-war generations to rethink their understandings and readings of the Liberation War in ways that generate essential dialogue on the inter-communal, cultural-linguistic, gender, and affective dimensions of 1971 in connection with past historical events in South Asian history. This dissertation asks Bangladeshi citizens to ruminate on the forgotten voices of the wounded *muktijoddha*, the bleeding revolutionary, the East Pakistani language martyr, the *birangona*/*birangona-ma*, and the 1947 abducted woman. Doing so will engender further insight into how violence in its many modalities (ethnic, colonial, communal, gender, national) not only kills, destroys, and displaces, but also otherizes/effaces certain voices, stories, and bodies. The goal of this project is to bring together people from different regions, religions, language groups, and genders, to initiate conversations about the interconnected, shared, and disputed histories of South Asia with the aim of creating recognition of forgotten memories. This project hopes for people to work toward building a more harmonious and equitable future. Afterall, our voices, words, and works are all catalysts for change.

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Appendix

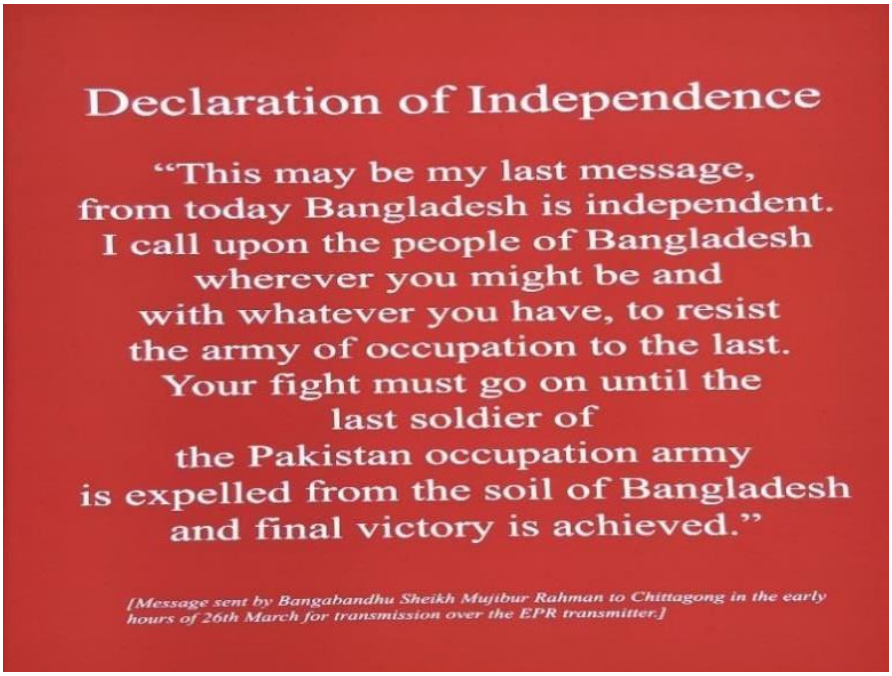
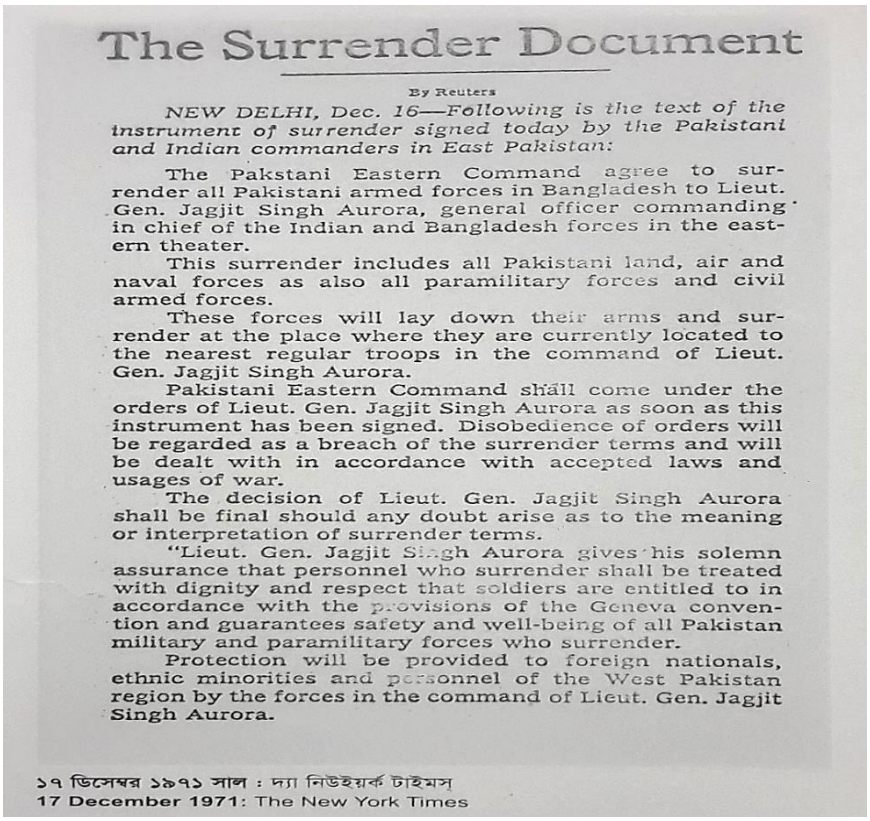


Fig. 1 *Declaration of Independence* – Muktijuddho Jadughor, Liberation War Museum

Fig. 2 *Liberation Supplement* – North South University Central Library



The Surrender Document

By Reuters

NEW DELHI, Dec. 16—Following is the text of the instrument of surrender signed today by the Pakistani and Indian commanders in East Pakistan:

The Pakstani Eastern Command agree to surrender all Pakistani armed forces in Bangladesh to Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, general officer commanding in chief of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theater.

This surrender includes all Pakistani land, air and naval forces as also all paramilitary forces and civil armed forces.

These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the place where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops in the command of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora.

Pakistani Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with accepted laws and usages of war.

The decision of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora shall be final should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of surrender terms.

"Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora gives his solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva convention and guarantees safety and well-being of all Pakistan military and paramilitary forces who surrender.

Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of the West Pakistan region by the forces in the command of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora.

১৭ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৭১ সাল : দ্যা নিউইয়র্ক টাইমস্
17 December 1971: The New York Times

Fig. 3 *The Surrender Document* – North South University Central Library

বিশ্বের মানচিত্র থেকে স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম

বাংলাদেশের অস্তিত্ব মুছে ফেলার শক্তি

কারো নেই –

সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম

১৯৪৭ সালে পলাশীর আম্র কাননে বাংলাদেশ তার স্বাধীনতা হারিয়েছিল আজ ১৯৭১ সালের ১৭ই এপ্রিল সেই প্রাচীন জেলারই আর এক আম্র কাননে জন্ম নিল স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশ রাষ্ট্র।

কুষ্টিয়া জেলার মেহেরপুর মহকুমার একটি গ্রামের নতুন নামকরণ হয় মুজিব নগর। এই মুজিব নগরই হলো বাংলা দেশের অস্থায়ী রাজধানী।

সেদিন বেলা ১১টা ১০ মিনিটঃ মঞ্চের পশ্চিম দিক থেকে এলেন নেতারা। সমবেত জনতা জয়ধ্বনি দিলেন। অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম প্রথমে নিলেন সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর অভিবাদন। এর পরে নেতারা মঞ্চে এসে চোয়ারে বসলেন। প্রথমে উপরাষ্ট্রপতি। তারপর প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাজউদ্দিন। তারপর মন্ত্রী খন্দকার মুসতাক আহমদ, ক্যাপটেন মনসুর আলী, জনাব কামরুজ্জামান এবং প্রধান সেনাপতি কর্নেল আতাউল গনি ওসমানি। স্বেচ্ছাসেবকরা পুষ্পবৃষ্টি করে তাদের অভিবাদন জানালেন।

জনাব আবদুল মান্নান শুরু করলেন অনুষ্ঠান সূচী। প্রথমেই নতুন রাষ্ট্রের ঐতিহাসিক, দলিল ঘোষণাপত্র পাঠ করলেন দলের চীফ হুইপ অধ্যাপক ইউসুফ আলী।

সাড়ে ৭ কোটি বাঙালীর যে স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম দেশ জন্ম নিল তার নাম হলো 'স্বাধীন গণপ্রজাতান্ত্রিক বাংলা দেশ। তখন সারা আকাশে ছিল থোকা থোকা মেঘ। চারটি ছেলে প্রাণ ঢেলে 'আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি গানটি গাইল। এর আগে পবিত্র কোরান শরীফ থেকে তেলাওয়াত করা হলো।

তারপর উঠে দাঁড়ালেন স্বাধীন বাংলা দেশের অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম। পায়জামা আর পাঞ্জাবী পরনে। সুতরাং তিনি বললেনঃ অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি হিসাবে আমি তাজউদ্দিন আহমদকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী পরে নিয়োগ করেছি এবং তার পরামর্শক্রমে আরও তিনজনকে মন্ত্রীরূপে নিয়োগ করেছি। একে একে তিনি পরিচয় করিয়ে দিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী এবং তার তিন সহকর্মীর সঙ্গে। তারপর ঘোষণা করলেন প্রধান সেনাপতি পদে কর্নেল ওসমানির নিয়োগ। আর বললেন সেনাবাহিনীর চীফ অব স্টাফ পদে নিয়োগ করা হয়েছে কর্নেল আবদুর রবকে।

তিনি সাড়ে ৭ কোটি বাঙালী মনমানসের অবিসংবাদিত নেতা বন্ধবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবের কথা বারবার বললেন। তার প্রতিভা, বাক্তিত্ব, আত্ম ও স্বার্থত্যাগ এবং বিরাট রাজনৈতিক জীবনের কথা বললেন। তিনি বলেন, আজ এই আম্রকাননে একটি নতুন জাতির জন্ম নিল। বিশ্বের সকল মানুষ বাংলার মানুষ, তার নিজস্ব সংস্কৃতি, নিজস্ব ঐতিহ্য, নিজস্ব নেতাদের নিয়ে এগোতে চেয়েছেন। কিন্তু পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী কায়েমী স্বার্থ কখনোই তা হতে দিল না। ওরা আমাদের উপর আক্রমণ চালিয়েছে। আমরা নিয়মতান্ত্রিক পথে এগোতে চেয়েছিলাম, ওরা তা দিল না। ওরা আমাদের উপর বর্বর আক্রমণ চালাল। তাই আজ আমরা লড়াইয়ে নেমেছি। এ লড়াইয়ে আমাদের জয় অনিবার্য। আমরা পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী হানাদারকে বিতাড়িত করবোই। 'আজ না জিতি কাল জিতব। কাল না জিতি পরশু জিতবই।'

তিনি বলেন, আমরা বিশ্বের সব রাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহাবস্থান চাই। পরস্পরের ভাই হিসেবে বসবাস করতে চাই। মানবতার, গণতন্ত্রের এবং স্বাধীনতার জয় চাই।

'আপনারা জানেন, পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানের শোষণ এবং শাসন থেকে মুক্তি পাওয়ার জন্য গত ২৩ বছর ধরে বঙ্গবন্ধু সব কিছু পরিত্যাগ করে আন্দোলন করেছেন। তিনি চেয়েছিলেন রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক অধিকার। আমি জোর দিয়ে বলছি তিনি আমাদের মধ্যে আছেন। জাতির সংকটের সময় আমরা তাঁর

(৩য় পৃষ্ঠায় দেখুন)

মুক্তিবাহিনীর ফৌজি সালাম নিচ্ছেন অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম

মীরজাফরদের খতম কর

বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন স্থান থেকে মুক্তিফৌজের কেন্দ্রে কেন্দ্রে খবর আসছে যে, বিভিন্ন স্থানে একশ্রেণীর মীরজাফর বাংলাদেশ ও বাঙ্গালীর স্বার্থের বিরোধিতা করছে। তারা ইয়াহিয়া চিক্কা খানের লেলিয়ে দেওয়া পাঞ্জাবী কুকুরগুলোকে মুক্তিফৌজের অবস্থান জানিয়ে দিচ্ছে, আওয়ামী লীগ ও ছাত্র লীগের নেতা ও কর্মিদের নাম ঠিকানা বলে দিচ্ছে অথবা ক্ষেত্রবিশেষে পাঁচচরা সৈনদের পথ প্রদর্শক হিসেবে কাজ করছে। তারা নানা রকম মিথ্যা গুজব ছড়িয়ে শত্রুকবলিত এলাকার মানুষের মনোবল ভেঙ্গে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করছে। গুণ্ডা, দুষ্কৃতিকারী লেলিয়ে দিয়ে লুটতরাজ করাচ্ছে অথবা বাংলাদেশের মানুষের মধ্যে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার বীজ ছড়িয়ে মানুষে মানুষে বিভেদ সৃষ্টির প্রয়াস পাচ্ছে। এদের কোন কোন নেতা বেতার বক্তৃতা, সংবাদপত্রে বিবৃতি ও তথাকথিত জনসভা অনুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের স্বার্থের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ করছে।

এসব মীরজাফরকে মুক্তিবাহিনী শেষবারের মত হুশিয়ার করে দিচ্ছে। এরা যদি এই মুহূর্ত থেকে নিজেদের অপকর্ম বন্ধ না করে তাহলে মুক্তিফৌজ তাদেরকে কুকুরের মত হত্যা করবে। বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিফৌজ কর্মিদের প্রতি আমাদের নির্দেশ এদের খতম কর।

এম, এল এ—এম পি এদের প্রতি—

আওয়ামী লীগ দলীয় এম এল এ ও এম পি এদের প্রতি দলের হাইকম্যাণ্ডের নির্দেশ, তাঁরা যেন নিজ নিজ এলাকা থেকে মুক্তি সংগ্রামকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাবার চেষ্টা করেন। নিজ নিজ নির্বাচনী এলাকায় অবস্থান করা একেবারে অসম্ভব বিবেচিত হলে তাঁরা নিকটবর্তী মুক্তিসেনা শিবিরে চলে যাবেন এবং মুক্তি যোদ্ধাদের ট্রেনিং ও অন্য অন্যান্য কাজ তদারক করবেন। প্রাণের ভয়ে বা অনিবার্য কারণে যারা বাংলাদেশের সীমান্তের বাইরে চলে গেছেন, তাঁরা অবিলম্বে এ নির্দেশ মোতাবেক কাজ করবেন।

শরনার্থীদের উদ্দেশে—

বাংলাদেশ থেকে যে সমস্ত কিশোর যুবক এবং মধ্যম বয়সী লোক সপরিবারে বা একাকী সীমান্তের ওপারে গিয়ে আশ্রয় নিয়েছেন তাদের প্রতি আমাদের অনুরোধ, আপনারা অবিলম্বে বিভিন্ন আশ্রয় শিবিরে গঠিত বাংলাদেশ স্বেচ্ছাসেবক বাহিনীর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন এবং সামরিক ট্রেনিংয়ের জন্য নাম তালিকাভুক্ত করুন।

বাংলাদেশ থেকে যারা প্রাণে বাঁচার জন্য সীমান্তের ওপারে আশ্রয় শিবিরে আছেন তাদের সব সময় স্মরণ রাখতে হবে যে এটা অস্থায়ী ব্যবস্থা মাত্র। স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাসের জন্য তারা ভারতে যাননি। তাদের চেষ্টা হবে সামরিক ট্রেনিং গ্রহণ করে মুক্তিফৌজের সাথে পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী সৈন্যবাহিনীর বিরুদ্ধে মরণপণ যুদ্ধে লিপ্ত হওয়া, এবং নিজেদের মাতৃভূমিকে শত্রুকবলমুক্ত করে নিজ নিজ বাড়ীতে ফিরে যাওয়া। ভারতে যারা শরণার্থীদের সাহায্য করছেন তাদের উপর বোঝা হয়ে বসবার চেষ্টা করলে তা নানা কারণে আমাদের জন্য আত্মহত্যার সামিল হবে। তাই রিলিফের খাদ্যগ্রহণ করেই নিশ্চেষ্ট হয়ে বসে থাকা কোনক্রমেই উচিত হবে না। শরণার্থীদের ভিড়ের মধ্যে পঞ্চম বাহিনীর অনেক লোকও ঢুকে পড়ছে। তাদের দিকে নজর রাখতে হবে। প্রয়োজনবোধে নিজ নিজ এলাকার মানচিত্র সংগ্রহ করে বা নিজ হাতে এঁকে তা মুক্তিফৌজকে দিতে হবে এবং শত্রুবাহিনীর অবস্থান, সেখানে গমনের নিভুল রাস্তা ঘাট ও নদী-নালার নিভুল পরিচয় দিয়েও মুক্তিফৌজকে সাহায্য করতে হবে।

প্রসঙ্গতঃ বলা দরকার যে বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন স্থানে মুক্তিফৌজের বহু ট্রেনিং শিবির চালু হয়েছে এবং সেসমস্তে হাজার হাজার তরুণ ট্রেনিং নিচ্ছেন।

Fig. 4 *No Soul Has the Power to Erase Bangladesh from the World's Map* [title translated] – North South University Central Library

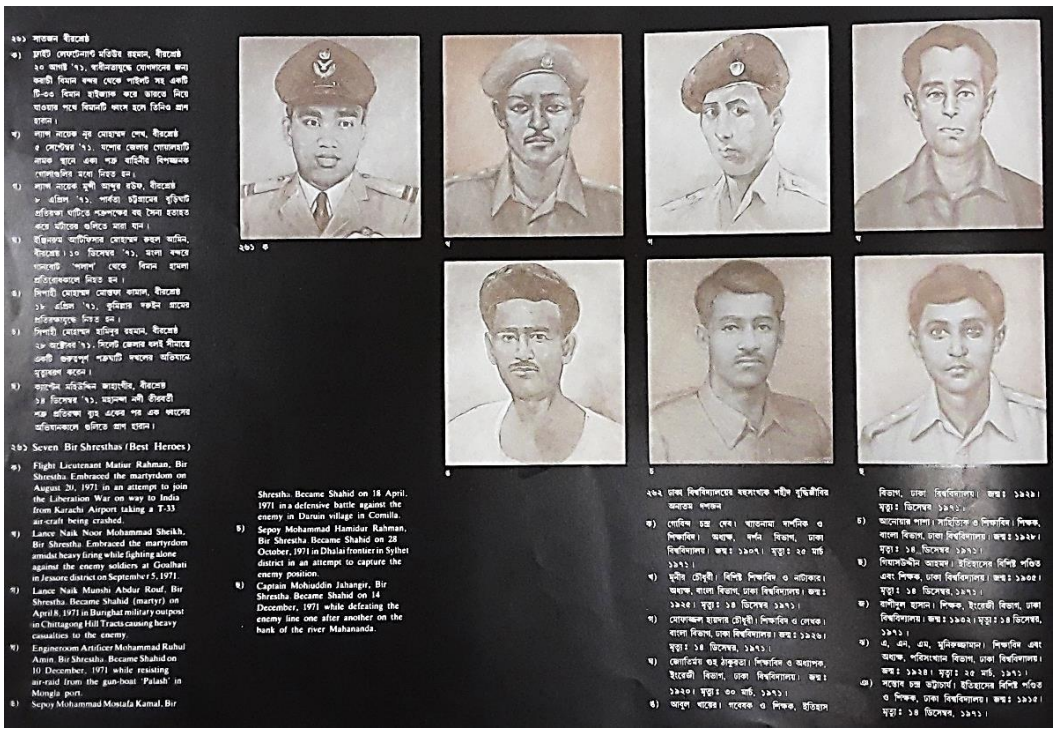


Fig. 5 *Seven War Heroes* [title translated] – Muktijuddho Jadughor, Liberation War Museum (also available at: North South University Central Library)

Fig. 6 *The Victorious Freedom-Fighters at the Liberated Zone* – North South University Central Library

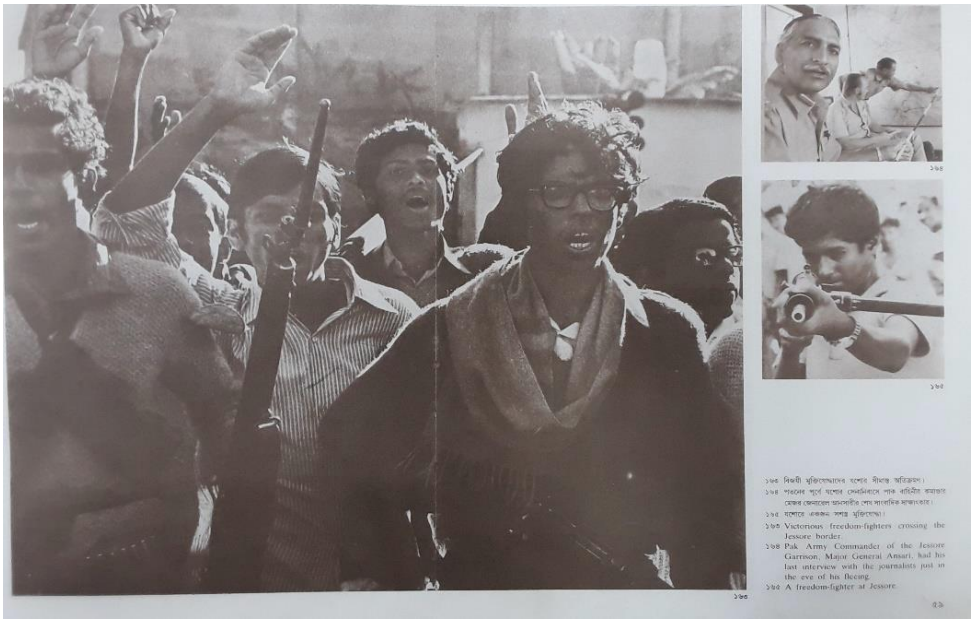


Fig. 7 *Victorious Freedom-Fighters Crossing the Jessore Border* – North South University Central Library

Appendix

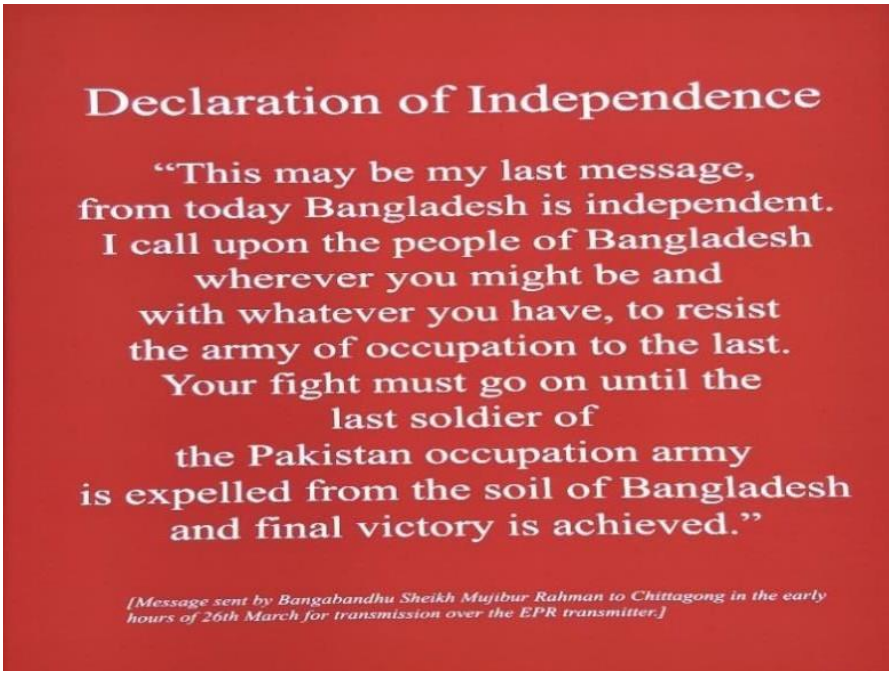


Fig. 1 *Declaration of Independence* – Muktijuddho Jadughor, Liberation War Museum

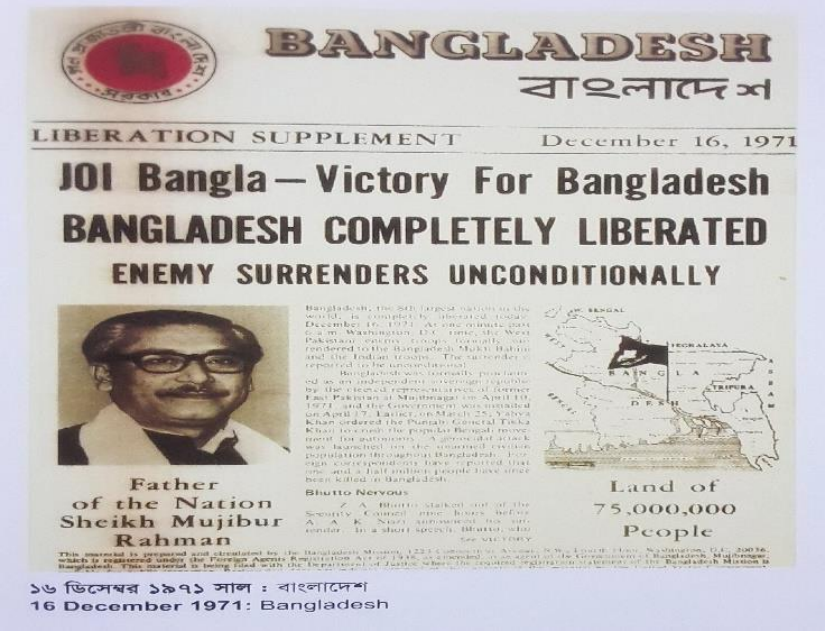
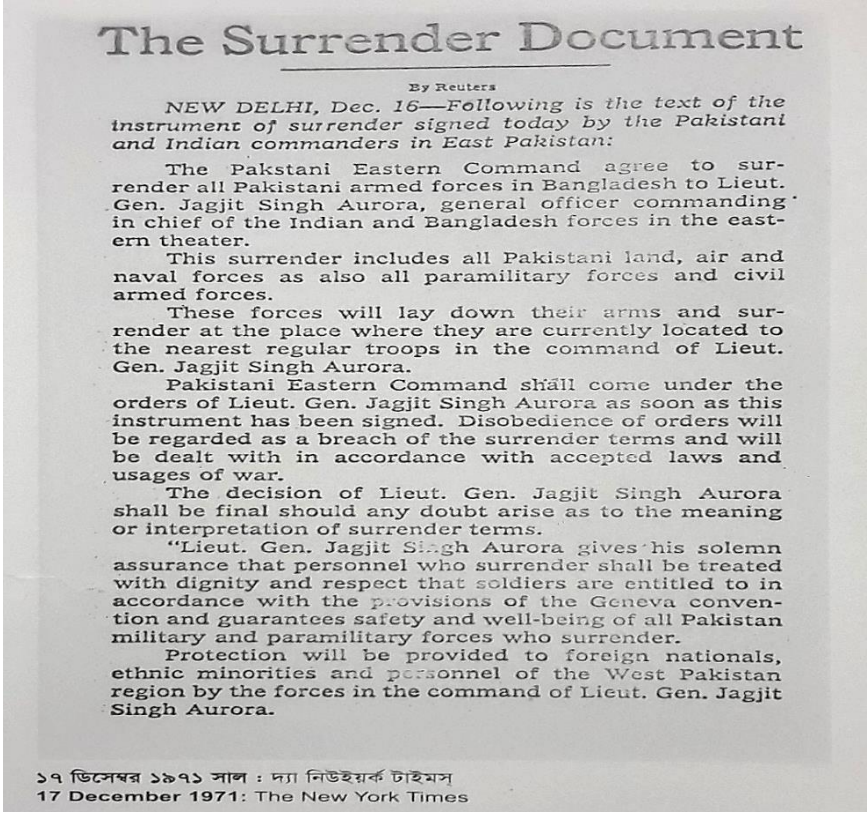


Fig. 2 *Liberation Supplement* – North South University Central Library



The Surrender Document

By Reuters

NEW DELHI, Dec. 16—Following is the text of the instrument of surrender signed today by the Pakistani and Indian commanders in East Pakistan:

The Pakstani Eastern Command agree to surrender all Pakistani armed forces in Bangladesh to Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, general officer commanding in chief of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theater.

This surrender includes all Pakistani land, air and naval forces as also all paramilitary forces and civil armed forces.

These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the place where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops in the command of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora.

Pakistani Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with accepted laws and usages of war.

The decision of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora shall be final should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of surrender terms.

"Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora gives his solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva convention and guarantees safety and well-being of all Pakistan military and paramilitary forces who surrender.

Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of the West Pakistan region by the forces in the command of Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora.

১৭ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৭১ সাল : দ্যা নিউইয়র্ক টাইমস্
17 December 1971: The New York Times

Fig. 3 *The Surrender Document* – North South University Central Library

বিশ্বের মানচিত্র থেকে স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম

বাংলাদেশের অস্তিত্ব মুছে ফেলার শক্তি কারো নেই –

সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম

১৭৫৭ সালে পলাশীর আম্র কাননে বাংলাদেশ তার স্বাধীনতা হারিয়েছিল আজ ১৯৭১ সালের ১৭ই এপ্রিল সেই প্রাচীন জেলারই আর এক আম্র কাননে জন্ম নিল স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশ রাষ্ট্র।

কুষ্টিয়া জেলার মেহেরপুর মহকুমার একটি গ্রামের নতুন নামকরণ হয় মুজিব নগর। এই মুজিব নগরই হলো বাংলা দেশের অস্থায়ী রাজধানী।

সেদিন বেলা ১১টা ১০ মিনিটঃ মঞ্চের পশ্চিম দিক থেকে এলেন নেতারা। সমবেত জনতা জয়ধ্বনি দিলেন। অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম প্রথমে নিলেন সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর অভিবাদন। এর পরে নেতারা মঞ্চে এসে চোয়ারে বসলেন। প্রথমে উপরাষ্ট্রপতি। তারপর প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাজউদ্দিন। তারপর মন্ত্রী খন্দকার মুসতাক আহমদ, ক্যাপটেন মনসুর আলী, জনাব কামরুজ্জামান এবং প্রধান সেনাপতি কর্নেল আতাউল গনি ওসমানি। স্বেচ্ছাসেবকরা পুষ্পবৃষ্টি করে তাদের অভিবাদন জানালেন।

জনাব আবদুল মান্নান শুরু করলেন অনুষ্ঠান সূচী। প্রথমেই নতুন রাষ্ট্রের ঐতিহাসিক দলিল ঘোষণাপত্র পাঠ করলেন দলের চীফ হুইপ অধ্যাপক ইউসুফ আলী।

সাড়ে ৭ কোটি বাঙালীর যে স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম দেশ জন্ম নিল তার নাম হলো স্বাধীন গণপ্রজাতান্ত্রিক বাংলা দেশ। তখন সারা আকাশে ছিল থোকা থোকা মেঘ। চারটি ছেলে প্রাণ ঢেলে 'আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি গানটি গাইল। এর আগে পবিত্র কোরান শরীফ থেকে তেলাওয়াত করা হলো।

তারপর উঠে দাঁড়ালেন স্বাধীন বাংলা দেশের অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম। পায়জামা আর পাঞ্জাবী পরনে। সুতরাংই তিনি বললেনঃ অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি হিসাবে আমি তাজউদ্দিন আহমদকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী পরে নিয়োগ করেছি এবং তার পরামর্শক্রমে আরও তিনজনকে মন্ত্রীরূপে নিয়োগ করেছি। একে একে তিনি পরিচয় করিয়ে দিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী এবং তার তিন সহকর্মীর সঙ্গে। তারপর ঘোষণা করলেন প্রধান সেনাপতি পদে কর্নেল ওসমানির নিয়োগ। আর বললেন সেনাবাহিনীর চীফ অব স্টাফ পদে নিয়োগ করা হয়েছে কর্নেল আবদুর রবকে।

তিনি সাড়ে ৭ কোটি বাঙালী মনমানসের অবিসংবাদিত নেতা বন্ধুবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবের কথা বারবার বললেন। তার প্রতিভা, বাগ্মিতা, আত্ম ও স্বার্থত্যাগ এবং বিরাট রাজনৈতিক জীবনের কথা বললেন। তিনি বলেন, আজ এই আম্রকাননে একটি নতুন জাতির জন্ম নিল। বিশ্বের সকল মানুষ বাংলার মানুষ, তার

মুক্তিবাহিনীর ফৌজি সালাম নিচ্ছেন অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম

মীরজাফরদের খতম কর

বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন স্থান থেকে মুক্তিফৌজের কেন্দ্রে কেন্দ্রে খবর আসছে যে, বিভিন্ন স্থানে একশ্রেণীর মীরজাফর বাংলাদেশ ও বাঙ্গালীর স্বার্থের বিরোধিতা করছে। তারা ইয়াহিয়া চিক্কা খানের লেলিয়ে দেওয়া পাঞ্জাবী কুকুরগুলোকে মুক্তিফৌজের অবস্থান জানিয়ে দিচ্ছে, আওয়ামী লীগ ও ছাত্র লীগের নেতা ও কর্মিদের নাম ঠিকানা বলে দিচ্ছে অথবা ক্ষেত্রবিশেষে পাঁচচা সৈনদের পথ প্রদর্শক হিসেবে কাজ করছে। তারা নানা রকম মিথ্যা গুজব ছড়িয়ে শত্রুকবলিত এলাকার মানুষের মনোবল ভেঙ্গে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করছে। গুণ্ডা, দুষ্কৃতিকারী লেলিয়ে দিয়ে লুটতরাজ করাচ্ছে অথবা বাংলাদেশের মানুষের মধ্যে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার বীজ ছড়িয়ে মানুষে মানুষে বিভেদ সৃষ্টির প্রয়াস পাচ্ছে। এদের কোন কোন নেতা বেতার বক্তৃতা, সংবাদপত্রে বিবৃতি ও তথাকথিত জনসভা অনুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের স্বার্থের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ করছে।

এসব মীরজাফরকে মুক্তিবাহিনী শেষবারের মত হুশিয়ার করে দিচ্ছে। এরা যদি এই মুহূর্ত থেকে নিজেদের অপকর্ম বন্ধ না করে তাহলে মুক্তিফৌজ তাদেরকে কুকুরের মত হত্যা করবে। বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিফৌজ কর্মিদের প্রতি আমাদের নির্দেশ এদের খতম কর।

এম, এল এ—এম পি এদের প্রতি—

আওয়ামী লীগ দলীয় এম এল এ ও এম পি এদের প্রতি দলের হাই-কম্যাণ্ডের নির্দেশ, তারা যেন নিজ নিজ এলাকা থেকে মুক্তি সংগ্রামকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাবার চেষ্টা করেন। নিজ নিজ নির্বাচনী এলাকায় অবস্থান করা একেবারে অসম্ভব বিবেচিত হলে তারা নিকটবর্তী মুক্তিসেনা শিবিরে চলে যাবেন এবং মুক্তি যোদ্ধাদের ট্রেনিং ও অন্য অন্যান্য কাজ তদারক করবেন। প্রাণের ভয়ে বা অনিবার্য কারণে যারা বাংলাদেশের সীমান্তের বাইরে চলে গেছেন, তারা অবিলম্বে এ নির্দেশ মোতাবেক কাজ করবেন।

শরনার্থীদের উদ্দেশে—

বাংলাদেশ থেকে যে সমস্ত কিশোর যুবক এবং মধ্যম বয়সী লোক সপরিবারে বা একাকী সীমান্তের ওপারে গিয়ে আশ্রয় নিয়েছেন তাদের প্রতি আমাদের অনুরোধ, আপনারা অবিলম্বে বিভিন্ন আশ্রয় শিবিরে গঠিত বাংলাদেশ স্বেচ্ছাসেবক বাহিনীর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন এবং সামরিক ট্রেনিংয়ের জন্য নাম তালিকাভুক্ত করুন।

বাংলাদেশ থেকে যারা প্রাণে বাঁচার জন্য সীমান্তের ওপারে আশ্রয় শিবিরে

নিজস্ব সংস্কৃতি, নিজস্ব ঐতিহ্য, নিজস্ব নেতাদের নিয়ে এগোতে চেয়েছেন। কিন্তু পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী কায়েমী স্বার্থ কখনোই তা হতে দিল না। ওরা আমাদের উপর আক্রমণ চালিয়েছে। আমরা নিয়মতান্ত্রিক পথে এগোতে চেয়েছিলাম, ওরা তা দিল না। ওরা আমাদের উপর বর্বর আক্রমণ চালাল। তাই আজ আমরা লড়াইয়ে নেমেছি। এ লড়াইয়ে আমাদের জয় অনিবার্য। আমরা পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী হানাদারকে বিতাড়িত করবোই। 'আজ না জিতি কাল জিতব। কাল না জিতি পরশু জিতবই।'

তিনি বলেন, আমরা বিশ্বের সব রাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহাবস্থান চাই। পরস্পরের ভাই হিসেবে বসবাস করতে চাই। মানবতার, গণতন্ত্রের এবং স্বাধীনতার জয় চাই।

'আপনারা জানেন, পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানের শোষণ এবং শাসন থেকে মুক্তি পাওয়ার জন্য গত ২৩ বছর ধরে বঙ্গবন্ধু সব কিছু পরিত্যাগ করে আন্দোলন করেছেন। তিনি চেয়েছিলেন রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক অধিকার। আমি জোর দিয়ে বলছি তিনি আমাদের মধ্যে আছেন। জাতির সংকটের সময় আমরা তাঁর

(১২ পৃষ্ঠায় দেখুন)

আছেন তাদের সব সময় স্মরণ রাখতে হবে যে এটা অস্থায়ী ব্যবস্থা মাত্র। স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাসের জন্য তারা ভারতে যাননি। তাদের চেষ্টা হবে সামরিক ট্রেনিং গ্রহণ করে মুক্তিফৌজের সাথে পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী সৈন্যবাহিনীর বিরুদ্ধে মরণপণ যুদ্ধে লিপ্ত হওয়া, এবং নিজেদের মাতৃভূমিকে শত্রুকবলমুক্ত করে নিজ নিজ বাড়ীতে ফিরে যাওয়া। ভারতে যারা শরণার্থীদের সাহায্য করছেন তাদের উপর বোঝা হয়ে বসবার চেষ্টা করলে তা নানা কারণে আমাদের জন্য আত্মহত্যার সামিল হবে। তাই রিলিফের খাদ্যগ্রহণ করেই নিশ্চেষ্ট হয়ে বসে থাকা কোনক্রমেই উচিত হবে না। শরণার্থীদের ভিড়ের মধ্যে পঙ্গম বাহিনীর অনেক লোকও ঢুকে পড়ছে। তাদের দিকে নজর রাখতে হবে। প্রয়োজনবোধে নিজ নিজ এলাকার মানচিত্র সংগ্রহ করে যার নিজ হাতে এঁকে তা মুক্তিফৌজকে দিতে হবে এবং শত্রুবাহিনীর অবস্থান, সেখানে গমনের নিভুল রাস্তা ঘাট ও নদী-নালার নিভুল পরিচয় দিয়েও মুক্তিফৌজকে সাহায্য করতে হবে।

প্রসঙ্গতঃ বলা দরকার যে বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন স্থানে মুক্তিফৌজের বহু ট্রেনিং শিবির চালু হয়েছে এবং সেসমস্তলোতে হাজার হাজার তরুণ ট্রেনিং নিচ্ছেন।

Fig. 4 *No Soul Has the Power to Erase Bangladesh from the World's Map* [title translated] – North South University Central Library

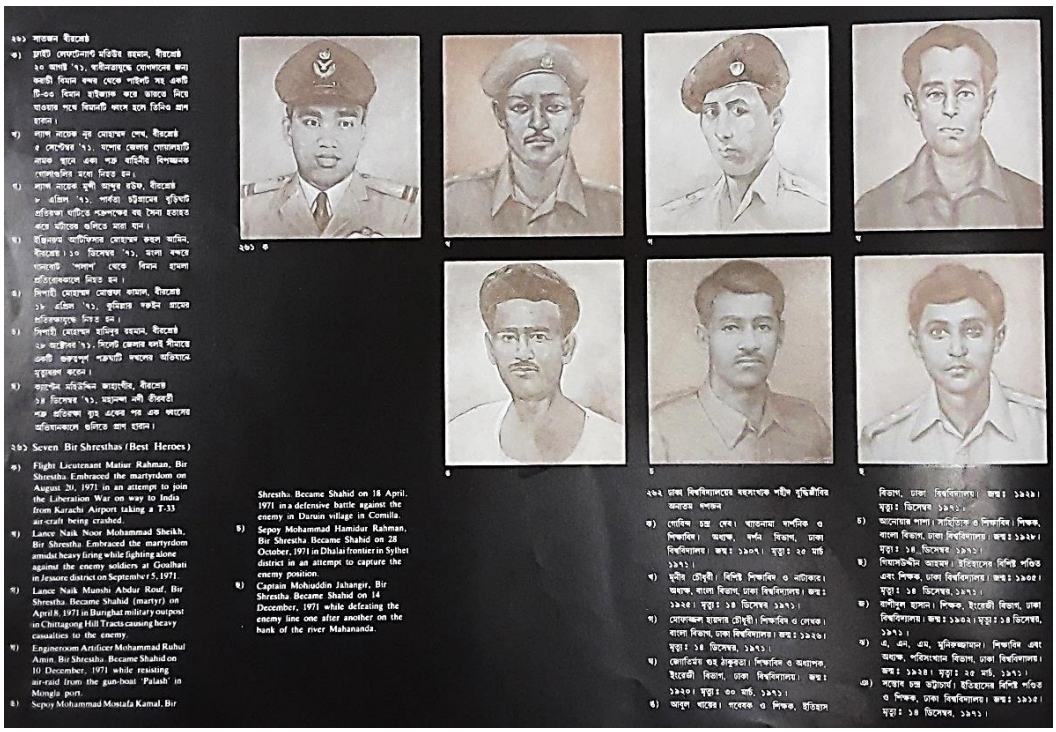


Fig. 5 *Seven War Heroes* [title translated] – Muktijuddho Jadughor, Liberation War Museum (also available at: North South University Central Library)

Fig. 6 *The Victorious Freedom-Fighters at the Liberated Zone* – North South University Central Library

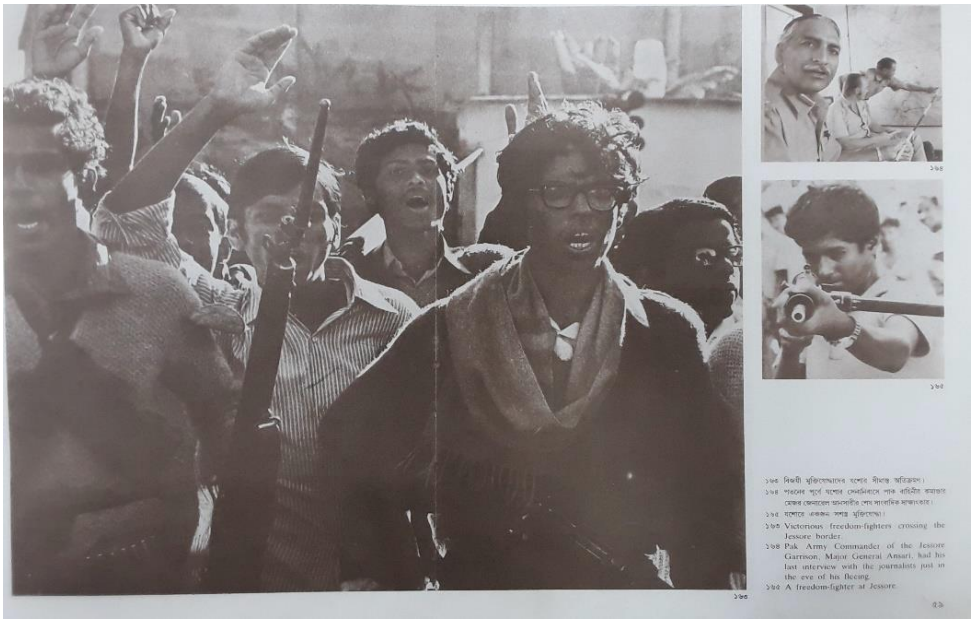


Fig. 7 *Victorious Freedom-Fighters Crossing the Jessore Border* – North South University Central Library