

Postcolonial Residual:  
Foundation of National Identity of Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in English

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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## Approval

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## **Ethics Statement**

I hereby, declare that this thesis composed by me is a genuine innovative work and it has not been published anywhere else. This work has been done for the requirement of MA in English Literature degree of Brac University.

## **Abstract**

Colonized nation-states cannot escape the residual problems of the colonial environment. The birth of Bangladesh as a self-governing nation-state is directly influenced by its colonial rulers (both British Raj and Pakistan). Without conscious awareness of colonial history and accepting the secular aspect of nationalism, the future of this nation is threatened with atrocities leading to a state of chaos realm backed by opportunist groups both from home and abroad. Beyond the debate of territorial rights and system of government, one's national identity has to safeguard the human aspect of an individual. Ideological aspect of identity should not redeem the individual freedom. At the same time, the tension of existential security should not reduce the intellectual freedom. A genuine leadership is a must to emancipate the mass people in the light of nationalism.

**Keywords:** Nation-state; Identity; Colonialism; Citizenship

## **Dedication**

To my undergrad mentors Israt Jahan ma'am (who showed a reason to study literature) and Mohammad Hasan Jan sir (whose introduction to Ahmed Sofa changed almost everything and everything else for me).

## **Acknowledgement**

I cannot thank enough my supervisor Dr. Sayed Abu Noman to guide me throughout the entire writing process of this paper. The global pandemic had made it challenging to focus on writing of academic area. Once again, I am expressing my warmest gratitude to Dr. Noman for helping complete this despite facing unanticipated obstacles.

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## Quotation

*“Those who tell stories rule the world.”*

*– Plato*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Bangladesh has a complex and repressed colonial past (divided into parts) which directly influenced the formation of its national identity. This paper aims to examine and explore how the current national identity of Bangladesh is shaped (and predetermined) by its colonial predators. This task requires exposition of arbitrary and complex terms and concepts like nation, identity, colonial/postcolonial history and citizenship. Apart from these we need to focus on the real world execution of the theoretical formula of power-dominance and identity. Based on the time and place the following analysis of nation-state and national identity will have similar consequences, in spite of being caused by a similar action/event (if not the exact same). For instance, the partition of 1947 has produced distinctly different facts for the two nation-states. Despite all these challenges, one needs to study and understand one's own political nature of national identity. Though European colonization has engineered the 'nation-state' and the governing system in almost every third world countries, one has to start examining these political ideals, class paradigm, and power-nexus (that keep a nation functioning), initially using resources offered and made available by European to debunk the enigma of one's national identity and emotional investment on the nation-state.

The inherent nature of any colonial gift (by-product) is Eurocentric. This essential trait of nationalism can be seen and understood as a prodigy offspring of colonialism. Thus, the contemporary instances and ideologies of nationalism of nation-states are rooted in those of colonialism (and imperialism as well). To sum up precisely the history/story of both world and civilization, it can be said that it has been the history/story of Imperialism/Colonialism. An exception can be added as a devoted Marxist would say that it has been the history of class struggles. Nationalism and national consciousness are descendants of political ideologies.

Similarly, the notion of national identity is also a political ideology, and any form of political element vastly values history. The contemporary nation-state perception was born in Europe both as a hope and resentment of failed promises of Enlightenment. Colonies all over the world embraced nationalism as a movement of independence to acquire the authority and rights to establish self-government. Being a country born out of anti-colonial movement, the status of Bangladeshi national identity is not free from stains and influence of its colonial past. Moreover, it is indebted to not one but two former colonizers. The exceptional attribute of Bangladeshi national identity is that it bears marks of two colonial oppressions and a large number of people fail to consciously recognize both. Usually most random citizens do not acknowledge the twenty-three years' reign of Pakistan as a colonial era rather they assume it as a union of solidarity and fraternity gone wrong and ending in a devastating divorce. On the other hand, no social group of Bangladesh recalls the departure and fall of British Empire as a sign of independence. However, exponents of South-Asian history and intellectuals of Bangladesh suggest that this land is still submissive to its former masters irrespective of wearing the attire of independence. The mass people who were oppressed majority during colonial eras are still suffering. History both as fact and fiction shows ample evidences of that. Moreover, without good understanding of history, it is not possible to identify the root of cultural and ideological problems. This is why history holds the blueprint of Bangladeshi national identity. In his insightful introduction of *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972), Michel Foucault elaborately discussed the pattern of historical continuation and transformation as a non-linear and disrupted continuation "which transform *document* into *monument*" (7). Foucault brilliantly exposed the nature, formation and function of history and discourse and skimmed the process of continuation and displacement of history which nicely fits any nation-state. To analyze history from perspective of Bangladesh in one of the most insightful essays offered by Serajul Islam Chowdhury (1936 -) suggests that history of Bangladesh lacks

freedom and creativity of action. Chowdhury is concerned about the contemporary status of history and his analyses focus on exposing bourgeoisie discrepancy to highlight class struggle of working class people. According to him, history has a life like any living organism and the most crucial element that requires to keep it alive is 'creativity'. In his essay "The Question of Emancipation of History" he asserts that history is not only a thing of past, rather it is very much a present continuous phenomenon. He relates historical analysis to national consciousness to assert his point of breaking the circle of class struggle and oppression. He claims that without the freedom of history the nation cannot deliver the emancipatory promise of nationalism. However, history is not a problem or a solution to my analysis of postcolonial influence on the formation of Bangladeshi national identity. It is relevant as a necessary component of that identity and it is a primary tool to diagnose the problem of that identity.

The objective behind this examination is not to debunk or reject Nationalism, but identify the colonial residual engendering problems and anomalies on current national identity of Bangladesh. Despite nationalism's emergence as a system to eliminate extreme class difference in society and religious orthodoxy, it created more complex problems such as rivalry between socialist and democratic states. This rivalry is marked by the infamous Cold War. Though the Cold War ended after the fall of Soviet Union, the recent trade war between China and USA proves that the rivalry is still extant. For Bangladesh nationalism did not appear as a promise of secular society, as the birth of national consciousness in 1905 was based on religious unity. The rebirth of national consciousness in 1952 accommodated a utopian vision of secular nation whose unity was based on eradicating class struggle and conflicts for the people of East Bengal. To precisely describe the reality of the second nationalist consciousness (which is conceptually more correct than the previous one) I am borrowing Frantz Fanon's words, "nationalism, that magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters, and dies away on the day independence is proclaimed" (203). What I want to say

is that Bangladesh as a nation-state is needed to be studied more to understand the reactionary nature of mass nationalistic consciousness and create a foundation for socially progressive national ideals with scope of evolution. This challenge ahead requires collective effort -- collective as both action and consciousness. On the other hand, the mass cannot grow a collective consciousness, without intellectual leaders. At the same time no single effort can make it possible, yet, we have to start. The concept of national identity is not only a matter of ideology but also a matter of existence. Often times, it is impossible to draw a hardline of distance between the interdependence of ideology and existential security of one's national identity.

## Chapter 2: Research Question and Rationale for research

This paper is a problem oriented research. The method used here is in descriptive form. Descriptive methodology focuses on expanding knowledge on current issue. At the same time being a problem oriented research; it tries to understand the exact nature of the problem to find out relevant solution. The process is similar to deductive reasoning. As this research is based on a concept which is both arbitrary and abstract, it is challenging to select any particular text as primary text. However, despite the fluid nature of identity concept, national identity maintains some rigid traits that separate one national identity from another. A fundamental source of shaping national identity is the constitution and citizenship act of a nation-state, which is fundamentally more important if, the nation-state has no written form of constitution. A second source of data for this the history of Bangladesh, more specifically the colonial periods. The book *History of Bangladesh: 1905-1971* by Dr. Abu D H is a good work that covers the essence of nationalist consciousness of Bangladesh. Other essays by prominent scholars of Bangladesh like Salimullah Khan, Ahmad Sofa and Serajul Islam Chowdhury provide a strong ground for analytical discussion of this research. Benedict Anderson's writings lay a strong theoretical foundation for analysis. In addition to Anderson, other theoretical texts are referred here where they are suited. To name a few are Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the earth* (1961).

My research questions for this paper are:

1. How Bangladeshi national identity is based on its colonial legacies?
2. Why does the mass consciousness fail to address the two colonial past?
3. What can be a solution to eliminate the colonial residual?

This paper will further look for the answers of the above mention questions in later chapters. The chapter 4 deals with the problems of research question 1 and 2. Which mainly

explains why the nationalist consciousness of Bangladesh is not a spontaneous product of development civilization process. The nationalist movement of Bangladesh is historically a reactionary movement against its colonizers. Despite this reactionary trait of Bangladeshi nationalism, the mass consciousness fails to acknowledge the two colonial past. As a result, reminiscence of independence only glorifies the ‘national heroes’ of 1971 and the revolutionists during British Raj are almost forgotten (if not totally erased). Similarly, the existing supporter of nationalism based on religious unity of British India in Bangladesh does not accept the Pakistani reign as a colonial rule. These residual problem of colonialism is a common phenomenon in almost each nation-state born out of colonialism. That does not mean the newly independent nation-state from a colonial environment cannot eradicate the colonial legacies. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) is a good instance that shows a contrapuntal criticism can be helpful to understand the hidden difficulties of colonial masters.

## RESEARCH RATIONALE

The human existence in contemporary time is fundamentally depended on one’s national identity. The root and rise of nationalism for European and non-European countries are motivated by different social movement. Nationalism is more than a concept. Every individual of today’s nation-states is more or less concerned, controlled and conditioned by his/her national identity, colonized nations need to study their nationalist consciousness. First world or third world, national identity plays an integral role in an individual’s life. one can either be aware or unaware of textual fundamentals of nation, national identity and fidelity to the nation-state, but everyday collective consciousness influence an individual’s choice. Being said that, most colonial nation-states carry colonial residual both explicitly and subtly. This is now the brown/black men’s burden to identify the colonial legacy and eradicate the stains of their former masters. Like Said, Bangladesh is “a product of colonial environment and ‘must develop a resistant consciousness’ for the affirmation of intellectual freedom (Walia 11)”.

National identity is undeniably the most dominant form of an individual's identity. If this identity is not free from the colonial stains and legacy, the people will remain subject to the colonial propaganda living a self-governed country. There are lot of distractions that a newly established country faces right after independence from colonial reign.<sup>1</sup> Beyond those distraction the leaders of the newly formed nation have no alternative to work on the process of eradicating colonial residual to fulfill the emancipatory promise of nationalism and independence.

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<sup>1</sup> See Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), p. 148.



### Chapter 3 Literature Review

There are few prominent writers who wrote on colonial impact on Bengal (current Bangladesh) and fewer explored the role of nationalism in relation to colonialism in Bangladesh after 1971. Most of the works focus on the liberation process of 1971 and while the historical origin of nationalism in Bangladesh. Though the existing literature has covered impact of colonialism on culture and history of independent Bangladesh, none has focused on their relation to the formation of identity and possible results in future. The legacies of colonial past still haunt Bangladesh and the people cannot be free in the truest meaning of the word freedom if the true history and its damaging effects are not studied properly. One of the obstacles to challenge and change the invisible impacts of colonialization is that their local agents still promote colonial agenda. The resemblance of colonial rulers and the ‘governing’ body since their departure are two sides of a coin. The home grown intellectuals have always faced difficulties talking about these similarities between the post-independent government and the colonial rulers. The silencing of critics and local intellectuals has created an artificial paucity of writing that exposes colonial nature of every ruling party after independence. This has also shut the door to clean the colonial residuals in Bangladeshi nationalism.

Professor Salimulla Khan’s ((1958 -) work on Nawab Sirajudulla in his book *Satto Sadam Hussein o ‘Srajerdoula’* (2007) [*True Saddam Hussein and ‘Srajerdoula’*] is a good place to start with the understanding the historical legacies of colonialism in Bengal. In chapter 4 and 5 Khan explores the colonial propaganda of defaming fallen Siraj-ud-daula. In chapter 4, Khan debunks the myth of Siraj-ud-daula’s incompetency as a Nawab and exposes the character assassination of the last Nawab of Bengal. He also points out why commoners also fell into the traps. Khan is explicitly determined here to challenge established ‘historical facts’

asserting that no form of representation is neutral. One example of that defiance and reconstruction is the spelling of Nawab's name in the book's title and in the chapter headline. This re-writing here is another form of 'righting' which can also be seen perceived as a process of decolonization. The historical model here is visibly inspired by Foucauldian method<sup>2</sup> of analyzing the existing historical data and information. Such analysis has a postmodern trait which sometimes benefits postcolonialism. Postmodernism promotes thinking at surface level and *Capre Diem* at the same time with the spirit of questioning the authority and these usually tend to normalize the intensity of a historical evidence of colonial oppression. This is how approach to postmodernism, sometimes, acts as a tool of postcolonialism. Khan provides many crucial textual references centering his argument in this short chapter. In chapter 5, he carefully examines the death of Nawab and the historical documentation after his death. In addition to his death and its historical records, Khan also scrutinizes some fictional works related to this subject. However, one of the most crucial aspects of Khan's writing here is that history firmly matters to understand the ongoing action which will soon be qualified as history in near or far future. He subtly lays a foundation to analyze the current occurrences (like fair and flawless elections) and how some of them will be documented as history and many will be ignored. Moreover, when it comes to the construction of the identity, contribution of history is simply undeniable. The essence of identity (particularly, a political one) is the expression (in this case history) of someone or an artificial entity (nation-state). In other words, our expressions (writing journals or video blogging for individuals and publishing yearly list of success and achievements for government) creates our identities. For instance, during election candidates sell history and unfulfilled promise of history to attract potential supporters and surprising or not, people usually follow these campaigns selling history like insects fly toward a flame. In this case, history is crucial to illustrate the postcolonial influences in the context of Bangladesh.

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<sup>2</sup> a type of discourse analysis focusing the relation of textually with *power* and *knowledge*.

Now the problem with history is that it exists as a subjective narration; then whose version of history we have to look for. Third-world countries exhibit inclination of politicization of history which requires critical studies. Political parties race like unbridle horses to outperform its rival(s) in the process of politicization of history. The history of the mass people turns into an asset of political parties. During election campaigns, the party leaders and their paid intelligentsia along with media partners (recent times includes social media platforms as well) work in the de/construction of a national identity.

Salimulah Khan explores the beginning of colonial manipulation starting from the Raj in here. This provides valuable instances to understand the first research question: colonial legacies as foundation of Bangladeshi nationality. The following texts provides navigation for the remaining inquires. Particularly, the writings of Ahmed Sofa boldly point out the limitation of post independent era of Bangladesh which is related with the second research question. Benedict Anderson's insightful, yet beautifully crafted, analyses on nation-state and the future of its members (humans/citizens) depict a better solution to improve universal human condition.

Benedict Anderson's famous book *Imagine Communities* (1983) explores the origin and nature of contemporary practice of Nationalism. The text "Imagined Communities" establishes some margins and understanding of the concept of nationalism and nation which is immensely important and a prerequisite to understand the formation of Bangladeshi National identity. To define 'nation' Anderson provides three paradoxes:

“(1) the objective modernity of nations to the historians' eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept - in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender - vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete

manifestations, such that, by definition, 'Greek' nationality is *sui generis*. (3) The 'political' power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.”  
(49)

Despite above stated problems of nationalism, Anderson confidently defines 'nation' as an imagined community given the fact that no single citizen will know the rest of population, yet, they feel an arbitrary proximity and abstract connection to the people might never meet. In the following paragraphs, Anderson shows how understanding of nation easier through imagining and rather than treating it with 'liberalism' and 'fascism'. To support his view, Anderson quotes Gellner that “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* it nations where they do not exist (49)”. So the nation “is an imagined political community – and imagined both inherently limited and sovereign.” He traced the emergence of nationalism back to 1500 associated with the availability of printed books and their commodification. This print-capitalism created a favorable path to the 18<sup>th</sup> century nationalist vibes which came after three things fall of script languages (Latin and Hebrew), disintegration of communities based on these languages and changes in dynastic politics. Dissemination of paper books generated print knowledge which challenged manuscript knowledge. Then Reformation era's “battle for men's mind” was also facilitated by this print-capitalism. Finally, it resulted in the elevation of administrative vernaculars to the language of power. Print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness as: (1) it created unified fields of exchanges and communication, (2) it provided a new fixity to language, (3) a new mass oriented language-of-power replaced old administrative vernaculars. Newspaper and television channels are two of the biggest media to connect to the mass. Television is more effective to engage mass with the ruler/leader as its audio-visual output requires no

literary skill like reading a newspaper. Benedict Anderson closes the text giving emphasis on language and its commodification to create a sustainable evolving idea of nationalism as imagine communities.

In the essay “Replica, Aura and Late Nationalist Imaginings” Benedict Anderson analyzes the significance and function of various symbols (like monuments or special museums) in contemporary nationalist practices. He draws readers’ attention to the Lincoln Memorial in the USA and drag the attention to a third world countries Philippines’s Rizal Monument. With such distinct contrasts, Anderson shows the presence or absence of aura and the varying difficulties of categorizing them based on place and states. In the text, he tries to illustrate the underlying nature of contemporary nationalism and its relation to the monument [as symbolic representation and manifestation of state-power and nationalist ideas]. The concept of Nationalism is abstract in one’s thoughts and they are transferred through these signs (sculptures and historical sites). Sign conveying deeper and purposeful message becomes symbol. These types of symbolic expression through sign is important to connect and create a unity in the mass thought. As abstract ideas are not pictured as in everyone’s mind, it is crucial for national leaders to construct and connect the mass variety of thinking to some concrete object (monument) whose purpose is to give nationalist motivation. This text provides an ideal model to construct our own study of national monuments (like Central Shaheed Minar) and various national days associated with the journey toward the country’s independence in 1971. The recent obstacle to erect statues of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to commemorate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday has led to a violent ‘sculpture debate’ across the country. The religious spokesmen have raised voices against this project of replicas. According to their claim, the sculpture is ‘haram’ (prohibited action or things in Islam) and all the sculptures are related to pagans and

polytheism. To debunk, the claim of religious spokesmen, the government has given an exposition on the matter which describes ‘sculpture’ and ‘idol’ used for worshipping are not the same thing. Anderson’s example of the replicas of prominent US Presidents (including the Lincoln Memorial; US is also the pioneer of instituting replicas of national heroes) also supports the government claim, but from a different angle. Anderson explains that though these replicas are erected to be noticed, they lack *aura*. Anderson writes,

“the fact that national hero monuments are auraless also means that they circulate extremely easily through different media-stamps, T-shirts, postcards, wallpapers, posters, videotapes, place-mats, and so on-without anyone feeling profaned. Most exemplary, perhaps, is our money. It is not simply that five replicas of George Washington will get you a good cigar, and five Andrew Jacksons a middling one-night hotel room. But the descending rank-order in prestige— Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, Jackson-inverts the descending rank-order of purchasing power (thus Washington is worth one-twentieth of Jackson, Lincoln half of Jefferson) and no one minds one bit, or even thinks about it. (4)”

On the other hand, idols are not kept in temples to attract tourist. Here Anderson’s analytical architecture is a great model to understand and explore the similar phenomena in the context of Bangladesh.

In the book *Becoming Worthy Ancestor* (2011), Benedict Anderson’s essay “The Goodness of the Nations” tries to find some positive sides of nationalism. According to Anderson, though “nationalism has a long enough history for anyone to recognise its dark side” (109), its origins in the last quarter eighteenth century is “in the context of a wider popular involvement in projects of emancipation (109).” He adds three qualities of goodness in this

historical-utopian framework of the nation. The first is the Future determined by the nation-state structure as “the first in human history to be fundamentally bound to the idea of Progress” (110). He also shows that the former systems like feudalism or Imperialism lacked future of possible progress. Anderson uses German sociologist Max Weber’s passage to depict this utopian virtue of nation in the future. In this vision the society as a nation-state will become a fine country rising from the ashes of fallen empire and dominant nobility where ‘politically illiterate’ workers will be capable of providing leadership. Anderson points out another side of Weber’s vision that “the Future asks us to be worthy ancestors” (112). The way to be worthy ancestor is not being content with current progress, but always being ashamed of not making it one step further. The second quality of Anderson’s Goodness is the National Dead. Anderson’s argument here is that remembering the ghosts of National hero is vital to generate emotions of Nationalism and promote Nationalism to the current members and for setting a standard for the unborn future. He compares the death of a patriot with religious notion of redemption as being a National Dead redeem his moral books. The third dimension is ‘collective children’. Anderson emphasizes on the meaning of ‘collective’ here as individually we may not like a child but collectively they are devoid of any problem that an adult member of a nation faces. The ‘collective children’ are the Future of the nation and the Goodness depends upon them. This ‘collective’ form keeps them free obligation to subscription to any social ideology. Anderson concludes that through emphasizing on protecting and shaping the ‘collective children’, “morality is kept at bay, and the Nation remains young, strong, and lovely” (115). In the final section Anderson debates on the emancipatory power of national rights being more prominent than the human rights. He notes “that it is a mistake to over-value the significance of ‘human right’, above the national rights of the citizens” (117). One of limitations of human rights is that feasibly it is not possible to implement all across the universe. On the other hand, rights of citizens were “central to the original self-emancipatory thrust of early nationalism”

(118). Anderson's vision can be studied to analyze the feasibility of achieving prescribed Goodness of the nation in the context of Bangladesh.

Now moving onward, Ahmed Sofa (1943 – 2001) – one of the finest contemporary intellectuals of Bangladesh who has written extensively on related issues like political difficulties of Bangladesh, in the essay “Bengali Race and the State Bangladesh” addresses all major conflicts and controversies regarding the identity of individual in the political domain. Sofa starts the essay acknowledging the habitants of Bengalis and comparing that with the Kurdish. After that brief contrast, he moves to the historical events and influences to illustrate and explore the ‘collective consciousness’ of Bengali commoners. He points out a major understatement of contributing factors motivating the people to form a free independent state in 1971 due to overstating the benefits of language movement of 1952. According to him, the language movement did shape and inspire us to that point, but language alone was not enough to ignite the liberation war in 1971. He adds that the additional requirement is the collective unity of masses of a particular region. Like Salimullah Khan, Sofa has also debunked few serious accusations on the national and political identity, for instance, the Bengali vs. Bangladeshi debate and similarly the question of being a Muslim or Bengali ‘first’. However, Sofa did not cover the colonial residuals on post-independence national identity crisis diving deep. He concludes with few suggestive solutions. In the middle of text, he claims without the establishment of secularism this country will not be truly Bangladesh, instead, it still remains East Pakistan in disguise of the name Bangladesh. To the contrary he ends his solution emphasizing on monetary factors where he gives subtle hints at a Marxist model socio-economic subscription.

All these text have also dealt with the similar theme of the paper [Nationalism, political identity and/or colonialism], but they do not connect them as a close result of crisis in one from other. Still they are undeniably helpful to advance the quest of this paper.



## Chapter 4

### Postcolonial Residual: Foundation of National Identity of Bangladesh

Nationalism that inspired modern nation-state system is relatively young for non-European countries to illustrate a stable image fitting a general structure for nations born out of colonial abolition. At the same time, 'Nationalism' has been around and across the globe for adequate time to infer its possible outcome and the driving force behind it. Understanding nationalism means understanding nation or the nation-state. Due to the compound of arbitrariness and abstraction of the concept, no single definition seems to give a satisfactory answer, as that raises more questions about nationalism and obfuscate other related ideas (nation-state, country, borders, race, ethnicity and national identity). A lucid way to define nationalism is analyzing the suffix 'ism' thus, it means a process of producing a set of action, belief, and principle that defines nation and makes other things related and friendly to the nation. Based on one of the most practical use of the word Nationalism, it is also a process of cultivating ideological emotion related to the artificial entity the Nation. Apart from definition, we need to focus on the historical origins of nationalism, particularly, in Bangladesh. The nationalism we are looking at emerged as a comprehensive ruling concept of society in eighteenth century Europe as projects of emancipation<sup>1</sup>. These emancipatory rights are political rights and different than human rights. Though nationalism can be defined in relation to Nation, it is different from the basic concept of nation. Due to the arbitrariness of abstract nature of the semantic of the word 'nation', it is a challenging task to define all existing forms of nations in a single definition. The most workable definition of Nation provided by Benedict Anderson states that "in an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."<sup>2</sup>

(49) Theoretically nation and state are described differently, but in real world use of these two words has no major difference. There exist only few exceptions like Hong Kong and Taiwan (officially known as Republic of China) where the notion of states and nation has wide difference. Like Anderson, I also will refer to that as nation-state as practically it is not separable outside of narrow theoretical field as two different things. Anderson's definition covers three of four main components of a nation-state: population, territory, government and sovereignty. Without population we cannot have a politically aware group of masses to imagine being connected through a national consciousness. It is important to produce a politically aware mass-mind, without this the national consciousness is impossible. Politically aware national consciousness is essential to create an imagined community. For instance, in many parts of the world we still see many tribes living with actual sense of community connection without any imagination, but none of them qualifies as a nation to form a nation-state. Small ethnic tribes cannot form a nation-state for two reasons, despite having a population with thick sense of belonging to a specific community. First one is that the tribal community lacks the political consciousness which is similar to the mainstream community. Secondly, the already established nation-state does not allow any form of disintegration that shrinks its territory. Anything that might inspire a tribal or ethnic minority group to initiate formation of a new national consciousness is liquidated strictly by the already existing nation. This collective consciousness is applicable to the history of colonial establishment in Bengal in July 23, 1757. Ahamed Sofa (1943 – 2001) points that the English succeeded to defeat Nawab Sirajudllah with eleven hundred white soldiers approximately against fifty-five thousand local soldiers as the mass people refrained from this war due to the absence of nationalist consciousness. Sofa asserts, "Bengalis could not ever form state organization"<sup>3</sup> (256). Indeed, before the division of Bengal in 1905 we do not see mass interest in politics. The problem with the political interest of early twentieth century among the population of Bengal was that it was inspired by religions

(Hinduism and Islam). Though the division of Bengal became ineffective in 1911, this later inspired the partition of 1947. *History of Bangladesh: 1905 – 1971* (2008) by Dr. Abu Muhammad Delowar Hossen narrates the inception of Bangladesh since 1905 (not as Bangladesh but as East Bengal) to its current achievement of independent status in 1971. The first national awareness among the population of modern day Bangladesh is not ‘political’ (like it was in the Europe), but ‘religious’. The Lahore Proposal of 1940 asserts that is mostly true for not only Bangladesh but every nation-state born out of Indian subcontinent after the success of independence movement against the British colonizers. This also is a crucial difference to keep in mind to understand and distinguish the national consciousness of 1947 and 1971. Independence of 1947 was inspired by religious emotion to establish a sovereign state for ensuring rights of Muslim population of the Indian subcontinent which caused direct conflicts with the early nationalist movement in Europe that demanded exclusion of religion from power paradigm along with “movements against emperors, monarchs, and aristocracies” (Anderson 109)<sup>4</sup>. The secular aspiration was plainly vivid and at the core of liberation movement of 1971. The national consciousness of mass in 1971 is a politically aware mass mind whose birth is usually traced back to the language movement<sup>3</sup> of 1952.

The next component of a nation-state is territory. Benedict Anderson calls nation state *limit* based on its boundaries. This feature is finite and has physical existence. The problem with territory is to represent it through map and principle to determine the territory of a nation-state. For instance, partition of Bengal (1947) was not based on the interest of the inhabitants entirely and the verdict of separating Bengal into two parts came from the British Colonizers without any feasibility studies on the consequences. The separation of 1947 was more like

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<sup>3</sup> See *Reminiscence of Language Movement and Few Inquires* (1993) by Ahmed Rafiq, especially chapter 14 and 17.

bargain in grocery market than allocating 'lands' to its proper heirs. A summary of dividing Bengal in 1947 depicted by Dr. Abu Delowar is:

A commission was formed in June to specify the territory of Bengal. Sir Radcliff, Chairman of the Commission, declared the territory of Bengal after discussion with Muslim League and Congress. In this declaration Kolkata was included into West Bengal. Two third of Nadia, despite being a district of Muslim majority (61%), was given to West Bengal. Entire Murshidabad district (56.6% Muslims) went to West Bengal. Nababganj, Shibganj, Nachol, Gomostapur and Volahat these five thanas of Maldah district (57% Muslims) were given to East Bengal. Bongao (53% Muslims) and Nohatta of Jessore District were included to West Bengal. Khulna (49.36% Muslims) were given to East Bengal. Chittagong Hill Track area was given to East Bengal as a compensation of including various Muslim majority district like Maldah, Murshidabad, and Nadia. East Bengal availed the large portion of Sylhet district through referendum. The newly formed East Bengal gained a total of 63.8% of area and 64.86% of population of undivided Bengal according to the decision of specifying the territory of Bengal. (200)

These details of determining and allocating territory show that the national territory sometimes is not based on nationalist movements. The interest of business persons was vital to support the partition in 1947. Larders from the winner of election of 1946 were in a hurry to taste the power which also made them agree on whatever terms that could accelerate the farewell of British Raj. Dr. Abu Delowar notes that Lord Mountbatten (appointed to monitor the partition of British India into India and Pakistan) offered Jinnah (Muslim league leader) to choose between unified India or divided Bengal and Panjab. When it comes to territory, nations act like colonizers. Defending the territories of nation-state becomes national heroic duty, as other nations are trying to accumulate land of its neighboring nation-states. At the same time,

defining nation based on boundaries is becoming complex at a new level due to the rapid and sudden upsurge of refugees across the world. Bangladesh is currently sheltering approximately more than one million Rohingya refugees expelled from its neighboring country Myanmar. So the problem with Bangladeshi national identity is not limited to the colonial influences, the threat of assimilation of these refugees is also beginning of a new problem. This refugee crisis is one of top priority problem for current government of Bangladesh which in the process, becomes the problem of people and issue of national security.

The third component of a nation-state is government. I note two problems with this feature of government. First one, there cannot be any rationally established form of government (democratic, socialist state or monarchy). Secondly, how and who should decide the right form of government for the goodness of the nation? There can only be debates and counter arguments of the appropriate system, but there is no objective method to select the best suited governing system. Both democracy and socialism are better suited systems for government in a utopian-framework, which in reality do not proves so. Preachers of democracy often refer to *Perpetual Peace* (1795) by Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1824) which summaries a model of ensuring sustainable peace in various regions through making sure each surrounding nation-state is subscribed to democratic system of government. The claim here is that two democratic nation-states are not engaged in a war. This logic is a ‘historical fallacy’, as lack of historical incidents of a particular happening does not ensure that an incident of particular thing (war between two democratic nation-states here) will not take place in the future. Contrary to this hypothesis of peace, the eve of twenty-first century the world has seen enough evidence that the ‘perpetual peace’ model will not work out. The real world application of ‘domino theory’ (coined by US President Dwight Eisenhower) shows democratic countries are getting more engaged in war through sending troops to United Nations’ Peacekeeping mission. According to Eisenhower theory, a socialist country creates a domino effect where its neighboring countries keep

converting to a socialist nation-state like a push from a fallen piece making other piece fall too. Thus, US believed rigidly in the post-World War II era that they had to take initiative to save third world nations especially in the South East Asia from socialism. However, that US project of saving democracy did not change the socio-economic condition of a vast majority of working class people in the region including Bangladesh. Contrary to their promise to preach democracy, during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, the US government allied with the Pakistani non-democratic military dictatorial government, instead of helping the people of East Bengal/Pakistan to avail their independence under a democratic government. This clearly rejects Kant's notion of sustainable peace by subscribing to a specific system of government. Despite all these troubles, the system of government of a nation-state is an imperative part of one's national identity. A member of nation-state is expected to defend the system of his government as an integral part of his duty to the nation-state along with payment of taxes and other duties. Sovereignty is the final feature of a nation-state. Sovereignty refers to the concept a nation-state as supreme power or authority. This simply means no member of a nation-state is more powerful than the artificial entity nation. This is an arbitrary concept to ensure fidelity of the member of a nation-state. A nation-state's power as a *self* to dominate *other* is expressed through its members in reality. The members of a nation are called citizens.

The most crucial idea to any national identity is citizenship. Citizenship is the most crucial and fundamental idea to explore and understand any national identity and an effective tool to seam relations of colonial past of Bangladesh with the national identity of its people. T.H. Marshall's sociological model provides one of the most influential theory of citizenship in the light of post-war societies. Apart from sociologist ideal narratives of citizenship, the most relevant paradigm of citizenship is the citizenship act/law and constitutional guidance on citizenship. In plain words, citizenship is nucleus of one's national identity, thus, these two words can be used interchangeably. A laconic definition of citizenship is that it is a membership

of a civil society which governs an individual's various rights (political, social, civil and religious). Citizenship like nationalism lacks grand narratives in comparison to discourse of humanity and human rights. In today's world where everything and everything else is dominated and determined by a state-nation, one's citizenship matters more than his/her human identity.

According to the constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh, "the citizenship of Bangladesh shall be determined and regulated by law" (Article 6.1). In article 6(2) it states that "the citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshi." However, the Bangla version constitution uses another word for citizen here, which simply translates into 'people/population'. This sometimes engenders some confusions, as it clearly fails to acknowledge the existence of other ethnic minorities residing and being born here for centuries and generation after generation. This resonates what Fanon said regarding young nation born out of colonialism. He notes that, "The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is a racism of defense, based on fear. Essentially it is not different from vulgar tribalism, or the rivalries between steps or confraternities (163-4)". The condition of ethnic minorities and the incessant unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area (natural inhabitants of many minority groups) proves that the mainstream population have marginalized and demoralized those groups. This treatment of these minority groups is an explicit imitation of former colonial masters. In the third part, the constitution elaborately listed fundamental rights of its citizens. Among eighteen constitutional rights listed there twelve can be availed and enjoyed by foreigners residing inside Bangladesh. The problem with constitutional definition is that it excludes the transparent differences between the mainstream population and other ethnic minority groups. As a simple consequence, these minority groups find themselves as almost as 'non-citizen', whereas, mainstream people take more advantages of existing laws and social norms. The problem with defining citizenship is nothing new; the British faced this while

colonizing India in twentieth century and preaching, at the same time, relatively new ideologies and aesthetics of nationalism in all their occupied territories. The British Raj introduced first citizenship act for its colonial subjects in 1914 known as British Citizen and Status of Aliens Act 1914 [which came into effect in January 1, 1915] and this act counted all its subject as its citizen and could travel to London or ‘main land’ England and settle/reside there like their white superior counterparts. Soon after the sun finally set on the British Empire, they revised and passed a new citizenship act in 1948 which limited the right to a British citizenship, especially by birth in a former or current colony. As many colonies were free between 1947 to 1982, the British government passed a new citizenship act in 1981 which was more protective and tougher to acquire than the precedent ones. This only provides one evidence that people of Bangladesh are well aware of citizenship as a concept and its actual implementation in society. I mentioned earlier that national identity has two dimensions: the ideological one and the existential one. In practice, the citizenship act fails to eliminate the opposing ideology to the Bangladeshi national identity meaning citizenship. The opposing opinion against the national identity is that by labeling the population as Bangladeshi is injurious to the religious identity of being Muslim. Almost every Bangladeshi intellectual has defended and debunked the identity debate of citizens as Bengali and Bangladeshi against the tension of being Muslim after being Bangladeshi. The group questioning the identity to be Muslim ‘first’ or Bangladeshi, has an ideological agenda without any threat to the existential security of being a legal member of the nation-state. Moreover, their claim is not entirely based on an ideology (despite having an agenda) rather it is rooted in the religious faith. For the idealist group of Bangladeshi national identity, the ideological aspect has a lot to do with the existence. For any idealist the physical existence is not greater than the ideological acceptance. This debate will remain a crucial confusion for the ordinary mass mind of Bangladesh for days far in the future. However, the problem of Bangladeshi citizenship is not entirely a direct result of colonial process. Within



two separate periods of independence, it has created its own esoteric definition of citizenship to make an opaque concept of nation and nationality/citizenship even more complex. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the rehabilitation of Rohingya refugees is throwing a new challenge for Bangladesh what many European countries are facing as well. This refugee crisis at this scale is new for modern nation-states scenario. So this is early to forecast any scenario. The only visible part is the clash of identity between the refugees and the local citizens based on social rights (like health, education and politics) and tension to avoid extinction yet to assimilate. This can either create a diasporic situation or a damaging effect on the national culture on regions these refugees have been accommodated. Cosmopolitan cities of former colonizers (like London, Paris and Madrid) have been facing these refugees and diasporic problems of identity for a long time. Colonial residual is an important area of studies to understand the identity newly formed nation-states in colonial aftermath.

Postcolonialism is the study of colonial discourse and its legacy in the colonized territory. This territory is both physical (land and places) and abstract (culture, identity and history). Colonialism usually refers to invasion of other territories of the world. Another meaning of colonialism is occupying foreign territory, control its politics and exploit the economy. For Bangladesh, the colonialism arrived long before the arrival of civilization mission of 'white men's burden'. I am referring to the fact that even before the British Conquest of Bengal in June 1757, the rulers (monarchs) of this region were foreigners. According to Ahmed Sofa (1943 – 2001), "in this Bengal the ruling systems that were valid at different timeline came always from outside. Meaning during entire historical time, foreign rulers ruled the Bengal. (256)" The colonialism I am referring here starts from the European invasion. The postcolonial history of Bangladesh is divided into two segments. The first one is the British invasion and the second one is the twenty-three-year reign of Pakistan. The former is undisputedly recognized as an era of colonial oppression while the latter is debated as a colonial

establishment based on subjective views. Regardless of all the debates, the twenty-three years' reign of Pakistan is equally venal, brutal, oppressive and exploiting compared to the two hundred years of British custody. The British authority in Indian subcontinent was seen as 'foreigner' from the day one to the departure in 1947. In addition to this, they were imagined and perceived as socially superior to the oppressed majority. The territory of today's Bangladesh is entirely based on the will of British Raj which has been discussed in details earlier. This is an example of colonizing physical territory of Bangladesh. By this I am referring to the fact that the territory of Bangladesh was not determined based on the spirits of nationalism (not even religious solidarity of Muslims of the British India<sup>4</sup>), rather it was a bargain of political titans in 1947 (namely Congress and Muslim League). This is similar to occupying land by force without the consent of native inhabitants. According to Frantz Fanon (1925- 1961) this competition to capture power after expelling the colonial power is a common situation initiated by the national middle class. In the book *The Wretched of the Earth (1961)* he writes, "This merciless fight engaged upon by races and tribes, and this aggressive anxiety to occupy the posts left vacant by the departure of the foreigner, will equally give rise to religious rivalries" (160). The current Bangladesh is still influenced by the colonial mentality of the British Raj. This influence is visible in two domains: firstly, the political domain (laws, government, and bureaucracy) and secondly the cultural domain (language, dress and literature). An instance of physical domain of colonial legacy is the selection of capital of a postcolonial state. The Constitution of Bangladesh declares Dhaka as its capital in article 5. Fanon says, "The capital of underdeveloped countries is a commercial notion inherited from the colonial period" (187). Similarly, Dhaka has been the focal point of industrial economy, political organizations Western urbanization since British period. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish the physical and abstract domain of colonial influence as two separate things.

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<sup>4</sup> See *History of Bangladesh: 1905 – 1971*, chapter 17

For instance, the chopping of thumb of ‘Muslin’ producers in Dhaka did not only create a financial loss (physically countable) for British India but also engendered a culture shock. Shashi Tharoor (1956 -) in his book, *An Era of Darkness* (2016) notes that “the country no longer wove or spun much of it; master weavers became beggars. A stark illustration of the devastation this caused could be seen in Dhaka, once the great centre of muslin production, whose population fell from several lakhs in 1760 to about 50,000 by the 1820s (9).” This is a well-known example which demonstrates how a single act of colonizers damaging and shaping both physical and abstract domain of culture. In an invisible way the British Raj truly never left Indian subcontinent. Even after so many years of independence from British Raj, their stains of colonial essence are still present in the social and personal life of an ordinary citizen of Bangladesh. It is like oxygen we are incessantly inhaling without being conscious always. Bangladesh’s legal system is designed based on laws and Acts passed during the British colonial era. The independence of 1947 (discussed here as second partition of Bengal) is also based on The 1947 Indian Independence Act. This reduced the prominence of struggle, movement and sacrifices for independence from becoming a revolution for the population of the country in 1947. Instead, the taste of independence and the joy of birth of new nation-states are marked by religious riots. This still haunts the collective mind of Bangladesh. A large group of people still laments for the religiously dominated nation-state. On the other hand, another larger group remembers the trauma of religious extremist backed non-secular East Bengal till 1971. As I mentioned that Bangladeshi national identity has a conflict of ideological aspect.

The common inherent attribute shared by both colonialism and nationalism is the promise of a better life for the inhabitants of a locality and the members of the state. The European colonizers justified their invasion of the colonized territories as ‘white men’s burden’ to civilize the rest of the world. Similarly, nationalism gained popularity through the emancipatory projects. The colonizers did not simply invade and rule various regions of the

world, the unorganized mass people (a handsome portion of the people) welcomed their 'Enlightenment' projects. One of the biggest advantages the British colonizer had was the social status system based on caste which also helped them preach Christianity. Sociology defines two types social mobility status: a. ascribed status and b. achieved status. In ascribed status one's social mobility is fixed at his/her birth, one has no control over choosing a social class, caste or dynasty. It is assigned to one based on the random cosmic accident of birth, thus, one cannot change it. The European missionaries reached to the furthest place possible to preach Christianity. For many people of ascribed status, converting to Christianity was an unexpected escape route from the social subjugation. Achieved status of social mobility refers to social system where an individual can ascend to a higher socio-economic class through his/her hard-work (which obviously refers to earn more money and wealth). Christianity could not confirm a hundred percent working model of social mobility based on achieved status. The colonial products/slaves could never live up to mark to be fully the European White Man. This also was a problem for the European women too. At the wake of various uprising against such barrier of social class and religion, Nationalism emerged with a secular model of society to liberate the people chained in ascribed status. However, at the end of the equation nationalism fails to break free humans from class struggle. Indeed, the innate nature of achieved status of social mobility is similar to the blueprint of capitalism. The only difference between a fixed social mobility and capitalist backed nationalism is that the latter keep a gate open for working class people to redeem unbearable pain of struggle. No one can get equal chance to cross that gate, at the same time, not everyone can achieve a higher class status in the society. The capitalist motivation is designed in such a way that it makes few winners from struggling class and advertises those few faces to millions of working class people who are never going to be a millionaire, but they will strive to be one. This is where both British Colonialism and nation-states of Pakistan failed to truly liberate people outside of power. Likewise, the governing

system of Bangladesh highly shaped by its colonial leftovers has narrow downed the spirit of nationalism to liberate people from social oppression and injustice. Bangladesh during Pakistani period faced intensely brutal colonial oppression.

As soon as the British settlers left in August of 1947 (handing over the power to native people), two separate countries were formed in Indian subcontinent. Today's Bangladesh was collaborated into Pakistan as East Pakistan. The pseudo unity of religion, initially, motivated people of East Bengal to welcome the unprecedented union of two sets of diverse population with zero socio-cultural proximity to have a sovereign country run by the Muslims. By all means, the nature of this union of single nation as two distant states was a submission to new colonizer for East Bengal. The details of territorial bargain earlier again assert that East Bengal's inclusion in Pakistan during the partition of 1947 was not a liberation. Moreover, the inception of word 'PAKISTAN' disqualifies the union of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to be a part of Pakistan. The word Pakistan was coined as an acronym by Choudhury Rahmat Ali (in 1933 when he was a student of Cambridge University) to allude five specific regions in South Asia for his political movement. The title of the book (initially published as a pamphlet) is *Now or Never; Are We to Live or Perish Forever* (1933) where he formally proposed the need of a separate states for Indian Muslims. The letter P refers to Panjab, similarly, A for Afghanistan, K for Kashmir, IS for Indies or Sindhu and TAN for Baluchistan. This clearly asserts that East Bengal was never a part of the "Pakistani Movement". Unfortunately, many Bangladeshis guess the meaning of 'Pakistan' as 'holy land or place' which is correct as a belief but as an origin story. Even Afghanistan did remain a separate sovereign country after 1947 to till this day, although it had an adjacent boarder and greater ratio of Muslim population than the East Pakistan/Bengal. It raises the question why in the first place the people of Bangladesh agreed to be a part of Pakistan. There is no single answer to fairly narrate the event. One possible response can be that the people of West Pakistan were seen differently – almost equal to the

people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Thus the native residents had a hope of being its own representative (through forming political party). This fascination of being their own representative of East Pakistan kept them unaware and unable to realize the fact that instead of being independent, they were being compliant to a new colonial ruler. The new colonizer promised too many things of which most lucrative one was the access to the parliament, thus, the oppressed majority had a chance to be their own master – not being slaves in their own land. This fascination did not last long. The twenty-three years of Pakistani reign is flooded with series of protests and uprising against the Pakistani authority. The rate is extremely high compared to the two hundred years of British colonial rule. This intense brutality of Pakistan normalized the invasion of European colonizers to some extent. This is one of the reason that Bangladesh is indifferent to revisit the memory of British Colonial era and glorify the heroes of British colonial era. Surprisingly this is also true for India as well. Shashi Tharoor describes this as: “The fact that, despite all these wrongs and injustices, Indians readily forgave the British when they left, retaining with them a ‘special connection’ that often manifests itself in warmth and affection, says more about India than it does about any supposed benefits of the British Raj. (273)” One possible answer behind this reaction is that the British came here as a guest then became a host and finally transformed as a master. Even the people did not have to do strong demonstration to expel them in 1947 rather they handed over power to the native people. Since then the newly formed countries have been obsessed with attacking each other. Each nation considers itself as the *Self* and nations outside of its territory as the *Other*. This rivalry of *Self* vs. *Other* also fuels obsession and animosity between neighboring nation-states. Along with the guest to host to master logic, the unmeasurable oppression, domination and exploitation of Pakistani colonial period blurred the British colonialism from mass mind.

Bangladeshi National Identity certainly carries residuals of two colonial periods. But those leftover influences are not the only challenge for today’s leaders and people to overcome,

new problems (like Rohingya refugees, neo-colonialism and lack of qualified leaders) are getting on board making it more complex than it should have been. Shashi Tharoor states this concern: “A ‘mixed’ colonial history within one modern state is also a potential source of danger. When a state has more than one colonial past, its future is vulnerable (289).” To secure the future, Bangladesh as a nation-state needs to spread the clear message that both British Raj and Pakistan are our colonial past. The current political complexity is a major challenge to educate the mass consciousness on this matter. The struggle with poverty is also an impediment to draw attention of the mass people to such non-physical ideological concept of identity.

## Chapter 5

### The Challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the Future

Despite the well know dark side of nationalism, some nation-sates are doing their best to truly emancipate their members. Following the trajectory of colonial masters, that emancipation cannot be achieved. A decolonizing process is required to do that. This decolonizing process is possible to initiate without a leader who is capable of striking the consciousness of colonial residual.

The biggest challenge for Bangladesh to eliminate the residuals of colonial legacies is the paucity of leadership. This is what I agree with Serajul Islam Chowdhury. He writes:

Leadership and chivalry are not the same thing, there are distinction between these two. Valor is mainly a personal matter; a person alone achieves that. One does that in his/her own way. On the other hand, the execution of leadership is solely not a personal matter. That is mainly collective. A leader will have personal preference; chivalry is also expected from him; but he mostly want to be connected with the mass. S/he stays at frontiers, at the defense line, but he does not stay disconnected. Leader is the prophet of the people. S/his supreme attribute is not bravery. His/her supreme quality is analytical ability. S/he has to take decision and taking risk becomes unavoidable. (64)

Sadly, our history shows that we do not take care of leadership. Chowdhury also notes that the mass of Bangladesh exhibit chivalry but they lack the power of leadership. Moreover, the mass cannot be organized without a leader. Frantz Fanon also visualize the importance of great leader and the unfortunate fate a nation faces due to the absence of a worthy leader<sup>5</sup>. Now should the leader start his journey to decolonize the mass conscious and reconstruct a national identity free of the colonial legacy and stain? I believe the system of welfare state is a good

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<sup>5</sup> See Fanon *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 168.



model to start. Moreover, that model has more chance to fulfill the emancipatory promises of nationalism.

My proposition of following a welfare states is based on the utopian framework of Benedict Anderson's three qualification of goodness. The first one 'the Future' refers to notion that current members of a nation-states invest developmental projects and pay taxes for schools they do not attend from a sense of duty and responsibility to the next generation. Population being the ultimate element for a nation-state, it cannot survive without current generation investing for a secured tomorrow. This is why the current generation should pay taxes for institution like schools which they are never going to study, according to Anderson. Anderson's second quality suggests symbolic representation of national heroes. It is important to motivate the members toward an ideal. The truest form of any ideal is always utopian; we cannot achieve that in real world, but we have to strive to get there. National identity is an earthly and political identity. Without remembering the dead heroes of nation, the members cannot construct a higher purpose beyond monetary achievements. Symbolic representation of national heroes and heroism is important to express and establish the abstract ideas of nationalism through a mode of physical embodiment. The third one suggests 'collective children'. This refers to a fiction of future where the nation spreads 'collectively' the future generation is good. He also adds "the emancipatory power of national rights" (116) which has been analyzed in the previous chapter. In existing welfare states, we witness these qualities (not at their full potential though).

The analytical effort of this paper is not about reaching to a conclusion of nationalism and national identity; or debunking logical fallacies of nationalism and colonialism. The fluidity of national borders and escalating multicultural cosmopolitan have not reduced the localization of identity, rather it has intensified identity politics for third world people travelling and migrating to other countries. The critical studies of colonized countries like Bangladesh

can contribute to a leadership of creating a secured environment for the present population and the coming members of the nation-state. Without cleaning up the residuals of colonial legacies from our national consciousness, the creation of a society that strives to reduce class difference and deviation and promote class collaboration instead of class conflict, unfair advantages of class interest and class struggle.

Notes

1. See Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), p. 148
2. a type of discourse analysis focusing the relation of textually with *power* and *knowledge*.
3. See *Reminiscence of Language Movement and Few Inquires* (1993) by Ahmed Rafiq, especially chapter 14 and 17.
4. See *History of Bangladesh: 1905 – 1971*, chapter 17
5. See Fanon *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 168

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