A HISTORY OF SCARS: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW WAR AND TRAUMA CHANGES PEOPLE AND THE STORIES THEY TELL

By

Khondker Shahad Muktadir Arko

ID No. 17103031

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of
Bachelors in English

Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University

January, 2021

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our 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/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Khondker Shahad Muktadir Arko
ID No. 17103031

Student Full Name
Student ID

Approval

"A History of Scars: An Examination of How War and Trauma Changes People and the Stories they Tell" submitted by Khondker Shahad Muktadir Arko (ID No. 17103031) of Fall 2020, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors in English on January 13, 2021.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor: _____
(Member)   Full Name
                                                Designation, Department
                                                     Institution

Program Coordinator: _____
(Member)   Full Name
                                                Designation, Department
                                                     Institution

Departmental Head: _____
(Chair)   Full Name
                                                Designation, Department
                                                     Institution

Supervisor: _____
(Member)   Full Name
                                                Designation, Department
                                                     Institution

Abstract/ Executive Summary

This paper will attempt to analyse the effects of war, intergenerational trauma and selective persecution on the human psyche, and how that is reflected in literature through the theoretical frameworks of New Historicism and trauma studies. The aims of this paper is to examine if only the persecuted or the defeated are affected by trauma, or if there are opportunities for polyphonic discourse, with the perspectives from both sides being highlighted. The first part of the paper will discuss the American Civil War and its aftermath, particularly the reflection of self-loathing portrayed in William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and the crisis of identity caused by trauma and its manifestation in Richard Wright's *Native Son*. The second part of the paper will delve into the history of the War of Liberation of Bangladesh, and discuss literature's role in validating and propagating dominant ideological structures through capillaries of power. Furthermore, this section will also assess the importance of polyphonic narratives and dialogic discourse for healthy identity formation, and discuss the potential of peripheral narratives through an examination of Shahidul Zahir's *Mukher Dike Dekhi*. Finally, this paper will offer potential pathways to locate and render minority narratives, which can be beneficial to interrogate the past and contextualise the present in order to better understand the interplay of power. I hope this paper will help future researchers appreciate the gravity of history, and the extent to which it is woven into our national and individual identities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war. (Remarque 4)

These lines appear in the epigraph to Erich Maria Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front,* and in these few somber lines Remarque, who was forced to enlist in the German army during the first world war, highlights one of the often-overlooked casualty of any war and its fallout - the human psyche. Much has been written about the visceral and direct horrors of conflicts. We mourn and celebrate the dead, the maimed, the displaced and those directly affected, there are narratives (some fictional, others representational) detailing the physical and psychological trauma of those who were consumed or spit out by the war. However, both history and literature have underrepresented the stories of those whose lives were poisoned by the lingering effects of conflicts. This paper will attempt to examine how war, selective persecution and intergenerational trauma affect the psyche of a community, and its effects as reflected in specific segments of their literature. A New Historicist framework will be used to analyse texts from the United States of America and Bangladesh, two countries that had been embroiled in civil wars. and examine the psychological scars that have been passed on from generation to generation. The paper will also use insight gleaned from trauma studies to observe the interactions of trauma and memory, and how a mediated and partisan interpretation of history

can be ratified and enforced to represent a collective "truth". This paper will be divided into two parts - the first part will discuss the historical background of the American civil war, its aftermath, the subsequent civil rights movements for equality, and the literature of people from both sides of the spectrum. The second part of the paper will explore the literature of Bangladesh written after the 1971 Liberation War, and attempt to find narratives of people who lived through the war but were not directly involved.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1.Methodology

The paper will be divided into three chapters in an effort to properly organise and communicate the central concepts of the thesis topic. This paper will examine how war, trauma and selective persecution psychologically affects people and changes their means of expression. Chapter 1 constitutes the literature review and details the methodology of the paper. In order to analyse the texts that have been selected for the paper, two primary theoretical frameworks have been selected. The first is New Historicism, a school of thought that first emerged in the 1980s and gained traction in the 1990s through the writings of its proponents such as Stephen Greenblatt, Catherine Gallagher, Louis A. Montrose, and Frank Letricchia. New Historicism is a hermeneutic theory that places texts and other cultural artifacts within the context of its creation and gives agency to readers in how they interpret texts. New Historicism is multidisciplinary and draws influence from various scholars such as French philosopher Michel Foucault and

anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Foucault's theory of power and the composite idea of power/knowledge play an important role in New Historicist thought, as circulation of power is a significant aspect to the discipline. The second literary framework used will be that of trauma studies, which draws from the works of Sigmund Freud and E. Ann Kaplan. It examines the impact of trauma of various types and its long-term effect on an individual and community.

The second chapter will be divided into two parts and will analyse the American Civil War and its effects and aftermath. The first part of the second chapter focuses on William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*and discusses Faulkner's unique narrative technique and how the trauma from the past can affect people, even if they are the perpetrators. The second part of the second chapter focuses on Richard Wright's *Native Son* and will look at how inherited trauma and loss of identity due to marginalisation psychologically alters a person.

The third chapter will also be divided into two parts and will analyse the texts and cultural artifacts that followed the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. The first part of the third chapter will delve deeper into the concept of power and the ubiquity of its circulation. This section will analyse young adult novels written by Muhammed Zafar Iqbal where the antagonists are either razakar or Pakistan sympathisers. Some of these stories were written decades after the liberation war, and yet support the dominant nationalistic spirit in a sphere of literary expression far removed from the domain of war. The second part of the third chapterwill try to locate voices of people who were alive and lived through the war but were not directly affected by it. As a frame of reference, Shahidul Zahir's *Mukher Dike Dekhi* will be analysed as an exemplary text

where the war operates in the background of the narrative without occupying the emotional and narrative brunt of the story. This part of the paper will further analyse the exchange and negotiation of power, and how texts and media are used to support hegemony and perpetuate an established narrative.

1.2. Research Questions and Rationale for Research

This paper aims to examine if only the persecuted or the defeated are affected by trauma, or if there are opportunities for polyphonic discourse, with the perspectives from both sides being highlighted. In the process of delving into this topic, the paper will discuss corollary ideas such as the representation of trauma in the selected texts, the interaction and negotiation of the past with the present, and what happens when there is an absence of discourse and divergent perspectives.

Understanding the interplay between historical representation, trauma, and power, is necessary to conceptualise and appreciate how and why power is utilised. This paper also attempts to locate and scrutinisealternative and peripheral narratives, as they hold the potential for a more impartial representation of people and their lives during a particular epoch. These peripheral narratives deserve as much attention as the narratives of the direct victims of war, as without them people will have an incomplete understanding of history. These gaps in representation then become ripe for exploitation, and can be appropriated by agents with various agendas.

1.3.Literature Review

The overarching theoretical framework that this paper will use to bind and substantiate its most salient points is New Historicism, a dialogical and interpretative theoretical lens by which texts are analysed placing them within the sphere of the context of when, where, and by whom it was written. New historicism is a vast and divergent school of thought, and it is difficult to set specific parameters on its mode of interpretation. In its fledgling state, new historicism represented an "impatience with American New Criticism, an unsettling of established norms and procedures, a mingling of dissent and restless curiosity" (Graham and Greenblatt 2). New criticism (closely associated with formalism), the discipline antithetical to new historicism, placed its focus on a close reading of texts and analysis of its forms. The central idea was that texts should be removed from their historical and sociopolitical contexts and ought to be read and interpreted based on its own merits and demerits. Cleanth Brooks, an early proponent of new criticism, used this succinct and fitting example to explain the main agenda of new criticism:

The real proof of the literary pudding is in the eating there of. It is perfectly proper to look at the recipe the cook says she followed, to take into account the ingredients she used, to examine her intentions to make a certain kind of pudding, and her care in preparing it?or her carelessness. But the prime fact for judging will still be the pudding itself. The tasting, the eating, the experience is what finally counts. (598)

Although he did not use the term new criticism and his writings supporting this idea precede the coining of the term by literary critic I.A Richards, T. S. Eliot in his essays "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Hamlet and His Problems" elaborated that as the representation of the outpouring of emotion, and to distract from that through discussion of the poet and his personal proclivities would be disingenuous. He believed that to "divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad" (Eliot 58). However, there were many problems with this approach which has discouraged people from pursuing this mode of interpretation and led to the advent of new schools of thought such as new historicism. These failings include the fact that new criticism "ignores the reader's role, denies the importance of authorial intention, cuts off literature from history, and favors some groups of texts" (Cain 1100). A discussion of new criticism and its inherent flaws is important because it can be used to explain the natural resurgence of disciplines such as new historicism. New historicists claim that it is impossible to divorce a text from its context - every single piece of writing is a product of its time and the author's intent and position are imprinted in it to a certain extent. Despite the non-existence of a monolithic set of ideas related to new historicist thought, there are a few key tenets and assumptions that new historicism adheres to. In the introduction to *The New Historicism,* H. Aram Veeser detailed these fundamental assumptions:

1. that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices;

2. that every act of unmasking, critique and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;

3. that literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably;

4. that no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths, nor expresses inalterable human nature;

5. finally, as emerges powerfully in this volume, that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe. (xi)

These ideas represent the fundamentals aspect of new historicist thought. New historicism places focus on not only the writer of the text and their status, but also on the reader or critic who is to read and interpret. Just as a writer's circumstances and beliefs can colour their perception and its reflection in their writing, a reader of a text has a set of inherent beliefs and leanings influenced by the contextual space they occupy. Therefore, different people might have vastly different interpretations of the same text and it would be difficult to completely discredit one reading of a text over another. These epistemological differences are not always used as a means of expanding knowledge and appreciating diverse viewpoints. Texts can often be intentionally misinterpreted, or the intention of the author skewed in a way that fits a dominant agenda. Very few philosophers have been a worse victim to the appropriation of their ideas and the corruption of their core ideologies than Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's writings have been misappropriated by xenophobic far-right and extremist groups, and his beliefs misinterpreted in ways that would fit their agendas. He has been touted as a far-right iconoclast who hated women and Jews. The Nazi regime purposefully misread and misinterpreted Nietzsche's ideas, as a result he was regarded as one of the great inspirations for Hitler and his ideas. More than half a century later Richard Spencer, a notorious neo-nazi and white supremacist, claimed in an

7

interview with *The Atlantic* that he "'was red-pilled by Nietzsche'...To 'red-pill,' in alt-right slang, is to enter a vertiginous spiral of awakening and reassessment" (Wood). Although this tarnished Nietzsche's reputation and cast doubt on his ideas for a long time, renewed interest in his philosophy and further academic readings of his books has "rehabilitated [him] into the pantheon of great philosophers as an essentially benign thinker largely concerned with the shaping of the self and the soul, while the 'nazified' Nietzsche has been summarily dismissed as a crass and manipulative misinterpretation" (Whyte 171). In reality, Nietzsche hated German nationalism and spoke against anti-Semitism, even ending his close friendship with Ricard Wagner due to Wagner's anti-Semitic stance - "Growing up in Bismarck's reich, there were three things Nietzsche hated: the big state, nationalism and antisemitism. '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, that is the end of German philosophy,' he wrote, and 'I will have all antisemites shot'" (Prideaux). Nietzsche was against established truths and his idea of the Übermensch was based on spiritual enlightenment, not racial purity. A discussion of Nietzsche is further relevant to this paper due to Nietzsche's refutation of facts and universal truths. He contended that "it is precisely facts that do not exist, only interpretations" (458).

Another important aspect of new historicism is that it is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, drawing influences from various disciplines and fields of practice. New historicists "refuse to apportion the discussion of character, language, and theme to literary scholars, of primitive customs to anthropologists, of demographic patterns to social historians" (Veeser xv). While it is true that certain areas may be more conducive to a new historicist interpretation due to the contextual and dialogical nature of this framework, the principles that it is found on can and does have a wide ranging and non-uniform application. Due to the

interpretive lens that new historicism uses in order to analyze texts, it has applications in not only literary criticism but any medium which has the potential of having multifaceted, and often dissenting voices. New historicism draws inspiration from other disciplines and "brackets together literature, ethnography, anthropology, art history, and other disciplines and sciences, hard and soft" (Veeser x). New historicists have especially borrowed heavily from the idea popularised by American anthropologist Clifford James Geertz called "Thick Description", first elaborated in Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures.* Geertz asserts that human activities and social behaviour are deeply entrenched in semiotic codes that are often only comprehensible to those who were inundated in those norms. For someone not belonging to the community utilising the codes, it is difficult to ascertain the purpose and functionality of these systems of interaction. An ethnographer trying to document these patterns is faced with "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (Geertz 10). An ethnographer must then engage in "thick description" - a complete rendering and interpretation through procedural study of not only the direct actions of an individual or group, but also the social context and their semiotic significance. The example used by Geertz is that of the contraction of one of the eyelids - this can be a mere twitch or a targeted and socially charged wink, which can mean a multitude of things in different contexts. The subtlety of these modes of communications means that successful transfer of information or knowledge is not only dependent on the interlocutor sending the message, but also on the receiver to appropriately interpret and respond to it. The poetics of these interactions that each and every individual takes part in everyday are complex and connected to a shared nexus of social understanding. Interpretation, therefore, plays an undeniably essential role in the

decryption and reproduction of meaning. Geertz believes "that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun", and the analysis of it is "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (5). This interpretive approach is important to new historicists, as it allows for contextual analysis of texts and the circumstances surrounding them.

Another key aspect of New Historicism is the idea that fiction and non-fiction, or literary and non-literary texts, both represent and embody a historical frame. As representational artifacts, every text represents a metahistory and are collated and circulated so as to establish historical and social narratives. The comprehension and understanding of these texts can change over time based on changes to the established norms. More importantly, texts, even in different fields of study, are often connected to each other through narrative and thematic frameworks. As part of the same metahistory, and as their creation and interpretation are shaped by the zeitgeist, interconnected texts act "as representative historiography of significant historical events-of events joined together by a narrative formation, where events derive historical significance because they fit into a representative narrative account" (Fineman 53).

Some practitioners of New Historicism, such as Stephen Greenblatt and Louis Montrose, prefer the denomination "poetics of culture". Due to the negotiative and exchangeable qualities between the individual, sociocultural and aesthetic domains, "the work of an is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society" (Greenblatt 12). As the ways of circulation and exchange between these domains become more and more elaborate, the

distinctions separating different discursive domains lessened. Stories and fiction and the modes of communicating the aesthetic paradigm bleed into individual and communal life. We are influenced and molded by what we consume, and our patterns of consumption and the larger current of social tendencies influences the creation of things to be consumed. This is a continuous cycle that permeates every strata of aesthetic and social engagement, and there are countless examples of this phenomenon. Let us consider, for example, how texts and media and the relationship the audience has with these changes the form. The effect of media and fiction in propagating and reinforcing harmful stereotypes has been widely documented. The novel has always been an especially powerful tool that has been used to bolster cultural hegemony. Novels and other texts are a means of disseminating and controlling knowledge, and the corruption and manipulation of information has always been a powerful tool for oppressors. This can go so far as to make the subject of derision internalise the message of inferiority that the oppressor would want them to believe, resulting in spiritual enslavement. For the time being, we are going to move away from forms of entrenched hegemonized ideologies that follow this principle, and illustrate this phenomenon with more routine and mainstream examples, even though the cogs of the capitalist machine are evident in the functioning of these instances as well. The effect media and texts have on people is evident - quotes from movies have entered our lexicon, some of us tend to adopt the mannerisms and peculiarities of our favourite characters, and entire fandoms are created based off of fictional worlds. Our affinity to these imagined worlds and the characters that inhabit them can bleed into the real world and have ripples in society. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had put a conclusive end to his world-famous creation Sherlock Holmes in the short story "The Final Problem". Sir Doyle felt Sherlock took up most of his time and creative energy, and wanted to venture into new artistic territory. Sherlock's death was not taken lightly by the fans of

the great detective and the public reaction to the death was unlike anything previously seen for fictional events … young men throughout London wore black mourning crêpes on their hats or around their arms for the month of Holmes' death" (Armstrong). Mounting pressure from the fanbase, and other considerations contributed to Sir Doyle's decision to resurrect Sherlock. Closer to home, we have the example of Baker Bhai, the central character in Humayun Ahmed's television series *Kothao Keu Nei*, played by Asaduzzaman Noor. When news got out that Baker Bhai was to be hanged after a wrongful conviction "[p]rotests broke out everywhere, demonstrations were brought out. Letters and petitions urged Ahmed not to kill off Baker Bhai … For years afterwards, special prayers were held in many localities to pray for the departed soul of this fictional character" (Mustafa). These are examples of how audiences' perception and participation is a powerful force in the formation of cultural artifacts, and how in turn these elements of culture influence people and the way they perceive reality. Wolfgang Iser, a proponent of reader-response criticism, discusses these interplays and the importance of the negotiations between the different domains. Texts in particular are powerful media of propagation and make "inroads into extratextual fields of reference" (Iser 237), creating in the reader a new node of connection between alternating pathways of reality and the aesthetic. This interplay and transfiguration Iser calls "dynamic oscillation", and he describes it as:

> Whatever the relationships may be like, two different types of discourse are ever present, and their simultaneity triggers a mutual revealing and concealing of their respective contextual references. From this interplay there emerges semantic instability that is exacerbated by the fact that the two sets of discourse are also contexts for each other, so that each in turn is constantly switching from background to foreground … The resultant

dynamic oscillation between the two ensures that their old meanings now become potential sources for new ones. (237)

Due to these reasons some practitioners and proponents of this interpretive framework prefer to call it the poetics of culture. Culture and its various armatures, both visible and invisible, are constantly shifting and forming new patterns. Understanding these nebulous but often nomological ideas have proved to be impossible. Attempting to find "through historical research, a stable core of meaning within the text, a core that united disparate and even contradictory parts into an organic whole" (Greenblatt 1444) has also been futile, as there is no monolithic edifice that connects all people and can explain the behaviour of disparate communities. This is why we see a vast disconnect between historical reconstructions of past events gathered from texts and the reality of the people who lived through that history.

One of the most important tenets of New Historicism, at least for our discussion, is the way it describes power and the ubiquitous circulation of power. Power creates the circumstances for literature and art to either flourish or perish. There are numerous examples throughout history where the state or ruling class has been the largest patrons of the art and under their patronage a society's cultural identity was formed through the hands of great artists, and this identity that they created, or at least an impression of the identity they created, last to this day. During the 15th and 16th centuries, The House of Borgia[1] were responsible for sponsoring and inspiring the creative endeavours of many great artists and scholars whose works are revered to this day - this includes Niccolo Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Pinturicchio, and Michelangelo.

---

[1] Powerful Spanish family that had established itself in Italy in the 15th and 16th centuries. "The house of the Borgias produced two popes and many other political and church leaders" (Encyclopædia Britannica).

Unfortunately, there are more examples of a regime constricting the creation of art and literature due to state endorsed censorship. Since discourse through texts and art have the capability to circulate power, autocratic states that want to promote one concrete ideology to its citizens often censor literary or artistic productions to preemptively destroy any means of dissension. The biggest influence on New Historicists with regards to understanding and theoretically conceptualizing power and the relation between power and knowledge was Michel Foucault.Foucault and his works were seminal in further developing the theory of the circulation of power and how knowledge and power interact and depend on each other. Foucault in his own right was greatly influenced by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, and shared Nietzsche's derision for absolutes, and a "principal objective of Foucault's work is to illustrate the historical and contingent nature of what philosophy has traditionally viewed as absolute and universal", and that the "very ideas of absolute and universal knowledge and moral values are themselves historical phenomena" (Taylor 2). Foucault believed that power was not just exercised or held by certain entities and sociopolitical apparatuses, but was pervasive in society in every aspect of life. For Foucault, "power is omnipresent, that is, power can be found in all social interactions" (Lynch 15). Also, we must realise that Foucault's conceptualisation of power was not directly tied to subjugation or domination, although he did not discredit these effects of power. Foucault's theory was not primarily concerned with the physical or externally violent exertion of power, nor did he specifically discuss the domination of one group over another (Lynch 16). So, what were the basic assumptions of Foucault's theory of power? Foucault delved into the micro-relations of force, the transformation and interplay of these force relations, and the processes and systems connected to these power relations (Lynch 19). There are veins or capillaries that run along contiguous to our daily lives through which every single person exerts power over

something or someone. There is of course a hierarchy maintained by power dynamics, and that determined how many individuals and to what extent one can expend power. He was also polemical to the view that power could only exist in a suspension or vacuum of knowledge, and strongly believed that power and knowledge were intrinsically tied:

> We should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests … We should admit rather that power produces knowledge … that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault 27)

As mentioned above, New Historicists "have embraced Michael Foucault (the deeper theoretical influence on their work), and the effect of this … acceptance is traced everywhere in new historicism in the coded term 'power'" (Lentricchia 234). As a hermeneutical sphere of analysis that considers the contingencies and negotiations of cultural and social artifacts, New Historicism is deeply invested in the circulation of power and how power structures can propagate a certain stream of text and suppress others. Theorists also delve into the power relations of the past and the historical influence that was exerted on a creation, and how that creation might have exerted power on its audience. Greenblatt uses the example of Queen Elizabeth and her trepidation with Shakespeare's *Richard II,* and how the character of Richard II and his eventual imprisonment after the usurpation of the throne - "'I am Richard II. Know ye

not that?' exclaimed Queen Elizabeth on August 4, 1601, in the wake of the abortive Essex rising (Greenblatt 1443). Contemporary Elizabethan scholars such as Dover Wilson assured Elizabeth that the play was in support of the throne and cast the usurper in a negative light. However, that was perhaps not an accurate representation of public opinion of the time, which is reflected in the monarch's anxiety. These schisms between the aesthetic and the real domains, the tension between a purported reality and the various interpretations of the same event refracted through historical and social context is the eschatological goal of New Historicism. Maybe this is why plays meant to entertain were a more honest representation of history, as theatre "holds [a] mirror up to nature precisely by reflecting upon its own artifice" (Montrose 209).

The second prominent theoretical framework that this paper will utilise is trauma studies. Trauma studies and its effect on literature is a relatively fledgling field, even though the effects of trauma and its impact on the psyche and memory formation has been documented and studied for a considerable amount of time. The main concerns of the field of trauma studies are "[p]sychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping individual and cultural identities" (Mambrol). Trauma is a visceral and overt influence on a person's mind and body, and has long lasting and insidious effects not just on the victim but also perpetrators. The dimensions of expressions and experience are different for the victim and perpetrator, but being associated with trauma deeply impacts all parties involved.

The initial problem that one finds themselves in while trying to research and study trauma is its lack of a concrete definition, and what should be constituted under the field of trauma research. Trauma can be of various types, and can range from causing in a subject a mild but

lingering anxiousness to rendering a victim mute and crippled from abject terror. Should the

research on trauma only constitute widespread and documented events terror and persecution,

such as the Holocaust? Should the more subtle forms of trauma that are individually experiential

and elicit no collective response deserve study from a literary and critical perspective?

According to E. Ann Kaplan, "such daily experience of terror may not take the shape of classic

trauma suffered by victims or survivors, but to deny these experiences as traumatic would be a

mistake" (1). Furthermore, we must consider a subject's proximity and relative position when it

comes to the experience of trauma. Someone living through and directly being victimised will

have a completely disparate reaction to someone who faced trauma indirectly or proxy. This does

not invalidate their experience, but the response elicited by these different groups and the way

they need to be addresses are different:

> [I]t is necessary to distinguish the different positions and contexts of encounters with
>
> trauma. At one extreme there is the direct trauma victim while at the other we find a
>
> person geographically far away, having no personal connection to the victim. In between
>
> are a series of positions: for example, there's the relative of trauma victims or the position
>
> of workers coming in after a catastrophe, those who encounter trauma through accounts
>
> they hear, or clinicians who may be vicariously traumatized now that increasingly
>
> counseling is offered to people who survive catastrophes. (2)

Whatever the context and proximity, trauma fundamentally disrupts mental cohesion and

changes how people react to external stimuli. This fragmentation of the psyche can be inherited,

and intergenerational trauma can cast doubt on a person's identity and individuality long after the original event that generated the trauma has passed.

Trauma also changes a person's reaction to the outside world, and can create triggers that can be set off due to seemingly unrelated events. Scientists have researched the effects of psychological trauma on the brain, and it has been shown that an emotionally traumatic event can fundamentally alter brain chemistry. These negative changes are often unalterable, and even if they are treatable or reversible they require years of therapy or the help of medication - "Traumatic stressors such as early trauma can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) … as well as depression, substance abuse, dissociation, personality disorders, and health problems. For many trauma victims, PTSD can be a lifelong problem" (Bremner 445). The residual effects of trauma can manifest itself in many ways can lead people to act in ways that are erratic or not socially acceptable behaviour.

Additionally, another crucial aspect of trauma studies is the role of language, more importantly, the inherent lacking in language in being able to express trauma. Trauma studies discusses the fact that suffering and the psychological response to suffering is fundamentally unrepresentable, and language falls short of being able to sincerely mirror the immensity of these experiences:

> Literary trauma writing performs a complex balancing act regarding the (un)speakability, (un)narratability, and (in)comprehensibility of trauma, and trauma theory displays an equally strong concern for the interrelations between wounds and words, between wounds and signification. (Schönfelder 30 - 31)

A fundamental problem that arises due to these limitations is the inability to express completely how a person has been truly affected. This unavoidable suppression can lead to the emotions and pain being channeled in unhealthy and harmful ways.

Trauma studies also delves into memory and repression, the manifestation of repressed memories and the psychopathological expression of memories or emotions triggered by memories. Relevant work in his field was pioneered by Sigmund Freud, although his research and findings were connected more closely to hysteria and the causes of hysteria. In *Studies in Hysteria,* Freud noted that:

[T]he precipitating event in some way still continues to exercise an effect years later, not indirectly through a chain of intermediary causal links, but as a directly releasing cause, in something like the same way that a psychical pain remembered in waking consciousness will still produce the secretion of tears later on: hysterics suffer for the most part from reminiscences. (52-53)

However, a facet of this discussion that is often ignored is how trauma and the expectant response to it can be appropriated and manipulated in order to establish a dominant norm, enforced by a hegemonised collective response to the trauma. This paper will introduce and discuss such an example, where, due to the lack of polyphonic narratives and opposing voices, the collective consciousness of the citizens of a state has been conditioned to reinforce a nationalistic spirit that proved useful in maintaining the status quo.

Wright's *Native Son* and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* have been the center of extensive research, and a selection of these existing analyses will be discussed in Chapter 2. *Native Son*in particular triggered a powerful response across its readers, and influential authors and scholars including James Baldwin have criticised the novel. This paper has attempted to analyse these two texts specifically within the sphere of trauma, historical representation, and power. The aim of exploring these opposing narratives is to juxtapose it with the Bangladeshi perspective discussed in the third chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

This chapter of the thesis will focus on the American Civil War, fought between armies of 23 northern states and 11 confederate states of the south between 1861 and 1865. More specifically, it will focus on the backdrop of the war, the main reason of contention over which the war was fought, and the aftermath that it had on the people it was fought over. There were many accumulating reasons for the precipitation of the war, and tensions between the North and the South had been mounting for a long time. Despite certain cultural and economic differences, the fundamental cause of the war was the abolishment of slavery. The Transatlantic slave trade saw men, women and children being captured or sold off from mostly African nations, and they were shipped to America to support its burgeoning agricultural economy. People of colour were bought and sold and used as commodities, barring them from accessing even the most basic

human rights. Although forced labour and trading people as chattel were a common concept even before the trans-Atlantic slave trade burgeoned, "[t]he trans-Atlantic slave trade, which began as early as the 15th century, introduced a system of slavery that was commercialized, racialized and inherited" (Elliot and Hughes). Friction between the North and the South continue to grow, and eventually boiled down to a civil war to decide the fate of the nation.

The main reason behind the South's secession and their willingness to battle the North despite being outnumbered was not any cultural difference, but economic survival. The Southern economy before the Civil War was heavily dependent on slave labour. Whereas the North had invested in infrastructure, trade, industry and communication, "Southerners invested their money in slaves—even more than in land; by 1860, 84 percent of the capital invested in manufacturing was invested in the free (nonslaveholding) states" (Hassler and Weber). An end to slavery meant the economic edifice of the South would crumble. Under the leadership of President Abraham Lincoln and Commanding General of the United States Army, Ulysses S. Grant, the North won the war and America was set on a path of emancipation. However, the road to freedom and equality has been plagued by institutionalised and socially embedded racism, and racial tensions between African Americans and the white majority in America is still a massive problem.

More than the war, this part of the paper will deal with the impact of the war and its aftermath as presented in literature. On the other end of the spectrum, this chapter will also discuss how slavery and institutional racism has affected the African American psyche, and how texts have responded to this fragmentation of identity and alienation.

2.1 Fear and Loathing in the South

As has already been mentioned above, the effects of extorting and infliction trauma on another human takes a toll on the psyche of the perpetrator as well, which can lay latent and manifest itself in unexpected and tragic ways. This section of the paper will discuss the effects of trauma on the perpetrator or oppressor, and analyse the ways in which history, memory, and trauma interact. The gradual economic and spiritual erosion of the American South after they lost the Civil War has been the topic of much discussion, but very few texts have done so with the eloquence and fierceness in its condemnation of the South as William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*. The novel is a vast and labyrinthine account of the rise, fall and eventual annihilation of the Sutpen dynasty in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha county, set in Mississippi. Even to the most seasoned readers, *Absalom, Absalom!* Proves to be a difficult read. One of Faulkner's great skills is his ability to imbue his narrative with a sense of frantic kinetic energy that pushes the events of the novel at a paranoid speed towards its end - "the story and the telling eat each other's tails—but in some miraculous way, out of this mutual devouring that ought to produce nothing, rise shades, the delineation of the unspoken, and a silence that tells" (McPherson 432). This becomes doubly fascinating when one juxtaposes Faulkner's mode of storytelling with the setting of the novel. Opposed to the frenetic pace of his writing, the main themes of the novel are the death and decay of what was once resplendent, and how the past haunts and distorts the lives of the characters.

The story of *Absalom, Absalom!* Is convoluted, and the truth, if there is any truth to be found, is hidden under layers of narrative and spatiotemporal inconsistency. The noble has 4

separate narrators, and there is often no tonal shift in narration when the narrator changes. Just as Quentin and his Harvard roommate Shreve are trying to piece together the actual story of the Sutpens, so must the reader pick through clues dropped casually in a torrential stream consciousness and assemble the different narratives and their conflicting tales to form a coherent whole. There are 4 primary narrators in the novel - Rosa Coldfield, Quentin Compson, Mr. Compson (Quentin's father), and Shreve McCannon, and the narration abruptly and often without any indication switches tracks. This is further made difficult due to the presence of "'nested' narrators who narrate from within the narratives of the primary narrators, [presenting] accounts of Thomas Sutpen's life that often include contradictory sets of detail and contrasting descriptive style" (Casero 86). The fragmentation of these narratives serves to create distance between the reader and the characters, enhancing the mythic quality of the figures in the narrative. It also allows for the readers to interpret the motives and driving force of the characters. Stripped of the power and enigma that Faulkner's method of storytelling imbues, the plot of the novel is relatively barebones. The primary driving force of the novel is Thomas Sutpen and his indomitable and single-minded desire to establish a respectable white dynasty in Mississippi. Before he arrives in Yoknapatawpha county, Sutpen takes a brief sojourn away from America and after some fortuitous events marries the daughter of a Haitian plantation owner. He then learns that his new wife is not ethnically pure, and he abandons her without a second thought. Sutpen returns to America and aggressively pursues his dream, marrying into a respectable but poor white family. His wife (Ellen) bears him a son (Henry) and a daughter (Judith). All seems to go well for a while, until Henry's friend (Charles) from university appears in the Sutpen household and a romantic relationship blooms between Charles and Judith. Sutpen comes to realise that Charles is his son from his first marriage, and he too has negro blood in

him. He informs Henry of his discovery, and after years of deliberation in the middle of the Civil War, Henry kills Charles to prevent his marriage to Judith. Left without a male heir, Sutpen proposes to Ellen's younger sister, but their relationship falls apart due to Sutpen's brutishness. He eventually seduces and has a child with the granddaughter of one of the inhabitants (Wash Jones) of his now decaying and dwindling plantation, but repudiates the girl after learning that she gave birth to a daughter. As a result of his taunts, Wash Jones murders Sutpen. him. "At the end of the novel the only living descendant of Thomas Sutpen is a mulatto idiot, the grandson of Sutpen's son by his first wife" (Watkins 80). Thus ends the dynasty that Sutpen had hurt, maimed and cajoled to build, and his memory only lives on in Rosa's cold hatred of him and the ambiguous story that Shreve and Quentin attempt to piece together.

There are a few elements of *Absalom, Absalom!* which require further discussion within the framework of this paper. The first of these elements is the interplay between the effect of trauma, biracial sexual attraction contradicting ideological conditioning, and the manifestations of oedipal complexes. This also ties in with the second element this paper will discuss further on, namely the negotiation and exchange with the past and how it alters the reality of the characters in the novel. While discussing slavery and the role of the American slave owners in the perpetuation of unspeakable cruelty on African-American people, it is the experience of slaves and slave narratives that receive the most focus. The other end of the spectrum, that is the experience of the slave owners, is comparatively minimized. Ostensibly, this is an accurate mode of representing the atrocities perpetrated in the name of racial inferiority. However, this obfuscates the absolute tragedy and horror of the South as a whole. Slave owners, through sweeping dehumanization of African Americans, intrinsically dehumanized themselves. These

wounds were self-inflicted and motivated by greed and the loss of a moral compass. This loss of core humanity corroded their society from the inside, and *Absalom, Absalom!* is a tragic but illuminating example of this decay from the inside out. Even a character such as Ellen and Rosa's father, who was removed from the unspeakable atrocity of the plantation, felt this in his bones, and it eventually destroyed him:

> … it was his conscience he hated, not Sutpen;—his conscience and the land, the country which had created his conscience and then offered the opportunity to have made all that money to the conscience which it had created, which could do nothing but decline; hated that country so much that he was even glad when he saw it drifting closer and closer to a doomed and fatal war; that he would have joined the Yankee army, Father said, only he was not a soldier and knew that he would either be killed or die of hardship and so not be present on that day when the South would realise that it was now paying the price for having erected its economic edifice not on the rock of stern morality but on the shifting sands of opportunism and moral brigandage. (Faulkner 218)

The characters also exhibit a complex and corrupt array of sexual desires, many of which materialise within the story. Sutpen has a mixed child with one of his slaves, and Sutpen's illegitimate child Clytemenestra plays an important role throughout the novel. There is also a strange trifecta of attraction between Charles, Judith and Henry. Within the narrative Henry exhibits a sexual desire for Judith, and there are also hints that the reason he is drawn to Charles is not just because of Charles' charisma, but due to reasons more complex. The internal rupture of identity and desire gradually wears away Henry's rational thinking, and in the end he murders

Charles to stop his marriage with Judith. It is implied that it was not specifically the fact that a

union between Charles and Judith would be incestuous that drew Henry to fratricide, but the fact

that Charles was mixed. Even so, Henry struggles to make up his mind:

—So it's the miscegenation, not the incest, which you cant bear. Henry

doesn't answer.

...

—Think of her. Not of me: of her.

—I have. For four years. Of you and her. Now I am thinking of

myself.

—No, Henry says.—No. No.

—I cannot?

—You shall not.

—Who will stop me, Henry?

...

Henry looks at the pistol; now he is not only panting, he is trembling;

when he speaks now his voice is not even the exhalation, it is the

suffused and suffocating inbreath itself:

—You are my brother.

—No I'm not. I'm the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister.

unless you stop me, Henry. (Faulkner 299)

Absalom, Absalom! uses many unique narrative devices and uses language as a lure to expound on one crucial point that echoes throughout the novel - that one must not forget the past, but they should also not let it consume them. Almost every central character in the novel is in some way haunted by the past and allow their lives to be informed and shaped by a shared history. After the demise of his son and the South's loss in the Civil War, Thomas Sutpen invested his lifeforce to try and return to the past and he failed. Rosa Coldfield dwelled in the past too, and let her hatred for Sutpen dominate her life. Charles Bon pursued a relationship from his past his entire life, and all he did was to gain not even the approval, but at least the acknowledgement of his father. It was not love for Judith that drove him, or desire to enact revenge on the father who had abandoned him. He simply wanted the smallest gesture of recognition:

> He would just have to write 'I am your father. Burn this' and I would do it. Or if not that, a sheet a scrap of paper with the one word 'Charles' in his hand, and I would know what he meant and he would not even have to ask me to burn it. Or a lock of his hair or a paring from his finger nail and I would know them because I believe now that I have known what his hair and his finger nails would look like all my life, could choose that lock and that paring out of a thousand. (273)

Finally, it was Quentin who buckled under the weight of his history. He was born into the sickly tar of regret and inherited the self-loathing that passed down from generations who had destroyed not just the lives of others but had also stripped themselves of a moral core. His visceral, frantic, and immediate response to Shreve when he asks him why Quentin hates the

South is evidence enough of inherited wounds and scars that may never heal - "I dont hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I don't hate it," he said. I dont hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it! (316)

2.2 The Blacker the Berry

This section of the paper will examine inherited trauma, and how divergent discourse and its representation through literature allows for discussion of historically entrenched power structures and their influence. In an essay titled "Black Boys and Native Sons", American critic Irving Howe explored the social impact of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and the ripples of the cultural shockwaves that Wright's novel produced - "The day *Native Son* appeared, American culture was changed forever...Richard Wright's novel brought out into the open, as no one ever had before, the hatred, fear and violence that have crippled and may yet destroy our culture" (354 - 355). Wright created a complex narrative of the plight of African Americans, and his novel reflected the internalised oppression that African Americans suffered. Although Wright warned of the reality that might emerge if racial tensions and the percolating violence that had so far been turned inwards were ignored, the novel offers a glimpse into the psyche of a young black man and the schisms he faced in reconciling his own identity and his place in the larger community. The social conditions and trauma that Bigger was forced to grow up in altered his psyche, and perhaps the most devastating aspect of that was a loss of identity.

The lack of a strong sense of self and the defense mechanisms of violence and lashing out to hide his vulnerability is part of Bigger's social paradigm - "[t]he moment a situation became so that it exacted something of him, [Bigger] rebelled. That was the way he lived; he passed his days trying to defeat or gratify powerful impulses in a world he feared" (Wright 62). This was not a problem he alone was subjected to, but how social and economic conditions that greatly disenfranchised and marginalised African Americans affected the black community. Even so, a central idea of the novel is Bigger's lack of individuality, and the act that finally gives him some agency and allows him to feel some semblance of power and control over his own life. Wright attempts to portray Bigger as a "discrete entity, a particular person who struggles with the burden of his humanity. Wright has gone to great lengths in the novel to create Bigger as a person, to invest the social character with particularizing traits, to delineate the features of a face (Gibson 728). In "Many Thousands Gone", James Baldwin discusses this lack of individuality and the social forces that enforce these paradigms. According to Baldwin, the black American experience, their history, and their relation to other Americans is confined within the social domain. The black man lacks humanity and agency, and is seen as a social problem to be kept in check (Baldwin 36).

The fear Bigger was constantly aware of and that haunted him was the fear of the power of whiteness, and what in his mind seemed like a monolithic and collective force that had suppressed him and would continue to oppress him for as long as he lived:

To Bigger and his kind white people were not really people; they were a sort of great natural force, like a stormy sky looming overhead, or like a deep swirling river stretching

suddenly at one's feet in the dark. As long as he and his black folks did not go beyond

certain limits, there was no need to fear that white force. But whether they feared it or

not, each and every day of their lives they lived with it; even when words did not sound

its name, they acknowledged its reality. (131)

This fear, coupled with discrimination and social control, made it easier for the dominant

class to keep African Americans subservient to them and to exert control over them. This opened

up avenues of exploitation and profiting off of human misery. An example of this is that the

character of Mr. Dalton owned stakes in the buildings that Bigger and his family lived in. As

African Americans were confined economically to certain areas of the city, the people who

owned the real estate and other resources could exploit them as they see fit. The propagation of

this fear and the exertion of power, both direct and subtle, was important in maintaining the

status quo. So, even though slavery might have ended, the power relations between hierarchical

positions based on race and class stayed quite the same.

Bigger finally finds some agency and feels powerful after his trauma and fear pushes him

to commit homicide. Although the death of Mary was unintentional, Bigger took various steps to

make sure that no traces of the body would remain, and after the homicide Bigger "felt that he

had his destiny in his grasp. He was more alive than he could ever remember having been: his

attention and mind were pointed, focused toward the goal" (166). Furthermore, he extorted the

Daltons for money under the guise of ransom, making them believe that Mary had been

kidnapped and not killed. His response to his trauma reaches its peak when in an abhorrent act of

cruelty he rapes and then kills his girlfriend Bessie. Bigger's morality and motive might be

brought into question, as he had no reason to commit the second murder, whereas ana argument could be made that the first death was necessary for the formation of his sense of self, which unfortunately came at the price of a human life. Wright's intention was not to condemn or exonerate Bigger due to his social circumstances, but to illuminate the idea that he was a product of his environment - "the fact that Bigger is subjected to complex social forces—racial oppression and cultural discourses—that divide his sense of selfhood makes problematical any simple apology for or criticism of his violence (Takeuchi 56).

In the rousing but flawed speech that Max Boris delivers at the end of the novel in an attempt to save Bigger's life, Wright expounds his principal argument. Again, his intention is not to prove Bigger innocent or cleanse him of his wrongdoings conditioned his environment. Wright wants to bring attention to the power structures that had created the environment that gave birth to Bigger Thomas. He wanted to bring attention to the degree of public outrage and outcry at Bigger's crime, a response that might not have been as strong had the crime been committed by a white person. Wright wanted recognition of the black experience and to elucidate the gulf of difference between the experiences of a black man and a white man:

> ...I plead with you to see a mode of life in our midst, a mode of life stunted and distorted, but possessing its own laws and claims, an existence of men growing out of the soil prepared by the collective but blind will of a hundred million people. I beg you to recognize human life draped in a form and guise alien to ours, but springing from a soil plowed and sown by all our hands. I ask you to recognize the laws and processes flowing from such a condition, understand them, seek to change them. If we do none of these,

then we should not pretend horror or surprise when thwarted life expresses itself in fear and hate and crime. (400)

Grim and fatalistic as it may be, the narrative Wright represents highlights the narrative of the marginalised, and the recognition of the African American experience was crucial in adding depth and dimension to the national consciousness. There can perhaps be no more telling a sign of the burden of the black experience, and the degree of exhilaration felt when one is freed from the gaze and control of white oppressive metastructures, than Bigger's lack of regret at the very end of the novel, even though he was about to be put to death. As Max says his goodbyes to him, Bigger asserts that he did not regret his actions because it gave him a taste of freedom and spiritual emancipation, even if for a moment - "[b]ut what I killed for, I am!" (440)

2.3 Space to Breathe

In January 1863, two years before the Civil War officially ended, President Abraham Lincoln signed and ratified the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State … shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free" (Lincoln). As mentioned before, there were many factors that caused the precipitation of the war between the different states, slavery being one of them. The ratification of the Emancipation Proclamation clarified, to some extent, the motives and focus of the war, and now there were explicit stakes on the line - the freedom of millions of black people in America. However, winning the war was only the first step on a long road to equality. Racial tensions still run high more than 150 years later, as questions of race and identity have evolved

and adopted new dimensions over the years. The lynching of African Americans was a mindlessly cruel expression of hatred adopted by the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups, and the last reported case of lynching recorded in the United States was not in the late 19th or early 20th century, but in 1981 in Mobile Alabama. On the morning of March 21, 1981, Beulah Mae Donald received a call. She had hoped it would be from her son, Michael Donald, who had not returned after spending the evening before with his cousins. The call was from one of her neighbours, and a "few blocks away, in a racially mixed neighborhood about a mile from the Mobile police station, Michael Donald's body was still hanging from a tree" (Kornbluth). He had been murdered and hung for display by two members of the Ku Klux Klan. A more insidious but equally problematic issue is institutionalised racism. African Americans still face racial profiling and disproportionately high incarceration rates, and the issue of police brutality against people of colour flared into the public consciousness after the murder of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020. 3 police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, took George Floyd into custody over an alleged case of the use of a counterfeit note. He was forcefully restrained, pushed to the ground, and one of the officers stepped on his neck, cutting off his air flow. He repeatedly gasped for air and told the officers that he could not breathe. This went on for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. As the last few breaths left him, George Floyd called for his mother - "'It was a modern-day lynching,' said Arica Coleman, an historian, cultural critic, and author" (Brown).This incident, along with the unjust death of other African Americans such as Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor due to police intervention, sparked protests and movements across the country, and communities from across the world stood in solidarity with the protesters. This prompted many statewide structural changes in some places and a general acknowledgement and call to action to address the racial inequality still pervasive in the country.

The point of the examples used above was to illustrate that while the metastructures and political environment in America are deeply flawed, social ills still garner a response, if not a solution. Beulah Mae Donald sought justice for her son, and it resulted in the conviction and execution of one of his murderers and the bankruptcy and dissolution of the Klan's local chapter. George Floyd's death did not go unanswered, and invoked a nationwide response. Confederate statues across America were vandalised and later removed, and police budgets of many cities were slashed. When there is space for discourse and response, society tends to rise to the occasion, even if the dissenting side is a vast minority. The American Civil Rights movement was born out of a collective desire to address the inequality and injustices rampant in America, and this movement galvanised millions into taking action. There has always been pushback and reputations of social changes. Even so, the sociopolitical climate of America has provided opportunities for dialogic discourse and many voices to coexist. This also has reflections in literature and text - we can find slave narratives detailing the harrowing experiences of working in a plantation, juxtaposed by historic narratives of slave owners. These opposing voices and their expression are crucial to gain a fuller understanding of the past, to comprehend the various interlocked dimensions that drive the present, and to build a better future. However, what happens when there is no space for discourse or multiple perspectives? What happens when a society is conditioned to glorify a mediated representation of its history, thereby silencing other voices and interpretations? The next chapter of this paper will discuss this in detail.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH

The historical view of the war that ravaged East Pakistan in 1971 presents an interesting juxtaposition with how the 1971 Liberation War is viewed in Bangladesh. This contrast, at least superficially, is not unusual - due to social proximity and cultural inundation, a citizen of Bangladesh will be more emotionally entrenched in the national narrative. However, for most of the world the war in 1971 was fought between India and Pakistan, and Bangladesh's independence was a byproduct of India's victory. This struggle between divergent narratives is an inherent characteristic of history. During the Nuremberg trials, Hermann Goering expressed his famous aphorism, which has also been echoed by many others around the world and across many timelines - "'The victor will always be the judge, and the vanquished the accused'" (Gilbert 10). Perhaps a more nuanced reading of this adage would be that entities with more power and historical influence can highlight and promote a particular narrative over others. For the purposes of this paper, we are going to analyse the effects of the war and its reflection in the selected texts within the context of Bangladesh.

There were multiple factors that led to the conflict between East and West Pakistan. Economic inequality, political dominance, and unequal distribution of resources were some of the primary factors that galvanised the conflict. The war for East Pakistan's secession and freedom had a violent and tragic beginning - Operation Searchlight, a targeted and brutal massacre of residents "in Old Dhaka, Tejgaon, Indira Road, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhaka airport, Ganaktuli, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan and Kanthalbagan" (Dhaka Tribune). This marked the beginning of a traumatic and harrowing conflict that would scar the psyche of the newly

emergent Bangladesh and its people. Bangladesh has had a history of political upheaval since its independence, and has gone through various iterations and forms of government. Bangladesh's past has been marred by assassinations, coups, military occupation, and dynastic autocracy. The current regime has been in power since 2009, and has essentially rendered Bangladesh a one-party state with little to no political opposition. The regime has also propagated a nationalistic rhetoric, bordering on jingoism, that has enshrined and glorified the war and the people who fought in it. This chapter will discuss how this mediated representation of the war has been used as a tool for enforcing a nationalistic ideology that exalts figures and symbols of the war, and what effect this has had on Bangladesh's literature. This chapter will also attempt to discuss the lack of parallel narratives that could provide other perspectives of our history.

3.1 Glorified, Past

It is common practice for some New Historicists to include some form of anecdote or a fragment of historical record in their discussions, even though it might first appear that they share little to no relevance with the topic that is under discussion. This allows the writer to achieve a few things - it creates a trail that the reader must invest in and follow, it exemplifies the ubiquity of power, and shows that even the most tangentially related things are connected through capillaries of power. Following the example of the New Historicists, this section of the paper will begin with a discussion of a few selected young adult novels,which is a genre that has traditionally attempted to maintain a thematic distance from trauma and violence. Specifically,

this section will analyse selected novels written by Muhammad Zafar Iqbal in the young adult genre.

The first novel is titled *Bubuner Baba (Bubun's Father),* and is a coming-of-age story of Bubun, a 13-year-old boy. Bubun and his mother move to the suburbs from Dhaka, and there he becomes friends with a group of misfits. As the novel progresses, we come to know that Bubun's father (Masud) had developed a mental disorder after Bubun's birth and had left home when Bubun was 2, never to return. In the 5th chapter of the book, Masud is brought back to his family by a doctor who had been taking care of him, but his mental development had been arrested and he had lost all his memories. A majority of the following plot centers around the children's attempts to bring Masud's memory back through different shenanigans. So far, the *Bubuner Baba* has all the conventional trappings of an archetypal young-adult adventure novel. A looming presence in the novel is the character of Khobiruddin, local political leader who is introduced as "Razakar commander of 1971, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, anti-NGO, anti-women's education, slaughterer" (Iqbal 309, translation mine). Khobiruddin threatens Bubun's mother (Rowhsan) many times, as she had been transferred to the town in order to develop a women's education program, which he opposed. Khobiruddin kidnaps Bubun's father and threatens to kill him unless Rowshan leaves town. When she is hesitant to leave her husband behind, Zahid, her colleague and a recurring character in the novel, urges her to comply with their demands and not attempt to fight or oppose them in any way:

> … 'Yes. You could have opposed them if they were human, but you cannot compete against beasts.'
> 'Beasts?'

'Yes. They murdered our teachers in 1971. They're not human Dr. Rowshan.' (358, translation mine)

Towards the climax of the novel, Masud recovers his memory and his mental maturity when Bubun's life is in danger, and it is revealed that he had been a freedom fighter at the age of 16. The antagonists cower under his newfound confidence, and decide to surrender their arms without much resistance. Masud orders the criminals to surrender their guns and not try to escape, and declares "no Razakar has ever escaped my grasp" (374, translation mine). In the climax of the novel, Masud and Rowshan are reunited, and Bubun's family is whole.

The author's choice to make Masud a freedom fighter and Khobruddin a razakar alters, to some extent, how this text is to be read. What was a light-hearted Bildungsroman thereby takes on the larger narrative of a fight between good and evil, and a microcosmic representation of Bangladesh's victory against Pakistan, despite the odds being against the liberation forces. The information that Masud is a freedom fighter is revealed to the readers only at the end of the novel, it does not motivate the characters' actions, nor does it advance the central plot in any way. What purpose, if any, does this characterisation serve? Was it merely an artistic choice by the author, or are there other motivators at work here?

Bubuner Baba is only one of many such instances where the primary antagonist of the story is either a razakar or a Pakistan sympathiser. *Nitu Aar tar Bondhura (Nitu and her Friends)* is a story of a 10-year-old girl who is sent to a boarding school after her mother passes away and her father remarries. Nitu quickly makes a tight knit group of friends, but soon discovers that the school is run by a cruel, foul-mouthed and abusive woman named Khorashani. The plot revolves

around Nitu and her friends' adventures and how they eventually get Khorashani kicked out of the school. During their investigation, they discover land deeds and official documents that proved that Khorashani had usurped the ownership of the school, and had distorted the patron's wishes. The donor had wanted the school to become a palace where girls would be "cared for and nurtured with love, so that they could realise that the love is the greatest force in the world" (Iqbal 444). She had also wished the school to be named after a great female figure who had contributed to the development of the country. Khorashani had taken over the school, and named it after her grandmother. The girls utilise this knowledge to eventually get Khorashani kicked out. The last page of the story contains the following lines:

> [Khorashani] had evaded capture, and no one knew her whereabouts. Rumours say she had changed her name and moved to Pakistan. Perhaps that was for the best, both for Khorashani and for Pakistan. It had always seemed that she had loved Pakistan more than Bangladesh anyway. (Iqbal 463, translation mine)

Another example of this ever-present characteristic of Dr. Iqbal's writing is seen is *Raju O Agunalir Bhoot (Raju and Agunali's Ghost).* This is another relatively straightforward coming of age story where a boy, who had simply gone to visit his uncle, finds himself embroiled in a dangerous world of intrigue and adventure. One of the central characters of the book is Shaon, a girl who has been kidnapped by her own father and kept captive in a room. The story revolves around the boys, Raju and Agunali, and how they free Shaon in order to return her to her mother's care. The father is portrayed as evil, politically corrupt and abusive. In describing her father, Shaon says:

My grandfather was a very powerful razakar. My father is quite like him. My father believes girls should never leave the house. Girls do not deserve an education. If they must go out, they should cover themselves with a burqa to cover their entire visage, otherwise they go to hell. (Iqbal 129, translation mine)

These examples have been provided to illustrate a point. This is not just a trend in Dr. Iqbal's writing, but a characteristic that permeates the young adult genre of Bangladesh. At this point it needs to be mentioned that Dr. Iqbal's father, "who worked as a police officer in what was then Eastern Pakistan, was killed during the 1971 liberation war" (Mahmud), and this deeply affected him. This incident changed the course of his life, and that reflects in his writing. Even so, the prevalence with which he uses the war as a narrative tool, particularly in a genre that is not naturally congruent to the above-mentioned themes, seems suspect.

This discussion was to reinforce the idea that power is ubiquitous, and once a dominant ideology establishes itself, it utilises every channel available to it to propagate and maintain the power relations that are beneficial to its operations. Our national narrative has been guided to support an agenda. Our state ideals and national moral compass revolve around principles inspired by the father of the nation. The iconic call-to-action delivered on March 7th, 1971 at the Ramna race course is blasted through loudspeakers across the country on historically significant days. His face appears on our banknotes, and his framed picture graces every Government office in the country. In 2016, our Cabinet approved the Digital Security Act, which has a "provision for life sentence and a fine of Tk. 1 crore for anyone involved in propaganda against the 1971 Liberation War and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" (The Independent). In 2018, Dhaka University "suspended Prof Morshed Hasan Khan of Marketing

Department, from all academic and administrative activities for his alleged derogatory comments on the Liberation War and [the] Bangabandhu" (Shovon). On October 20, 2020, a student from the Noakhali Science and Technology University was suspended for defaming Bangabandhu (Kuri). There are many similar examples, all of which pointing to the extent of social control that is being enforced on Bangladesh's citizens.

The glorification and semiotic mythification of the war and the main actors involved with it has altered the perception of the people of Bangladesh towards their liberation. Bangladeshi citizens are inundated in this jingoistic and partisan interpretation of the war, and they are taught to exalt the symbols of the war. In this simulacrum of glory and pride, the actual human toll of the conflict and the effects of the collective psychological trauma faced by people who lived through the war are forgotten. Movies are made about the war, songs sung about the sacrifice of the martyrs, and books written about the price that was paid in blood. This monetisation of the past desensitises people, and the real repercussions of the war are replaced by an anodyne version of reality. The simplistic condensation of the past into palatable morsels is central to the process of hegemonisation by the dominant regime, as it allows them to mass produce propaganda and distribute it at every level of society. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, some new historicists place great importance on the anecdote and its ability to convey truths that otherwise would be difficult to communicate. According to Fineman, "the anecdote...is the literary form or genre that uniquely refers to the real", and that they ought to be seen "as a historeme, i.e., as the smallest minimal unit of the historiographic fact" (56-57). I would therefore like to take the liberty to end this section with a personal anecdote.

I had gone to visit my friend in his hometown of Sonagazi in Feni. As we were on our way to his house, which lay on the outskirts of the main town, we came across a building that caught my eye. It appeared to be a mosque, and I could see people praying inside. However, the building was built unlike any mosque I had ever seen. The architecture was brutalistic and spartan, and even the main entryway seemed uninviting. I asked my friend, who is a student of architecture, about the building and if he knew anything of its past. He informed me that the building had been repurposed to serve as a mosque, but had originally been used as a bunker by the West Pakistan forces in 1971. During the last few months of the war, freedom fighters gained control of Sonagazi, and captured the bunker for their own use. My friend, a gentle and mild-mannered man, recounted that one of his relatives had beheaded more than 20 Pakistani prisoners of war in that building while it was still being used for its original purpose. He relayed this information to me in the same conversational tone that he had been using while we were talking of architecture and our plans for the future. An account of an act of inhuman cruelty resulting in the death of more than 20 people, told and accepted without any agitation of the conscience. We accept these stories, and regardless of which side of the narrative we sympathise with, we chalk it up to one of the many atrocities of war. The larger narrative consumes individual suffering, dates and statistics supersede humanity.

3.2 The Search for Other Voices

Bangladesh's post-war literature has been indelibly affected by the war, and the war's imprint can be observed in every form of media. These narratives largely concern people whose lives were affected directly by the war. We read and hear of the struggles of the freedom fighters,

and the families that were torn apart by the conflict. Motherhood, and a mother's trauma of losing a child to war, is a strong theme that recurs in Bangladeshi post-war literature. Anisul Hoque's *Maa (Mother)* and Jahanara Imam's *Ekattorer Dingulee (The Days of '71)* are based on true accounts of mothers who had lost their sons to the war, and they present a harrowing recollection of the pain and suffering that paved the way to Bangladesh's liberation. Texts have also been written on the perspective of people whose lives were forever changed by the war - Nilima Ibrahim's *Ami Birangona Bolchi (I, the heroine, speaks)* and Shaheen Akhtar's Talaash *(The Search)* delves into the lives and experiences of Birangonas (war heroines), the title awarded to Bangladeshi women who were raped or sexually assaulted during 1971. These are only a few examples, and other prominent Bangladeshi authors such as Humayun Ahmed, Syed Shamsul Haque, Selina Hossain, and Anwar Pasha have written novels and narratives about 1971. As mentioned before, the characters in these novels are survivors of the war, whose lives were unalterably changed due to what they experienced. These narratives do not necessarily reflect the experiences of a significant portion of the population. There were people who lived through the war, but were not consumed by it. For them, war was a social reality which ran parallel to their daily lives. However, locating these narratives has proved to be prohibitively difficult. We have portrayals of ailing mothers who had lost what was most precious to them in the war, but none of the common housewife for whom the war was a frightening, but ultimately nonconsequential, experience. We have chronicles from freedom fighters and descriptions of their psychological trauma, but seemingly none of a clerk whose biggest personal tragedy was that they were perhaps out of a job for 9 months. The apparent lack of these divergent voices renders our history incomplete, and forces us to attempt to piece together a kaleidoscope of experiences from only a few fragments. This section will use the example of one such peripheral

narrative in Shahidul Zahir's *Mukher Dike Dekhi (Looking to the Face)* to discuss the historical significance and storytelling potential of such texts.

    Mukher Dike Dekhi is a surrealist text that weaves its narrative across space and time, while maintaining a complex web of interconnectivity between its characters. The structure of the novel is fragmented, and the perspective shifts from character to character with no particular consideration for maintaining spatiotemporal continuity. The first part of the novel is centered around a few families that inhabit the same street in Bhooter Goli, Dhaka. The central characters of the novel are Chanmiah and Mamun, two boys who grow up next to each other in Bhooter Goli. Chronologically, the story begins before the Liberation War and before the boys are born. The lives of the characters in the novel interact with the war, but the war is not a narrative focus. Unlike other novels of the genre, the war seems itself to be a minor character, and casts a small shadow on the novel. Chanmiah's father disappears during the war, leaving his mother Khoimon to raise him by herself. Although Mamun starts off as a single character, in the first chapter of the novel his story splits into two - a version of him returns safely home after having gathered some threshed bran; the second version of Mamun falls into the piled-up heap of bran and his unconscious body is trucked off to Satkania, where he lives a portion of his life as Asmantara Hure Jannat's pet rabbit. The stories of two versions of Mamun, the Mamun who returns home to his mother Zubaida Rahman, and the pet rabbit who later assumes the name Kutubuddin Aibek, run parallelly. The novel contains elements of magical realism, and this adds to the disjointed structure of the plot, which serves a few important functions. There are 3 important insights that can be gleaned from *Mukher Dike Dekhi.*

Firstly, the lives of the characters interact with the war, but the effects are portrayed in subtle and temporary ways. Chanmiah's father is captured and taken away during 1971. He never returns home, and Khoimon or Chanmiah never learn of his whereabouts. Khoimon's brother Rashidul goes off to fight in the war, and this draws the attention of razakar Sardar Abdul Goni. Goni is drawn to Khoimon, and makes frequent visits to their house. In order to protect her and her child's life, Khoimon maintains the subterfuge of being pregnant, even after Chanmiah is born:

> After Chanmiah's birth Khoimon arranges to appear pregnant, and she wraps fabric and old cloth around her waist. Abdul Goni continues to make visits to the house, but Khoimon shows no sign of delivery. When Abdul Goni asks how many months it has been, Khoimon stays silent. (Zahir 62 - 63, translation mine)

On December 16th, once the surrender of Pakistan has been declared, Khoimon takes off the weight she had been carrying for so long, and Chanmiah is retrieved from his hiding place inside the basket his father had used to carry and sell vegetables. Although Khoimon's life is marred by the war, she dedicates the rest of her days to raising her son. The war plays a minor role in the narrative, and the characters have their own intrinsic motivators that determine their actions.

Secondly, a central characteristic of the novel is narrative uncertainty, and one of the operative words that repeats throughout the story is "perhaps" or "maybe". The story blurs the lines between reality and fantasy, and in almost every page the trajectory of the character's lives

split off, as the narrator offers a divergent set of events without establishing which is true. There are many examples of this in the novel. Khoimon has to leave Chanmiah alone in her room for prolonged periods of time while she works, and often returns to find him surrounded by monkeys that live in the area. Khoimon believes that the monkeys had grown fond of Chanmiah, and that perhaps one of the female monkeys had even breastfed Chanmiah while he was crying. These stories are never confirmed nor denied, but Chanmiah is shown to have an affinity with monkeys throughout the novel, and they follow him around wherever he goes. His classmates even come to call him "monkey boy". Additionally, after years of living with Hure Jannat's family, an incident sparks Aibek's memory, and he returns to Narinda to meet his mother. Zubaida does not recognise Aibek, and is bewildered by his claims. However, even she is confused and cannot recollect if she had lost her son or not.

The novel also places significant importance on the power and fallibility of memory, and how our interpretation of our past can affect our present. Julie, another character in the novel, and Mamun pour over a picture from their childhood, and have two completely different recollections of what happened. The readers are given a glimpse into the past as it was, but it is striking to see Julie and Mamun constructing their own version of the event with imperfect information. The role of memory in the formation of a person's identity is echoed throughout the novel, as "fundamentally, man exists only in memory. Memory keeps him alive, and memory kills him" (98, translation mine).

Thirdly, Chanmiah's character and the arc of his life can serve as an important allegory. Even though he is born somewhere in June, or perhaps July, Chanmiah begins his existence on

the 16th of December, the day Bangladesh officially wins the war and begins her journey as a sovereign entity. Chanmiah, despite the circumstances of his life, shows promise in his early years, and is propelled forward by his mother's dream and her hard work. However, his past lays too heavy on him. He faces harassment and bullying by his peers, and they call him cruel names such as "monkey boy" and "potlar pola" (basket boy). His potential gradually wastes away, and he becomes corrupt and morally bankrupt. Chanmiah is also colourblind, and cannot distinguish between the basic colours of red and green. These colours, and their meaning, is lost to him. He becomes involved in crime, and paralleling his color blindness, can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. The novel does not provide an ending to Chanmiah's story, and the readers are left to ponder his fate.

Mukher Dike Dekhi presents an interesting alternative to what readers have come to expect from a text that features our war for independence. The novel is a powerful example of the potential of exploring divergent and polyphonic narratives. However, the literary grounds for exploring these avenues of expression seem to be dwindling and bordering on extinction, as Bangladesh has drafted and is set to ratify the Liberation War Denial Crimes Act, punishing those "representing the liberation war history inaccurately or with half-truth in the text books or in any other medium" (Rahman). There are existing laws that are already being used to establish a monolithic narrative, and perhaps soon all Bangladeshi people will be forced to tell the same story.

3.3 The Path Ahead

Fiction and narratives are some of the best tools humanity has in order to question and come to terms with its past. Texts and other artifacts of culture help us recontextualise and gain a better understanding of our roots. A fuller appreciation of history is important for communal progress, but entrenched ideologies can sabotage the path ahead. What steps can be taken to find and document alternative and divergent narratives?

Firstly, society must try to locate voices that have been lost, or voices that never had a platform for expression. This attempt at finding or rediscovery can take many shapes and forms - from sifting through archival material to create a database, to conducting interviews of people who have first-hand experiences of the war that add something to the national conversation. An example of such an undertaking is Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence,* which documents the lost narratives of people affected by the Partition of India in 1947. The location and rendering of these other narratives can prove difficult, as one might face opposition from different sectors who might not wish for new narratives that challenge established ones. It needs to be mentioned that this paper is not implying erasure or forceful censorship of minority voices. However, sometimes a lack of evidence is the most salient evidence one can find.

Perhaps there is no malicious intent behind the lack of alternative texts and other media, and it is just a simple case of supply and demand. Perhaps some unknown author has already written the definitive text that reconciles the dialogical narratives of the war in a single tome, but they eventually faded into obscurity after selling less than 20 copies in 10 years. This was an exaggerated hypothesis, but it is not hard to imagine something similar being close to reality. If people do not read and buy books or consume informative media, people will have little to no motivation to write or create. On the other hand, someone who creates something that falls in

line with the national narrative may expect state sponsorship and promotion of their work. Therefore, the second step would be to attempt to create a rich literary field and inspire people to be creative and step outside the norms. People should also be taught and encouraged to be more mindful and well-rounded consumers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to find and conceptualise the effect of conflict, trauma, and persecution on people and their literature. The theoretical frameworks of New Historicism and trauma studies have been utilised to analyse the timelines and repercussions of two civil wars. The first part of the paper discusses the American Civil War, fought primarily over the freedom of African American people, and the ways in which its imprint can still be felt on the American psyche today. William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* was analysed in order to examine the self-loathing and self-deceit evident in texts from the North, and how the past can distort and cause the present to collapse under the weight of its burdens. Furthermore, Richard Wright's *The Native Son* was discussed to examine intergenerational trauma, and continues to exert influence on the lives of African American people by helping to validate dominant ideologies that benefit the majority. The second part of the paper was dedicated to discussing the Bangladesh Liberation War, and how literature has been used to propagate a monolithic sociopolitical ideology that is mired in past glory through the dissection of the trend to include razakars or Pakistani sympathisers as antagonists in young adult novels written by Muhammad Zafar Iqbal. Additionally, Shahidul Zahir's *Mukher Dike Dekhi* was analysed as an example of a

text that provides the perspective of people who were affected by the war, but not completely consumed by it. The goal of this analysis was to gauge the narrative potential of such texts, and to explore the possibilities that other examples belonging to this criterion may hold.

There are a few limitations of the paper, some of which are intrinsic to the nature of the research. Firstly, as much as I would have liked to include the Pakistani perspective of the 1971 war, and how it is perceived in the country today, there are scant resources that contain this information in detail. This is understandable, as Pakistan would be motivated to downplay this incident in order for it to not be a stain on their national identity. Secondly, the second part of the thesis concerns Bangladeshi literature, and scholarly resources and secondary materials relating to Bangladeshi literature has proved relatively hard to source. Many other books and texts that might have been beneficial for this paper were not easily available, and there are no databases that contain executive summaries of novels and texts.

I hope this paper provides useful insight into the importance of history, and how the human psyche remembers trauma even after the scars have seemingly faded. Our histories are part of us, and try as we might, we cannot separate ourselves from what is embedded within our very identities. For better or for worse, "[p]eople are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (Baldwin 145).

Works Cited

Armstrong, Jennifer Keishin. "How Sherlock Holmes Changed the World". *Bbc.com*, 2016,

https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160106-how-sherlock-holmes-changed-the-world.

Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

Baldwin, James. *Notes of a Native Son.* Beacon Press, 1984.

"Borgia Family | History, Members, & Facts". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020,

    https://www.britannica.com/topic/Borgia-family.

Bremner, J Douglas. "Traumatic stress: effects on the brain." *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience*

    vol. 8,4 (2006): 445-61. doi:10.31887/DCNS.2006.8.4/jbremner

Brooks, Cleanth. "The New Criticism." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 87, no. 4, 1979, pp. 592–607.

    JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27543619. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

Brown, Deneen L. "'It Was A Modern-Day Lynching': Violent Deaths Reflect A Brutal

    American Legacy". *Nationalgeographic.com*,
    2020,https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/06/history-of-lynching-violent-
    deaths-reflect-brutal-american-legacy/. Accessed 18 Dec. 2020.

Cain, William E. "The Institutionalization of the New Criticism." *MLN*, vol. 97, no. 5, 1982, pp.

1100–1120. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2905979. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

Casero, Eric. "Designing Sutpen: Narrative and Its Relationship to Historical Consciousness in

Faulkner's 'Absalom, Absalom!"." *The Southern Literary Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2011,

pp. 86–102. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23208771. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on poetry and criticism*. Alfred A. Knopf,

1921.

Elliott, Mary, and Jazmine Hughes. "A Brief History Of Slavery That You Didn't Learn In

School".

Nytimes.Com, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/19/magazine/history-
slavery-smithsonian.html. Accessed 20 Dec 2020.

Faulkner, William. *Absalom, Abasalom: The Corrected Text*. Vol. 271. Random House Digital,

Inc., 1993.

Fineman, Joel. "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction." *The New Historicism*. Edited

by H. Aram Veeser, Routledge, 2013, pp. 53 – 54.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage, 2012.

Freud, Sigmund, and Joseph Breuer. *Studies on Hysteria*.Translated by Nicola Luckhurst.

Penguin, 2004.

Gallagher, Catherine, and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism.* University of
Chicago

Press, 2000.

Geertz, Clifford. *The interpretation of cultures*. Vol. 5019. Basic books, 1973.

Gibson, Donald B. "Wright's Invisible Native Son." *American Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1969,
pp.

728–738. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2711605. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Gilbert, Gustave Mark. *The Nuremberg Diary*. New York, Signet, 1947.

Greenblatt, Stephen. "Introduction to The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance." *The*

    Critical Tradition. Edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007, pp. 1444.

Hassler, Warren W., and Jennifer L. Weber. "American Civil War". *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

    2020, https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War. Accessed 16 Dec. 2020.

Howe, Irving. "Black boys and native sons." *Dissent* 10.4 (1963): 353-368.

Iser, Wolfgang. *Prospecting: From reader response to literary anthropology*. JHU Press, 1993.

Iqbal, Muhammad Z. *Kishore Uponnash Shomogro,* Maola Brothers, 2000.

Kaplan, E. Ann. *Trauma culture: The politics of terror and loss in media and literature*. Rutgers

University Press, 2005.

Kornbluth, Jesse. "The Woman Who Beat The Klan". *Nytimes.Com*, 1987,

https://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/01/magazine/the-woman-who-beat-the-klan.html.

Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Kuri, Ranajit Chandra. "NSTU Student Suspended For Defaming Bangabandhu". *Dhaka*

Tribune, 2020, https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/10/15/nstu-

student-suspended-for-defaming-bangabandhu.

Lentricchia, Frank. "Foucault's Legacy-A New Historicism?" *The New Historicism*. Edited by H.

Aram Veeser, Routledge, 2013, pp. 234.

"Life Sentence For Defaming Bangabandhu, '71 War". *theindependentbd.com*, 2016,

http://www.theindependentbd.com/arcprint/details/57095/2016-08-23. Accessed 22 Dec

2020.

Lincoln, Abraham. "The Emancipation Proclamation." *September* 22 (1863): 1862.

Lynch, Richard A. "Foucault's theory of power." *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts.* Edited by

Dianna Taylor, Acumen, 2011, pp. 15.

Mahmud, Faisal. "Why Was Science Fiction Writer Zafar Iqbal Attacked?". *Aljazeera.com*,

2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/3/13/bangladesh-why-was-science-

fiction-writer-zafar-iqbal-attacked. Accessed 22 Dec 2020.

Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Trauma Studies". *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2018,

https://literariness.org/2018/12/19/trauma-studies/. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

McPherson, Karen. "'ABSALOM, ABSALOM!": TELLING SCRATCHES." *Modern Fiction*

Studies, vol. 33, no. 3, 1987, pp. 431–450. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26282384.

Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Montrose, Louis. *The purpose of playing: Shakespeare and the cultural politics of the*

Elizabethan

theatre. University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Mustafa, Sabir. "Bangladesh's Most Enduring Storyteller". *BBC News*, 2012,

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18930073. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Portable Nietzsche*. Penguin, 1977.

"Operation Searchlight: Genocide Unleashed on Bangalis In East Pakistan". *Dhaka Tribune*,

2017, https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/03/25/operation-searchlight-

genocide-unleashed. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Prideaux, Sue. "Far Right, Misogynist, Humourless? Why Nietzsche Is Misunderstood". *The*

Guardian, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/06/exploding-nietzsche-

myths-need-dynamiting. Accessed 3 Dec. 2020

Rahman, Mahmud. "In Bangladesh, Writing Fiction About The Liberation War May Well

Become Impossible". *Scroll.In*, 2016, https://scroll.in/article/810215/in-bangladesh-

writing-fiction-about-the-liberation-war-may-well-become-impossible. Accessed 22 Dec.

2020.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All quiet on the western front*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2004.

Shovon, Fahim Reza. "DU Professor Suspended For Allegedly Defaming Bangabandhu". *Dhaka*

    Tribune, 2018, https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2018/04/02/du-

    professor-suspended-for-allegedly-defaming-bangabandhu/.

Takeuchi, Masaya. "Bigger's Divided Self: Violence and Homosociality in 'Native Son.'"
Studies

    in American Naturalism, vol. 4, no. 1, 2009, pp. 56–74. *JSTOR*,

    www.jstor.org/stable/23431159. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Taylor, Dianna. "Introduction: Power, freedom and subjectivity." *Michel Foucault: Key*
Concepts.

    Edited by Dianna Taylor, Acumen, 2011, pp. 2.

"Theorizing Trauma: Romantic and Postmodern Perspectives on Mental Wounds." *Wounds and*

    Words: Childhood and Family Trauma in Romantic and Postmodern Fiction, by Christa

    Schönfelder, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2013, pp. 27–86. *JSTOR*,

    www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxrhq.5. Accessed 18 Nov. 2020.

Veeser, H. Aram. "Introduction." *The New Historicism*. Edited by H. Aram Veeser, Routledge,

2013, pp. xi.

Watkins, Floyd C. "WHAT HAPPENS IN 'ABSALOM, ABSALOM!?"." *Modern Fiction*

Studies, vol. 13, no. 1, 1967, pp. 79–87. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26278649.

Accessed 20 Dec. 2020.

Whyte, Max. "The Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in the Third Reich: Alfred Baeumler's 'Heroic

Realism'." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2008, pp. 171–194. *JSTOR*,

www.jstor.org/stable/30036502. Accessed 4 Dec. 2020.

Wood, Graeme. "Richard Spencer Was My High-School Classmate". *The Atlantic*, 2017,

https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/06/his-kampf/524505/. Accessed 3

Dec 2020.

Wright, Richard. *Native son*. Random House, 2016.

Zahir, Shahidul. *Mukher Dike Dekhi.* Maola Brothers, 2006.