

## Rethinking Terrorism: A Contextual Analysis of a Female Terrorist in Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of Crescent Moon*

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### Abstract:

Although female participation in terrorism and violence remained an infrequent happening in the past, contemporary times have observed a drastic increase in the number of female terrorist activities. With the increase in number of female terrorists, many researchers have tried to find out the motives and causes behind their involvement in terror attacks. Majority of these studies focused on the study of stereotypical image of female terrorists who are projected as victims of patriarchy by the media. On the contrary, the probability of their strong political commitment to fight for peace has rarely been considered. Addressing this void, this paper, by adopting the theoretical framework of Cragin and Daly (2009), throws a challenge to the stereotypical media image of the female terrorist, who is presented as both a passive and ignorant victim of oppression devoid of any political conscience. This paper considers the representation of a female terrorist in Fatima Bhutto's novel, *Shadow of the Crescent Moon* to identify the ways in which the political forces responsible for the chaos and instability of Mir Ali mobilize female participation in terrorism as the only viable route to restore peace of their land.

**Key Words:** Female terrorism, media stereotypes, social and cultural context, suicide bomber, political awareness

### INTRODUCTION

Terrorism, which is one of the major causes of political instability today, is being interpreted either as "propaganda of deed" (Hardman, 1987, p. 227) or "propaganda by deed" (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006, 3). These rich theoretical and political interpretations of this phenomenon primarily focus on its political, social, and psychological consequences and consider it as an "unlawful use of threat to intimidate and coerce government/ individuals" (Schmid & Jongman, 2005). However, very little attention is being invested to identify and examine the causes and motives of both the individuals and organizations that are involved in terrorist activities (Reynolds, 2002; Barber, 2003; Hafez, 2006). And most of these studies have focused on the generalized motives of the terrorists and terrorist organizations, mainly from the essentialist Western perspective that overlooks their individuality and the socio-cultural context within which they live (Juergensmeyer, 2003). This Western bias becomes more intense in the study of the motives of the female terrorists, whose involvement in terrorism is estimated either as involuntary participation or as a confrontation to the patriarchal denial of a female agency. More specifically, the female terrorists are projected as victims of their own cultures and social systems (Agara, 2014; Hoffman, 2004; Laqueur, 2003). Terrorism, being representation of violence and cold blood murder, has always been associated with men. However, 26 percent of the suicide attacks between 1981 and 2007 were carried out by women (Ness, 2008), which shows the increase in the phenomenon. Therefore, media have started focusing on the subject as if it is a recent phenomenon (Agara, 2015). But in case of female terrorists many other factors are considered to be significant, such as their physical appearance,

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their social status, their familial and romantic relationships etc. All these attributes of female terrorists are considered important as women in patriarchal, religious societies are considered to be deprived of their rights and political knowledge (Tierney 2002, 36).

As most of the coverage presents terrorists as religious fundamentalists (Hafez, 2006; Juergensmeyer, 2003; Barber, 2003 & Laqueur, 2003) and members of alienated societies, the motivations of female terrorists are presented in a very different light, i.e. the rebels, misfits and outcasts in their own societies. It is often considered to be their cry for gender equality and linked with feminism. Otherwise it is linked to the Islamic concept of jihad and religious fundamentalism (Reynolds, 2002; Tierney, 2002). Pakistani society being patriarchal also prescribes dominant roles for men, i.e. decision makers and immediate authorities within and outside household systems (Saeed & Zainab, 2017:2). Therefore, it is quite difficult for people to accept a woman in such a dominant, powerful role, where she is herself in control of her body and makes decisions for herself.

Pakistan being a Muslim country despite fighting its war against terrorism, has been accused many times of being “Safe haven” for terrorists (“Trump backs off,” 2017). Therefore, the research and fiction written in this context needs a political understanding of the phenomenon. This study has selected Fatima Bhutto’s novel, *The Shadow of Crescent Moon* that depicts the society of a Pakistani tribal area, where injustice breeds terrorism. The story of the novel revolves around the theme of war on terrorism by portraying the miseries and misfortunes of the people who are perceived by the western world as “threatening and dangerous” (Marquardt & Heffelfinger 2008, 112). The novel narrates the stories of different generations and both the male and female characters living in the town of Mir Ali, the Pakistani tribal agency wherein the narrative is set, who become victim to this phenomenon. However, this paper only focuses on the female protagonist of the story, Samarra, who gets involved in the planning and execution of a suicidal plan. Much like the media portrayal of a female terrorist who has strong familial associations, Samarra is portrayed as devoted daughter whose life revolves around her father. In examining the character of Samarra from a socio-cultural feminist perspective, this paper challenges that apparently her involvement in the violent activities may appear to be direct consequence of her father’s military eviction after which her life hardened as a female in the traditional society of Mir Ali. By applying the theoretical framework of Cragin and Daly (2009) to develop a contextual analysis of Samarra’s character, this study asserts her strong political consciousness and loyal commitment with the people of Mir Ali, which motivates her to political action. Through this fictional narrative, Fatima Bhutto shows to the world that the female terrorists from third world countries hold strong political motives and are the guardians of their traditions instead of the social rebels. Therefore, the study challenges the major misconception spread through media that female terrorists blow themselves up and join terrorist organizations for the sake of their personal revenge, social injustice and gender oppression.

### **REVISITING THE HISTORY OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN TERRORISM**

Generally, the ideas of a female and terrorism are considered to be quite dissimilar to appear in a same sentence if not completely opposite. It is because of the fact that women are assumed to be “gentle, soft, fragile and innocent.” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011, 1) According to another research there are various roles played by female terrorists within a terrorist organization. Therefore, the female terrorist activity can be classified in different levels. The highest form of terrorism carried by

female is in the form of suicide attack while other roles played by female terrorists are that of *“Facilitators, in both planning as well as preparation of terrorist attacks”* (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2011, 1). However, it has been only a few years that there is turn of focus towards the significance of roles of women in terrorist activities as they *“account for much smaller proportion of terrorists as compared to men”* (Gonzalez-Perez 2008, 14). It is, therefore, the matter of time that the subject has become quite popular among literary critics, researchers and theorists.

Even though research on the subject has appeared only in recent times, it is quite a false notion that women did not play any active role in such activities in the past. Women have always had active roles in such activities, as Jill Steans claims that *“Historically, women have always participated in both conventional as well as military revolutionary movements”* (Steans 1998, 89). Steans (1998), Tickner, (2001), Laqueur, (1977b) and Cunningham (2003) agree that women have a history of active participation in revolutionary wars, i.e. guerilla movements (Laqueur, 1977a, 398). Therefore, the subject under consideration is not based on a novel idea, but due to the sudden increase in the number of female terrorist activity researchers are trying to explore this area of research.

Other than an increase in the number of female terrorists, a certain change in their roles has also been observed. Researchers such as Strentz, (1988) and Russell & Miller (1977) agree on the point that the role of women in such organizations is that of a *“servant to the male”* as they are not considered equals (Strentz 1988, 18). Due to this inequality, women were historically considered to be effective only in the supporting roles (Russell & Miller, 1978). Georges-Abeyie agreed to these notions in his research, while he anticipated the shift of their role as supporting agents towards *“an increasingly dynamic and significant”* (1983, 71). The change of role Abeyie anticipated can most certainly be observed in recent times, as news coverage of *“female suicide bombers seem to result in more widespread media exposure as compared to their male counterparts”* (Schweitzer 2006, 154-55). This attention is due to the difficulty of the world to accepting woman in the role of brutal killer and suicide bomber.

A well-known Pakistani writer, Kamila Shamsie (2002) argued that a woman ripping herself into thousand pieces by strapping explosives onto her body and pushing a button is a qualitatively different matter than a man doing the same. Hence, researchers are trying to find out the motives of female terrorists, through both quantitative as well as qualitative methods.

### **Representation of Female Terrorists**

Although a lot of research and scientific studies have been carried out about terrorism, a lot less is particularly related to female terrorism. Therefore, in forty years only a handful examined women as perpetrators, while most books extend the stereotype of women as pawns or victims of violence by men (Bloom 2011, 6). As most researchers portray the stereotypical image of female terrorists, Schweitzer among others identified the motives of women in terrorist attacks to be based on personal motives. He claims in his work that women involved in terrorism react to loneliness, social rejection or any other form of imperfection that may make becoming a martyr more attractive than living. In order to support his claim, he argued on the account of a few personal interviews of teenage girls involved in terrorism who volunteered for suicide duty as they could not marry the man they liked or feared an arranged marriage (Schweitzer, 2006). Such research is responsible for

their false portrayal of women's image in terrorism as it appears as proof that women involved in terrorism act out of passion as compared to men who are being politicized.

### **Motives of Female Terrorists**

Many researchers tried to prove that women are being lured into these organizations by male members of their family instead of their own willingness. Deborah Galvin (1983) argued that women in terrorist organizations are recruited by their boyfriends. While most infer motivations of female terrorists to be based on their personal experiences (Skaine, 2006; Rajan, 2011), others attribute their actions to be result of oppressive social and cultural influence (Skidmore & Smith, 1997, 63; Kryzanek 1995, 34; Seitz 1992, 163). Through research on the subject many scholars claimed that the major reason for female involvement in terrorism is due to the social injustices and inequality of genders in patriarchal Islamic societies.

Other than social and political motives, other important motives discussed by various theorists are religion, motherhood, and widowhood. Ness (2008) in his book *Female Terrorism and Militancy* described religion as one of the most significant motives for female participation in terrorist activities (2008, 21). Furthermore, the religious factor of terrorism is more significant with the Islamic concept of jihad. Therefore, development of female participation in religious terrorism is due to the idea of females seeking martyrdom (Cook, 2005). On the basis of many interviews and Muslim ideology of jihad, researchers such as Shalinsky (1993) discussed the role of female Muslim terrorists in Afghan jihad. Even though religion is one of the factors, other motives are equally significant.

### **PORTRAYAL THROUGH MEDIA**

#### ***Physical Stereotypes***

As absurd as it may be, the female terrorists are always portrayed by media as beautiful young women, who seem incapable of such inhumane activity and violence. Nacos (2005) in her research through content analysis of American and non-American newspapers found out that stereotypical representation of female terrorists is common in print media. Although other stereotypes are significant too, the physical appearance of these female terrorists is given much importance. Therefore, any news related to a female terrorist dwells on the looks, where they are portrayed quite opposite to that of the image of tough terrorist (Nacos 2005, 348). Meanwhile, other adjectives analyzed from newspaper articles included "bright-eyed," "attractive" and "delicate Audrey Hepburn face." As headlines about female terrorists call them "Lipstick Martyrs" or the "woman with long, dark hair" there is a need to recognize the motives behind such exotic description of female terrorists.

#### ***Stereotypes of Terrorist Motivations***

Other than physical appearance, factors such as family background, loss of love are most significant stereotypes. However, gender discrimination based on social/ cultural feminism and attempt to prove their strength are other few reasons given by media to the question of "Why." Another claim, rather considered absurd by few, is terrorism out of boredom; as few women do not possess any political knowledge thus join terrorist organizations out of boredom. The stereotype of family background and loss of lover can both be discussed through an important concept of "black widow," where a stereotypic image of Muslim widow is presented to be the seeker of revenge covered from

head to toe in black after the death of their husbands (Alcott, 2012). All these stereotypes present female terrorists as seekers of personal revenge, based on emotions rather than an organized crime which need political and revolutionary motives.

Furthermore, using terrorism in order to gain gender equality is another major stereotype which has been discussed by many researchers. In a book written by British journalist Eileen MacDonald, *Shoot the Woman First* (1992), she wrote that many women from third world countries join terrorist organizations as it is the place where men and women are equal, equality which is denied to young girls and women by their societies and cultures. Moreover, Schweitzer in his book presented this argument more strongly and concluded in his research that joining terrorist organization or suicide bombing are the ways of resistance against gender oppression, a cry for their right to equality (2006, 98). All these stereotypes related to female terrorist suggest in one way or other personal and sentimental involvement of women in terrorism rather than political and practical. They are being portrayed by both literature and media as if they do not have any political understanding of the subject and join such organizations out of passion.

On the basis of case studies and personal interviews, a manipulated version of female terrorists is represented through media, in order to raise the curiosity of audiences and demand for the news on subject. Only by using few comments of interviewed female terrorists, assumptions are generalized without any further research within context. Although these stereotypes cannot be denied, there is more to the story of those women who kill themselves by turning themselves into human bomb, killing many innocent people. The true reasons and motivations could be found through detailed research on such female characters while keeping in view their specific culture and traditions rather than treating them as isolated objects of analysis.

### **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION**

Theoretical framework for this paper has been adopted from Cragin and Daly's *Women as Terrorists* (2009). Although work has been done in past related to female aggression and participation in terrorism, this work includes the detailed discussion on motives of female terrorism and suicide bombing. Instead of presenting the stereotypic image of female terrorists, Cragin and Daly in their work discuss the possibilities and number of motivations within the context of women terrorists. Even though in their book they included the physical descriptions of female terrorists, the discussion is primarily based on the motivations within the context of each suicide bomber. In their discussion about motivations of female terrorists, they stated "female operatives are motivated by a complex variety of factors, just as their male counterparts" (2009, 55). Other than the acknowledgement of complexity of process, they acknowledge the differences in life experiences of men and women, thus, focus on various logical explanations of female participation in terrorism instead of drawing conclusions on the basis of their relationships with male partners and religious affiliations (p.56).

For analytical purpose, method of Narrative analysis postulated by Herman and Vervaeck in *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (2005) is adopted for the textual analysis of Bhutto's Novel. Within their model of narrative analysis various aspects of text are described to be important for the deep understanding of the text/narrative. However, in order to explore the hidden motives and causes of Samarra's indulgence in terrorist activities, character and plot analysis is mostly emphasized. Other than character and plot analysis, the setting of novel has also been discussed with respect to



character and events of the narrative. As character and plot analysis would help in understanding motives of Samarra, settings of the novel would help in shedding light to the context in which the events took place.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE *SHADOW OF THE CRESCENT MOON***

The very introduction of Samarra's character in the novel seems like the authentication of media stereotypes and perceptions of people regarding appearance of female terrorists. The young beauty of Mir Ali, Samarra is introduced by Aman Erum as he remembers "*She was twelve and he had never seen anyone so beautiful*" (Bhutto, 2013, 8). As Nacos (2005) claimed in his research, the physical appearance of female terrorists is given much more importance as compared to their political views and ideologies. Samarra being a beautiful, free spirited, emotional, and young girl had a certain sex appeal. "*She wore jeans and played cricket and rode horses and shot pellet guns*" (Bhutto 2013, 8), the way of dressing and movement in the society refer towards her good looks, confidence, and adventurous nature.

The exotic image of Samarra is portrayed by Bhutto again after she grows up into her teen age, the fresh blooming flower: "*she was sixteen now*" and had "*green eyes, unlined except by her thick lashes. A dark brown speck of color escaped her iris*" while Aman Erum looks at her "*under Chitral's pale moon light*"; the only word to appear in his mind in the midst of an utterly serious conversation was "*beautiful*" (Bhutto 2013, 13). The description of Samarra's eye colour is significant, as such image of female terrorists is presented in media in order to generate the sense of astonishment among masses on involvement of such innocent-looking human being, especially a young girl in cold blood murder and violence. The purpose of such description of Samarra by Bhutto presents a rather very different aspect of female involvement in terrorism. Bhutto in her novel presents Samarra as a beautiful, exotic, teenage, innocuous girl as it is quite natural for people from northern regions to be beautiful. However, the innocence of young Samarra raised a lot of questions in the minds of readers about the reasons for darkness her future holds for her.

As Nacos (2005, 221) in his research on portrayal of physical image of female terrorists in media came to the conclusion that various newspapers and reports insisted on such women wearing makeup, lipsticks, sleeveless and modern western forms of dresses and having very charming and engaging smiles. The concept is made clear when he gives an example of a headline written on the website of Christian Broadcasting Network about Palestinian female terrorists, the key words were "*Lipstick martyrs.*" The reason for using such language is to illustrate that the women from these regions are deprived of their rights to their own bodies and choice of the clothes they want to wear. Samarra being a Muslim girl from conservative society also "*wore jeans and played cricket*" (Bhutto 2013, 8); unlike other young girls of her age she did not learn how to cook, instead she learnt to ride a motorcycle. She drove "*relegating her father to the back seat while she tore through traffic.*" Her special relationship with her father did not stop here but she also went "*fishing for brown trout in the icy streams of the northern valleys*" (Bhutto 2013, 9). Samarra was a special girl, she was tough, as "*she never complained, fought hard and idolized her father.*" (Bhutto 2013, 9) On the contrary, description of Samarra's physical appearance, her outstanding beauty, her unique lifestyle all attests to the stereotypes prevalent about female terrorists.

However, the reasoning given by Bhutto for Samarra's masculine ways, her courage and extraordinary beauty is quite the opposite of how media represent such women. The toughness and

bravery of passionate Samarra was all possible due to the support of her loving father. He took her everywhere with him, made her his own shadow. Unlike the stereotypes of male figures from eastern regions Ghazan Afridi, Samarra's missing father was quite the opposite. He loved his daughter dearly, took her everywhere with him, taught her to shoot guns and ride a motorbike. It was always him, who encouraged her to wear manly clothes; she looked up to him, he inspired her, and it was his hand that took Samarra to the places no other girl imagined going to.

After many years of her father's disappearance, Samarra waits for him, she counts the days and hours their enemies have held her father. Even after getting involved in the terrorist activities she is repeatedly described as a beautiful young lady, who wears "*her long hair tied loosely in a bun secured by two pencils*" (Bhutto 2013, 69). In all her accounts with Hayat, he is attracted towards her physical beauty, while she remains calm and comfortable among men; he looks at her "*long neck, her unpolished fingers.*" While her physical appearance suggests delicacy and fragility, Hayat acknowledged the fact that "*to argue with her is futile.*" She is not only a beautiful face but a rugged woman with quite strong and immutable opinions. While he tries to persuade her about their operation, she expresses her strong opinions "*coldly*" and "*moves away from him before he can say another word*" (Bhutto 2013, 70). The way she expresses her opinions and imposes her decisions does not indicate any form of reference towards her unwillingness or lack of understanding towards the cause of work she has been doing for a long time. The youth and immaturity of female suicide bombers, highlighted in the media as described by Nacos, does not imply that they are unaware of the political agendas and impact of their actions worldwide.

Samarra being a young participant and enthusiastic member of terrorist organization did not only take orders but make suggestions and planned attacks as well. After completely devoting herself to the national cause she was satisfied over her decision. She even went against the organizational plan and decided for herself to take the final step. While doing so she was excited as she said "*this is the biggest thing we will ever do. We don't need more time. It's today, Hayat. We are ready*" (Bhutto 2013, 151). It was not an imposed order; she was not forced to carry out the terrorist attack or be a part of it in any way. She volunteered for it happily as she could not contain her smile and Hayat witnessed her "*restraining a laugh*" (Bhutto 2013, 151). The smile of female terrorists which is considered significant is also repeatedly mentioned while describing Samarra; however, the purpose and meaning of that smile is quite different from that of western notions. While western media depict the smile of female terrorists as their liveliness, innocence and unworldliness, Samarra not only knows exactly what she is doing, how and why she is doing it but also the long-lasting impacts of her suicide attack. It can be observed while she explains the reason of her excitement to Hayat:

Do you know what this will mean?' Samarra talks to herself now, sounding jumpier as her words tumble into each other. She talks quickly in order to get them out 'it will change the situation. It will be too large an assault. They will have to reconfigure everything. Every security, every informer will be unmade by it.' She is excited. (Bhutto 2013, 132).

While Hayat tries to warn her, "*She smiles.*" Her smile is not the same anymore, it has changed as Hayat notices "*there had been a different tug, a smaller tilt to her smile when he had first met her.*" (p.132) The change in Samarra's smile is significant as the lost smile was the lost innocence and

naughtiness while the new smile depicts her understanding of magnitude of her vicious plan. She is well-aware of her plan and its consequences. *"She doesn't have stage fright"* (Bhutto 2013, 132).

Another major stereotype linked to female terrorists in media is their war for gender equality. Schweitzer's (2006) book about female terrorists revolved around this major claim that female terrorists are coming forward from such areas of the world where they are deprived of their life choices, and rights. Therefore, becoming a suicide bomber and joining terrorist organizations is one of the ways of resistance against gender norms and inequalities. Or in other words as Narcos explains, they want to fit in ultimate masculine roles. Samarra, the young beauty of Mir Ali, was masculine in her ways, as she smoked cigarettes in public, an attitude quite unfamiliar for eastern women. Her way of dressing, movement in public places and comfort with which she stands in front of men and puts forward her strong opinions seem quite fitting to the image of female terrorists portrayed through media. She wore western clothes as a girl which she had to stop wearing in her adult age, but she did not care about her clothes and public display of affection. She *"Draped a shawl across her shoulders; she wears it as a man does, casually, carelessly"* (Bhutto 2013, 100). She ignores the instructions of Hayat and comfortably touches him in public, while he resists, she simply replied *"let them assume"* (Bhutto 2013, 99). Her way of talking, dressing and movement indicate her rebellious ways and dissatisfaction with society, which is considered to be one of the major causes of female participation in terrorism.

Other than the change of clothes she also had to stop going with her father on expeditions which she loved more than anything. Samara had been her father's constant companion but as she grew up, he had to leave her at home; she was *"too old, too much of a woman to accompany him"* (Bhutto 2013, 11). Other than this, the decision about her education was also taken by the society as *"she would stop at matric, a tenth-grade education which the world had decided was more than enough for a seventeen-year-old beauty who would never, they hoped, have cause for further studies"* (p.15). Other than this she also had to stop driving a motorbike her father taught her in good old days (p. 99). None of these incidents bothered Samarra or were significant enough for her to walk on the path of self-destruction.

Other than Schweitzer (2006), MacDonald (1992) also claimed in his book *Shoot the Woman First* that *"most of 'these' women (female terrorists) - particularly the younger generation- identify themselves with feminism and with the struggle against political oppression"* (Bhutto 2013, 79). In case of Samarra, she definitely faced few limitations and difficulties, but we cannot call her a rebel, or the girl who challenged gender norms. She was restive to the social injustices called upon her nation from outside forces, and not to her own culture, religion, or society. She wore western clothes and her father approved of them, even after many years she carried herself the way she wanted to, not because she wanted to prove something but because she was raised in such way by her father. She took after her brave father, who fought for his cause. Due to her association with her father she was brave and strong willed. An example of her rational behavior is truly depicted by her reaction on the disappearance of her father. While her mother cried in front of each visitor *"Don't cry', she whispered to her mother as the guests left 'nothing ever happens to the brave'"* (Bhutto 2013, 25). Her strength and liberty were all due to the encouragement of her father and not the symbol of her rebellion from the social norms.



A few other instances of gender inequality mentioned above included the lack of educational opportunities and free movement in the public sphere. While all these incidents are mentioned casually by Bhutto, not once do we see Samarra resisting against cultural norms; she rather loved and respected her culture as it was the way of their life. She did not feel angry when she was stopped from getting higher education nor did she enjoy going outside the house or become enthusiastic about getting permission for university education. It was all of secondary significance while injustice she resisted strongly was of foreign forces in her country. Even though on many occasions we see Samarra as a strong woman with masculine ways and unyielding attitude, she also has a softer side. She *“wears a ring of raat ki rani on her wrist. A garland of jasmine flowers braided through a wisp of metal that she fastens on her wrist, like a bride”* (p. 98). Wearing a traditional jewelry piece at all times signifies the missing part of her life and how much she wanted it. She not only loved the conventional ways of her society but was in a romantic relationship for a long time. She wanted to be a part of conventional household, to become a bride but she had to put her whole life on hold for the sake of security and safety of her community.

Samarra was not only loved by her father, her family but was also respected by Aman, Hayat and all the other male members of her community. Never in the presence of her own men had she felt any discomfort or insecurity. Colonel on the other hand was an outsider, who disrespected her and humiliated her body while her own men protected her and helped her through the roughest times of her life. After being raped for many hours, the first person she wanted to share her deep grief and heart-bursting pain was Aman Erum. Even though he was miles away, she believed him to be the one to comfort her, to be on her side and console her. Later, she shared the story of darkest hours of her life with Hayat, which in itself tells us a lot about the relationship of love, care, respect and trust among men and women of Mir Ali. It is not the gender equality which she intended to seek from her society, but the injustices of foreign invaders pushed her towards the edge.

When Samarra called Aman Erum to tell her how she was abused, disgraced, and shamed *“she sobbed, and howled Ghazan Afridi”* (p.168). As the wound of her father’s disappearance was always fresh, she could not move on with her life since her father left. It was the first tragedy of her life and when the misfortune followed her a second time, she could not help remembering all the wrongs done to her. She suffered all her life due to the injustices of political powers; these were the oppressors who made her life a living hell. The cries on her loss of self-respect and dignity *“He couldn’t understand what she was saying except ‘Zalim’, between her growling cries she repeated the word over and over. The unjust. The injustice”* (Bhutto 2013, 168). She never complained about her own people and never thought of them as *“Zalim.”* Samarra might not seem like a patriot, some may think she chose the path of revenge but it was not due to her personal tragedies and injustices, but because she felt for her people, the residents of Mir Ali. She had a strong sense of association with her homeland. Everyone in Mir Ali went through tragedy; they were at war and each one among them suffered. Samarra fought for herself but mostly for her father. His remembrance was her driving force; all the injustices he fought against now became her cause of life. *“She fought to erase from her life the man with the medals on his chest and rose gold wedding ring on his finger”* (Bhutto 2013, 147). The media stereotypes about female terrorists represent them as manipulated women who do not have any political voice or point of view, as if they themselves are the victims of their lack of knowledge on the subject. Bhutto through the depiction of Samarra’s character represents the political voice and strong association with homeland. Long before choosing the vicious path,

Samarra had an unbreakable bondage with her motherland, Mir Ali. As Aman Erum presented her with the proposal of moving to another place, a place more peaceful, she rejected the idea quite ruthlessly by saying “*No, you can't choose your home. You can't just make another one*” (Bhutto 2013, 13). After few years when Aman was leaving for America, he asked her again to go with him, but she refused again, strongly negating his idea, “I don't want to leave Mir Ali. I don't want to walk on the roads that have no memory of my life. I want me and you to walk our children to school on the streets we know by heart. Streets we have well known since we were children” (Bhutto 2013, 41). Her love for Mir Ali never lessened even when she waited restlessly for Aman to return; she “*always asked when he was coming home.*” Mir Ali was the only home she could ever imagine living in. “*She never asked when he would return to her, it was always Mir Ali*” (Bhutto 2013, 153). Mir Ali was the only place on entire earth she could imagine her future in, the only definition of home to her was Mir Ali.

While Samarra took over the mission of her father to protect her homeland, she was completely aware of her choices. Political awareness and motives for her involvement in terrorist organization become quite obvious when she confronts colonel after being kidnapped and kept against her will. Instead of talking about revenge, or her missing father she said “*You are the ones who sold everything in this country. You sold its gold, its oil, its coal, its harbors*” (Bhutto 2013, 166). She did not stop here. She regained her strength and instead of keeping quiet or submitting, she demanded answers from the people who destroyed not only her life but many of her people's lives. She demanded answers not only on behalf of her mother but on behalf of every mother, every daughter and every other member of her community who suffered “what have you left untouched?” (p. 166). She questioned again on behalf of her community, with strong sense of association to her country “*who you are to sell the sky?*” (p. 167). She stayed strong and decided not to cry while she was abused in worst ways “she promised herself, as she began to feel her eyes burning, that she would not scream” (Bhutto, 2013, 167). She stayed strong for the sake of her father; his cause was greater than her pain. She understood that it was part of her training, so she can become ruthless, and stop being afraid of what might happen to her.

## CONCLUSION

This study through its contextual analysis of the fictional female terrorist in Fatima Bhutto's novel *The Shadow of Crescent Moon* (2013) negates the popular image of female terrorist that is being projected by western media. Apparently, Bhutto's narrative employs almost all the stereotypic features of a female terrorist in its characterization of female protagonist. However, this study has unveiled the interior motives of Samarra's character for her participation in terrorist activities. The myth of female terrorism and motives such as revenge, death of lovers, gender oppression are not the causes of Samarra's voluntarily participation in terrorist processions. Unlike the media portrayal, female terrorists from third world do not strive for liberation from their own culture and patriarchy but they are the victims of international interference and hold strong political grounds. This paper further reveals that the motivations of female terrorists could not be understood properly unless they are studied within the context of their culture and social arena. This study recommends future researchers to draw comparisons not only among media portrayal and textual representations of female terrorists but comparisons of various literary representations of female terrorists and their motivations in order to play their role in eliminating war on terror.

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