

Exploring Radicalization in Fatima Bhutto's *The Runaways*Aisha*¹, Dr. Rab Nawaz Khan²

Original Article

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Abstract

Radicalization is a burning issue of today's multipolar world, which has been a hot topic of debate amongst scholars, political and religious leaders, journalists and literary writers. Literature is considered as a powerful tool to influence people, and has also been one of the most important ways of communicating the real issues of the world through the use of fiction which highlights these issues. With the researchers' personal inclination to the field of literature, the researchers selected a popular novel by Fatima Bhutto (2018), *The Runaways* to explore and analyze how the process of radicalization in the youth is represented in the novel, and how, if at all, they have been radicalized. The research is guided by the theoretical perspective of Miller and Chauhan (2011) who argue that the study of previous works on radicalization suggests that there are not just the push factors for radicalization. There are also some pull factors which influence the minds of the people, and they turn towards radicalization. David Greenham's (2019) method of close reading is selected for the analysis of the novel as it begins by studying the meanings of the words and goes up to the study of the text in wider socio-cultural, historical and political contexts. The researchers found that there were also push and pull factors for the major characters of the novel, i.e., Layla, Sunny and Monty, to join a radical organization, e.g., Ummah Movement. However, the event turned so brutal and painful that Layla and Monty were largely de-radicalized from the inside and wanted to escape the so-called land of milk and honey for there was bitterness and more cruelty and inequality prevailing than they had suffered in their societies of origin. Through the close reading of the novel through various aspects, like syntactic, semantic, generic, thematic, iterative and adversarial, answers to the research questions have been found. Push factors, like socio-economic conditions and betrayal by the loved ones, are overarching for characters to join radical organizations while pull factors, like motivation and realization of real phenomenon, have been helpful in de-radicalization. Failure in achieving the ideal, being part of a radical organization is also a significant finding. The researchers recommend that further research in different other genres of literature could also be conducted that deal with the issue of radicalization.

Keywords: Radicalism, Close-reading, Push and Pull Factors, Fictional Devices

Background of the Study

Researchers and academicians of literature and social sciences are concerned with the issue of radicalization and violent extremism because it is seen as a threat to peace and progress of the nations and communities worldwide (Borum, 2011). It has become mandatory to take steps regarding counter-radicalization and make such programs that contribute to the process of de-radicalization because radicalization leads to violent extremism. The phenomenon of radicalization has disturbed the peace and tranquility of the world, and has caused a lot of damage to the world and humanity. It is a radicalized mind that ends up fighting for a lost cause and thinks differently

from the rest of the world. A radical person delineates the laws and norms of the society, and may follow the path of violent extremism, thus ruining peace of the society and of human beings. Understanding the key concepts, such as radicalization, violent extremism and de-radicalization, is considered as a prerequisite before going into the details of the whole phenomenon. The current study mainly focuses on the topic of radicalization as a whole and specific to the book in discussion, using close-reading technique as the yardstick. The research focuses on the content of the text and analyses the author's approach to the main idea from the reader's perspective.

"Radicalization is a process involving an individual or group whereby they are indoctrinated to a set of beliefs that support acts of terrorism that can be manifested in one's behaviour and attitudes" (Sageman, 2004, p. 35). Radicalism, however, does not equate to terrorism. While radicalism typically precedes terrorism (Silber & Bhatt, 2007), it is not necessary that a radicalized person will always commit terrorism or violent extremism. On the other hand, it is possible that a person, who is involved in acts of terrorism, would have experienced the process of radicalism earlier. As discussed earlier, radicalization is a threat to peace. In order to get rid of violence, we have to overcome radicalization.

With the increase in radicalization's debates and discussions, the study on de-radicalization also grows eminently, many programs have been established in order to de-radicalize the youth who have experienced the process of radicalization earlier. It refers to the process of using different methods and techniques to undermine and reverse the process of radicalization. Through this process of de-radicalization, the radicals get demotivated towards the radical ideology and are once again connected to the society.

As the phenomenon of radicalization is growing, states are taking preventive measures to control it, and counter radicalization programmes have been established to reverse its aftermath. In Pakistan, since the rise of Mujahedeen in 1980s and 2000, the Pakistan Army has established many rehabilitation centres in Swat to counter Talibanization and reintegrate the former fighters back to their societies.

Statement of the Research Problem

Radicalization is a global issue and has been a threat and challenge to many developing countries, and *The Runaways* depicts the factors of radicalization in a multipolar world. These factors are personal, social, ideological, economic and political. This study explores how certain people are radicalized, and how radicalization creates manifold problems for others. Moreover, the radical's identity is in constant flux, and consequently, they struggle for their status and identity to be recognized by the society.

Research Objectives

Prime objectives of the current study are:

1. To highlight the circumstances that lead to radicalization of the characters
2. To find out the ways used to de-radicalize the radicals
3. To explore the novelist's message to the readers about radicalization

Research Questions

The study answers the following research questions:

1. What factors are involved in radicalization of major characters in *The Runaways*?
2. How are the radicals de-radicalized in the novel under study?
3. What message does the novelist convey to the readers by narrating the dimensions of radicalization?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. Primarily, it is relevant to Pakistani culture. The issue explored is also a global concern and is a theme analyzed in the literary work written by a Pakistani writer. The exploration of the Pakistani perspective is important since it gives a comprehensive look to the issue under study. Furthermore, there has been a lot written about the issue, but the reasons for joining a fundamental organization, that holds violence as the only solution to the problems, have been scarcely explored. This justifies why the study has been undertaken at this level. It is also one of the most recent works on the issue of terrorism and fundamentalism that explores the roots in the personal and social conditions of the characters in Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistani Anglophone literature now has its established place in the world literature, so opting for this novel and its close reading is very helpful in further extending the relevance and importance of Pakistani literature. The researchers are also hopeful that this study would add to the debate about fundamentalism and motivate further researchers in exploring the motives behind terrorism and fundamentalism at a deeper level.

Literature Review

Radicalization is a global concern and has become very threatening and alarming. It has been discussed by many scholars and researchers on various levels, whose reviews and works done on the issue are mentioned in this section. The study is based on the well-written and compelling novel, *The Runaways* written by Fatima Bhutto which deals with the issue of radicalization through the lives of her three suppressed and directionless characters from different social milieus, in search of significance and validation in a polarized world. Many researchers have worked on the causes of radicalization, but this novel is unique in its dealing of the issue and exclusively addressing the cognitive, personal, social, economic and political aspects of radicalization.

The issue of violent extremism is also known as radicalization in modern terminology and has become a major challenge for Pakistan. It is a multifaceted phenomenon and many nations across the world have lost precious lives beyond estimation. There is a vast literature available on this global issue, but in the current study, Abbasi (2014) focuses on education as a primary factor which is directly or indirectly supporting radical ideology and an unbalanced society.

Borum (2011) highlights the difference between Islam and Islamism and discusses how Islam is misinterpreted by some people for their personal gains, promoting the ideology of radicalism and extremism. He says that Islam is not a religion of hatred and violence, it does not encourage killing of the civilians. On the other hand, Islamism does not refer to religion, but to a totalitarian political ideology whose aim is “conquest of the world by all means.” The point to mention is that there were many militant leaders, who used Islam as a tool to promote anti-western and anti-democratic sentiment and deliver extremist ideology.

Neumann (2013) is of the opinion that if we study radicalization, we would come to know that there are two types of radicalization. The first one is the process that results in ‘cognitive extremism;’ the second one results in ‘behavioral extremism’ and both are summarised as what happens before the ‘bomb goes off’ (Neumann, 2008, p. 4). Moyano and Muhammad (2019) talk about the 3N model of radicalization which identifies need, narrative and network as the three important factors that lead radicalization towards violence. They discuss that the “quest for significance” plays a motivational role in radicalization. The universal desire to be known, to be

someone, and to be respected by others becomes a priority for people who face failure and humiliation in life.

Shmotkin and Litwin (2009, p. 32) suggest that social alienation is a devastating feeling that is strongly associated with loss of personal worth and purpose. The 3N model of radicalization proposes that when significance is lost, individuals become motivated to restore it. They further say that when a person experiences loss of significance, he/she wants to punish those people who are responsible for it. This can be done easily through violence which is generally prohibited, but the narrative ideological framework provides moral justifications for its use against the oppressors. Once people adhere to the ideological narrative that morally justifies the use of violence to restore significance, people are likely to be motivated to seek the presence of others, sharing similar beliefs. People's beliefs are likely to influence the type of group they join because of the universal motivation to attain mutual understanding and a shared sense of reality. This group of like-minded people, who support violence as a morally justified act, forms a network.

Holt and Freilich (2015) attempt to explore the role of the internet in radicalizing young people's minds towards extremism. The article highlights the issue of how Jihadist videos and extremist content motivate the lonely and rejected people towards the path of extremism and how these videos of Jihad and the victims play a powerful role in promoting the radical ideologies. The authors further suggest that the government should take initiatives to control this process, as it is the complementary role on the part of the government to control such actions.

Hayes (2017) points out the relationship between radicalization and marginalization in his research article and discusses the importance of understanding marginalization for reducing the process of radicalization. He is of the opinion that the factors responsible for radicalization of the youth are bifurcated into two versions. The first version is radicalization in the form of religious preaching in which a radical scholar through misinterpreted teachings radicalizes young people. The second version is self-radicalization in which the youth are "self-radicalized" by accessing material on the internet which is extremist in nature. But the underlying factor in these versions is marginalization. Youth becomes radicalized when they face marginalization (social, political, religious) in society. This (marginalization) is very common in the children of the foreign-born parents, asylum seekers, refugees as they have experienced it. The author recommends that the problem of radicalization could be reduced if the government, policy makers and practitioners focus on the problems of marginalized people and help them. By doing so, they could overcome radicalization and improve resilience.

Rahimi and Graumans (2015) give us an account of the causes, leading to radicalization of the young Muslims living in Western countries. Many researches have been conducted on the issue of radicalization discussing poverty, social marginalization and identity crisis as contributing factors behind the phenomenon. Regardless of all these factors, the present article focuses on specific issue as factors behind radicalization, which is lack of cultural integration among young Muslims who live in Western countries. It attempts to analyze how the lack of cultural integration among young Muslims living in Western countries increases the threat of radicalization. The authors suggest that the relationship between radicalization and cultural integration should be reconsidered to prevent ourselves from potentially harmful and ineffective results.

Kruglanski and Gelfand (2014) discuss the model of radicalization and de-radicalization based on the fact that the quest for personal significance is a major motivational force that may

push youth to follow the pathway that leads them towards violent extremism. In their point of view, radicalization is a process in which individuals involve themselves in activities which are deemed by others, such as killing of civilians, violation of social norms, etc. They present three basic components of radicalization/de-radicalization model. The first component is motivational component which is defined as the quest for personal significance. The second is ideological component which is supporting violence as justified act for achieving their goals. The third one is group dynamics which is a social process of networking shared by like-minded people through which they share their violence, justifying ideology, work on it, and try to implement it. Those, who ultimately become radical, must have experienced these three basic components of the process.

Research Design

Creswell (2013) has suggested that there are five approaches in qualitative research designs that could be categorized as: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographic research, and case study research. A research design is a guiding strategy that is developed in order to conduct research in a logical and coherent manner. Various components of research methodology are discussed in detail with proper rationalization so that the research work may be logical in order to address the research problem. Following qualitative research design as suggested by Creswell, this study falls under the approach of narrative research. It is useful to define narrative here. Narrative is a type of discourse that tries to understand and make sense of an experience (Patterson, 2013). The experience can have an arrangement of its own. It is not necessary that the narrative has to be chronologically organized. Hence, there are narratives that have different time frames and spaces. The word narrative is a broad term that also refers to the real time events that are happening in the world and are presented in the form of specific discourses. The data for the current research is literary narrative that belongs to a specific and well-renowned genre of literature. Chase (2017) argues that narratives comprise feelings and thoughts that could belong to such time and space which are hypothetical and could also have little or no link to the present or past times. There are science fiction narratives that normally talk about the fictional futuristic time and space. Literary narratives are also a form of discourses that are involved in “meaning-making through shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one’s own or others’ actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time” (Chase, 2017, p. 951).

Research Method for Analysis

Close reading is selected as an analysis technique for the selected literary text for this research work. In the popular texts by I. A. Richards’ *Practical Criticism* written in 1930 and *Seven Types of Ambiguity* by Richards’s student William Empson (1930), a method of understanding and evaluating literary writings was postulated with the name of close reading. Richards (1930/2002) also asserts that all respectable poetry invites close reading. With the passage of time, there have been different changes in the concept of practice of close reading. It is grounded in the theory of new criticism which did not take the author into consideration during evaluation of the text, later, the intention and aim of the author was also made part of this research analysis method (Wells, 2011). Close reading as a practice of studying novels and other literary genres is still an ongoing research practice.

However, for the current study, the method of analysis, that is adopted, is close reading based on the guide provided by David Greenham (2019). Greenham argues that in order to have the “most rewarding reading experience” (p. 06), close reading is the most suitable choice. But to enjoy that experience, a text needs to be studied with fullest range of plausible contexts. According

to Greenham, there are six important contexts that need to be taken into consideration so that the detailed and actual understanding of the text may be revealed. These contexts are summarised in the table below:

Table 3.1. Based on Close Reading: the Basics (Greenham 2019, p. 07)

Contexts #	Name of Contexts	Meanings of Contexts
Context 1	Semantic	Meaning of individual words
Context 2	Syntactic	Meaning of words when put together
Context 3	Thematic	Emergence of themes and how these affect meanings during reading
Context 4	Iterative	How repetition and patterning affect textual meanings
Context 5	Generic	How the work changes our approach to its meanings
Context 6	Adversarial	How historical, political and theoretical concerns reshape meanings

Data Collection

For the current study, the researchers have gathered data through the application of purposive sampling. It is a judgmental sampling technique in which the researcher chooses his data with a specific purpose. As the core issue of the research was the study of fundamentalism as presented in Pakistani literary narrative, therefore, the researchers, on purpose, selected a novel that was written by a Pakistani writer and also dealt with the issue of fundamentalism. Through this procedure, the researchers were able to narrow down the choice and select Fatima Bhutto's novel *The Runways* published in 2018. One of the purposeful concerns in the selection of the novel was to see if the work is contemporary and most recent. There were different works written on the same idea by Pakistani writers because Pakistan has a significant role in war on terror after 9/11 and the idea of fundamentalism has been the part of Pakistani politics and social fabric for a very long time. But the aim was to select a work that is the most recent with a new voice by the young writers to see how they present the issue.

Analysis of the Data through Close-reading Technique

The story of the novel revolves around three major characters, Anita, Monty and Sunny, who, though, belong to different social backgrounds, they have their paths juxtaposed in Iraq where they have come on the same mission, but with different driving forces. The novel begins when Anita is leaving Karachi. But before leaving this metropolitan city, there is a long story of suffering and humiliation that had finally caused her to take the step and leave the city so that she could give vent to the anger and anguish from which she had been suffering since her childhood. The words that resonate in her ears while leaving the city are "This city will take your heart . . . You don't know what Karachi does to people like us. Take your heart, do you hear?" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 05). Analysis of the words of Osama at the semantic and thematic contexts reveals that her neighbor to whom she had been going regularly to borrow culinary items for living on the order of her poor mother who was a masseuse of the rich ladies. These were extremely poor circumstances, but meeting Osama was a pure joy for her because Osama told her the poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Habib Jalib, Jalindhri and Ghalib who are the renowned Urdu poets. One of the commonly found characteristics amongst these poets was rebelliousness. Faiz and Jalib are quite famous for their revolutionary ideas and standing against the odds of the world, especially injustice. Anita as a girl saw injustice everywhere and wanted to be free by hook or crook. But still there were things lacking in her to take the bold step of going to Iraq. So, something happens that finally makes her decide about her final fate. It is Anita's brother Ezra, who had changed his name to Feroze, who traps her to go to

Dubai with her, and there makes her work as a prostitute. That unbearable act is so shameful and infuriating for Anita that she decides to leave the city for Iraq and becomes a Jihadi. It was a revenge that she sought after. During her sexual slavery, her video had also been made that got popular on YouTube and she did not want to be recognized as such. She also changes her name to Layla. So, in taking such a big step in her life of going to Iraq and becoming a Jihadi is also due to Osama Shah's motivation to stand against injustice and inequality of the society who used to tell her verses from the poetry of the revolutionary poets. Analysis of the text at the semantic and syntactic level reveals that choosing Iraq as the battleground for her identity and her war against inequality has a lot to do with her sexual video which had become quite popular. There was no way that she could survive reasonably and respectfully in that society of Karachi. She needed a new place where she could find and exercise her freedom. In the back of her mind, the word 'lion' roared regularly. This is what she was called by Osama Shah who used to motivate her that she would be fighting against inequality and injustice in the world, like a lion. This is also the first part of the book as it focuses mainly on the story of Anita. Although other characters, like Monty and Sunny, also have their voices and stories told by the novelist in the first part, the major focus is on the lion, Anita. The issue of poverty is also taken up by the novelist. The question of what motivates Anita to become radical needs to be deliberated upon because she had got rid of poverty through the help of her brother by getting shifted from Machar colony to Gulshanabad, but the price was heavy for her which toppled her life completely. Whether it was the economic injustice or the moral injustice that forced her to take the extreme action in her life needs to be evaluated so that the real motive of writing the story by Bhutto may be understood in a better way. Fatima Bhutto (Inskeep et al., 2020) has also mentioned in an interview that it was not about the Ummah Movement that she wanted to write, but it was more about the forces that propel young people to join such extremist movements. However, it needs to be ascertained if poverty is the actual reason that drives the people to become radical or if there is something else, like moral degradation or external pull factors that are driving the people to adopt a certain extremist pattern of life and are even ready to lay down their lives for the aim that they take up over the time period. It has also been established through the portrayal of these characters that radicalism is not something that is inborn. It depends largely on the external factors that are responsible for such choices in life. However, in the coming paragraphs, the researchers have attempted to do the close reading of the novel and tried to establish what the novelist has actually tried to mean.

The second important character of the novel is Sunny who feels himself alienated in Portsmouth UK which is comparatively a peaceful society that has strict laws and is considered to be among the developed societies of the world. He is a British-born Indian whose father had migrated to England in order to give his child what he never had got in the Indian society. He was not poor, but was bullied by his schoolmates due to his dual origin. Analysis of the text at the semantic, syntactic and thematic contexts reveals that, right from his childhood, he had fallen prey to the identity crisis and wanted some way out where he could assert himself and feel at peace with whatever identity he had. Sunny develops sexual relations with different girls whether they are white or brown, but is never at ease because there is something like emptiness that never lets him be at peace within himself. He had always wanted to do something that would help him be himself with whatever identity he had. There is emptiness and restlessness throughout his life. Although there is no economic reason that would propel him to become radical, yet there are clear psychological factors that always keep on disturbing him. There is a clear void in his life that needs to be fulfilled. The acts of bullying by the British boys are persistent pain for him. He even wishes that he would never have come to Portsmouth. It was during his dallying in the void of the identity crisis that he comes across his cousin Oz who shows him quite a different way of life. It later dawns

upon him when he was in Iraq that his cousin had been manipulating and trapping him to become radical by taking advantage of his fragile personality and the issue of identity crisis. However, his cousin clearly tells him that:

“Because you and me, Cuz, they’ll never accept us. We’re the periphery, we’ll never be the centre. We’re not like them. We come from a different culture. They don’t understand our people, our struggles” (Bhutto, 2018, p. 100).

Analyzing the above lines at the semantic, syntactic and thematic levels, it can be argued that the lines hint at the popular narrative of the Ummah Movement which vividly drew and manipulated the boundaries of us versus them. Being culturally different, the whites are supposed to never accept the Muslims from all over the world. Oz manipulates the idea that they were different and it is never going to happen that the whites would accept them as they are as openly as it should be at human level. There is no other way to fight back so that they are at par with them. Sunny was a flirtatious boy who had never wanted to be part of any extremist and violent behaviour and attitude, but the social injustice from which he had been suffering throughout his life was so severe that he eventually fell prey to the words of Oz. Oz also tells him that the West has played havoc with their lives. They have sucked out their power and identity and it is never going to be the same again. Taking up arms would be the only option for them. Therefore, it is pertinent that they all follow the extreme step and take revenge with full force. Bhutto has also tried to manifest here that the attitude of the West towards the East is also painful that is creating trouble and is also detrimental in influencing the raw brains of the young Eastern people that they should start thinking of taking the extreme steps. However, Bhutto seems to put the real burden on the influencers who play up with the minds of the young people and turn them against the West by adopting a brutal course of action. Attention is also diverted towards the divide between the rich and the poor in the story of Sunny. Oz also uses this divide as a tool to convince Sunny to go to Iraq. Oz says, “Sunny nodded, rapt. ‘The elites are eating up the world,’ Oz explained. ‘And at the same time, they are casting you out’” (Bhutto, 2018, p. 101). Oz makes Sunny realize that they are always going to be cast out of the world. They are never going to be considered as equals because in doing this, the supremacy of the West is challenged.

Semantic Context

“You want to be a son of a new world? You want to be radical and profound? You want to be someone? Then you have to make a choice. This or that. Comfort or sacrifice. Sex, rock-and-roll or solitude. Which do you have the courage to choose? Sacrifice, Sunny swore. I choose God. I choose the future” (Bhutto, 2018, p. 244).

The above excerpt from the novel presents the keywords that have been the focus of the story. As Greenham (2019) opines that the first step of close reading is to see the semantic context of the words that are used in the novel, so the researchers have outlined the words that shape up the meanings in the novel. The most important word of all is radicalization. Bhutto has also claimed that she wanted to show how youngsters are radicalized. The word here means that it is a process through which the individuals pass in order to become a radical. It is not a single day’s job. It has a whole context that is attached to other concepts. Those concepts are delineated by the novelist through other words, like ‘poverty,’ ‘injustice,’ ‘cruelty,’ ‘inequality,’ ‘treachery,’ ‘sacrifice,’ ‘comfort,’ ‘bullying’ and so on. These words work like surrounding clouds that overshadow the concept of radicalization. The process can happen because of any of these words. For example, in the case of Layla, it all started from the word ‘poverty’ that means, not having enough to live comfortably in this world. The word ‘injustice’ is also regularly used in the description of her early life. It was because

of poverty and injustice that Layla had to go to her neighbor and ask for culinary items. It is there that she met Osama who sprinkles an air of rebellion in her life. The word 'poverty' is again there when she is forced to be a prostitute in Dubai by her brother. She was shifted to Gulshanabad, and was having a comfortable life, but then the fear that she might lose it all. It is because of the fear that she is tricked by her brother and had to become a prostitute. But then there is another side to it. Once her sex-tape is made public, she no longer can stay there. She had to run away and find some meanings in her life. She becomes a radical for all the things that she had gone through, the only solution for her was to become a radical. The sufferings that she had had in her life, she wanted to change. As Flaherty (2004) has pointed out that the word 'radical' has certain characteristics in it, it means to stand for something fruitful and to believe that extreme actions are the only options available for man to bring political or social change. Semantically, the word also means the destruction of the existing system and that there is no relaxation given to anyone else who stands against the radical. A new system is envisioned by the radicals, and that they do not hesitate to take even the violent steps. All these characteristics of the word 'radical' are manifested in the novel. All of the three central characters wanted that there should be change in the existing order, and that they were ready to take arms for the sake of that change. Violence was also accepted by these characters to be the last resort. So being a radical means that the person is uncompromising. In the novel, it has been used negatively showing that violence is the only recourse for the radical.

Syntactic Context

Although the words used in the novel have their semantically specific meanings, their meanings are made clear when these are explored in their syntactic contexts. For example, there is a different case with the word 'radical' in the novel. Throughout the novel, the word is used seven times. When first it is used, its surrounding words are 'fundamentalist' and 'terrorist' as in the novel, "You've gone from Britain to Iraq and back again, from hate to acceptance, from radical fundamentalist – one might even say terrorist – to reformer" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 190). It is used during the interview of Oz who turns out to be a cheater and hypocrite who had manipulated Sunny to be there in Iraq while he had become part of the anti-radicalism movement in the West and was living comfortably. However, the word is used along with fundamentalist and is equated with terrorism. In another place, the word is used as something negative and needs to be reformed. "He goes into Twitter and types in 'Ozair Reforming Radicals' – and there he is, a new account and all" (p. 199). Radicalism is not something good, and it needs to be reformed. But when the word is surrounded by other positive words and comes into the mouth of Oz while manipulating Sunny to join the Ummah Movement and become someone real fighter, the meanings change and become positive. When Oz is talking to Sunny and says, "You want to be a son of a new world? You want to be radical and profound? You want to be someone? Then you have to make a choice. This or that" (p. 244), the meanings here are changed. The words, like 'profound,' 'son of a new world' and 'someone' give the word 'radical' a different meaning. Here, for Sunny, the word seems to have grippingly different meanings. He seems to be attracted towards it. Being radical means being someone special, and especially the one who is going to bring change to the world and become the real hero. It is associated with the concepts, like being a savior and the true person in the world. So far the word is used in two different meanings for different socio-cultural communities. For the Western community, it is something undesirable and needs to be reformed and for the Muslims living in the West, it is something desirable and makes a Muslim the real man. However, it also has its third connotation when used by Feroze while talking to her sister, Anita. Anita thinks that,

“Feroze didn’t like Anita coming over here, to their radical neighbour’s house. You have to keep your head down, Feroze told his sister, don’t draw unnecessary attention to yourself” (p. 219).

Thematic Context

When the words are put together and the story is taken as a whole, different themes emerge. In case of *The Runaways* by Fatima Bhutto (2018), there seem to be different themes that are fused in the novel. Although the writer herself had claimed that she was interested in exploring how a young man of 19 years falls prey to radicalization and adopts an extreme point of view leading towards violence. Some of the significant themes are the driving forces and the factors that propel youngsters to adopt a specific radical path and even do not shun away from extreme violence. If the factors of radicalization as presented in the novel are enlisted, it seems that Miller and Chauhan’s (2017) theoretical framework of radicalization seems justified. There are push as well as pull factors that are involved in driving men towards radicalization. The list of push factors includes: socioeconomic and political reasons and isolation and marginalization. The analysis of the novel from this perspective reveals that all these push factors have been represented by Bhutto in the novel. In case of Anita, there were the socio-economic factors that had made her rebel against the existing order of the world and become part of the Ummah Movement. She was born in a poor family and had to suffer a lot due to this. But it was not just the economic conditions that had forced her to become radical. If her character is studied thoroughly, one comes to know that the last blow came from another external factor, i.e., treachery and lust of his brother who had turned her into a prostitute for the sake of money. She could not believe that at first, but at that time in Dubai she was entangled in the web. It is after she came back, she knew that there was no other way out. Her desire for justice makes her angry, and it is in her anger that she finally decides to become radical.

In case of Anita, there were not just the push factors that drove her towards radicalization. There were also pull factors as outlined by Miller and Chauhan (2017). They argue that the pull factors may include the likeness for the ideology of a specific organization, the promise of brotherhood, association, new identity, and search for excitement. For Anita, the pull factor that worked a great deal was her association with Osama whom she considered as her only true friend and also wanted to be with him at any moment. As Bhutto (2018) mentions in the novel that, “It was late at night and Anita had snuck out of her mother’s suffocating home to be with him, with Osama comrade sahib. Her only ally. Her one true friend” (p. 29). She was pulled deeply by Osama to become a fighter, and fighting was the only option that would give her a good life, the kind of life that she dreams about. Marxist organization was not available to her at that time, so she considered the Ummah Movement to be the only one that stood against the oppression of the Western Capitalist society and she opted for that. She wanted to associate herself with some movement of resistance against the brutal powerful forces. The Ummah Movement provided her the platform. They recognized in her a powerful voice that could convince others to become part of their struggle.

Iterative Context

According to Greenham (2019), during the process of close reading of the text, iterative context also needs to be studied. Iterative context means that the use of repetition and patterning needs to be evaluated so that the specific effect that has been generated in the writing may be understood in a better way. Bhutto has also used this technique in the novel in order to create a specific impact on the readers. Different ideas are repeated in various ways in the novel so that the impact may be generated that would develop a certain kind of meaning in the text. Primarily, the

dichotomy between Us versus Them is enumerated in the novel and repeated in different ways. It is, no doubt, a complex novel in which the boundaries of Us and Them seem to be mixed up at different levels. For Sunny, Oz belongs to the category of us while the West is them. But the religious clerics are also for Sunny. For Anita, the ruling class is them, and that they are the manipulators.

As the novel focuses on the concept of radicalization, the concepts of radicalization, terrorism, extremism, and fundamentalism are interchangeably used in the novel. The concept of fundamentalism is used two times in the novel, radical seven times, extremism two times, terrorism for fourteen times in the novel at different places. There is a specific pattern in the use of these words as the impact is to terrorize the people. Ironically, this repetition and patterning is attached to the Muslims and specifically the Ummah movement. Quite contrary to the concept of terrorism, there is the use of the word 'love' that is also repeated in the novel. But it is used mostly in the causal sense as if it has no significance in the world. Even when Layla was leaving for Iraq, there was a telephonic discussion between Monty and Anita. Anita wants Monty to say something concrete and Monty says that he loved her. But this is not considered to be something concrete by Layla.

'Layla, where are you?' 'Tell me, Monty,' Layla repeated impatiently. 'Tell me something real.' 'I love you, Layla,' Monty said, sitting up, suddenly awake. He checked the time again: where was she? Who was she with? Monty listened carefully, straining to hear the noise in the background; it wasn't a party, it wasn't a TV. It was an announcement system, like a radio. It sounded and then fell silent, sounded and then fell silent. 'That's not good enough, Monty,' Layla replied, her mood suddenly dark. He didn't want to argue with her or step on one of her landmines right now. 'What do you mean? It's all I have' (Bhutto, 2018, p. 282).

Love, although, a powerful emotion of human beings, seems to have no substantial value for the characters in the novel. Even the word 'love' is repeated many times, but in an ironical or non-conclusive manner for there is no significant value attached to it. The characters are so stuck in the quagmire of their issues that they do not have any value for love in their lives. Although Monty keeps on thinking about his love, for the rest of the characters, it is not something valuable. The way sunny utters the word 'love' for his father is also ironic and patterning for the readers. A world is created where soft powerful emotions do not seem to have significant value for the people. The reason for this patterning of the concept of love seems to be a voluntary effort for the focus of the writer seems to be on delineating the horrors of radicalization. This is what has also been admitted by the novelist. All other concepts in the novel seem to be secondary when compared to the horrors that have been inflicted in this world upon the human beings in different forms. There is a trauma of identity, and then there is war trauma that is haunting the contemporary world. It is a world where love seems to have no or secondary place.

Generic Context

Close reading also demands that the generic context of the work may be studied in detail so that the meanings and themes of the work are better understood. By generic context, Greenham (2019) means that the identification of the kind of work that is changing our approach to its meanings. As has already been mentioned earlier in the paragraphs, Fatima Bhutto wanted to create a world in which she wanted to show how young characters are radicalized and make specific choices of becoming part of any radical organization that brings them closer to their tragic ends. In order to show how choices of becoming radicals are being made by Sunny, Monty and Layla, the choice of the genre of psychological novel was the most apt. The novel is divided into

four parts and each part has specific significance in the story. In the third part of the novel, the characters meet with each other in Iraq and their lives, thus, become interconnected. Although Monty and Layla had met in Karachi, it is in the third part that they meet in the foreign land. The last part is entitled ironically as the land of milk and honey. It signifies the promise that is made by the religious radical leaders to the innocent people that they would be having heaven after they get martyrdom in the sacred battle. It is ironic in the sense that the characters do not get martyrdom, rather they suffer in that land of milk and honey. Their sufferings are increased more than they were in their hometowns. Each part has different chapters on the name of the characters. Each character is dealt with separately and their inner worlds are shown likewise.

Feelings, thoughts and motivation of all the characters are shown separately so that the factors that are propelling them to become radicals may be presented in detail and logically. For example, Layla has the feelings of anger and depression throughout the novel. Her depression is due to the poverty that she suffers from, and the anger is due to the molestation and manipulation while she was a sex tourist. In her thoughts, she tries to stay pure and justifies her choices that she wanted to get rid of the circumstances in which she was put due to her poverty. Bhutto also moans over the fact that her characters are never going to have any other choices than the ones that they have made in the novel. Each character has his/her own specific motivation. Sunny is motivated by Oz and the circumstances that push him to become something of a brave man with his own individual identity. So he goes for that to Iraq, but fails badly because the world there is so chaotic that it has no place and meaning for the likes of Sunny. Monty has his own thoughts, feelings and motivations to go to Iraq to find the love of his life. Although he poses to be a warrior in front of the brothers of the movement, from inside he is clear that he had come there for the love of his life and that he is going to get her and get out of that depressing horrible land where there is no value for human beings.

Adversarial Context

Political, historical and theoretical contexts shape meaning of the novel. Politically, the novel delves into the politics of the international phenomenon of war on terror and the clash of cultures by making references to the histories of each phenomenon. Theoretically, it also talks about the interpretation of different religious concepts and their usage by different kinds of people. There is not just Islam in the novel, but there is also Marxism along with capitalism and Christianity. However, theoretically, it deals more with the Islamic concepts, and how these are used by the radicals to convince youngsters to become part of their organizations. The concept of Jihad is of particular attention in the novel as the characters are convinced to be involved in the fight to change the world before they are annihilated by the enemies.

There are lots of political allusions in the novel. These references include not only the murder of Daniel Pearl at small scale, but also to Talibans and the Ummah Movement in Iraq. In fact, part two and three of the novel are filled with these references to show how the West and the Islamic world are involved in conflicts with each other and how a specific segment of Islamic world is retaliating to the Western hegemonic aims. In order to delineate how various political references are given in the novel, the example of Sunny would be apt here. Once he was asked by his friends to go together and watch cinema, it was the time when Sunny was growing his interest among the brothers of the movement. He was getting attached to the movement. In response to the invitation and how his new brothers were mentioned by his friend, Ben, Sunny deletes his number and does not talk to him anymore. "Let's go out, catch a film, eat some Nandos. You bringing your Taliban pals? Sunny didn't reply. He just deleted Ben's number" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 82). This incident is very

important as it shows how long the divide among different groups in the world has been created. The image of the Taliban has been presented as something laughable and objectionable which, in turn, had further developed the association of the people towards it. These were the very Taliban who were considered as heroes during the cold war era, but now as the politics of the world had changed the images of the groups. The image of the group had been so much projected in the world that everyone seems to be affected. This kind of strategy is politically effective in the West for a specific kind of representation of any group in the world serves the purpose of the hegemony of the powerful Western countries.

Oz is also very much fluent in politics and world affairs which also impresses the father of Sunny. "Pa saw how confident and certain Oz was, how fluent in politics and current affairs" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 100). Anita was also taught politics by Osama. During her education, there were different allusions to Marxism, the red book and the code of honour of the Marxists. Even Anita notes down the points on the red book which also suggests that she was also becoming a Marxist fighter. The novel also alludes to the political strife between Marxism and Capitalism.

There are also clear references to the historical events in the novel. Once Layla asks her history teacher, Mr Adler: "What about Partition? Millions killed in the course of weeks? What about the Dirty Wars in Latin America, tens of thousands disappeared and murdered in football stadiums?" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 91). The references, here, are made to the historical events of partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and the dirty wars in Latin America in which millions had been killed. Layla could be seen as aggressive in her expressions because she wanted to make a point in the class that every human being mattered, and history should tell in actuality what had happened during those times. She does not let Mr. Adler respond because she is prepared by Osama, the Marxist, and is convinced that the only way in the world is through assertion and fighting. Although the point of Layla is valid that all human beings matter and that history should not be stagnant, it should be told openly to the world. It is always moving on and on. Furthermore, Bhutto also wants to make a point that students should not be taught selective chapters of history where things may seem to have run smoothly in the world. Taking the example of the event of partition, most of the textbooks are silent on the event, but there are millions of lives involved in this incident. The event of partition is still a point of debate between Pakistan and India. There are blame games being played by the two countries, and it rarely occurs that the true events may come to the fore. Bhutto seems to point out that history is moulded according to the desires of the powerful in the country, and the true picture is not presented to the people. Everyone wants to have a good night's sleep that all went well in history, and that there is no problem anymore. Bhutto reminds his readers by making these allusions that there have been dark chapters in the history of nations, and that nations should admit and tell the people so that the real learning of the people may occur.

There are also allusions to other historical events in the novel. For example, the struggle of the blacks for their rights in America has also been mentioned, and how that struggle has been manifested through art and literature. "The blacks encapsulated all the sorrow of their history in art – in music, in literature, in dance. The way the Sindhis or Baloch did here. Even as they suffered, the blacks sang to the world of beauty and terror" (Bhutto, 2018, p. 219). Thus the historical, theoretical and political concerns have been shown in the novel that shape meanings. It shows that nations have been struggling against the powerful in order to gain their rights in the world. The meanings of looking for identity and joining some organizations in order to bring change in the world are enhanced, but unfortunately in the current case, the organization, that is joined here, is full of chaos and troubles.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to explore one of the burning issues of this world, i.e., radicalization as present in the field of literature. *The Runaways* by Fatima Bhutto (2018) was selected as the primary data which was analyzed and investigated, using close reading as the method of analysis. A comprehensive theoretical framework as posited by Miller and Chauhan (2017) was adopted to study the novel and the factors responsible for radicalization in society. According to this framework, there are not just external push factors; rather there are also certain pull factors that influence the minds of the people and they are attracted towards radicalization. There are many studies conducted on radicalization and most of them focus on the push factors. The researchers selected this framework for the reasons that it also allows to explore the pull factors for radicalization. Moreover, the novel also belongs to the genre of psychological novels, therefore, the pull factors that are mostly related to the inner feelings, thoughts and motivations of the people were necessary to be explored in this study. In order to explore the research problem of radicalization and the factors behind being radicalized, the researchers developed different research questions. The overarching research question of this study was to find out the factors that push and pull people to radicalization. The second question of the research was to find out if Bhutto has also shed light on the process of de-radicalization, or how the characters in the novel have been de-radicalized. The third research question of this study was to explore the message that has been conveyed by Bhutto in her novel.

The first question of this study was related to exploring the factors that are responsible for radicalization among the characters of the novel. The researchers found that there were mainly three characters, i.e., Anita, Sunny and Monty. All these characters had various push and pull factors that propelled them to join the radical organization of the Ummah Movement. For Anita and Layla, there were primarily two main push factors to join radicalism, i.e., socio-economic conditions and treachery by her brother who pushed and manipulated her towards sex tourism. The major pull factor was the motivation by her only true friend and neighbour, the retired Marxist, Osama who motivated her that there was no other way to get rights than through fighting. So when she was utterly depressed and disturbed by her conditions and did not know what else to do, she decided to join the radical organization and become part of something big to fight against the prevailing injustice in society. The push factor for Sunny to join the Ummah Movement was the issue of identity mainly. As he was a British Indian and living in England, he was never accepted by the whites and was even bullied for his dual identity. From the start of his life, he has been prey to this crisis and felt like living in torturous hell. He also wanted to be somewhere else. So the issue of identity, which could also be regarded as cultural segregation, pushed him to join the radical movement. Oz and his forceful personality worked as the pull factor for him to join the movement. Oz manipulated and played with his psychology and then weak character by giving references of the Islamic concepts and the prevailing political conditions of the world. Monty joined the radical movement mainly because of the pull factors, i.e., love of his life. He was so much attracted to Layla that when he heard that she had gone to Iraq to join the war against the oppressors, he could not hold himself and went there. However, at the same time, her mother's words at the shrine of Ghazi also served as the push factor that he should be a real man and do something in the way of Islam. Hence, there was a mix of push and pull factors that made them join the radical movement.

The second research question was to explore how the radicals are de-radicalized in the novel. The researchers found that the way Bhutto has discussed in detail the process of getting radicalized in the novel, she has also delved into discussing de-radicalization of the characters.

There are two characters that seem to be de-radicalized in the novel, i.e., Layla and Monty, whereas Sunny loses his life when he expressed his brutal side to the extreme level. As such there is no concrete way of de-radicalization. In the last two sections of the novel, particularly, in the last section, with the turn in the events, the characters start to realize that the ideals for which they joined the Ummah Movement were nowhere to be achieved there. Even in the Ummah Movement, there was cruelty and injustice. The heaven, for which they had come so far from their homes, was not there. In the end of the novel, Layla could be seen sitting, tied on the chair and screaming and crying for the failure and torture that she had suffered over there. Monty had come there to be the real man for Layla. He was also full of pain over there as if lamenting over the tragedies of Layla, Sunny and himself. There is no definite conclusion presented by the novelist to show that the characters were de-radicalized. The conclusion is left for the readers. However, from their dialogues and last expressions, it seems that they were not going to stay there anymore which means that they were de-radicalized completely.

The third question of this research work was to explore the messages in the novel. Overall analysis of the novel suggests that Bhutto has tried to give different messages in the novel. The first one is that every person in society is important, and that no one should be excluded because it is due to the process of exclusion in society that people turn towards different aims and objectives, and one of the objectives of life could be radicalization. There are different push and pull factors that are responsible for radicalization of the young people in our societies. These factors need to be addressed so that no one joins brutal organizations, like the Ummah Movement. These factors need to be eliminated. Another message is that no matter how ideal an organization looks, anything, that is radicalized, has extreme behaviours which can also turn to violence. Another message in the novel could be that tolerance among different cultures for cultural segregation can lead people to suffer from acute identity crises which are extremely harmful for the healthy living of the people in any society. Another important message in the novel is as Fatima Bhutto (2020) herself says in an interview that: "If you happen to be a Muslim — and, of course, there are more than a billion of us — you know that there's nothing inherently radical about Islam," she says.

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