



THE BEAUTIFUL TRAGEDY OF THE BHUTTO DYNASTY

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THE BEAUTIFUL TRAGEDY OF THE BHUTTO DYNASTY

By

STEFANIE TAUB

A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College

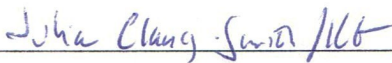
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Abstract

This paper will construct a biography of the lives of Benazir Bhutto and her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, before their ascension to political leadership of Pakistan in the hopes of better understanding what allowed Benazir to become prime minister. It will set out to prove that what allowed Benazir Bhutto to become the first female prime minister of a post colonial Muslim nation was a sequence of life events, her own character, unique education, the martyrdom of her father, and most importantly, the great role Zulfikar had upon her life as the person she loved and respected most.

Assessment of Project Success

I learned a great deal from writing this thesis on how to better research history; knowledge that I will undoubtedly take with me and apply in graduate school. I have never written a paper of this scope, depth, and length before, and I personally feel that I did quite well considering I have written almost a small masters thesis while still an undergraduate. As for the topic of Benazir Bhutto, I feel that I am familiar enough with the lives of her and father from writing this thesis that this would be something I could easily turn into a masters thesis if I chose to pursue and continue with this topic in graduate school.

Preface

“Jiye Bhutto!” --- “Bhutto Lives!”



www.himvani.com/.../1236/

This quote, which was the popular chant with which millions of frenzied Pakistanis greeted Benazir Bhutto when she campaigned for the office of prime minister, is quite heavy with meaning. Benazir Bhutto, the beautiful and charismatic former prime minister of Pakistan, was a symbol not just for women around the world, but also for the name of Bhutto. While the crowds screamed and roared for her to be elected as prime minister, they were also simultaneously screaming for her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was almost a decade deceased by this point. Both father and daughter were merged

into a single entity, a symbol and promise of democracy and freedom, in the minds of the Pakistanis who burned with desire for the liberty the Bhutto's promised.

I first became interested in the life of Benazir Bhutto due to an immense interest in women's history. There have been many powerful, intelligent, and beautiful women like Benazir throughout history who have managed to rise to the top of politics despite all of the odds. As a woman who came to power in a third-world Islamic nation, during an era that was especially misogynistic and wrought with turmoil, it seemed the odds were stacked even higher against her. I wondered what was so unique about this alluring and striking woman that enabled her to ascend to a position where even males are regularly deposed and discarded under the volatile and violent system of Pakistani politics. I wanted to know who she was and what it was about her; what events, ideals, dreams, passions and thoughts constituted her very being and differentiated her from the rest. The more I researched her and became personally entangled in her rich and turbulent history, the more I realized that telling the story of Benazir Bhutto without elaborating upon the story of her father Zulfikar as well would be incomplete.

The Bhuttos have shaped the nation of Pakistan for better and for worse in the second half of the twentieth century. The parallels in both of their lives are enormous and at times disconcerting as Benazir and her father both rose to the incredibly tumultuous office of prime minister only to be violently executed far too young. Benazir and Zulfikar both sacrificed everything for Pakistan; their freedom, happiness, and ultimately their lives in the zealous attempt to bring the symbol of democracy to Pakistan. I say symbol of democracy, rather than true democracy, because although this preface may have

started sounding something like an idolization of the Bhuttos, that is not at all the case. Both Benazir and Zulfikar have been charged with corruption and nepotism, and both ultimately lost the seat of prime minister and their lives because of these charges. I am well aware that both Bhuttos are flawed characters, as all humans and particularly politicians are. I am well aware that their charisma and magnetism has transcended even their deaths and rendered them martyrs for many Pakistanis. I am well aware of their charm, and how deeply and easily one can become lost in their hypnotic gaze, passionately charged rhetoric and heartfelt stories if not careful. I have made the utmost effort to remove myself personally from the lives of the Bhuttos in writing this thesis, something many who have written professional biographies of them could not fully accomplish. The fact that the Bhuttos were corruptible, tangible human beings, and not the perfect politicians they paint themselves to be, is what makes them even all the more irresistible to me. Whether you love them or hate them, or love to hate them, Benazir and Zulfikar both remain alive long after their deaths in memory, and it is for this reason I chose to focus my thesis on the extraordinary life of Benazir Bhutto, and the role her father Zulfikar played in it.

I Introduction

The thunderous blast shook the darkened neighborhood of Karsaz in Karachi, rocking the armor plated flat bed vehicle that was designed with the intent of suicide

bombers in mind¹. A second far more powerful explosion, followed by sniper fire and the orange fire ball of a flamethrower engulfed the truck, turning it upside down and causing it to roll back and forth like a toy in the broken streets. Carnage and the wail of sirens simultaneously masked the scent of Basmati rice and joy that carried on the breeze seconds earlier as the men who were moments before cheering and vibrant with life lay dismembered and taking their last breaths. Blood soaked bits of white t-shirts that belonged to the “*Jaan Nisaar Benazir*” (those willing to give their lives for Benazir) clung to the road, as the men who had formed a human shield around Benazir Bhutto fulfilled their unspoken promise by giving up their own lives for hers.²

This is the scene that welcomed Benazir Bhutto home to Pakistan on October 18, 2007, after a self-imposed exile of eight years. Crowds of millions thronged to the airport in Karachi, awaiting her return, fervently hoping to catch a glimpse of the woman who inspired the most passionate of love or hatred in the hearts of Pakistanis. The unsuccessful suicide attempt on her life that day was part of what was expected by Benazir, a woman who was born into, and would eventually die in, the turbulent politics of Pakistan. She knew that her life was in jeopardy by returning home to Pakistan and yet she did so anyway.³ She was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, her life, for the hope of democracy in Pakistan, and like those *Jaan Nissar Benazir*, she fulfilled her promise to Pakistan by giving up her life to suicide bombers two months later, on December 27, 2007.

¹ Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation, Islam, Democracy, and the West* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 11.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ Amy Wilentz, “The Exile’s Return,” *More*, December 2007/ January 2008, 144.

The first time she verbally uttered that she would not give up on the cause of establishing democracy in Pakistan was on April 3, 1979. At the time Benazir and her mother Begum Nusrat were detained in Sihala's police camp, several miles from the Rawalpindi prison's death cell block where her father was being held.⁴ Zulfikar was only hours away from being executed and Benazir and her mother were brought to the prison to say their final goodbyes. They were only allowed thirty minutes and Benazir spent that precious time in a numb, dreamlike state as she tried not to reflect on the fact that this was the last time she would ever see her father, the man she loved more dearly than anyone else in the world.⁵ He was in a terrible state; malnourished, bony, his gums full of pus and blood from an infection, and riddled with liver disease. He had wasted away to a hollow shell of his former self under the harsh conditions of Pakistani prison life.⁶ Weak and barely clinging to life her father gave her an escape from the destiny of Pakistan. He told her she had suffered so much for her young age of twenty-five and that she did not need to pick up the reins of the political party he had established and would die for, the PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party). Benazir replied that she would never go, that she would never leave Pakistan; that she could not leave Pakistan.⁷

When evaluating the life of Benazir Bhutto and how she rose to the position of Prime Minister of Pakistan, a seemingly impossible achievement, one must attempt to take into account all the variables that influenced her and pushed her life in the direction it went. It would be easy to claim that one single cause, such as the influence of her father

⁴ Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 328.

⁵ Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny: An Autobiography* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 9.

⁶ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 328.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

Zulfikar, could be responsible for her ascension to the figurative throne of Pakistan. However, this claim would also be false, foolish, and limited in scope. Benazir Bhutto is an intrigue to many, not so much for her shocking and unorthodox assassination, but for her shocking and unorthodox life. The death that befell her was the ultimate culmination and final manifestation of all the violent and unusual events that shaped her life and led her to become the woman that she was. Her own autobiography, titled Daughter of Destiny (1987), implicitly and explicitly states that she felt her life had some greater purpose, some greater destiny in which her life was not her own to live, but rather was devoted to the cause of Pakistan.⁸ She opens the preface to her autobiography with the quote, “I did not choose this life, it chose me,” and indeed that became the ubiquitous theme in the life of a woman who did not initially chose politics for herself, but had politics chosen for her by a combination of unusual life circumstances and birth into the Bhutto family.⁹ To therefore imply that her destiny as prime minister could be the result of one single action, such as the influence of her father in her life, would be ignoring all the other key and crucial events that this thesis argues also lead to her role as prime minister.

Benazir Bhutto was the first female to lead a post-colonial Muslim state, who not only managed to transcend the constraints of her gender and reign in a strictly male Islamic realm, but who managed to do it twice. Her ability to rule in such a climate has made her an unsolvable enigma, and she is revered by many as a martyr, an imposing

⁸ Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny: An Autobiography* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), XII. Benazir discusses how after her father’s execution and taking control of the PPP she never expected to find the happiness of love and marriage in her life, but was willing to sacrifice everything to continue her father’s legacy.

⁹ *Ibid.*, XI.

figure who must have been endowed with some form of supernatural power in order to rise above the blatant misogyny and patriarchy inherent in Islamic politics. She has been symbolized, turned into a myth, a mystery, a unique and rare entity. A very apt quote by Rafiq Zakaria in his book The Trial of Benazir Bhutto does a wonderful job of summarizing a woman who is not easily summarized:

Benazir Bhutto is a study in contradictions. She is an aristocrat by birth, a socialist by conviction and a people power revolutionary out of sheer necessity. She is a democrat who appeals to feudal loyalties. She is a beautiful young woman who will allow no romance into her life--- a politician in purdah. She is an expensively educated, westernized woman who intends to rule a male-dominated, Islamic society. Now, after Radcliffe and Oxford, after prison in Pakistan and exile in London, Bhutto 33—‘Pinky’ to her friends--- is home again, planning to topple a government that overthrew, and then hanged the father she adored.¹⁰

As evidenced by the above quote, Benazir is such a curiosity because of her inability to be neatly categorized and put into a schema of human ideals that we all subconsciously try to divide people into. She does not fit the mold, and perhaps her irresistible charisma is due to the fact that she can so successfully be so many people at once.

Thus, this thesis asks: what life events and circumstances led her to become the woman she became? What was it about Benazir that has captured the attention of so many, especially after death? Was she really a daughter of destiny? Perhaps she was just simply a product of her father’s manipulation as some have claimed, or maybe, even more simply, she was just a woman who used her cleverness to rise to high places? There is no doubting her extreme intelligence, political stealth, and overpowering charisma.

¹⁰ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 7. This quotation was written in 1986 by *Newsweek* and referenced in Zakaria’s book, prior to her getting married in 1987 and elected as prime minister in 1988.

There is no doubting the rarity of her upbringing, with a father who taught her equality of the sexes and bestowed upon her an advanced western education when over 90% of Pakistani women were illiterate during her childhood.¹¹

There is also the question of how Benazir gained leadership in a politically cutthroat nation like Pakistan where male leaders, such as her father, were deposed on a regular basis. How did she overcome all that, plus the inherent misogyny in the patriarchal system of Islam which states that women, who are symbolically and physically veiled, are not allowed to rule in the public domain of men?¹² An advanced education would not be enough to explain this phenomenon, nor would the fact that her father was once prime minister and instilled in her egalitarian values. These are all pieces to the puzzle, but just as there is no one piece that can adequately portray the puzzle, there is no one piece that can portray her. In evaluating the puzzle of Benazir, this paper will argue that what allowed her to obtain her notorious place in history was a combination of events such as her upbringing, beliefs, life altering experiences, and her own unshakeable internal strength, with an emphasis placed on the role Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had on her life. If only one of these pieces were missing or out of place then the puzzle could have never been completed, and Benazir would have never become the first female prime minister of Pakistan. In this sense, Benazir truly was a daughter of destiny. Her father's influence, her advanced western education, the tragic death of her father, the importance of the message of egalitarianism that he instilled in her, her years spent under house arrest, in jail and political exile, and the death of General Zia (the man who

¹¹ Anita M. Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 5 (May 1990): 440, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed November 19, 2008).

¹² Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 4.

executed her father) all shaped her destiny and future. There will never be one right or wrong answer to solve the enigma of Benazir as a person or a ruler, and to try and claim that a woman as complex and multifaceted as Benazir could be explained by one event is as foolish and simple as trying to claim that the Bhuttos achieved democracy just because they campaigned for it. In examining the events of her life and what brought her to an untimely, violent, and tragic death, one could see that Benazir was truly extraordinary in the fact that she could at times be an ordinary woman.

II Ancestry and the Life of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

“It requires one individual to change the destiny of people”

–Shah Nawaz Bhutto

The Bhutto family migrated to the Sindh region, which was at the time still part of India, in the 18th century. They were originally Hindu but had converted to Islam centuries earlier.¹³ Both Benazir and Zulfikar were raised on the stories of their ancestors who were brave and fiery souls that were known for stirring trouble with their intensely defiant characters. One of the famous stories that both father and daughter loved was of Mir Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto (1869-1899), the grandfather of Zulfikar. The Sindh region had been taken over by the British in 1842 by Charles Napier. One of the colonels who had control over the Sindh region was Colonel Mayhew, who kept many Sindhi mistresses. Mir Murtaza fell madly in love with Mayhew’s Sindhi mistress and engaged in an elicit affair with her. They were discovered one night in bed together by Colonel

¹³ Ibid., 5.

Mayhew, and as the shocked Mayhew reached out with a whip to lash Mir Murtaza, Mir grabbed the whip and fled with his lover which started a feud between the Bhuttos and the British for decades.¹⁴ It has been speculated that Zulfikar inherited his fiery and mercurial temperament from his grandfather Mir Murtaza, not his father Shah Nawaz, just as Benazir inherited her temperament from her father and not her mother. Another interesting factor to note about this childhood story is that Zulfikar and Benazir both heard different versions of it. Zulfikar used to exaggerate the childhood stories he told to Benazir and her siblings. Benazir writes about this same story in her autobiography, yet in Zulfikar's version it was a white British woman in love with Mir Murtaza, not a Sindhi woman. This discrepancy is quite noteworthy because at the time it was forbidden for foreigners to have sexual relations with white women, thus making Mir Murtaza's character appear even more scandalous and heroic than he actually was. Zulfikar had a tendency to fabricate and exaggerate; a reflection of his grandiose and complicated personality that was evident even in his rendition of childhood stories.¹⁵

Benazir's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was born on January, 5 1928, the son of Shah Nawaz Bhutto (1888-1957) and Lakhi Bai, the second wife of Shah. Lakhi Bai was a beautiful Hindu dancing girl that Shah fell in love with at first sight who became his second wife after converting to Islam and changing her name to Kurshid.¹⁶

It is here that unpacking the life of Zulfikar becomes dangerous territory because the only known source in English on Zulfikar's childhood was by Stanley Wolpert who wrote, Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times (1993). Wolpert was one of the first

¹⁴ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 6.

¹⁵ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 30.

¹⁶ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 15.

and only westerners to be allowed access to the Bhutto archives at the family home of 70 Clifton in Karachi. His biography of Zulfikar contains information that is otherwise unknown and extremely useful, but must be taken with a grain of salt due to the way Wolpert chose to frame the biography. Numerous other writers have critiqued Wolpert's work for its psycho-historical rather than biographical nature. This criticism must be mentioned since this source was the main one relied on in understanding the roots of Zulfikar's life. S. Zufligar Gilani of *Economic and Political Weekly* wrote an article condemning Wolpert for his ill-informed application of psychology to history, such as describing Zulfikar as having a schizoid personality disorder while clearly demonstrating no psychological background upon which to substantiate such a claim.¹⁷ Not only does Wolpert label Zulfikar with psychiatric terms of which he has no understanding, but he also has a tendency to project his own emotional conclusions onto Zulfikar and simplify him into psychiatric paradigms of Freudian concepts and unsubstantiated personality disorders.¹⁸ Wolpert also spends an excessive amount of time relishing in great deal Zulfikar's sexual conquests while trying to link this behavior back literally to the "milk of his small mother's body."¹⁹ This misunderstanding of Freud's Oedipal complex is yet another way that Wolpert tries to paint Zulfikar as a "passive victim of ancestral history

¹⁷ S. Zufligar Gilani, "Review: Unveiling Bhutto," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 7/8 (February 18-25, 1995): 377, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009). Wolpert continuously speaks of the contrast of dark and light and mercurial and emotional temperament in Zulfikar's nature. If he were to have the authority to diagnose Zulfikar with any psychiatric disorder it should not be schizoid personality disorder which is characterized by a lack of interest in social relationships, a tendency towards a solitary lifestyle, secretiveness, and emotional coldness. Schizoid personality disorder is the antithesis of Zulfikar's emotional and at times promiscuous nature that Wolpert writes of.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁹ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 20.

who is pulled by the strings of psychological fate,” as S. Gilani so aptly puts it.²⁰ Just as there is no one deciding factor that resulted in Benazir Bhutto becoming prime minister, there is no one deciding factor such as Freudian analysis or psychological fate that can explain who Zulfikar Bhutto was and how he became the man that he did.

If Wolpert’s book is taken with a grain of salt however, there is a lot of useful information regarding not only Zulfikar’s early life but also the Bhutto history that can be applied to better understanding Benazir. One statement that Wolpert was extremely correct about was that Zulfikar was not a simple personality.²¹ Zulfikar wrote while in his death cell, just as Benazir wrote in her autobiography, that he believed his life and role in the politics of Pakistan to be destiny: “My genesis to political fame is written in the stars.....If I am not a part of Pakistan....Sindh is not a part of Pakistan...my roots in the soil of this land are very deep.”²² Zulfikar was a multifaceted, charismatic, narcissistic, religious, sacrilegious, loving, passionate, at times dark, always brilliant man; a simultaneous reflection and projection of the torn and complicated nation of Pakistan that ran in his blood. He was a product of many different forces and yet it was not him, but his father that set into motion many of the modern notions that further helped develop him and Benazir into the progressives that they would become.

The idea to bestow advanced educations upon the Bhutto children did not begin with Zulfikar, but rather with his father Shah Nawaz. Shah Nawaz, considered a progressive, turned his back on the feudalistic Islam of the Sindh region and not only

²⁰ S. Zulfikar Gilani, “Review: Unveiling Bhutto,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 7/8 (February 18-25, 1995): 378, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009).

²¹ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

educated his sons, but his daughters.²³ If the practice of educating sons was frowned upon since a son's responsibility was to remain on the land, the idea of educating daughters was considered completely scandalous in an era where Sindhi women still lived in *purdah*.²⁴ *Purdah* literally means a curtain, such as the physical veil that separates women from men, but it also refers to women being segregated into separate living quarters from men, and remaining behind the walls of their homes and out of public view.²⁵ Shah Nawaz, whose own household was structured around the concept of *purdah*, was far ahead of his time in the belief that education was the key to success in the rapidly modernizing world, and he passed this belief down to his son Zulfikar.²⁶ Another interesting parallel between Benazir and her father was that Zulfikar was also chosen by his father Shah Nawaz to be the successor to his legacy. Shah Nawaz was a shrewd, self made, self educated man who was the first Bhutto to ever become involved in politics. He recognized a spark and promise for a successful future in his son Zulfikar just as Zulfikar saw it in Benazir, and thus made an extra effort to make sure his son received the finest education.²⁷

His son Zulfikar, the son of a second wife who was formerly a Hindu dancing girl, was automatically bestowed a lower status upon birth as it was customary for the sons of the more respected first wife to take over the inheritance. In addition, Zulfikar was also a frail child while growing up, prone to many illnesses, and almost died at the

²³ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 31.

²⁴ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

²⁵ Elizabeth H. White, "Purdah," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 31, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed November 19, 2008).

²⁶ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 32.

²⁷ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 14.

age of three from a raging fever that resulted from influenza. As a result of his illnesses and the lower status of his mother, it was thought that Zulfikar was unusually closer to his mother. As Wolpert states, “no familial bond in South Asia is closer than that which ties a son to his mother.”²⁸ Zulfikar was the only son of his mother, who was already estranged from the rest of the Bhutto clan because of her Hindu past. It is here that Wolpert starts dangerously applying psychoanalysis to the young Zulfikar, claiming that his adult personality of mercurial temperament, suspicious ambivalence towards most people, sudden strange shifts in mood, and rapidly cycling aloof and passionate nature was the result of the inherent incompatibilities between his mother and father.²⁹ His mother was doting and insecure, clinging to her only son for comfort in a strange land of unwelcoming Muslims, while his father was arrogant, overconfident and emotionally distant from his children.³⁰ As Wolpert boldly conjectures:

All the clashing pluralisms of South Asia itself, a riverine blend of Hindu-Muslim, highborn and outcaste passions, conflicts, harmonies, and hatreds flowed in Zulfi’s blood, an inharmonious mix of the light and dark, a microcosmic reflection of Islam’s violent assault upon and unstable conquest of the body politic of Hindudom. And added to that impossible blend, of course was the superimposed external world of an English Christian West, whose patina of polite privilege and imperial arrogance had been donned with a knighthood and knee breeches by his proud, pompous prince of a father, magistrate-wadero of Larkana, Sind’s Mughal on the Imperial Council, a red-cheeked English governors boon companion and right hand man. Was it any wonder Zulfi should be so strangely complex, inherently incompatible within his many psyches, forever unsure of which Bhutto he was?³¹ Hindu outcaste? Sufi saint? Or the Zulfikar—sword—of Islam? The Sword—Zulfikar—that first

²⁸ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

³¹ Another problem that has been addressed with this biography of Zulfikar was the way Wolpert referred to him as Zulfi, not only throughout the book but also in the title. Only Zulfikar’s closest friends referred to him this way and so this blatant lack of respect and assumption that Wolpert’s tie to Zulfikar was actually greater than it was is reflected in his informal titling of the man he’s writing a biography on.

belonged to Caliph Hazrat Ali, and was used to liberate Arabia's poor, converting them to Islam.³²

Leslie Wolf Phillips, from *Third World Quarterly*, also wrote a review of Wolpert's work stating how his prose reminded her more of a romance novel than a well informed historical biography at times.³³ While the above quote certainly illustrates Wolpert's tendency to draw unsubstantiated inferences and use at times overbearing flowery prose, there is some useful information that can be drawn from it. Zulfikar was a man of contradictions, as was his daughter Benazir. Any historian documenting both of their lives will note the bipolarity in their characters and how they inspire a diametric opposition of either the greatest of love or hate in the hearts of the Pakistanis and the world. Zulfikar came from a fragmented background, and while that fragmentation should not be the sole explanation for why he became the man that he did, there is a certain truth to psycho-history and the importance of understanding the roots of someone's character in order to better understand the choices and decisions they make as leaders.

By the time Zulfikar was six years old his father placed him in the convent kindergarten at Bishops High School in Karachi. However, Shah Nawaz, who was already involved in politics by this point, was invited to join the cabinet of Lord Brabourne as an advisor, and the family moved to Bombay, a bustling portside city.³⁴ When Zulfikar reached the age of nine he was enrolled in Bombay's Cathedral High School, even though he had yet to reach the required age of admission. Shah Nawaz

³² Ibid., 20-21.

³³ Leslie W. Phillips, "Review: Z.A. Bhutto of Pakistan: A Biography," *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (December 1994): 725, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009).

³⁴ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 21.

stressed education for his sons, especially his brightest son Zulfikar, and pulled all the necessary strings to make sure he received only the best education. It was from Shah Nawaz that Zulfikar began to develop his unorthodox views on education, which was shown in his later choice to highly educate his daughter Benazir. Whatever it was about Shah Nawaz, he recognized that the only way for his son to have a successful future was through education, especially in the rapidly modernizing city of Bombay. As Wolpert states:

For all his power and natural sagacity, Sir Shah Nawaz, who never graduated high school, became keenly sensitive about his lack of formal education after moving to Bombay. Daily contact with Lord Brabourne and His Highness the Aga Khan, both of whom lived nearby, and with his cultured Parsi commercial neighbor, Sir Homi Mody, and Jawaharlal Nehru's charming sister, Krishna Nehru Hutheesing, who lived next door, made him feel acutely conscious of his intellectual 'handicap'. Shah Nawaz resolved, therefore, to spare no resources to assure that his brightest son should receive the best possible education money could buy.³⁵

It was during his time in high school that two important events took place in Zulfikar's life. His baby sister, whom he adored, succumbed to influenza and died at the age of 14. Her name was Benazir, meaning "matchless", and he insisted on naming his first daughter after her when she was born.³⁶ At the age of 13, Zulfikar's life was changed even more drastically when he was married to his older cousin Sheerin. It is interesting to note that in all 431 pages of his daughter Benazir's autobiography, of which there are entire sections devoted to her father, she never one time mentioned that her mother was her father's second wife. Just like Zulfikar, Benazir was the product of the younger, more beautiful second wife in whom the potential for leadership was seen.

³⁵ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

Zulfikar, for all his intelligence, was lazy and unmotivated as a student. When the time came to apply for college he did not have the grades to go to Oxford as his father wished for him to. He instead applied to several American universities, hoping to improve his grades so he could eventually get into Oxford. He was rejected from every school except one: The University of Southern California, USC. On September 5, 1947 Zulfikar headed west for Los Angeles literally less than a month after the bloody birth of the nation of Pakistan, separated finally from India. The birth of Zulfikar the politician and the nation of Pakistan could not have coincided anymore perfectly.³⁷

The knowledge that Zulfikar received at USC extended far beyond an advanced academic education; it was an education on the basics of surviving life. Zulfikar grew up spoiled and privileged as the brightest son of Shah Nawaz, so that even the simplest of tasks were completely daunting to him. A neighbor in Zulfikar's boarding house who later became a friend, Al Cechvala, remembers one of his first encounters with him. Zulfikar cried down from the top of the stairs in a somewhat patronizing whine, "Who down there is going to draw my ba-a-ath?"³⁸ Even a task as simple as drawing a bath was beyond the scope of what Zulfikar was capable of. This rude awakening was further extended when he realized that not only was anyone going to draw his bath for him, but that no one was going to cook, clean, or look after him as well.

Another rude awakening that Zulfikar faced in California was racial prejudice. As the sheltered son of Sindhi aristocracy he was not only spared from such harsh and arduous chores as drawing a bath, but also from the realities of racism. Jim Crowism was

³⁷ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 26.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

alive and rampant in the late 1940's in the United States, and Zulfikar was often confused for the much hated Mexicans of the southern California region or a "nigger" because of his dark skin. These words were foreign and cut deep: Zulfikar learned a valuable lesson on what it was like to be seen as the undesirable caste of society, rather than the upper echelon prince he was back in the Sindh.³⁹

America also opened up Zulfikar's eyes to a culture that he had never seen behind the hidden walls of Pakistani *purdah*. While in the 1940's promiscuity and the consumption of alcohol were not openly admired traits, they certainly occurred with a lot more frequency and a lot less stigma in California than back in Pakistan. Zulfikar dated many women while he was at USC of Caucasian and South Asian heritage, failing to mention to his closest friends that he was already married and had a wife halfway around the world.⁴⁰ He was described by his friends and the women he dated as handsome and incredibly charismatic and charming, adjectives that would be used to later describe both him and Benazir politically. A few years later at Zulfikar's sister's wedding he met Nusrat Isphani, one of Karachi's most beautiful debutantes. She was of Kurdish-Iranian heritage, her family having migrated to Bombay where she was born on March 23, 1929. She was somewhat cold and aloof in attitude towards him, and could have never imagined that a week later, despite her demeanor, he would propose to her.

'Then he proposed to me and I took it as a joke,' Nusrat recalled. She knew that in a week or two he would return to California to complete his degree. He would neither forget nor retract his proposal, however. Distance and time served only to strengthen Zulfi's resolve to the make the lovely cosmopolitan Iranian lady his second begum.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁰ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 27.

⁴¹ Ibid., 34.

It was during this time that Zulfikar was experiencing all that life in America had to offer him that he began to become more heavily involved in politics. His classes at USC were all political science classes, and as his years in California progressed he became more and more involved with the new nation of Pakistan. His hero and idol was Mohammad Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, and he began to rally strongly behind the cause of Pakistani Islamic nationalism.⁴² He talked casually to his roommates about starting a pan-Islamic league, and spoke often about Mohammed Jinnah to his friends. Even at such a young age, as a college student, when most are enjoying their youth and partying, Zulfikar was already beginning to show a deeply passionate, serious, and darker side when it came to the cause of the nation of Pakistan. His dates with women and adventures drinking in the city paled in comparison to the feelings he was developing for his home nation. On April 1, 1948 Zulfikar spoke at USC about Islamic heritage and what it meant to him:

I genuinely consider any accomplishment of the Islamic people as a personal feat, just as I consider a failure of the Muslim world as a personal failure. There is something binding about the Muslim world in spite of the fact that it is torn by dissension.....I am not a devout Muslim....My interest is soaked in the political, economic and cultural heritage of Islam. Destiny demands an Islamic association, political reality justifies it, posterity awaits it, and by God we will have it. Courage is in our blood; we are the children of a rich heritage. We shall succeed.⁴³

What is so incredibly striking about this speech is at the time it was delivered Zulfikar was only nineteen years old. There are not many nineteen year olds who can speak this

⁴² Ibid., 28.

⁴³ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 28-29.

richly, coherently, and passionately. In fact, there are not many adult politicians who possess the charm, charisma, and ability to manipulate language and hearts the way Zulfikar did as a college student.

The next stage of Zulfikar's education took place at Oxford in 1950, where he studied jurisprudence and law. Zulfikar's dominant and prideful personality also began to more clearly emerge at this time as he demanded to be able to finish the typical three year Oxford masters track in two years. He did it not so much for himself, but to prove that he was just as good if not better than the stereotypically Caucasian English Oxford boy. He still felt the sting of Jim Crowism even though he was thousands of miles away from Southern California.⁴⁴ Although England wasn't as overtly racist and biased as America, there was a certain subtlety about the English that never made him feel entirely accepted. His brown skin and Pakistani heritage were constant reminders of his outside status; he would never truly belong in the Old Boys club atmosphere of Oxford.

In the spring of 1951, Zulfikar returned to Karachi for a visit and went to go see Nusrat immediately. It had been two years since they had initially met and Zulfikar was resolved to marrying her. She was once again cool and aloof in demeanor to him, which drove Zulfikar even crazier in his quest to conquer this unconquerable challenge, and he was determined to prove his worth to her no matter what it took. At last Nusrat gave in to Zulfikar's constant barrage of marriage requests, but then he had to contend with both sets of parents who came from entirely different ethnic backgrounds and did not want their children to get married. However, if Zulfikar wasn't going to let Nusrat's initial rejections deter him, he certainly wasn't going to let parental disapproval. True to his

⁴⁴ Ibid., 38.

word, within a week Zulfikar and Nusrat were man and wife, another example of how when Zulfikar put his mind to something he tended to get it. Disappointment, failure, and worst of all rejection were not plausible options in the schema of Zulfikar's personal and political life. This was already clearly evident by the time he was married to Nusrat.⁴⁵

After the marriage, Zulfikar's education at Oxford continued to go well, and he was awarded a Master of Arts degree with honors. At this point, Nusrat had moved to Oxford, and in the fall of 1952, a doctor confirmed suspicions that she was pregnant. The only thing that seemed to bring Zulfikar to life and animate him more than the cause of Pakistan and his love for his beautiful wife Nusrat was the idea of becoming a father. Zulfikar would run up to strangers he had just met and gush how he was going to become a father. Nusrat returned to Pakistan at this time so Zulfikar could work on concentrating for his bar exam. It was in Karachi that Zulfikar and Nusrat's first child, Benazir was born.⁴⁶

III The Childhood and Education of Benazir

Benazir was born in Karachi, Pakistan, on June 21, 1953. The oldest of four children, followed by brothers Mir Murtaza, Shah Nawaz, and sister Sanam, she remained her father's favorite throughout her life. It was Benazir he would eventually choose to carry on the reign of politics, not her brothers; a choice that was highly unusual in a society which regularly practiced female infanticide in its more rural areas.⁴⁷ Her

⁴⁵ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 39.

⁴⁶ Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto*, 41.

⁴⁷ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

family possessed enormous wealth and owned several homes throughout Pakistan and the world, and yet the place that she considered the root of her heritage was not her birthplace of Karachi, but the ancestral village of Larkana in the province of Sindh.⁴⁸ Ironically enough, this home in Larkana which she viewed through the rose colored lens of childhood nostalgia would later become a source of misery as one of the sites of her house arrest under General Zia al-Haq. Irony, another prevalent theme that shaped and defined Benazir's life, must be mentioned because it was present from the day of her birth until the day of her death. Benazir, who would later head a borderline socialist Democratic Party, the Pakistani's People Party (PPP), was raised the equivalent of a Pakistani princess, very similar to her father's privileged upbringing, on her family's ancestral lands that were still ensconced under the yoke of feudalism.⁴⁹

Education is without a doubt one of the key factors that influenced Benazir Bhutto to become the woman she became. The combination of her father and mother's forward outlook on educating women encouraged Benazir's budding self confidence as a child despite being a woman in a society that found woman inherently inferior. Benazir's mother, Begum Nusrat Bhutto also came from a progressive family. Before her parents were married in 1951, when the rest of the Bhutto and Sindhi women were still living in *pardah* behind black *burqas* and the walls of Al-Murtaza, Begum and her sisters drove around Karachi, without veils, and received college educations.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Benazir Bhutto," Economist.com, January 3, 2008, under Obituary, http://www.economist.com/obituary/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10423870 [accessed September 28, 2008].

⁵⁰ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 32.

Both of her parents espoused liberal attitudes towards women's status, and the importance of an advanced education was instilled in her from birth. As she stated in her autobiography, "there was no question in my family that my sister and I would not be given the same opportunities in life as my brothers, nor was there in Islam."⁵¹ This quote illustrates how Benazir internalized from a young age the importance of the true egalitarian nature of Islam over the more popularized misogynistic male interpretation. This interpretation became what she would later use to defend her ability to rule Pakistan as a woman. She drew strength and pride in her heritage as a Muslim woman, as the powerful yet pious daughter her parents raised her to be, and the education of Islam they imparted upon her seemed to have impacted her as greatly as the western education they would give to her.

In order to better understand the form of Islam Benazir was taught, it is important to understand the multiple interpretations regarding women found in the Quran. There are two main ways to interpret the Quran in terms of the stance taken on women, the hierarchical and egalitarian manner. The hierarchical manner is a worldlier construct that places the woman second to man in a state of constant subjugation. It is supported by verses in the Quran that state that men are allowed to engage in polygamy with up to four wives, can beat disobedient wives and that women must be veiled.⁵² The egalitarian view, on the other hand, focuses more on the spiritual realm of Islam where both women and

⁵¹ Ibid., 34.

⁵² Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 72-99, 427. It actually states in the Quran that the Prophet's wives must be veiled, but this has been interpreted by various societies throughout history to apply to Muslim women in general. Women throughout history have also veiled to emulate the Prophet's wives, who are held in high regard, and so while veiling is often considered optional today there are a variety of reasons why women do and don't veil.

men are equal and have equal access to heaven and equal faith in God, and is supported by verses that promise Paradise specifically to both.⁵³ These two stances on women are obviously highly contradictory, and unfortunately it is the hierarchical version that has become the predominant way in which Islam is interpreted, including by the leadership of Pakistan.⁵⁴ Benazir's parents were an anomaly in the fact that they raised her according to egalitarian norms, a stance that is not even known to some women in the more rural areas of the Muslim world where there is a lack of access to education. Her education in egalitarian Islam is best exemplified in a childhood anecdote about when Benazir reached the age where it became time for her to wear the *burqa* and be veiled. Her mother placed the black cloth over her as tradition called for, but her father's response to the veil was a powerful moment in cementing in her egalitarian and independent identity; as she states the dialogue between her parents:

‘Pinkie [Benazir] wore her *burqa* for the first time today,’ my mother told my father when we reached Al-Murtaza. There was a long pause. ‘She doesn't need to wear it,’ my father finally said. ‘The Prophet himself said that the best veil is the veil behind the eyes. Let her be judged by her character and her mind, not by her clothing.’ And I became the first Bhutto woman to be released from a life spent in perpetual twilight.⁵⁵

Benazir did indeed become the first Bhutto woman to be released from a life spent behind the veil which would not only have physically shielded her from the

⁵³ Ibid., 90-99.

⁵⁴ Shahnaz Khan, *Zina, Transnational Feminism, and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 11-12. The laws under General Zia in Pakistan were highly Islamicized and responsible for decrees such as the Zina Ordinance, which harshly punish citizens for sex outside of marriage. It is often used as a means to control women's "morality". Women could even be executed by being stoned to death under these laws, and "honor killings" of women who have been raped are often justified under the same ideology.

⁵⁵ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 37.

world, but also would have stunted her growing independence and faith in education and the equality of Islam.

Her western education began at pre-school age, when her parents sent her to one of the best school in Karachi at the time, the Convent of Jesus and Mary. Benazir, like her father, received a Christian childhood education, something that was fairly common amongst the elite Muslims of India and Pakistan at the time. The convent education was more about providing an advanced western education rather than a religious one. While Benazir and her fellow students did learn about Jesus and the Christian faith, there was never any confusion that she was a Muslim and that Islam was the faith she followed. Her father also provided private tutoring for her and her siblings after school in order to help them better learn Quranic verses.⁵⁶ As a student she excelled and demonstrated her extraordinary intelligence by passing exams that left her with the equivalent of a high school degree at the age of fifteen. Her father, although busy with politics and his career by this time, made a point of constantly harping on Benazir to get good grades. Perhaps he remembered his own disappointment at having no other option besides USC for college because of his miserable grades, but whatever the reason, he expected nothing less than the best from his oldest child who he had already marked as his prodigy and successor. At the age of sixteen, she applied to Radcliffe College at Harvard and was accepted, a feat that is perhaps even more remarkable when taking into context that she was a South Asian female in the late 1960's applying for acceptance in a very elitist predominantly white American institution.⁵⁷ Harvard was to become not only one of the

⁵⁶ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁵⁷ "Benazir Bhutto," *Economist.com*, January 3, 2008, under Obituary, http://www.economist.com/obituary/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10423870 [accessed September 28, 2008].

most influential experiences in her life, but also the most enjoyable. Her years at Harvard were the first time Benazir had sole responsibility for her well being, and she learned how to accomplish even the most basic of tasks that her upbringing as a Pakistani princess never afforded her. Although she was brilliant enough to get into Harvard and spoke several languages at the age of sixteen, she had never once performed simple tasks such as cooking, washing clothes, or even answering a telephone, much like her father.⁵⁸ As she states in an interview with *More* magazine,

I have lived a life of contrasts, and I give thanks to God that I was in the U.S. in those hippie days and we were all so informal. I learned to look after myself. I could go to airports, pick up my own luggage and make my own bed. I came from so privileged a background; there I became self-sufficient. In the face of what later happened to me, I would have crumbled otherwise.⁵⁹

Harvard was an awakening to her on many levels. The experience of going to college, particularly a liberal one like Harvard during the turbulent “hippie era”, was a crash course in radical liberalism and democracy the likes which she had never seen. The tumultuous 1960’s was often a difficult time period for Americans to digest, let alone a girl who had been raised as a princess in a Muslim nation that still advocated the separation and inferiority of women. This experience at Harvard was the first time in her life where she was in an environment that treated women as full participants of society, and it was also the first time that she was exposed to the power of democracy.⁶⁰ Although her father was elected president by 1971 and prime minister by 1973 on a democratic platform, she never saw democracy at the actual grassroots level. She never saw the

⁵⁸ Amy Wilentz, “The Exile’s Return,” *More*, December 2007/ January 2008, 147.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶⁰ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

importance of protest, and how the young and passionate could make a change in the society around them. Benazir came into herself as a strong and powerful woman with democratic roots in near perfect synchrony with the rising momentum of women's empowerment and anti-Vietnam protesting. It was at Harvard that she said good bye forever to the meek Pakistani princess who was plagued by shyness and lacked the necessary courage to address future crowds of millions of men.⁶¹

The next stage of Benazir's education was where she truly learned to hone her political skills and develop into the sharp and powerful orator that she would become. Although she wanted to remain at the comfort of Harvard for graduate school, her father, who was of course an Oxford alumni, wanted his daughter to have the structure and discipline that only one of the best and most respected universities in the world would provide.⁶² At the age of only twenty, Benazir packed up and left for England to study at Lady Margaret Hall for a graduate degree in philosophy, politics, and economics. Just as her years at Harvard were so influential in teaching her how to be responsible for the little things in life, so was Oxford influential in that it taught her how to work and think under immense pressure. The more relaxed atmosphere of the Vietnam-era Harvard could have never prepared her for the cutthroat, cold, and calculated world of politics that she would soon enter after her graduation. Oxford was also where Benazir won her first election and learned a very important lesson in fighting against the odds. She ran for president of the Oxford Union, a debating club that was still known for its "old boy" atmosphere just as it was in her father's time, and only a few years prior had excluded women entirely. The

⁶¹ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 49.

⁶² Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 70.

experience she had at Oxford was remarkably similar to her father's, except on top of racism she also had to face blatant sexism. As she stated in an interview:

I had been told as a foreigner that I could not win and should not run. I had been told as a woman that I could not win and should not run, but I did run, and I did win, and I learned a valuable lesson. Never acquiesce to obstacles; especially those constructed of bigotry, intolerance and inflexible tradition.⁶³

Benazir thus became not only the first female president of the Oxford Union, but also the first Asian president, and began her term at the beginning of 1977 while completing a year-long post graduate degree.

After Oxford Benazir entered into the next phase of her life; a time that would irrevocably shape her destiny and lead her down the path to politics. Although she had received degrees from both Harvard and Oxford in politically oriented fields, Benazir had no true passion or love for politics at that time. She did enjoy oration and public speaking, but without her father her education would have never taken the route it did. It was her father who saw in her the spark for political leadership before she ever did, and it was she, not her brothers, whom he personally groomed and prepared for leadership.⁶⁴ After leaving Oxford and returning home to Pakistan in 1977, her life would take a turn down the path of politics of which there would be no return.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was due to run again for the office of prime minister in March of 1977, and while he could have easily won the election on his own, he rigged the campaign so he would have a guaranteed victory.⁶⁵ Although he denied rigging the

⁶³ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁶⁴ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 3.

⁶⁵ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

campaign, and Benazir denied that her father was ever involved in anything dishonest, there are numerous sources of evidence which have since proven that the election was corrupt.⁶⁶ This confusion led to massive amounts of riots and disorder on the streets of Pakistan, and by July of 1977, the situation was so dire that Zulfikar's Chief of Staff, General Zia ul-Haq, was able to take over the democratic government with a military coup. General Zia's first actions after the coup were to arrest Zulfikar and place Pakistan under a strict and brutal martial law. He would also eventually relentlessly harass and persecute the remaining members of the Bhutto family, especially Benazir. The next decade, which witnessed her father's trial and execution as well as Benazir's periodic political imprisonments under Zia is where she would learn strength and perseverance beyond the normal realms of human endurance. She would become rebellious and take up the cause of democracy in Pakistan like a crusade.

IV The Execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Political Imprisonment

Some have asserted that Benazir's insatiable drive to bring democracy to Pakistan was out of revenge for what was done to her father. While it is a fair assessment to state that revenge has motivated Benazir to some degree, she is far too complex and intricate a woman to be solely driven by something as simplistic as revenge. Benazir had a relationship with her father that most would envy, and there are few who would not seek vengeance against a perpetrator like Zia. The crimes that General Zia committed against the Bhutto family were heinous, and unfortunately they only began with the

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execution of Zulfikar in 1979. His martial law regime, which originally promised future elections, became just like any other third world dictatorship once he was in power. He slowly drained the Pakistanis of all their civil liberties and joy and instituted a violent Islamic theocracy that would make the Taliban proud. His persecution against the Bhutto family escalated when Begum Nusrat and Benazir picked up the reins of the PPP after Zulfikar's execution. He seemed to take a sadistic pleasure in targeting the cancer ridden Begum and the young Benazir, condemning them multiple times to the disease and filth ridden jails of Pakistan.⁶⁷

More than any other experience in her life, it seems the death of her father shook the very foundations of what Benazir knew to be right and just in the world. It is clear from the way Benazir writes about her father in her autobiography, and how she speaks about him in interviews, that her father meant more to her than perhaps anyone ever had or ever would. She credits him for almost everything in her life, especially her strength and pride in being a woman. If there must be a single person who took credit for shaping Benazir, it would be Zulfikar. As she says about him in an interview, "It is interesting that the person who made sure that I would break loose of the constraints of my culture and gender was not a woman, but a man."⁶⁸

General Zia kept Zulfikar in prison for two years after arresting him, trying to find a reason to put him to death. Zia was eventually suspected of creating false murder charges and trying Zulfikar in an overtly biased military court that predictably found him guilty, since he could not use that Zulfikar rigged the election as a justification for

⁶⁷ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 4-8.

⁶⁸ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

execution.⁶⁹ It was before his execution that Benazir learned how to protest and fight in ways that made the gatherings on Harvard's grass about Vietnam look like child's play. Protesting peacefully in the United States was a very different affair than protesting in a third world country under martial law for her father's life. Despite all her efforts to fight within Pakistan against her father's false murder charges, after getting arrested six times by the military, forbidden by martial law to enter Karachi and Lahore (where her homes were), detained in Sihala for six weeks and Rawalpindi jail for six months, Zulfikar was hung in the middle of the night. The last thing Zulfikar told Benazir was a message that she seemed to truly take to heart for the remainder of her hard life; he told her to not be bitter, to not let life make her bitter.⁷⁰

The next five years after her father's death would mark the worst period in her young life. She was under constant surveillance by General Zia's government and any sign of political activity would immediately result in harsh punishment. General Zia had turned Pakistan into a military dictatorship and had erased all of the freedoms put in place under her father's administration, especially freedom of speech and free democratic elections. At first Zia pretended that he was going to hold official elections in Pakistan, claiming the only reason the military had seized control of the government was because of the threat of civil war, but by 1979 he dropped all pretenses that he was ever going to let democracy return to Pakistan as long as he was alive.⁷¹ Between 1979 and 1983 he

⁶⁹ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 3. There have been multiple sources that indicate that Zia falsified the murder charges against Zulfikar. The circumstances surrounding the murder and the multiple times Zulfikar was ruled innocent before tried in Zia's military court have been accepted as proof that he did not commit the murder.

⁷⁰ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁷¹ Omar Noman, "Pakistan and General Zia: Era and Legacy," *Third World Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (January 1989): 29, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed November 29, 2008).

focused on turning Pakistan into an Islamic theocracy, enacting harsh laws using the strictest interpretations of the Quran that persecuted religious minorities and women particularly, such as the cruel Zina ordinance.⁷² Zia explicitly stated during this time that he would neither leave the country, nor allow anyone else to rise to leadership in Pakistan. Political activity of any kind became punishable by up to seven years vigorous imprisonment and twenty lashes. The current state of martial law meant that he had final say over everything that occurred, and that there would be no judicial checks to counter any of his decisions as there are in a democracy.⁷³

It was under this harsh environment, under constant fear for her life and the lives of those around her, that Benazir took the reins of the PPP and began her political career. Originally her mother was left as the head of the PPP after Zulfikar's death because Benazir was so young, but whatever remained of Benazir's youth over the ensuing years was shattered and she became the official head of the PPP. Since any political activity was now considered a crime against the state under martial law, Benazir often suffered the consequences of mobilizing the PPP. She lived for five years either under house arrest, or in and out of various jails. While no jails, even in the most liberal of nations, are known for their clean and welcoming atmosphere, the jails that Benazir and members of the PPP had to face under Zia's dictatorship were disguised torture centers, and were in fact later condemned by human rights organizations.⁷⁴ One of the worst experiences that Benazir faced was five months worth of solitary confinement in Sukkur Central Jail starting in early 1981. In March of 1981 her brother Mir's organization Al-Zulfikar,

⁷² Ibid., 30- 31.

⁷³ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁴ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 182.

which was a radical split off of the PPP, hijacked a PIA plane (Pakistan International Airlines).⁷⁵ As a result of the hijacking of the PIA plane, General Zia went on a rampage and arrested anyone who had the slightest connection to Mir and his organization. Of course, Zia arrested many that had no connection at all, using the hijacking as another excuse to wield unjustified sadism upon the Pakistani people. The arrests became so high in number that Amnesty International tracked them and estimated there were over 6,000 arrested in March alone.⁷⁶ Benazir and her mother were included in the 6,000. Zia's men claimed that they found the plans of the hijacking in her bedroom.⁷⁷

The conditions Benazir suffered through at Sukkur would have broken the most strong willed of people, and indeed were designed to break her, as Zia's men tried time and time again through interrogation to get a "confession". When she wasn't being interrogated, she spent the rest of her time in solitary confinement. Since she arrived at Sukkur in March, when it was still winter, the nights were freezing, as the cold desert wind swept through her cage-like jail cell. By May, the summer had reached Sukkur and her jail cell transformed into an "oven" of swirling and scorching winds that blew 120 degree heat into the cell.⁷⁸ Boils and rashes erupted all over her body as the sun burned into her skin, causing layers of deep sunburns that would peel off into a sticky mess in her hands, along with clumps of hair that she lost most likely due to lack of nutrition and

⁷⁵ Al-Zulfikar organization became known as a terrorist organization, and eventually ended up a rival party in complete opposition with the PPP in regards to Pakistan.

⁷⁶ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 171.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 181. It is important to note that there has never been any proof of Benazir having links to terrorist organizations, and in fact her brother Mir and her differed drastically as the years progressed in terms of political views. Mir's political party had terrorist links while Benazir continually sought to end Zia's reign through democratic means. Mir was gunned down in the streets of Pakistan in 1996 while Benazir was prime minister.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

sanitation. Insects crawled over her while she slept, biting her, stinging her, causing new blisters to form upon the heat rashes, and she had only a stale yellow water with which to drink and wash her damaged skin with.⁷⁹ During this time she suffered from a terrible inner ear condition that needed to be operated on. It grew so bad that she blacked out and had to have an emergency operation, where she later learned that while on the operating table General Zia planned to kill her. Luckily for her, a member of the PPP released the news of her operation to the international media in an attempt to halt any action the regime would take against Benazir's life.⁸⁰

V Exile and Return

Benazir was finally allowed to leave the country to have the necessary ear operation performed on her in 1984 and remained in exile in London until 1986. Throughout this time, even while weak in bed after surgery, she never stopped working on her campaign to try and help the members of the PPP who remained in Pakistan. Due to pressure from the United States and mass amounts of internal opposition, General Zia announced that in 1986, martial law would be lifted for the first time in almost a decade.⁸¹

Throughout the ordeal of her father's death, political imprisonment and exile in London, Benazir was still a young woman, only in her late twenties and early thirties. To be able to withstand years of torture by the man who had killed her father, just in the hopes of keeping his democratic party alive, was a true testament to the kind of internal

⁷⁹ Ibid., 194.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 180.

⁸¹ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 269.

strength that Benazir possessed, the kind of strength that most of us could only dream of possessing. Surviving Zia's persecution helped Benazir in her election to prime minister in two manners: the first and more obvious one is that it strengthened her beyond belief. If she could stand up to the man who tried to literally wipe the Bhutto family out of existence at such a young age, then she obviously possessed the kind of strength and self-confidence that would be necessary to lead a turbulent and violent nation like Pakistan. The other more subtle and unintentional benefit to come out of all the years of suffering at the hands of General Zia was to endear her to the Pakistani people.⁸²

The Bhuttos were like the Pakistani version of the Kennedys; sophisticated, idolized, and yet known for incurring great tragedy. Regardless of the fact that Benazir's father was most likely guilty of rigging the elections in 1977, the population and the world did not want to see him executed, and thus there were huge riots of support at his funeral.⁸³ Some have claimed that Zulfikar was a fascist; a narcissistic tyrant who "kept the civilian population in a state of perpetual terror," and who openly practiced nepotism by filling governmental positions with sycophantic admirers.⁸⁴ While this is one of the worst criticisms of Zulfikar, it still pales in comparison with General Zia's brutal command. Despite the fact that Zia used Islam as an excuse for his harsh laws, and to

⁸² Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 4.

⁸³ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁸⁴ "The Legacy of Bhutto," *Economic and Political Weekly* 13, no. 13 (April 1, 1978): 574, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009).

give his regime the appeal of religious backing, he was overwhelmingly hated by the people and only managed to stay in power through military might.⁸⁵ Benazir was able to monopolize, intentionally and unintentionally, upon this hatred of Zia and the symbol of her martyred family to conjure love and adoration for her cause in the hearts of the Pakistanis. This is why the *Jiye Bhutto* cries pertain to both her and her father, because part of the reason Benazir was loved was for the love she lost; her father. The irony of it all, that without Zia she would not have been as loved, is a bitter one. Zia took everything from her; the most beloved person in her life, years of her youth and health, her mother's health, and years of being away from Pakistan. Yet without surviving years of Zia's abuse she would not have been as admired by the Pakistani public, or as strong. Zia also took everything from the Pakistanis, and without suffering years of his abuse they would have not been as desperate for a change, any change that would return democracy and liberty to their lives. Benazir was a brilliant and charismatic speaker, she was well loved and received, she was the educated heiress to the only political party that promised any form of democracy in Pakistan, but without that deep nationwide yearning for a change, she would have never been able to ascend to power. Destiny provided an opportunity for her, and it was up to her to create a dream out of years of misery.

Her opportunity came in 1986 when martial law was lifted and she was finally allowed to return home after two years of exile in London. The welcome she received far surpassed any in the history of Pakistani politics. Thousands upon thousands thronged the Lahore airport where her plane landed, shouting "Welcome back Daughter of Pakistan",

⁸⁵ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 3.

and “Benazir brings the revolution!”⁸⁶ There were also cries for her to “oust the evil dictator, Zia”, and it was acknowledged that even her father, the beloved Zulfikar who during his campaigning days was also seen as a beacon of hope for Pakistan, had not drawn crowds half as large.⁸⁷ Benazir would travel around various cities in the following days, campaigning for the PPP and the return of fair elections to Pakistan, and the crowds that she drew grew from thousands into millions who would shove each other in the hopes of catching a glimpse of her. Her presence and charisma at these speeches was overwhelming, and her words were brilliant. Her eyes would flash and sparkle with power and fiery passion and her face would flush red as her voice rose higher and higher, the crowd’s energy feeding into hers in a circular pattern of undulated fevered fervor. Watching the hold Benazir had over the crowds of Pakistanis was a bit like watching an audience of children before a magician who promises magic in return for unwavering faith in what cannot be explained. Her hold was so strong that to the outside observer it must have been magic, for it transcended even her female gender and youthful age. She was able to speak in areas of Pakistan, such as Peshawar, where women routinely lived in *pardah*, and still managed to draw enormous dancing jubilant crowds. In her speech to the young men of Peshawar shortly after her return she stated:

People think I am weak because I am a woman. Do they not know I am a Muslim woman and that Muslim women have a heritage they can well be proud of? I have the patience of Bibi Khadija, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him). I have the perseverance of Bibi Zainab, the sister of Imam Husain. And I have the courage of Bibi Aisha, the Prophet’s

⁸⁶ Associated Press, "Opposition Leader Returns to Pakistan," *New York Times* (1857-Current file), April 10, 1986, <http://www.proquest.com.ezproxy2.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed November 30, 2008).

⁸⁷ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 5.

youngest wife, who rode her own camel into battle at the head of the Muslim army. I am the daughter of martyr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the sister of martyr Shah Nawaz Bhutto and I am your sister as well.⁸⁸ I challenge my opponents to meet me on the field of democratic elections.⁸⁹

The analogy she drew between her own life and powerful Islamic women of the past was a clever, if not dangerous one. There are many Muslims, particularly those who follow the hierarchical interpretation of the Quran, who look down upon women like Aisha for her role in the Battle of the Camel, since it states in the Quran that the wives of the Prophet must remain veiled and out of public sight. Yet, for as many Muslims there are who look down upon Aisha, there are also many who admire her bravery and revere her as the equivalent of a Muslim saint. Many Pakistanis, such as some of the learned theologians, the Ulama, who are more hierarchical in their interpretations of the Quran, predicted that Benazir would receive no welcome at all in Pakistan.⁹⁰ They claimed that she would be shunned by the crowds as a heretical woman occupying the public domain of men.⁹¹ These men, obviously, could not have been anymore wrong.

General Zia was stunned at the turnout of support for Benazir, and it was more than mildly ironic that her triumphant return coincided with his institution of even harsher Islamic based laws. By this point in his reign, women were treated as completely second class citizens, lacking all of the rights that Islam bestows upon them. In May of 1988, he dismissed his prime minister in a surprising move and announced that elections

⁸⁸ In 1985 her youngest brother Shah Nawaz died from a mysterious poisoning while on vacation on the French Riviera. No one was ever officially held culpable for the crime, but Zia has been rumored to be behind it along with Shah's wife.

⁸⁹ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 6.

⁹⁰ The Ulama are the men who study the Quran, the learned theologians of Islam.

⁹¹ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 6.

would be held for the vacant spot later in the year. He simultaneously also put in place Shariah law, the very strict interpretation of Islamic law that would have made it impossible for a woman, like Benazir, to rise to power.⁹²

By this time Benazir had married and was expecting a child, which added a whole new element of pressure on her campaign. On December 17th, 1987, Benazir was wed to Asif Zardari, in an arranged marriage. Although she came to age in the midst of the flourishing women's rights movements at Harvard, she was still a daughter of the east and arranged marriages in Pakistan are far more common than love marriages. There was also no way in the midst of her campaigning that she could have pursued a normal relationship. As she states in an interview, even the most discreet of relationships would have fueled gossip and rumors in a country that thrived on bazaar style gossip as news.⁹³ This is of course a stark contrast to her father who spent years dating women in the United States while married to his first wife and who was able to marry for love because of his male gender. Her marriage illustrates another sacrifice that Benazir made in order to come to power and return her father's democracy to Pakistan. She not only lost years of her youth, but she also lost the opportunity to fall in love with a man. She was so traumatized by her father's death, the various imprisonments and exiles, that even the thought of falling in love made her unbearably anxious, let alone contemplating marriage.⁹⁴ Consequently Benazir opted for an arranged marriage, with a man who came from a respected family and who understood the risks and sacrifices he would have to make in order to be her husband. As she said in an interview; "In love marriages, love

⁹² Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, 351.

comes first and then goes. In arranged marriage respect comes first and then love grows.”⁹⁵ She was willing to let love grow.

Under the constitution, the elections that Zia promised were supposed to be held in August; however he decided last minute to postpone them and hold them on November 16th and November 19th. It was later thought, although never officially proven, that the reason he delayed the elections was because Benazir was pregnant with her first child, Bilawal, whose expected due date was somewhere in the middle of November. Theoretically, Benazir would not be able to campaign or accept the position of prime minister if she was in the ninth month of pregnancy. Destiny once again intervened and Bilawal ended up being born on September 21st, 1988, which gave her plenty of time to still campaign in the hardest last months before the election. Within only a day of his birth she was back on the campaign trail, proving Zia and all his men wrong about the strength of a pregnant woman.⁹⁶

Even before Bilawal was born, Benazir campaigned all day long, traveling around the country to different provinces. After August 17, 1988, however, her campaign took a turn that irrevocably cemented her fate in becoming the first female prime minister of Pakistan. General Zia was killed in a mysterious plane crash, and in light of his death, Benazir was pushed to the center spotlight. It would have been extremely difficult for Benazir to come to power if Zia had still been alive with his implementation of Shariah law. Zia understood that with all the outside pressures from western nations and internal pressure and unrest he would be forced to allow elections, but he did not under any

⁹⁵ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

⁹⁶ Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny*, xiii.

circumstances want Benazir to become prime minister, something he illustrated time and time again through his actions against her and the Bhutto family.⁹⁷ Benazir refers to Zia's death as a moment of destiny. She calmly points out the irony that Zia's plane crash must have been an inside job, just as Zia was once her father's army chief of staff and used his inside position to overthrow Zulfikar's government.⁹⁸

On November 16th, 1988, Benazir's moment of destiny had finally come. She was elected the first female prime minister of a post colonial Muslim nation, and she had inherited a complete mess from General Zia. Pakistan was on the brink of destruction after ten years of martial law that gave little thought to the good of the people. The economy was near bankruptcy, poverty was rampant, illiteracy was a plague, women had no status and rights under the laws Zia created, and the jails were overflowing with "political offenders." The questions that now plagued Benazir were far more pressing than getting elected to office, because before she had no responsibility for the state of the nation. Would she be able to live up to the extraordinary and tremendous pressures placed on her to alleviate Pakistan's ailments? Benazir was more than just an ordinary politician elected to power. As a woman she was a symbol, not just for Pakistan but for the world.

⁹⁷ Rafiq Zakaria, *Women & Politics in Islam: The Trial of Benazir Bhutto* (New York: New Horizons Press, 1990), 9.

⁹⁸ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

VI A Brief Synopsis of the Careers of Zulfikar and Benazir Bhutto

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto ruled first as president, than prime minister of Pakistan from December 20, 1971 to July 5, 1977. There are a myriad of opinions regarding his seven years of rule; the harshest painting him as a narcissistic tyrant with nepotistic tendencies, while the kindest revered him as the martyr and savior of Pakistan. Which one was the real Zulfikar? It seems that both are. Although Zulfikar inspired a diametric opposition of both love and hate in the hearts of the Pakistanis, this was not because he was a fundamentally bipolar character, but rather because he was an incredibly complex, multifaceted, and intricate character. He was so many people in one; a devout Muslim, a womanizer, short tempered, cold and aloof, a passionate and loving husband, a wonderful father, a corrupt leader, a fighter for democracy, a martyr, a villain. He was so many people in one that the average person could not process all these different characteristics and so he was simplified into a black and white character just as Wolpert did. It is one of the most basic aspects of human nature to fit those around us into schemas, and the problem with both Zulfikar and Benazir was that they did not fit into any one stereotypical schema. Zulfikar was not just the product of his psychological destiny, nor was he forever marred and scarred because of an overbearing mother or a cold and arrogant father, nor was he good, nor was he evil. What Zulfikar was, was an incredibly human leader.

While in office, he carried out mass purges in the PPP, removed generals from power that did not fervently support him, retired civil servants, and replaced them with

sycophantic admirers.⁹⁹ The total expenditure on police force rose 3000% in his first two years in office alone, and he was not afraid to arrest those who dissented against him.¹⁰⁰ This obviously was not a democracy in the privileged American sense of democracy, however compared to Pakistani civil liberties before and after him this was heaven. By the time 1976 came, only a year before he was deposed from power, there were signs that Pakistan was improving economically. There was a pension plan for the elderly instituted, the federal health budget was doubled, and slow changes in gender rights began to emerge as more and more women could be seen wearing blue jeans and t-shirts on the street.¹⁰¹ Pakistan was politically stable, although still not a true democracy. Zulfikar openly admitted to censoring the press but he claimed this was necessary with the implication that the Pakistani public was too ignorant to understand political issues. As he stated while standing at the entrance of a colonial house in Hyderabad, “I don’t allow speeches to be made to the extent where people may poison the already not sophisticated minds of the peasantry.”¹⁰² For someone who campaigned to the common man and claimed to understand him, this was quite an aristocratic, snobbish, and ironic observation. This statement is a stark contradiction to what democracy is supposed to represent, and yet it fits Zulfikar so perfectly. He was still a *Zamindar*, a feudal lord at heart, and those who have analyzed him have noticed how, despite how much he wanted

⁹⁹ “The Legacy of Bhutto,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 13, no. 13 (April 1, 1978): 574, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 574.

¹⁰¹ William Borders, “Pakistan, Under Bhutto’s Strong Rule Shows Signs of Progress,” *New York Times* (1857-Current file), January 29, 1976, <http://www.proquest.com.ezproxy2.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 20, 2009).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

to adopt freely the concept of democracy, his landlord roots held him back, separating him from the common masses of Pakistan.¹⁰³

Benazir Bhutto was elected to the office of prime minister twice, not for just the typical reasons of re-election, but because she was dismissed from office on charges of corruption and nepotism the first time. These charges were never proven, nor were they ever disproven, something that is quite common in the world of Pakistani politics in particular. The irony of her losing office in the same manner as her father, because of corruption charges, is another interesting twist. Just as her father was most likely guilty of rigging the elections and most likely not guilty of committing the murder, it seems that she was probably guilty to some extent of corruption, but not all of it. As the first female leader of Pakistan, endowed with the simultaneously loved and hated name of Bhutto, she had many that wanted to see her go down in flames, both politically and literally.

She has also been accused of being a terrible leader who failed to achieve the majority of her campaign promises. This is an easier realm to speculate on because there is documentable proof that testifies to her poor leadership. She made many grand promises during her campaigns, especially in the areas of reforming rights for women and providing access to education and basic necessities for the poor, but she did not follow through on most of them.¹⁰⁴ This could be because she inherited a nation that was literally in shambles from General Zia or because she did not try hard enough to institute reforms and became complacent once in office. Saeed Shafqat, who was the Director of Pakistani

¹⁰³ Anwar H. Syed, "Z.A. Bhutto's Self-Characterizations and Pakistani Political Culture," *Asian Survey* 18, no. 12 (December 1978): 1254, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed March 27, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Philip Selkirk, *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Power*, DVD (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2008).

studies in Lahore and spent a great time analyzing Benazir's political career stated, "the administrative and economic performance of the Benazir Bhutto regime remains poor, and inefficiency and mismanagement create a crisis of legitimacy for the government."¹⁰⁵ Her budget for defense expenditures was 26% in 1993-1994, an amount that seems entirely too high for a party that was elected on social welfare premises. This amount only continued to escalate in the ensuing years in response to India's increasing arsenal, as education, women's issues, housing and welfare slipped into further decay and the nation's inflation rate rose to 13%.¹⁰⁶ There is no question that Pakistan's poverty was not miraculously erased under Benazir Bhutto, but any improvement was certainly an improvement over General Zia.

VII Destiny's Daughter: A Conclusion

The reality that Benazir Bhutto may or not have been a corrupt leader, or that she most definitely was a poor leader, is not within the scope of what this thesis set out to prove. In fact, her probable links to corruption serve to make her only more irresistible as the proof that she was indeed human and capable of succumbing to the frailties of human nature like the rest of us. What she survived and what led her to become prime minister, and the unique circumstances of her upbringing truly were amazing and beyond the scope of reality. Her life was pure destiny, in both the secular and non secular sense of the

¹⁰⁵ Saeed Shafqat, "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 7 (July 1996): 672, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/> (accessed November 19, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 670.

word. Without every piece of the puzzle of her life falling into place exactly as it did, even the bitter pieces such as her father's death and Zia's persecution, Benazir Bhutto would have never been prime minister and would most likely still be alive today. There is no doubt that the single greatest influence on her life was her father, and that is why this thesis devoted so much time to understanding Zulfikar. The parallels between their lives are so grandiose in scale that at times it seems almost impossible to separate the two. Just as the chant *Jiye Bhutto* was meant both for the martyred father and his living daughter, so will their memories be permanently entwined in history. Wolpert may have gone overboard on his psychoanalysis of Zulfikar, but there is a definite truth to the value of understanding one's past in order to better understand their present. By seeing the life of Zulfikar unfold, such as his foreign education, passion for life, fiery love of Pakistan, and willingness to be martyred, it is so much more clear why Benazir evolved into the woman that she did. It is hard to conceptualize the astounding life of Benazir Bhutto in terms of what life is to the average American, or even the average Pakistani, and it would take a very creative author to invent a woman with such an extraordinary, unpredictable, violent, beautiful, and tragic life such as hers. Her intense passion for everything: for her life, her destiny, and even inadvertently her death is a lesson that we can only hope to learn from. She did not always have a choice in the path her life took, and she may not have always been the best of people, but she fought with all her heart and never gave up despite the odds.

Epilogue

When writing this biography, I made the clear and concise decision to omit an in-depth evaluation of both Zulfikar and Benazir's political careers for two reasons. The first, quite frankly, is that politics as a whole does not interest me. The topic of both of their political careers has already been thoroughly researched, as evidenced by the few existing sources pertaining to their childhood and the abundance of political critiques. I believe that the best way to understand why individuals commit the actions they do and choose the life they do is not by analyzing them at this very moment of their life, but rather to analyze every step, twist and turn in the road that brought them here. It is impossible to understand Benazir as a politician without understanding what constituted her as a person, what shaped her, and led her to political office. This is also why it is impossible to understand Benazir without understanding Zulfikar. The second reason I chose to avoid a political analysis is because critiquing Zulfikar and Benazir's politics as well as evaluating the corruption charges placed against them is a dangerous business. It can become very easy to stop writing about what is fact, and instead what is myth and speculation. There seems to be a bipolar dichotomy of either the most passionate of love or hatred for the Bhuttos in literature, and it is hard to draw what is the truth from these incredibly biased sources. While all politics are enshrouded in rumors, lies and cover-ups, it seems the politics of Pakistan are even more so. Slander against office-holders is a commonly used tactic to call for new elections, and it is a nation where the military comprises its own force and holds far too much power, far more than the government in

fact and often overthrows leaders on the basis of rumors. The purely political careers of the Bhuttos are best left for another thesis, for someone who can deeply appreciate and understand the multi-faceted and complex politics of Pakistan.

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