

9/11 And Pakistan: A Critique On Nadeem Aslam's Novel "The Blind Man's Garden"

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Abstract

The Blind Man's Garden by Nadeem Aslam is selected for thematic content analysis through Lakey's theory of nonviolence in educating masses. The Post-Terror recovery programs and pro-conflict education and training among the eight strategies are selected for the study. The dissertation framework is the analysis and discussion of the novel regarding the contemporary problems in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Moreover, Stuart Hall theory of reception (1980) is also selected for the thematic study of the novel. The purpose of the study is to unveil the ugliness of this civil war (post 911 Pak/US/Afghan) and to bring under discussion the most attention concerned contemporary issues. Keeping in view this gap in research, the study is based on framing a scheme to fight against terrorism nonviolently and to make this study beneficial in educating the masses according to this approach. The study discusses a sense of hatred that has developed as a result of misapprehension of ideologies and nationalities.

Key Words: Violence, Terrorism, War, Peace, Terror, 9/11.

Introduction

The study is based on the subsequent effects of 9/11 on the Pakistani fiction that is Pakistani English novel. The text of a Pakistani English novel The Blind Man's Garden by Nadeem Aslam is selected for evaluation and analysis.

We are living in a world in which the difference between an enemy and a friend is darkened, and where the greatest burning desire is to return home. The novel, selected for research study is The Blind Man's Garden by a Pakistani English fiction writer Nadeem Aslam. It discloses nature of three different nations, that is, Pakistan, United States of America (US) and Afghanistan. It shows numerous disputes they faced after 9/11. The aim is to reveal the ugliness of war and its

impression on individual. The novel discusses the tussle between love and honour, duty and faith, humanity and religion. It knits together the different associations between people, marriage, brotherhood, the challenges of education and our usual responsibility to those important to us.

Peace is freedom from fear or absence of violent hostility and lack of conflict. It is the idea of harmony. Today the Pakistani authors have more awareness and freedom to express the contemporary problems in their works, as compared to past. Although modern Pakistani novelists deal with violent and war-related themes, the extremist or jihadi culture has rarely been glorified by the progressive Pakistani writers. We can see very clear condemnation of such militant activities by many Pakistan poets and writers for example Abaseen Yusafzai and Dr. Asrar Atal- famous contemporary Pashtu poets and prose writers like Khaled Hosseini, Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid Pakistani English fiction writers, have highlighted the adverse effects of terrorism on Pakistan. They have made pen their power for fulfilling this responsibility of promoting realistic peace. But as Pakistani society is directly affected by the warfare; literature of this area has dealt the similar topic with more seriousness and attention.

Research Questions

The present study focuses on the following questions keeping in view the contemporary issues of Pakistan.

1. How does Nadeem Aslam present the elements of war and peace in *The Blind Man's Garden*? Why is it important to explore these elements in contemporary Pakistani context?
2. Can the novel be used as an educational tool to address contemporary Pakistani problems? If yes, how?

Research Objectives

This research will try to find the elements of war and peace in Pakistani literature. However, the specific objectives of this research are:

1. To discover the elements of "War and Peace" reflected in the novel in 9/11 scenario.
2. To explore the potential of *The Blind Man's Garden* to address violence-based contemporary problems of Pakistan in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular.
As a result, the objective of the study is to know the extent the novel can be used as an educational tool to address the contemporary problems.

Literature Review

The study, intends upon investigating researchers' views and their findings, having relation with the works under consideration. Here, top-down approach is followed: from general to specific; novel, non-violence, war and peace, educational therapy, and parallelism.

The recent flowering of Pakistani fiction in English has received news and media coverage, and great critical attention when compared to the limited material on the subjects, such as the current insurgencies and the contemporary problems of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistani writers, most of them living or educated in the West, currently feature prominently in the international literary scene as award winners or nominees, bestselling authors, festival speakers and, increasingly, topics for research students and critics. The success is made by multiple prize awards or nominations, of such novels as Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohammad Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*, has led to attempting wars and high advances for US-educated writers Ali Sethi and Daniyal Mueenuddin.

9/11 in the World History

9/11 serves as an incident from where we could set a calendar. The world history has started to be known as before 9/11 and after 9/11. It was the day generally associated with the attacks on the targeted points in America by the most wanted militants Muslims Sunni group Al-Qaeda under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden. Four of the airplanes were hijacked, two of them were flown into the twin tower, the third headed towards Pentagon and hit just outside it, while the fourth one which was heading towards Washington DC, failed to reach its target and crashed in Pennsylvania. The crashes resulted in killing almost three thousand people including the 19 hijackers and 400 policemen and fire-fighters as well.

At the World Trade Center, 2,763 died after the two planes slammed into the twin towers. That figure includes 343 firefighters and paramedics, 23 New York City police officers and 37 Port Authority police officers who were struggling to complete an evacuation of the buildings and save the office workers trapped on higher floors. (9/11 Death statistics)

It was the most deadly terrorists' attack in US history. It is a persistent dispute in the world's history because it was declared by the then President of United States- George W. Bush as the "Global War on Terror". It paved way for the NATO forces to invade Afghanistan in October 2001. The motives behind the attacks were to remove the Talibans from Afghanistan. The apparent objective of that attack was to capture Osama bin Laden. Within few months after the invasion the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) captured big cities of Afghanistan (Farooq, 2005)

9/11 and the Muslims World

The incident of 9/11 has dramatically changed the political and social environments of the Muslims world. Politics, religion and cultures are intertwined. It has proved to be an event that has changed the politics not only on global level, but on regional and domestic level too. The purpose of the study is to provide the world policy makers an overview of the ongoing situations and insurgencies faced by the Muslims community throughout the globe.

The US media at that time also started to propagandize the Muslims identities. As the Arab prince Osama Bin Laden was blamed for the said attacks, Arab Muslims were publicized to be extremists and terrorists. This resulted in a series of hate crimes for the Muslims and Arab Muslims specifically.

Sikhs were also targeted in some places because of wearing turbans. Turbans are stereotypically linked with Muslims. A reporter of The New York Times, Tamar Lewin reported the brutal murder of a sikh, as a muslim suspect. Balbir Sing Sodhi, who was the owner of a gas station, was fatally shot in Arizona on 15 September 2001, as he was mistaken to be a Muslims. (The New York Times, 2001)

The word kaleidoscope used in the title of this research work has broader vision. Just like a kaleidoscope's multi-color reflections, this study reflects the many devastating imprints of 9/11 on the world in general and on Muslims in particular. The following are some of the major issues faced by Muslims after 9/11 attacks.

Punish a Muslims Day VS Love a Muslims Day

Earlier it was also reported that in Britain an anonymous letter was circulated/distributed with a title "Punish a Muslims Day" on 3rd April and a range of rewards were announced for teasing Muslims. The range of points were for actions like beating up of a Muslims, removing scarfs from Muslims ladies' heads or creating disturbances in front of the mosques or distracting Muslims while they were offering prayers. The letters say 3rd April will be "Punish a Muslim Day" and points will be awarded for certain acts of violence – from 25 points for removing a woman's headscarf to 500 points for murdering a Muslims. (The Guardian, 2018)

Stoning and calling names by targeting their (Muslims) nationalities or ideologies like Pakis or moozlimz were common practices. But fortunately realizing the warmth of the matter the authorities took sensible steps and "Love a Muslim Day" events were planned in Bradford, Wakefield, Sheffield and Leeds, and Stand Up to Racism Edinburgh and hold a demonstration in the Scottish capital also. This act was a part of "Parallel institution" which proved helpful in the rebuking of bitterness towards Muslims by the Westerns.

Mark Tessler (2003) writes in his essay "A national poll taken by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research following the attack of September 11, 2001, found that 54 percent expressed the view that the attack was motivated by a conflict between Christianity and Islam." (Tessler, p175)

Muslims community comprises of many Arab, African and central Asian countries. Despite that a large diaspora of Muslims reside in the Western and European countries as well. According to FBI the anti-Muslims hate crimes have increased approximately five times than they used to be before 2001. It is because of the brutal attacks on 9 September in 2001. [see chapter 2, section 1]

Although, it had been announced by the than government of the United States that it was not a war on ideology or it was not a war on Islam. “The then President of the United States George W.Bush insisted and commended that Americans must repel their anti-Muslims or anti-Islam itches, while he was addressing his most grieving nation, in a joint session of Congress on September20, 2001”. (Panagopoulos, p608)

“The enemy of America is not our many Muslims friends. It is not our many Arab friends No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith” (Bush, 2001)

Still some of the conservative American religious scholars commented and termed it as a war on religion, referring it to Islam. For instance, very negative comments of famous scholars and acknowledged religious Christians scholars were reported against Muslims and Islam, statement in this regard was “I believe it’s a very evil and wicked religion.” (Graham, 2001)

Pakistani Post 9/11 English Fiction

By the term post 9/11 literature it is usually thought that kind of literature which includes a group of fiction books, which directly features the destructive war of 9/11 and its aftermath. The sub-continent fiction is basically divided into two waves that are the pre 9/11 and post 9/11 fiction. In the Pre-9/11 fiction the aspect of post colonialism is very much projecting while the post 9/11 fiction deals with the Identity crises, deportation and immigration issues mostly.

Though the vigilant writers too quickly dismissed the anti-Muslims literature after 9/11 and dozens of quality books were produced. This act helped a lot in tactful dealing with these impossible looking subjects. The greater work was produced between 2003 and 2011. This list contains A Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid, Home Boy by H.M Naqvi, Burnt Shadow by Kamila Shamsi and many more. “David Waterman comments while discussing the salient features of his book, Where Worlds Collide; Personal and political cannot be separated in the novels of Pakistani writers writing in the English language.” (Dawn, 2015)

The very purpose of the fiction is to represent the situation the way it has happened. It is fiction that portrays, amuse, satirize or inform the reader about the real situation. Knowing the true purpose of fiction it is concluded that it is pure fiction which can portray the horrific events of war.

My thesis focuses on the role of Pakistani fiction and I have selected Nadeem Aslam. His English novel The Blind Man’s Garden is selected for this purpose. This novel portrays the present insurgencies in a perfect way. The novel reveals nature of two different nations, that is, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It shows various issues they faced after 9/11, for example, the brutal attack on an Army Public School in Peshawar on 16th December, 2014. Most of the martyred students in the school were army personals’ children. And they were made target for taking revenge on Pakistan Army, as Pakistani armed forces are conducting different military operations against Taliban.

Same is the case in the story when a Christian school, St Joseph is attacked for taking revenge on the American troops who bombarded on innocent Afghani kids.

Pakistani society has suffered a lot at the hands of different kinds of evils, for instance, inflation and unemployment, religious intolerance, low education, provincial disharmony, identity crises and discrimination and weak foreign policy. Pakistani nation is considered to be the most unfortunate after 9/11 because no one understands them. There is a lack of devoted leadership whether it is of ethnic or religious determination. Their existence seems to be a victim of negation.

The Pakistani English fiction writers, on the other hand, have greater contribution in this regards. The South Asian fiction writers are roughly divided into two Diasporas' classes which are the pre and post 9/11 fiction writers. The writers who belong to the pre 9/11 class have a dominant perspective of post colonialism like Kamila Shamsi, Mohsin Hamid and Bepsi Sidhwa and many more. While the writers like Nadeem Aslam and Khaled Hosseini who produced their work in fiction after 9/11, belonging to the twenty first century; they have redefined the perspective for fiction writing in terms of 9/11 and its aftermath.

Whenever the role of Pakistani English novel/fiction is discussed, Ahmed Ali is a name that comes into our mind as the pioneer. Born in Dehli and educated in Aligarh, and after partition moved to Pakistan and served in diplomatic Sector. He was a poet and also translated Quran into English but his novel *Twilight Dehli* a master piece in fiction became the source of his fame internationally. It is a novel which describes the nostalgic standard of elite Muslims, Mughal culture. The main theme of the novel is a sorrowful lament on the downfall of Muslims inheritance. Other acknowledged names in the literary field in the earlier era of Muslims English novelists are Mumtaz Shahnawaz, Zulfiakr Ghaus and Attia Hosain.

The Pakistani English novel/fiction is gaining fame in today's world. The classification is as mentioned earlier based on pre and post 9/11. The voices of new authors have come to the screen which includes good names like Sara Soleri, Mohsin Hamid, Khaled Hoseini, Nadeem Aslam, Moniza Alvi, Tariq Ali, Hanif Kurieshi, Muhammed Hanif and Kamila Shamsi. Some of the writers among these contemporary writers like Nadeem Aslam or Mohsin Hamid or Tariq Ali are not residing in Pakistan but still they have some spiritual and cultural links with Pakistan. And they proudly call themselves Pakistani writers. We have a list of renowned authors like Mohsin Hamid. His Novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. "It suggests that while Hamid's novel undoubtedly identifies and critiques the racism at the heart of the so-called war on terror – expressed both in domestic and foreign arenas" (Hartnell, 2010)

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a perfect reflection of identity crisis both political and personal. The novel reveals the hardships of the immigrants due to discrimination and the hateful attitude of the Americans, which made the immigrants to feel a sense of alienation in US. Changez; the hero of the story is the portrayal, who's inner struggle and eagerness to become the US elite is notable.

The novel is a dramatic monologue which is narrated by a third person Changez. It is based on the "East" vs. "West" dichotomy. Because Changez the high spirited protagonist of the novel narrates his story as an ambitious and talented youth.as he himself states that I considered myself

as James Bond with a bit dark complexion but handsomely paid. But after 9/11 his company proliferated the conception of “sticking to fundamentalist” that somehow as a reaction made Changez reluctant towards 9/11 and a smile/grin is seen on his face when he sees the visual clip of the demolishing Twin Towers; after the hijacked planes crashed. Mohsin Hamid is well known for his potential to address the current global and most burning issues in his novels. His characterization focuses on the impacts of such global issues on common Pakistani.

“The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) challenges the orthodoxies of the post-9/11 novel that, until its publication, had generally taken the form of documents of personal trauma and loss, or recapitulations of unproblematic notions of essential cultural difference, and that took as its default position a “clash of civilizations” mindset.” (Morey, 2011)

Research Methodology

This study essentially is qualitative in nature, which takes into account the text of *The Blind Man's Garden*. Being descriptive in nature textual analysis is carried out to probe into the set research. A close reading of the novel is carried out and the related text has been analyzed critically.

The analysis is based on the post 9/11 situations produced in subcontinent as a result of the attacks on World Trade Centre and Pentagon in America. During the analysis, the text which correlates to the current situation in Pakistan is highlighted. The similarity of incidents in the novel and real life Pakistan has also been emphasized in this study. This helps us identify the elements related to “war” and “peace” and also determines what role they might play in rejection of violence and promotion of peace in Pakistan. And it ultimately paves the way for teaching *The Blind Man's Garden* as an educational tool to counter terrorism and promoting peace among Pakistani youth, engaged in reading of the novel.

The research conducted is based upon the textual analysis of the “*The Blind Man's Garden*” through George Lakey's eight Strategies to defend against terror nonviolently. Different parts of the text are selected which correlates the theory in a befitting way.

Analysis and Discussion

Nadeem Aslam has created a universe of imagination when he is dealing with his characters. His characters are more symbols than flesh and blood. For instance, if we think about the name of the village, it is Heer. Heer is an unfortunate character in a Punjabi folk lore; she drowned while she was crossing the river to meet her lover at the other side of the river. If we compare the situation, that is going on in the novel it is assumed as if the writer has intentionally selected this name for it represents the awful situation of Pakistan due to the treacherous invasion of NATO forces in Afghanistan. Pakistan and its public suffer by the hands of a horrific Afghan war. US troops invaded Afghanistan as peace keepers but the consequences of their raids are faced by Pakistani nation in the form of suicide attacks, target killing, kidnapping, trafficking and missing people. And its position like the Heer in the folk lore, seems to be treacherously drowned by the non-nationals' hands. Afghanistan is dominated by US while Pakistan is consumed by the horrific war on terror.

The Blind Man's Garden and the Contemporary Problems of Pakistan: An Analysis

Different types of mediums like media, literature, journalism or politics and show business are used by people around the world to condemn the current war on terror and violence in different countries of the world. It is therefore on the credit of a visionary writer who foresees the aftermaths and consequences of an action or event by analyzing the ongoing situations. Visionary writers with their skills of strong observations and scholarly approach towards the specific situation can conclude the results and sometimes foretell or point towards the fearful consequences.

Rohan- The Blind Man and His Garden

There could be two perspectives in this regards because Rohan on one hand seems to be a reflection of Quaid-E-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, when his character as a founder is observed by the reader. And his property which is his school The Ardent Spirit and The Garden looks like Pakistan. But unfortunately, Jinnah departed too early after Pakistan was found and he could not see its bloom and developing into a nuclear state. "Nadeem Aslam's inspiration for the breathtaking garden was Pakistan. The flowers, the trees, the birds all symbolized Pakistan and its flight into freedom, with the blind man being Jinnah, who fought for the birth of the nation." (Ansari, 2013)

Rohan the blind man in the novel suffers because of his uncertainty, ignorance from the fundamental rights of an individual on humanitarian bases and his indecisiveness. Ultimately, he lost his beloved wife, the scholarly Sofia. Sofia basically suffers because of Rohan.

She has also made pictures of living things but Rohan had burned them during her last hours, fearing she would be judged for disobeying Allah, who forbade such images lest they lead to idolatry. The black smoke of the fire had sidled up to her deathbed. The sketches of a bull's skull and that of a fossil from the Bannu hills were destroyed too- these creatures were already dead when she drew them, but they had lived once, and he wished to eradicate all doubt to ensure salvation. He asked her to tell him where the rest of the paintings and drawings were, to tell him the address of the friend for whose home she has designed several murals. In his fear he had cleaned the house of every other image too, every photograph and picture, even those not created by her. (Aslam, p. 24)

Rohan- the head of the family, in the novel becomes blind. The loss of his physical sight gives him an insight; it is the rise of his spiritual insight. Nadeem Aslam blind folded himself for many days to feel the tortures and torments of a blind person. He felt the miseries that a blind person would feel living in the darkness. In Rohan's case it happened that he thought about his wife Sofia as an infidel and rebellious woman when he was physically able to see. He thought of her that she competes with God by creating creatures and figures like He does, but after losing his physical sight and Sofia, his visionary powers and spiritual insight developed. He comes to know that it was she and her paintings that were meant to add colors in the colorless world of Rohan. He now understands her very clearly and can comprehend her approach towards humanity on logical grounds. He could feel her love and essence, in her drawings and calligraphy, in the blossom of the garden and in her study. Rohan misses her company when she is no more a part of his life.

Rohan sweeps at his head to remove the white cloth that has come to rest over his eyes but realizes there is no cloth. The world moves away and everything becomes smaller but then the vision returns for a few moments and he sees the fire eddying along the ground. He is tired, tired of living without Sofia, and as he stumbles against something and falls, feeling a patch of meagre grass under his hands, he knows he is blind. (Aslam, p 150)

It is the story of a father (Rohan) and his two sons (Jeo and Mikal). Two foster brothers Jeo who left his hometown with an objective to serve the injured in the war in Afghanistan and Mikal who intended to provide security to Jeo but, unfortunately, both became victims to the evils of the same war unexpectedly. They both were deceived and sold by their traveling agent as freedom fighters. The elder brother that is Jeo was killed while the younger brother Mikal-unaware of his brother's death becomes a prisoner of a warlord, who ultimately sells him to the US soldiers as a Mujahid (freedom fighter). This explains the tragedy of the loss of the beloved kinship. Though the war ended and harmony prevailed at the end yet a brother lost in war would not come back at the end of war. It is one of the many examples as the results of 9/11.

Natural Ethics

Why it happens? Why will someone risks his/her own life for others? These questions have puzzled philosophers and scientists as well. But the ultimate answer may be provided by the phenomenon of "Natural Ethics" Generally, a question comes into mind why do people do good? In some cases people risk their lives to save others; sometimes the reasons are known while in other cases the reasons are completely unknown. For instance in 2007 a construction worker Austrey, saved an epileptic person from train, putting his own life at risk. Luckily both survived, when asked why he did so Austrey said: 'I just saw someone who needed help. I did what I felt was right.' (Steve, 2013)

Mikal and Jeo represents the phenomenon of "Natural Ethics". According to this school of thought it is not religion that teaches us how to take care of everybody else. It is the ground for common sense that is termed as the supreme religiosity, and it is meant to do well and to reject the evil. So it seems not on the credit of any religion or preacher that teaches someone to be virtuous. George Lakey suggests a strategy to fight against terror non-violently. An aspect of it could be that a good deed of a person that may motivate the others to do the same. It could be Geo's good intentions of attending the injured of wars, that had motivated Mikal to accompany Geo for his safety. Both risked their lives for the sake of someone else's life.

I made mistakes when my son was a child,' Rohan says. 'His mother had died in the state of apostasy and as a result I enforced an extreme form of piety on myself and on my children, making them pray and keep fasts, revealing to them things inappropriate for their ages. The transience of this life, the tortures of Hell and, before that, of the grave. I stopped eventually, seeing the errors, but it must have marked them. I wonder if that is why he went to Afghanistan. (Aslam, p98)

The sense of good morality is independent of the laws of religion. Jeo left for Afghanistan with an intention to serve the injured and wounded people of war, irrespective of their nationality or religion. He is a medical practitioner who wants to present his services to the needy. His approach towards life and humanity could be his inherited gene from his mother Sofia. [chapter4 section3.1]

Secondly we could also examine the same case with Mikal as well. He accompanied Jeo to Afghanistan to provide him the security because Mikal knew the possible threats in the war zone. And he fears that Jeo won't be able to survive in it. "Did you hear how the Taliban are putting inexperienced Pakistani boys on the frontlines, where they are getting slaughtered?" The organization I am dealing with has nothing to do with combat. We are not going there to fight."(Aslam, p28)

Mikal has lived in the slums but was adopted by Jeo's parent so he has the affiliation with his foster brother.

Another aspect could be his good will is that that his parents went missing after they had been abducted by Pakistani Military because they were assumed to be the suspects of political activists, his father specially. "An ordinary man caught in the Great Game, Mikal is described as "a mud-child and drifter," for that is what his life has been ever since his beloved father, a communist poet, was disappeared by a Pakistani dictator." (Martyris, 2013). She points towards Aslam's father who left Pakistan for England and tried to find safe haven from General Zia, who was a pro-America General. He ruled from 1978 till his death in 1998 in an airplane crash. According to a recent statistical analysis of the number of the missing people in Pakistan by Supreme Court published in Dawn. "Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances says it has disposed of 3,000 cases while 1,577 are still pending" (Dawn, 2018)

Mikal also defended an unknown US soldier at the cost of losing his own life. The American soldier who has tattooed the word infidel on his back to show Muslims that America is not even afraid of him. The word is "Kafir". It is in Arabic script as if the Americans are taunting on Muslims and they are deliberately showing their hatred towards all the Muslims. "Once again, the careful choice of name, Mikal, is a conceit typical of Aslam. Mikal, Michael, Mikhail — so close, except that scant feeling of brotherhood exists between the three." (Martyris, 2013)

But after two decades of thought he does sometimes suspect that his conduct had resembled sin, the sin of pride. Had he really decided that Allah lacked compassion, even for an apostate? Yes, he sometimes fears that his grief at her death – and before that at her doubts and renunciation - had driven him to something resembling an offence. (Aslam, p48)

"Natural Ethics" basically helps to identify and then differentiate between what is good or bad. In the above mentioned lines from The Blind Man's Garden Rohan's inner voice could be

observed. If he would have been educated properly, he would have had identify the difference of Sofia's virtue against his sins. Although he is a strict Islamist still his inner self seems to discomfort him of his sins that he had committed in the name of Islam. He considered his wife's humanitarian ideology something as unislamic act and thought of her to be an apostate. He stopped her medication just for the sake that he wanted her to be a true Muslims, but his barbarism made her lose her life. And later he suspects his religious approach himself whether or not he did justice in religion and humanity. Afterwards, he turns to believe in his wife's point of view about life and morality, that a person may not be punished for the wrong deeds he/she commits if we do not know the reasons behind his/her wrong doing. Because the reasons could be on the contrary to our assumptions, for instance if the money for some student's education comes from his mother's prostitutions [see chapter 4 section 3.1] or begging it is not like that she has deliberately opted to do so for her pleasure and the family deserves hate and repulsion from society. The reasons may be the poor financial status and non-availability of resources that leaves the struggling mothers no choice but the options of unfair means.

Mikal- The fighter in the story

Mikal the foster brother of Jeo kills a US soldier in self-defense and then he was killed while providing defense to the brother of the same deceased US soldier, although he was unaware of the soldier's true identity.

Mikal and Basie were adopted by Rohan and Sofia and both brothers were wholeheartedly welcomed in their house by their own kids, Yasmeen and Jeo. Mikal's parents were believed to be some nationalist or freedom fighters or activist people. They were abducted by the military men while Mikal and Basie were left alone to strive for survival until they were adopted by Sofia and Rohan. Mikal sometimes wondered if the mysterious Fakir could be his lost father because to Mikal there was some anonymous kind of similarity between these two.

Mikal does not have proper education but he is a well learned and experienced young man. He had lived a life of slum child because his parents were abducted by army and since then he and his elder brother Basie, were living like orphans until they were adopted by Rohan and Sofia. He has gained these experiences from his miseries and deprivations he has faced in his life while he lived in the slums. He has a good knowledge of stars; he knows how to deal with the weapons and to survive in the unfavorable worst conditions.

He left for Afghanistan with Jeo with an objective to ensure Jeo's security, but unfortunately he failed to do so. Some people may doubt he is the one responsible for Jeo's murder because his beloved; Naheed weds Jeo. But the doubt of the readers vanishes when he searches for him throughout his journey though himself been a captive, if he was in the Taliban's jail or the US military.

Mikal is an experienced young man who can evaluate the situation and can conclude the circumstances. He believes in the reason and effect phenomenon. His approach towards life, unlike

Jeo is based on logic rather emotions. He knows that Jeo has decided emotionally to go to Afghanistan and it is a lethal war zone where there is no room for people like Jeo. He accompanies him locating the dangers in this journey as they were deceived by the travelling agent and sold to Taliban warlord and imprisoned by Taliban. Keeping him safe on different occasions until Jeo finds the love letters in Mikal's hand bag which were written by Naheed to Mikal. And the moment they were arguing on the issue, they were attacked by US troops and Jeo gets killed at the hands of a young Afghan lady who was taking a revenge for her husband, who was also killed in the war by Taliban.

When Mikal has been interrogated by the US interrogating team, he remains silent for he wants to keep his identity a secret for the safety of his loved ones. So, that the war may not affect his innocent family members or fellow countrymen.

There is a clear difference in the Taliban and US interrogating methods while Mikal has been interrogated by US military. Unlike Taliban they want him to negotiate rather than been tortured or beaten to death. What Taliban did to war prisoners and those who they declared the outlaw according to Islam and Sharia? Sharia is defined in Oxford dictionary as "Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet (Hadith and Sunna), prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking." And Tailbans considered themselves as the defenders of Islam and Sharia when they ruled Afghanistan after Soviet defeat, and imposed tyranny.

Let me tell you something,' David says. 'The reason the United States isn't torturing you, hooking you up to electricity or drilling holes in your bones, as some countries in the world do, is not that torture doesn't work. Torture most definitely does work. But we don't do it because we believe it is wrong and uncivilized. (Aslam, p208)

Policy changes and the concept of reckless behavior and negotiations are thus the two main strategies that Lakey proposes for fruitful results in the process of peace keeping and bringing harmony. Tortures/torments is illegal under both the United States and International Law. It is measured as the most terrible practices in the history of mankind, and its practice is commonly judged as unfair by nearly every government today.

It is seen that the interrogator even tries hard to motivate Mikal to give any sort of information. He may break his silence even at the cost of rebuking, scolding or showing some hatred towards US people. "Say something. At least tell me we infidels will never win against the likes of you because we love life while you love death." (Aslam ,p204)

In the dark interrogating room Mikal is left alone. The room serves as a hallucinating chamber for Mikal to think about his sufferings. He has been questioned by an imaginary figure standing in front of him about his love for Naheed, for his failure in helping Jeo. A grin visible on the man's face asking Jeo why he is enduring all these torments by keeping silent, is it for the safety of all his family members and country fellows who are killing each other on petty matters

or who are busy in leg pulling and corruption or disorderly on their own land. A country where there are problems larger than a simple human being could hardly bare. Where there is no solution for the reported problems. A country; whose first class citizens make every effort to get the nationality of the western or European country. Though whatever the man has said is completely true yet it all seems some kind of hallucination as Mikal was kept deprived of sleeping for a long period of time. The interrogator though, claims to be civilized and not in favor of torturing the war prisoner keeping Mikal deprived of sleep is contradictory to his (the interrogator) statement.

He wonders if the man is real, despite the fact that his laugh is continuing to swell in the air of the room, roaring like a giant wave getting louder as it encircles his head. He remembers how after they had interrogated a prisoner for twenty-nine consecutive hours he was brought back to the cage hallucinating, was seeing people and things that were not there. And then suddenly the light goes off and the laughter stops, nothing in the room but his own breathing. (Aslam, p215)

In the light of the above lines it has been concluded that though the methods and tools may be different but the levels of tortures are same for both. (Talibans and US troops).

Destruction of Educational Institutions and Infrastructure

The destruction and demolition of the infrastructures and building of the educational institutions and academies have been seen to be a common practice in the war during the last few years. The main objective behind this is the decline of knowledge and education among many countries which are affected by war specifically in Pakistan. The attacks on schools and education institutions resulted in devastation of education. "February 2007 five private schools in Mansehra district, including three in Peshawar were closed after they were warned to make wearing the burqa compulsory." (O'Malley, 2011)

The most affected countries' list includes Nepal, Afghanistan, Thailand, Pakistan, Iraq, Zimbabwe etc. The schools are either attacked by shelling or bombing or they are occupied by militants or armed forces. And thus the schools are either made the training centers for training militants or they are made check posts by the armed soldiers. In *The Blind Man's Garden* we have an example of *The Ardent Spirit*. "Under Ahmed the Moth, *Ardent Spirit* had developed links with Paksitan's intelligence agency, the ISI. Pupils were selected to be trained in combat at jihadi camps run by the ISI, and ultimately sent to carry out covert operations in Kashmir." (Aslam, p34). So in the light of these lines it is evident that Talibans have links with Pakistani, US and Afghan government. And they are provided the resources by these governments as well.

"Between 2007 and 2011, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat, led by Maulana Fazlullah, destroyed more than 400 schools, many of them providing education for girls, the local administration says." (Hashim, 2012).

The ratio of destruction is higher for female schools and education centers. The girls' schools continuously received threats from Talibans especially in Swat and Tribal areas of Pakistan. In

some cases the schools were also warned to announce wearing Burqas (famous shuttle corks) or else the female students will face the acid attacks. “In a range of conflict-affected countries, access to good quality education is being reduced or denied not merely by the side effects of fighting but because schools, teachers and students are being targeted for attack.” (O’Malley, 2009).

According to a report by UNESCO different countries faced this problem during civil wars and wars on terror. But luckily some countries escaped the situation while in some countries it got worse. “In the past two years the situation has improved in Iraq, and Nepal, but has seriously deteriorated in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories.” (O’Malley, 2009). The most evident reason behind such attacks and destructions seems to be Talibans’ ideological narrow mindedness, due to unawareness from true Islamic education.

Conclusion

This study presents an analysis of the post 9/11 situations. The situation is analyzed with reference and textual analysis from the contemporary author Nadeem Aslam’s novel *The Blind Man’s Garden*. Though the research project attempted is admittedly brief, it proposes an overview of the outcomes of 9/11 in days that followed the incident. It is discussed in the study that a sense of hatred and repulsion is developed on both sides that is Muslims and Americans. Both sides have some insecurity from each other. If Muslims are declared as terrorists by the west same is the case with the Americans. As the Islamist school of thought considers and in some cases has declared America as an anti-Muslims state. Particularly this Islamist class sees United States (US) which exploits the resources and Islamic Ideology, as they are thought to be a powerful revengeful force towards Islam in particular. The purpose in conducting this research study is to prevent a violent reaction by the Muslims and particularly by the youngsters who might have been directly or indirectly affected by the incident of 9/11. The study will be helpful in serving as a rehabilitation remedy in regards of providing educational awareness among the masses. The main purpose here is to present *The Blind Man’s Garden* a fitting addition to the BS syllabus, which could help the students to cope with such unfortunate incidents self-confidently.