

Revisiting Ideological Boundaries of Pakistani Nationalism: A Study of Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden*

Atta-ul-Mustafa*

Ghulam Murtaza †

Ali Usman Saleem ‡

Abstract *This study explores the shattered Pakistani nationalism in Nadeem Aslam's 'The Blind Man's Garden' (2013) in the context of the post-9/11 invading military globalism and reactionary social globalism. Focusing on Nadeem Aslam's hallmark work, 'The Blind Man's Garden' (2013), this article not only explores the current foundationless nationalism of Pakistan as the byproduct of undue chauvinism instead of being the outcome of its real ideology but also stresses the need for renewal of ideological boundaries of Pakistan in the light of current sweeping effects of thick globalism. Being a diaspora and much influenced by the secularity of the host society, Aslam seems to be desirous of featuring the nationalist inscription of home society in accordance with the global world, as is revealed from the roles played by his characters like Mikal etc. in the novel. The study motivates us to revisit the national myths with an aim to devise the marks of nationalism, provided if we are to rehabilitate our national identity.*

- Vol. VI, No. I (Winter 2021)
- Pages: 16 – 25
- p- ISSN: 2520-0348
- e-ISSN: 2616-793X
- ISSN-L: 2520-0348

Key Words: Nation, Nationalism, Globalism, Globalization, Pakistani Literature in English

Introduction

Towards the beginning of the new millennium, numerous world personas have lost their belief in patriotism in favor of globalism. Nationalism is now profoundly influenced by the multi-layered globalism—economic, cultural, political, environmental etc. instead of proceeding along with one's duty towards one's nation, and one obliges the world now. The world's economy, anyhow, is now subjected to the impacts of globalization; the all-around blows of cultural, social, environmental and military globalism have changed individuals' life patterns. National character, too, has received profound dents upon its body nationalism within the world introduced in a developing sense of cosmopolitanism. It, however, does not mean that nationalism has absolutely died out. Actually, nationalism is in a confused state hinging on two extremes: religiosity and globality. The real basis of nationalism, i.e., its

ideology, lies somewhere in between these two extremes. If nationalism is replete with jingoism, the Western fundamentalism, too, is at its climax.

Amidst this messy situation quite injurious to nations' sovereignty, the fresh aid for globalizers comes in the form of diasporas who settled in the Center for one reason or the other. Under the strong influence of global culture, their attachment to the home society changes to bring a change like that of the host society. Aslam's national approach hinges on the global secular culture, as is shown in his *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013). Being a diaspora (of hope, terror and despair), he seems to be desirous of importing a renewed version of nationalism in Pakistan where the issues of national identity formation and who belongs and how they belong often change over time.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Linguistics, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.
Email: prof.attaulmustafa@gmail.com

†Associate Professor, Department of English, GC University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡Assistant Professor, Department of English, GC University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Review of Literature

Nationalism in Pakistan

In an interview with [Nauman Khalid in 2013](#), Nadeem Aslam says that Americans are leaving Afghanistan in 2014, and Ehsanullah Ehsan, the Pakistani Taliban's spokesman, has said that their fight is not with the Americans, nor with the Westerners; it is with fellow Muslims. So the Tehreek-e-Taliban, Pakistan (TTP) would struggle against the heretical—the almost infidel fellow Muslims in Pakistan. Defining the futuristic plan of the state, Mr Jinnah, however, had devised a strategy of mutual survival for all communities of Pakistan.

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste and creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State . . . We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State (cited in [Jones, 2002](#)).

Unfortunately, the nation deviated from this advice. With the passage of time, differences of opinion emerged between the modernists and religious segments. The unstable political regimes and military coups added fuel to the fire. Now religious parties have militant wings which strongly believe in armed struggle for implementing their particular ideology ([Editorial, 2016](#)).

After the creation of Pakistan, the main components of nationalist manifestations were found in the very chemistry of Pakistan. The slogan of achieving an independent Muslim state made Islam the only unifying force for Pakistanis, while nationalism had been evolving through the wheel of history. It was at its peak from 1947 to 1965 because people were emotionally clung to the saga of a newly born country. Since their bitter experience with Hindus was still fresh, so they knew the worth of independence. After 1965, however, an artificial void conspired between the eastern and western wings ([Hussain & Khan, 2012](#)). Wajahat Masood says that nationalism had then fallen to the bottom because Bengalis were thinking of the national army as an occupying force; their revolting attitude for 'being treated as a colony' ([Siddiqui, 2021](#)) gave the separatists an opportunity to dismember the eastern wing of Pakistan in coordination with India. After the Fall of Dacca, the nation became staunchly attached to

nationalism and the 1973 constitution was emerged as a strong unanimous voice of Pakistanis though the state could not erect its foundations on true footings. This zest for nationalism was tinted with blind religiosity after 9/11, though its seeds had already been sown in the Zia regime ([Jones, 2002, p. 261](#)). The Cold War in the neighbourhood and the state's direct involvement in it led her astray from the real path. Instead of developing relations with the modern world, the country met a collective internal degeneration, and a lack of economic production was observed due to the geopolitical, cultural and religious differences that resulted from Cold War, says the Pakistani columnist Wajahat Masood ([Siddiqui, 2021](#)). In order to fill the gap of nationalism, several directionless pseudo ideologies became prevalent in the country.

Neo-Nationalism & Globalization

Nationalism, i.e. the sovereignty of nations unto themselves, emerged worldwide as a key political organization. After 1945, however, a revolutionary rise in global telecommunication networks, capital, labor, cultural commodities and the operational role of supranational/transnational organizations beyond the borders have intensified the processes of globalization. Apart from bringing a decline in efficiency, globalization has also transformed the nature and functions of the nation-state by pruning its cultural, economic, and political spheres, besides leaving deep, uneven marks on its advancement ([Ho, 2019](#)). Globalization has established the monopoly of a 'super-state by directly handling issues of currency, international exports and migration of laborers besides snatching authority of subsidizing industrial and agricultural affairs from local governments (Maragz, 2018). Numerous Western countries have confined social patriotism and are connected through money-related and other kinds of help for remote nations to certain cultural conditions. The subjected nations retort in terms of cultural, religious and ethnic movements. Despite the fact that several nations talked about a worldwide plan, the larger part kept on advancing the national border at the cost of others, particularly those of 'Third World' countries. Hence, neo-nationalism featured under the powerful influence of multidimensional globalism, unlike the

extensively dynamic shrinking of distance due to globalization, seeks to attain a world typified by networks of connections covering multi-continental distances ([Nye, 2016](#)). It affects the cultural and several other aspects of a nation-state provided if it is 'thick' and that it becomes so with the increasing degree of globalization. Globalism, however, will expose us more frequently and in more heterogenized variations to the differences that surround us (2016).

Unlike the classical nationalism that cannot cope with impending consequences of globalization for its coalition with exploitative global forces, neo-nationalism emerged to fight for national values and counter the damaging effects of globalization to safeguard nation-states' sovereignty, particularly after the 2001 terrorist attacks ([Maragz, 2018](#)). Today's globalized world is facing two menaces on cultural and neo-orientalist fronts from globalizers besides being exploited by their neo-liberalist economic agenda. Religio-chauvinism will lead us to nowhere. Also, colonization is the cruelest form of nationalism still practised by neo-colonialists in the name of humanitarian aid ([Maragz, 2018](#)). The methods of fighting against neo-colonialists are different from what was applied against the old exploitative colonial system ([Maragz, 2018](#)). [Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin \(1995\)](#) suggest the perusal of changes in postcolonial nations of the Global South, i.e., 'Third World' countries, through economic globalization. Global empire determines a sweeping modification in ideas of sovereignty, nation, and people that serve as the rational base of modern politics ([Hardt & Negri, 2000](#)); the world is gradually becoming borderless and closer. Crossing national borders as a human activity is now being reckoned at interregional or intercontinental level ([Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 2002-3](#)). The economic, cultural and political interests of the developed world lie in disrupting the aboriginal ethics, particularly those of the Muslim world ([Khan, 2010](#)). In the current scenario, the spatial divisions among the First World, Second World, and Third World have been diminished, and now we find a merger of the First World into Third World and vice-versa with complete elimination of the Second World.

The article looks at the importance of a re-examined version of nationalism from a new angle to use it as a tool for reviving the mild image of our nation. It also examines how Aslam's 'The Blind Man's Garden' stresses the need for

intrinsic and extrinsic overhauling of national character through the motivational procedure of reviving love for culture, art and literature for uplifting the real nationalism ([Ansari, 2013](#)). Aslam pours his nationalism through the characters of his novel.

Theoretical Framework

The Hyperglobalizers such as Ohmae etc. opine that modern globalization signifies the dawn of a novel epoch showing people's more dependence on the glide of global marketplace than ever (1990). This tendency leads everything to internationalism by replacing the factor of localism; hence it does not believe in national borders. The hyper globalists see the global era as being run by global capitalism and global governance with the prevalence of McDonald and Madonna cultures in proposed global civil society and erosion of old hierarchies. Human action is outlined in line with global civilization because the nation-state has lost its previous authority ([Hostettler, 2010](#)).

The diasporic and hybrid people hold dual characters/ identities; first being the part of 'global tribes' (to use [Kotkin's](#) phrase), they flourish in the global marketplace and avow their very being internationally to extend the idea in their respective circle and secondly the features of diasporas are portrayed as a cultural condition by much of the postmodernist literature in [Cohen's](#) account ([Spencer and Wollman, 2002](#), pp. 164-65). Consequently, being a critique of discourses of fixed origins, [Brash \(1996\)](#) considers a homing desire on the part of diaspora quite unlike a desire for a homeland, which makes them "glocal" because of their interplay between local and global, as mentioned by [Holton \(1998\)](#) and [Robertson \(1995\)](#). [Cohen \(1997\)](#) says that being a part of the two worlds (home and host societies), the 'imagined' and 'encountered communities' of diasporas having transnational identifications become key players in undermining fixed national and ethnic identities; thus have become the traders of post-modern world. They rather prefer global identities to local ones ([Spencer and Wollman, 2002](#)).

One of the important aspects worth pondering is their nationalism or degree of relevance to the national cause since diasporas/ hybrid characters show multiple shades of political and cultural self-responses. At least two shades emerge more potentially; some show

duality in their disposition, i.e., a *mélange*/ or a mixture of identities (2002, p. 162), whereas the others integrate their nationalism through 'nostalgia politics' (p. 168).

Carrying internalized self-rejection, political co-operation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence as basic traits (Shohat, 1992, p. 110) and being influenced by cultural and political norms of the host society, they wish to see a thorough change in home society to bring an enlightened change back there and thus become representatives of the host society; either intentionally or unintentionally, of that civilization or culture which already sees their people as exotic, [an]'other' or to quote Harvey, now, 'others' (cited in Connell and Marsh, 2011). Having no perception of the ground realities of home society; its trends and norms, their contradictory inclination causes multiple counterproductive reactions in the denizens who sometimes react chauvinistically, which seems to be logical in the people of the postcolonial era who want to assert their identities religiously if not politically, though the acquisition of both identities is also expected from them at the same time (Spencer and Wollman, 2002).

Analysis

According to Anthony Giddens, "The revival of local nationalisms and an accentuation of local identities are directly bound up with globalizing influences, to which they stand in opposition" (1994). In Aslam's work, "The Blind Man's Garden", People like Khyra are one of those who inflame religious militancy in the country, and the wave of real nationalism is, therefore, being hijacked by religious fanatics. Characters like Ahmad and Khyra are responsible for notching all the dents in national identity (2013).

Aslam's Sarcastic View about National Character of Pakistan

Encompassing the defects of national character, Aslam (2013), through jeering of the white man at detained Mikal's country, sarcastically enumerates the factors that force the reasonable citizens of the state to "emigrate to Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, Dubai, Kuwait, Singapore, ... Italy, France anywhere" (pp. 191-92) excluding Pakistan since the land which they had freed from the British, "Empire's armoured might" (p. 9) to make it homeland, has now become a

"shameless beggar country" (p. 191) just because of its being contaminated by the criminals and criminalities of all kinds: "liars, hypocrites, beaters of women and children and animals and the weak, brazen rapists and unpunished murderers, torturers who probably dissolved his [sic.] father's body in a drum of acid in Lahore Fort, delusional morons and fools" (p. 191). Also, he blames America for having its hand in deteriorating Pakistan's circumstances through Mikal's retort of the same American (2013).

Poverty and Pakistan

Being a diaspora writer, Aslam conveys that it is impossible for the nations or even individuals to be cut off from the effects of today's thick globalism. The nationalists, with their extreme religious stance, enjoy its advancements even though globalization amounts to a cultural attack on their nation. Finding fault in Pakistan's foreign and economic policies, Aslam (2013) uncovers that Pakistan had to pay and is still paying huge costs for its involvements in Cold War and Post-9/11 war. Politically, Pakistan became a part of the great American game in Afghanistan to gain strategic depths (Rahman, 2014) which brought injurious cultural effects in the form of Jihad that changed the democratic and enlightened dimensions of the state (Aslam, 2013). But more than that the country faced economic wreckage because of its consecutive involvement in wars on its borders (Naqvi, 2010); the reactionary jingoism inside the country hampered the economy leading it to a 'multitude' (Hardt & Negri, 2000); a wasteland converting into heap of ruins instead of making a nation. The emaciated economic condition brought about unemployment; many students of the Ardent Spirits wasted time in the Soldier Bazaar rather than doing any job; they were sitting idly and watching every girl from head to toe with passions that could erupt anytime (p. 101). The social ailments such as professional dishonesty in terms of selling rotten meat and adulterating white chemical to milk for increasing its volume and doing many more corrupt practices for extorting money fraudulently without even bothering about the health of customers and consumers have become the common practices of national character; a negation of the ideology that was aimed to make it a practical laboratory for conducting 'experiments on Islamic principles' (Zafar, 2015). The exposition of such

a nasty game reveals the general disposition of “killing everyone else”; thus, making the country, “a land of revenge attacks” (p. 191). This contaminated condition disappoints the youth qualified from other reasonable institutes and forces them to leave the country (2013).

Acceptable Cultural Invasion

Nobody can refrain from the inevitability of globalization phenomena. The extremists who give air to clashes between civilizations embrace globalization despite of their extreme reaction towards its threatening factors for culture. They benefit from the fruits of global technology. Say, for instance, Western invasion of Afghanistan are countered by Western-manufactured weaponry. Similarly, Major Khyra’s transporting vehicle, Land Rover ([Aslam, 2013, p. 297](#)) is a cultural intrusion, but as it facilitates them in travelling so it is neither objectionable nor damaging ideologically. The easily available Kalashnikovs, AK-47 rifles, cell phones and camcorder are the blessings of globalization; these were used by Jihadists without any hesitation (2013) because the Taliban were attached with al-Qaeda organization that was efficiently using global technologies to combat the “global jihad movement” ([Kahn & Kellner, 2007](#)). What stimulated 9/11 terrorist attacks was an anti-modern and anti-globalization stance of the attackers. However, it was inevitable processes of globalization that helped jihadists accomplish groundwork in occurrence of attacks. Instead of impeding globalization, the incident was encouraged, and it accelerated the globalizing processes as a counteractive to cope up the menace of terrorism ([Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 2002-3](#)).

Feminist Perspective

Although the women have less authority and liberty than men in Islamic countries, yet reflecting the diasporic imaginations of Aslam for application of norms on host society the novel emphasizes that women there are not passive victims: while some women are complicit in the system; for instance, the group of local women who invent the tradition of not allowing the Muslim women to go into graveyards ([Aslam, 2013, p. 92](#)) for offering ‘Fateha’ on their kinfolks’ graves. Naheed resists this oppression and insists on visiting the graves of their dear-departed souls. The extreme women, actually, object that

“Islam has been brought so low” due to common women’s stepping out of homes with uncovered faces. Also due to their malpractices, “[f]ilthy, disgusting, repulsive infidels are attacking Muslim countries with impunity” (p. 93). Hence they are forbidding them from any deed of innovation. It is because, “... all this authority to reprimand the abhorrent wretch is granted to them by Allah (p. 94). So chauvinism is at the core of nationalism amidst the severe incursions of globalization; cultural enmity with West instigates them to replace true nationalist trends with chauvinism.

Aslam’s Philosophy of Nationalism

Aslam communicates his philosophy of nationalism through characters like Rohan and Mikal. In an interview with Terry Hong, he sifts his characters from their religious ties with a conviction that “a person has many layers to his personality” and “just because [one is] religious doesn’t mean [one’s] all acts are in accordance with [one’s] religion” (2013). Rohan, for instance, is a devout, peaceful follower of Islam but his wife Sofia, once a devout Muslim was an artist; could not preserve her faith, started valuing the real, natural world more than her belief in Allah (Aslam, 2013, p. 44). Since she rejected the faith (p. 41); died as “an apostate” (p. 41) a crime “punishable by death in Pakistani law” (p. 41), it is later revealed that Rohan withheld her medication during her ailment, in order to force her to embrace Islam again (p. 64). He attempted to save her soul, wishing for her to reach heaven instead of being doomed to hell, but in effect kills her. After Sofia died, Rohan burned all the works of art she created (p. 127), lest she should be “judged for disobeying Allah” (p. 21) in the hereafter. Her art about natural world’s images could, according to (strict perception of) Islam, lead to idolatry, and is therefore forbidden. Rohan did these actions unhesitatingly, but afterwards, he occasionally thinks that, “his conduct had resembled sin” (p. 43). [Lasdun writes \(2013\)](#) that Rohan’s “existence is a kind of atonement” (p. 9), indicating Rohan has been trying to make up for his mistakes. Contemplating on his life, Rohan concludes that his blindness is a punishment for his actions ([Aslam, 2013](#)). Actually, he sought to avoid from seeing “what [Sofia] had painted, [and] now he won’t be able to see the real things” (p. 127).

It is here that Aslam pours his philosophy of what ideology is and what nationalism is; that is Rohan, for Aslam symbolizes Mr. Jinnah. Nadeem Aslam's inspiration for the breathtaking garden was Pakistan. The flowers, the trees, the birds all symbolize sights and sounds of Pakistan flying into freedom, with the blind man being Jinnah, who fought for the birth of a new nation. Jinnah's garden is, however, sabotaged by the extreme and destructive measures of its nestling birds who cripple the very roots of its trees with their blind faith (extremists) thus curtailing the normal opportunities of its growth in the fair-weather of modernity. Instead they view modernity as the blow of unfavorable climate, stormy winds and dark clouds of disbelief (as symbolized in Sofia). The emergence of this unwanted state of affairs in the state would certainly be a squeezing situation for Jinnah's soul (as the novel shows Rohan's repentance for his act of stopping Sofia's medication) because Mr. Jinnah believed in religious freedom of all Pakistanis ([Jillani, 2013](#)); the post-partition narrow approach of religious corners demolished Mr. Jinnah's vision towards establishing the new state on liberal principles while "Jinnah wanted a different kind of Pakistan", says Solangi (cited in [Jillani, 2013](#)).

Though Rohan is a devout Muslim, yet he is shown to be struggling with some aspects of his faith; besides maltreating Sofia, "he expelled a pupil from school whose mother was revealed to a prostitute" (p. 43). Even then, he is not portrayed as extremist or dangerous and has, therefore, a strong appeal to be called the real face of Pakistan. He tries his level best to keep Ardent Spirit free from extremism (2013). He fosters Basie and Mikal after their Communist father (p. 15) is "taken away by the agents of the government-aligned with the United States, the enemy of Communism" (Aslam, 2013, p. 38). Being a diaspora of hope, Aslam aspires to imply the values of host society on home society without perceiving that ground realities are absolutely different.

According to [Spencer & Wollman \(2002\)](#), the culturally and genetically hybridized diasporas/ expatriates under impacts of globalization assume identities quite contrary to those of national/ ethnic identities and acquire a blended culture after breaking with home culture. The cultural mixture burns in them a desire to see their home society running according to the vast spectrum of their own

global mental picture rather than to let it run according to its own norms since they are quite unattractive for them. Aslam uses Mikal the protagonist, a dauntless character with the communist bent of mind and having minute observation of slums (p. 38), to communicate his view about how a country should adopt in current global world. Mikal's journey back to Heer from American captivity in Afghanistan initiates a decisive part of the novel, i.e., to counter the existing religious-chauvinism of the extremists. The invading American soldiers of post 9/11 Afghan war waged allegedly "to take over Pakistan's nuclear weapons ..." (p. 45) brought about Mikal's sufferings but he never blamed Americans (Aslam, 2013, p. 229) of this. Amidst the difficulties ranging from his captivity by Afghan warlord and Americans as well as his struggle to reach Heer, he became much frightened; he was convinced that his next-cage prisoner was inducted there to make him "reveal information" (p. 183). Feeling afraid of being executed by Americans instead of his release (p. 218), Mikal killed two captors. These sufferings could not render him take Americans as the enemy; he stated that even though they might have killed others, yet "they didn't kill me" (p. 229). In fact Mikal is the real face of Pakistan that Aslam aspires to see; apart from what the extremists did was but a reaction to what America had done in Afghanistan after 9/11, the continuity of these age-long civilizational clashes, however, need to be patched up. Aslam's mind is that East-West relations should make a fresh start by burying the past grudges. Hence we see Mikal suggesting that "the white man's eyes are a doorway to another world, to a mind shaped by different rules, a different way of life" (p. 378); this indicates that Mikal not only acknowledges the worth of other cultures i.e. he does not perceive them a threat to his own identity and national survival but also depicts Aslam's diasporic desire of practicing Western (host society's) culture herein home society. In fact, Aslam pours his mentality about nationalism by communicating that no country can survive without adapting a liberal policy in terms of its relations with other countries.

Moreover, the brother of American soldier that Mikal had killed is looking for him to seek revenge for his brother. After fleeing from American detention, Mikal accidentally meets this unidentified American soldier without knowing how they are connected. Mikal captures

him, but does not kill him. Although they do not speak each other's language, yet they seem to have developed a connection during all this time. American soldier's singing profoundly touches Mikal, who responds so emotionally as if "the unafraid resonance" had connected them "across the heat-thinned air" (pp. 386-87). Mikal begins to cry and has the uncontrollable urge to tell the soldier about his life. He "reaches out a hand and places it on the [soldier's] shoulder" and tells him about circumstances of divaricating from Naheed, Jeo and going to imprisonment, even though "his mouth [is] full of failed words" (p. 388). Mikal ends by apologizing to the soldier for killing his countrymen (p. 388). It is here that Aslam's nationalism applies to the novel; nationalism, boundaries and frontiers don't mean anything to me. I could live anywhere if I loved someone. The country I live in ... is bridged by Khyber Bridge which joins Pakistan and Britain in my mind (Aslam, 2013). In Mikal's sharing of his grief with American for being parted from Naheed and Jeo and then apologizing to him for killing his brother soldier, Aslam suggests a recipe to give a direction to Pakistan's foreign policy by turning over a new leaf through a burial of past enmities and neglecting others' misdeeds.

Jeo is the bright face of Islam as was said by Aslam in an interview with Terry Hong (2013) that, "there are no innocent people in a guilty nation" (2013, p. 2). Jeo and Mikal are equally opposed to the Taliban and the USA's attack on Afghanistan. What accounts for this distinction? They are decent human beings; whereas Jeo's values are derived from Islam — the gentler and deeply cosmopolitan sides of his parents' religion, Mikal's from his parents' political engagement (Hong, 2013). The novel shows the most beautiful relationship between the two foster brothers: Mikal and Jeo. Brothers in arms, closer than any blood relations, both embark on a dangerous journey into the heart of war in Afghanistan. While Jeo, a third year's medical student, wishes to use his skills to help the wounded, Mikal, a reader of the stars, vows to protect Jeo, and find a way back home, to their family. Although Jeo dies fairly early in the novel, Aslam ensures that Jeo is present throughout. He remains a major character until the end, with Mikal searching for a brother he does not know to be dead (symbolizing how golden Islamic rules were forgotten soon after Pakistan came into being though crave for implementing these is still alive to their hearts).

Ardent Spirit, the symbolic representation of the garden like country of Pakistan in the foundation of which Rohan had flung the dust with, "belief, virtue, truth and judgment" (p. 8) imported from Muslim cities of Mecca, Baghdad, Cordoba, Cairo, Delhi, and Istanbul is expected to grant equal opportunities to all of its flowers (pupils) irrelevant of taking into consideration the color, shape, fragrance (race, ethnicity, religion etc.) they adapt in terms of their growth; a true reflection of Quid's philosophy of how the new state would be as cited in Owen Bennett-Jones: "You may belong to any religion or caste and creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State" (2002).

The inward meaning is that without politics, Islam remains deficient of its true spirit. Islam and politics go hand in hand just as Jeo and Mikal do through thick and thin. Without politics, there is no Islam and vice-versa. Through the character of Jeo, Aslam communicates his philosophy of cosmopolitanism, i.e. Islam is in the service of humanity without confining itself to any borders; religious, geographical, racial etc. Islam's seeks the care and welfare of everyone, irrelevant of religious, racial, ethnic affinities and affiliations.

Figurative Depiction of Nationalism in Aslam's Characters

Rohan symbolizes Jinnah, the pioneer of Pakistan who planted a garden (Pakistan) with an intention to sow seeds of such plants (Islamic codes) as would be laden with fruits and flowers of different tastes and colours. Soon after, the garden was taken over by the chauvinistic nationals who destroyed it by applying outmoded techniques (narrow-minded religiosity) and watering the thorns instead of flowers (enlightened face of Islam). Rohan's forced expulsion from Ardent Spirit (the school symbolizing Mr. Jinnah's expected Lab for experimentation of Islamic rules) points to the expulsion of ideology by the self-assumed religious elites of the homeland who had rather thrust their rigid theology. In the later phase, the affiliation of fundamentalists with an authoritative institute could be perceived in context of the pigmentation of the institutes with religio-political colour; thus tainting the liberal, enlightened image of the country with extremism.

Naheed symbolizes the soil of the garden (country). Besides having capability to be impregnated with any of the ideology (save fundamentalism of any kind), the soil does not encourage the aggression of any type, whether it be religiously backed by extremists or politically supported by America: "I am angry at the Americans for invading Afghanistan. I am angry at al-Qaeda and the Taliban for doing what they did" (Aslam, 2013, p. 309). She also showed unhappiness over ill-treatment with minority students at St. Joseph's school (p. 292).

Jeo represents the moderate face of religion in the sense that the Blind Man (Jinnah) had decided to establish/ grow the state/ garden where real Islamic teachings/multicoloured flowers might be experimented/ grown. Jeo/ religion being religious in real sense of Islamic teachings was having a legitimate connection with Naheed/ soil whereas Mikal with all his secularity, represents that the soil must have a relationship (even though illegal) with modern outer-world so secular in respect of its contacts with other nations.

In fact, the whole dispute took place between three sons of Rohan; Jeo (real), Mikal (foster), Ahmed, the Moth (spiritual). Rohan (Jinnah) himself was quite moderate in his thinking. As for religiosity, he was a devout Muslim—did have much love for Ummah and the Afghan situation was much panic to him; so much so that had he been a young man (Jinnah's possible reaction if he were alive as he had morally supported Palestinian cause), he would certainly have helped them, fought for their cause but equally he felt the misery of 9/11 victims in the USA and in case if he had been there, he would have done much help for them (Americans), too (Aslam, 2013).

Aslam (2013) communicates that, no doubt, the land (Naheed) must remain connected with legitimate fertilizer (religion) but it must not be overlooked in terms of its prospective connections with foreign (illegitimate) waters to get flourished; certainly it has to be connected with global outer-world to thrive respectively among the nations. Nothing could grow in aloofness since, "[h]uman contact is as vast as any wilderness and [it] demands all daring" (p. 231). Daring is the visible characteristic of Mikal's personality who wanted to rip open the bridges

among East and West by saving the white man from locals soaked much in the conflictual situation with the unreasonable foreign policy of Americans. Naheed wedded to Jeo (religiosity) but became pregnant by Mikal (secularity); Aslam's philosophy is to get the country tracked on the track of enlightened moderation without declining its religious spirit. The contacts with modern world are very necessary for smooth running of country's affairs.

Conclusion

Traditionalist and conservative Muslims take piety and morality as the only acceptable standard to live in society. They are not ready to implement and practice the teachings of Islam in life. The society seems to be divided in good and bad (errant) Muslims (Mamdani, 2005). This is not a positive sign. Moreover the state seems have failed in instilling the disciplined norms and traits in its members as per the ideas of Quid-e-Azam and other national heroes who were determined to make it a "welfare Islamic state", and not a theocracy. It is need of the hour to introduce the real face of Islam and all types of fanaticism and extremism be discouraged to rebuild the image of Pakistan before the world. Considerations of identity and nation, including gender, sexuality and social class are applied to the close perusal to open up textual possibilities and pleasures for the critical reader. It follows new direction of literary criticism by demonstrating ways in which current fiction is offering a response to planetary rather than national or postcolonial issues and, by doing so, is encompassing an ethical as well as political cosmopolitanism that seeks to connect citizens within humanitarian and environmental global community. This is what Aslam did in 'The Blind Man's Garden' i.e. by uniting Mikal and American soldier, he makes efforts to develop a planetary culture acceptable to all people. Aslam's novel has proved successful in making the reader realize his social, cultural, political, national and religious obligations. Aslam surges between the near hallucinogenic violence of war and the smell of jasmine in a garden; moments of decency between strangers are reminders of what is being lost.

Note: This article has been derived from HEC's NRP Project No. 5709 entitled "*The Ideology of Nationalism in Pakistani Literature in English*"

References

- Ansari, I. Z. (2013, October 24). The blind man's garden – The missing slate. Knopf (2013). 384 pages
<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:hZz-uRse5x8J:journal.themissingslate.com/2013/10/24/led-by-the-blind-the-blind-mans-garden-by-nadeem-aslam/+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=pk>
- Aslam, N. (2013). *The Blind Man's Garden*. New York: Vintage.
- Brah, A. (2005). *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global diasporas: An introduction* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Connell, L., & Marsh, N. (2011). *Literature and globalization: A reader*. London, UK: Routledge Author.
- Editorial. (2016, September 21). Militancy nexus. DAWN.COM.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1285027>
- Featherstone, M., Lash, S., & Robertson, R. (1995). *Global modernities*. London: SAGE.
- Giddens, A. (1994). *Beyond left and right: The future of radical politics*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
- GRIFFITHS, G., & ASHCROFT, F. M. (1995). *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London, England: Psychology Press.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ho, J. (2019). Nationalism and globalization in contemporary Anglophone fiction. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.416
- Holton, R. J. (2011). *Globalization and the nation state* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Hong, T. (2013, July). Bookslut: An interview with Nadeem Aslam [Web log post]. Retrieved from
https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:47cyGiJbOJK:www.bookslut.com/features/2013_07_020162.php+&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=pk
- Hostettler, N. (2010). On the implications of critical realist Underlabouring. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 9(1), 89-103. doi:10.1558/jcr.v9i1.89
- Hussain, M., & Khan, A. (2012). Rising Nationalism in Pakistan as a Tool of Public Administration.
https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:gQbq7eWRPlsJ:https://qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%2520Dialogu e/7_2/Dialogue_April_June2012_186-202.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=pk
- Jillani, S. (2013, September 11). The search for Jinnah's vision of Pakistan. BBC NEWS [Karachi], p. BBC History.
- Jones, O. B. (2003). *Pakistan: Eye of the storm*. New Heaven, NH: Yale University Press.
- Kahn, R., & Kellner, D. (2007, January 1). (PDF) Resisting globalization.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240595351_Resisting_globalization
- Khalid, N. (2013, June 1). From Jaipur with love: Nadeem Aslam's 'The blind man's garden' (part two) [Huffpost]
https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:WMH6YGittTAJ:https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/nauman-khalid/from-jaipur-with-love-nad_b_2977314.html+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=pk
- Khan, G. A. (2010). *Globalization and Pakistan Some Realities*.
<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:8h6StAQBEK0J:https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/babc/2862665ab6af71f388b05918b6bd3e2a1842.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=pk>
- Lasdun, J. (2011, January 31). The blind man's garden - review. *The Guardian* [London], p. Books.
- Mamdani, M. (2005). *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harmony.
- Marghuz, J. (2018, November 21). Neo-Nationalism and Globalization. *The Daily Express* [Lahore], p. Editorial.
- Naqvi, H.M. (2010). *Home Boy*. India: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Nye, J. (2002, April 15). Globalism versus globalization. *The Globalist*, Globalist perspective.
- Ohmae, Kenichi, 1990. *The Borderless World*. NY: Harper Collins Publisher.

- Rahman, Z. H. (2014) *In The Light of What We Know*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Shohat, E. (1992). Notes on the "post-colonial". *Social Text*, (31/32), 99.
- Siddiqui, A. Q. [AQSLive]. (2021, January 18). Worst Situation [Vlog]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57gdztvEqRo>
- Spencer, P., & Wollman, H. (2002). *Nationalism: A critical introduction*. New Delhi, India: SAGE.
- Wiebelhaus-Brahm, E. (August 27, 2002). Globalization, Modernity, and Their Discontents. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1666871> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1666871>
- Zafar, S. (2015, December 25). Ideology of Pakistan in the light of Quaid-E-Azam's sayings <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ideology-pakistan-light-quaid-e-azams-sayings-sultan-zafar>.