

Theorizing Repressed Emotions and Experiences in Nadeem Aslam's The Blind Man's Garden (2013)

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Abstract

This research explores the characters' repressed emotions and experiences in The Blind Man's Garden (2013) by Nadeem Aslam. It focuses on the repressive psyche of the protagonist Mikal and his family due to Pakistan and Afghanistan's diverse social and political circumstances. The study aims at the concept of repression coined by an Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud. In this concept, the unpleasant experiences are penned down to forgetfulness in order to avoid harsh emotions associated with them. This study mainly deals with the suppression of desires and emotions of all characters on two major levels that are on individual and social levels. It brings to light the unassuming and restrained mentality of characters in the terrific time period of continuous suffering, terror, and jihad. The unpretentious life of Mikal and his clash between duty and faith, peace and terrorism has been depicted. This work examines the experiences of the struggle of Naheed between love and honor. This research has helped to better understand people who strive incorrectly in the name of religion and others who strive to do the right thing because it is their basic human responsibility.

Keywords: Suppression of desires, subjugation, violence, repulsive experiences, psychological impacts.

Introduction

Through the lens of psychoanalysis, this study investigates repressed emotions and experiences in The Blind Man's Garden (2013). It discusses the life of Mikal, the protagonist that is full of repressed emotions and experiences due to influence of war and political upheavals. It ties together many human connections, marriage, brotherhood, parenting challenges, and our natural obligation to those who are important to us. It explores how war and terror have irrevocably changed the way people live.

This study highlights the experiences of continuous repression and repressive happenings in the life of major character Mikal from childhood to his youth under the existing social, cultural, and political conflicts in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This work illuminates characters' modest and repressed psyches throughout the fantastic age of terror and jihad. This study deals with the life and experiences of characters in a conflicting zone of justice and injustice. In this research, repression is used as a defense mechanism in order to survive in an atmosphere of deep distress, anxiety, and fear.

The reader is transported to the heart of conflict to towns and villages in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the US-led War in Afghanistan following the September 11th attacks, to the sites of jihadists and peace activists, from torture camps to places of splendid natural beauty, clear starlit nights, and verdant gardens, in Aslam's novel. The large novelistic

landscape contains a wide range of details, with ethical dilemmas centered on how people treat one another being the most important concerns. Despite the fact that the events of 9/11 occurred thousands of miles away from Pakistan, the residents of Heer, a small fictional hamlet, are severely affected.

Jeo is a third-year medical student who wants to help injured soldiers, thus the two brothers crossed the border into Afghanistan not to fight, but to help the wounded. Mikal is named after the Archangel Mikal or Michael, and despite the fact that he has been a drifter since the age of fifteen, he is humble and unpretentious, preferring his own solitude to his foster-father Rohan's house. Despite his unusual mechanical aptitude, he supports himself by working at a gun shop. Despite the fact that both brothers have emotions for the same girl, Naheed, whom Jeo married a year ago, Mikal joins Jeo on his voyage to the Afghan border, mostly to protect his naiver foster brother. Aslam's cast of characters is diverse, with aggressive and cruel Pakistanis and Afghans selling the two innocent young men to a Taliban warlord, who sends them straight to the battlefield, where Jeo is slaughtered. Mikal has been imprisoned and sold to the United States. An Al Qaeda operative acquired the moniker of terrorist by ruthlessly slicing off his two index fingers in this barbaric act.

Mikal's ability to survive and overcome unimaginable traumas such as captivity in an American interrogation camp, from which he is mercifully released but not before killing two of his American captors in an act of erroneous self-defense, is the subject of this novel. Mikal is ultimately troubled by this unintentional murder. He will not find peace until he has made amends by saving and shielding an American soldier, whom he recognizes as the brother of one of his victims, at considerable personal cost. Mikal may never return to Heer or Naheed, the woman he loves. Despite the atrocities he has suffered at the hands of his American interrogators, he makes every effort to atone for the killings he committed. Mikal regards all life as equally valuable, and he does not distinguish between American, Pakistani, or Afghani life. Aslam frequently puts Mikal in morally difficult circumstances, and each time he chooses the high road supplying literature with alternatives to the Western idea of the aggressive, violent Muslim guy. Mikal has no belief system that coalesces into a cohesive framework that would justify his horrible acts. Morally he is a man of great integrity, often choosing the good over evil. Mikal's enemies are not clear. He is not driven by ideology or politics, and therefore his conduct is difficult to assess.

Mikal's strange ability to survive in what would seem an impossible situation for any human being is best understood as a form of autism or Asperger's Syndrome, combined with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These two psychological conditions can give rise to strange and unusual behavior in children and adults who have suffered some sort of abuse or trauma at an early age, often experiencing early childhood abandonment as well. Mention has been made of Mikal's early experience of being abandoned by his father, whom he never knew. Mikal's father was an institutionalized basket case who had a hazy memory of holding his son in his arms; it could be assumed that he suffered from some sort of personality disorder. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that at an early age Mikal was exposed to traumatic and deeply painful experiences such as physical assault, sexual abuse, and neglect.

Mikal is entirely alone in the world. His foster-father eventually dies after becoming physically unable to care for him, and Maryam, Mikal's mother, is an alcoholic woman who lives with another man while ignoring her son. At the age of fourteen, Mikal's mother abandons him for good. He is forced to fend for himself, moving from one friend's house to

another until he can finally live on his own. In his youth Mikal got married to a girl named Naheed. However, she left him after a few months because she could not stand the fact that he was not emotionally attached to her and his dedicated pursuit of religious studies. After Naheed left Mikal, they met again on the day when he had been shot in the back by American troops. At that meeting, Mikal and Naheed were both suffering from immense psychological traumas and because of their own problems they were unable to look beyond their present circumstances (57).

This research work deals with the study of *The Blind Man's Garden* in light of the theory of psychoanalysis which is one of the modern theories that are used in English literature. Sigmund Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis. In this study repressed emotions and experiences of characters are discussed on an individual as well as communal level. The major character or hero of the novel Mikal is suffering from immense repression of desires in a condition of severe hardships, continuous fear, war, and terror. He is facing such situations throughout the novel and striving hard to survive.

Research Objectives

- To highlight the use of repression; a defense mechanism to avoid the complexity of relationships in *The Blind Man's Garden*
- To explore the repression of desires and emotions of Mikal and his family in *The Blind Man's Garden*
- To throw light on individual as well as communal repression in *The Blind Man's Garden*

Research Questions

- How do the emotions of people change with threat of war, terror, and prison?
- How did war and 9/11 become the focal points of conflict in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is to highlight the repressed emotions and experiences of people under the conditions of hopelessness in unavoidable social norms. This research has helped to better understand people who strive incorrectly in the name of religion and others who strive to do the right thing because it is their basic human responsibility. It focuses on the suppression of desires due to the pressure built up by society and tense atmosphere in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It also deals with war and terror in countries, repression of desires because of the fear of loss, unpredictable as well as presumed threat, inhumanity due to lust for power and authority, unintentional and intentional murder, mutilation to show authority and control, and under the enormous economic and social pressure. This research paper will help future researchers look at various dimensions and aspects from which they were not aware before.

Literature Review

This section examines previously held beliefs about how people behave in depressed, war-torn, terror-torn, and threat-torn environments. Sethna (2013) draws a line between love and

war working side by side in Aslam's novel. She tells about the condition of people affected by war. She describes war as an ugly thing that shattered everybody's life. Donaldson (2013) talks about the lives of the characters like Mikal, Joe, and Rohan and how miserable they are. The magical dreams are becoming nightmares for them. Cummins (2013) reviews that Aslam's novel contain violence and repressive feelings as the food provided to people is insufficient. The forceful urine drinking by children and dead dog's bone marrow is one of them. Mikal's treatment in prison is also seems to be inhumane. Thomson (2013) writes that the time period after the incident of 9/11 became a havoc for Muslims. They are set to view through a judgmental lens. Taliban and their role in war is also presented as fearsome and inhumane.

Levy (2014) recalls wandering among the sensuous gardens, Christian and Muslim schools, disputed mosques, villages, and battlefields of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Taliban, Al Qaeda, and American troops. Rind (2015) discusses feminism and how women are treated. Women in the Pakistani community in Afghanistan suffer in silence. They are prone to abuse and dehumanization. Pirzadeh (2016) discusses how knowledge appropriation and watchful images transform land into hazardous and hostile place in Aslam's novel. In this review he says that armed forces re-deploy vigilant visuals to infiltrate the land in pursuit of terrorist hideouts, codifying it as hostile area. Boehmer (2017) examines Postcolonial writing, whether characterized as resistance or hybrid cosmopolitanism. It addresses the difficulties that arise in a pressured society. In this sense, it provides avenues for thinking through and beyond horror and devising effective political responses to it. Noor (2020) reviews about trauma in the novel that impacts each character differently.

Discussion and Analysis

In Aslam's novel, the reader is transported to the heart of conflict in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the US-led War in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, to the sites of jihadists and peace activists, from torture camps to places of splendid natural beauty, clear starlit nights, and verdant gardens. This section deals with the analysis of *The Blind Man's Garden* by Nadeem Aslam through psychoanalytical perspective of repressed emotions and experiences. There are two kinds of repression discussed there in this research. Aslam has artistically depicted the mind of characters. He has drawn attention to suppression on both an individual and a social level. Individual, societal, cultural, and communal pressures are exerted on the protagonists in this tale. All the major and minor characters have suffered from the feeling of distrust, fear, and rage to some extent. This research deals with all these feelings and experiences in the lives of people. This chapter has highlighted the emotions, feelings, and conditions of all characters in the novel to show people's mental conditions as a result of war and terror.

Individual Repression in The Blind Man's Garden

This part of study is focusing on repressive emotions and experiences of characters individually depicting their distinguished experiences. Each character in *The Blind Man's Garden* is suffering from different problems. The protagonist of the novel Mikal has suffered such emotional pressure due to his encounter with war, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, warlords, and severe condition of suppression of desires. His father Rohan, the blind man, is also suffering as in the very start of the novel it is stated that, "Under certain conditions, wounds are said to emit light—touch them, and the light will remain on the hands—and as the candles burn, Rohan considers each flame to be an injury somewhere in his house." (Aslam 1). This shows that sufferings are there in their lives from the beginning till the end. Rohan and Mikal are the

two major characters in the story. Rohan being a blind man, he has suffered from emotionally repressed state due to his physical disability of not having sight but his mind going blind. This is also seen when Rohan says, "I am going blind for this poor world. I will be nothing but an empty shell" (Aslam 2). This shows that he has suffered psychologically due to his incapability to see the world clearly or even see everything around him. The other character in the novel is Mikal, who is suffering from severe compulsion of lusting after Shazia and also suffering from repression of sexuality by prohibiting it. He is emotionally repressed due to the pressure of unwanted sexual desire. These are the two major characters in the novel, who are suffering psychological repression due to their mentioned problems. There are some other minor characters who also suffer repression; however their condition is different as compared to these two main characters. The story of suppressed emotions and experiences of these characters also portrays them as victims of oppressive culture, corrupted society, and system.

Repression of Desires and Emotions

Rohan has suffered a lot throughout his life. His wife died as an apostate four years after the birth of Joe. His life was a picture of continuous struggle and control of desires and emotions. Rohan can never save the life of his son who went to Afghanistan from Peshawar without telling him. His memories are also repressive as "Preparing himself for blindness he commits everything to memory" (20). Rohan became the victim of violence by an Afghani warlord and became blind, increasing his difficulties in life. He became blind by a warlord when he throws pieces of stone into his eyes as:

The warlord is standing above him, his hand extended, the hand he had rejected. As the warlord lowers his hand, Rohan notices the pulverised remains of the ruby in his palm, the stone crushed into tiny fragments. Calmly, the man inserts a fingertip into the shattered diamond, covering it with razor grit, and brings it to Rohan's eyes. He's tired of life without Sofia, and when he slips and falls, feeling a patch of poor grass under his hands, he realises he's blind. (67)

Joe, a medical student, is also depicting repressed experiences. He has left his wife of twelve months named Naheed, for helping the wounded people in Afghanistan. He has been trapped to fight rather than to heal as he says quietly, "They know I am not a fighter," and Mikal replies, "They'll make you fight, Jeo. They've paid for you. We have to get away from here as fast as we can" (25). He has to face a worse situation when he came to know that his wife has some kind of affair with Mikal. He reads the letters of Naheed to Mikal. He became much depressed when he finds and questions Mikal: "My father caused my mother's death?" (31). Joe died in this novel showing the most devastating experience of his life as well as of the people related to him. His face was broken, as it has revealed when his wife saw his dead body. When Joe's father dies, he feels guilty for the guilt of his own father. He says, "If only I had died before my father did" (36). He also says, "I shouldn't be alive. I should have died before my father did" (36). He has also repressed his desire as he confesses, "I want to marry Naheed and I don't" (37).

Joe came to Afghanistan for the first time. He saw dead bodies, burning villages and people in a very bad condition. He tried to save them with Mikal but all his efforts were futile as he could only save one injured guy who could miss his leg and one old woman who was too weak to survive. He tried to find Rohan in this horrible incident. They found him at last, but he was in a miserable condition with no mind and body. Joe had seen a very bad night in this

horrible incident with burning houses, dead bodies and injured people. They were in a very bad condition.

As Rohan sees his dead son resting there, he starts to talk to Joe. He says, "If I had known more, I would have done things differently" (61). He says, "I know what they did to you down there" (62). In the description of the night of Joe's death, Aslam has mentioned against warlords and terrorists. They have been linked with killing innocent people and harming others by using their arms with no thought at all.

Repression in the Life of a Female

Naheed has also become the victim of continuous repression. Her husband died in Afghanistan, and her mother does not want him to give birth to a child whose father has died. When she tells her mother that she is pregnant, she replies: "We are not telling anyone about this. No one will marry you if you have a child ... If you are a widow, I may marry you off. But if you're a widow with a child, you'll be alone for the rest of your life." (49). But Naheed wants to give birth to her child; in her repressive state she says: "This is my child. I'll bring him up myself" (50). Her love experience in life was also repressive as Mikal left her because she was going to marry his foster brother Joe, but after Joe's death, she started dreaming of Mikal again as she tells her mother: "I know he is alive and that he will come back to me. We loved each other" (53). When she was reading a book, the words revealed her repression: "She reads that love does not make couples invulnerable. Even though the world's beauty and love are on the verge of annihilation, theirs is the only side to take. Hate's success does not change the fact that it is what it is. Love that has been defeated is still love." (67). Mikal came back but for a short time period. She looks at him and says "If I thought you were dead I wouldn't be here" (158). But at the near end her repressed experience has shown as "... Years pass while she waits for Mikal, who is now more of a sensation than a person " (213). Naheed's love life remains a struggle in itself having many ups and downs in it.

A Bird Pardoner's Repressive Experiences

Life of Abdul, the bird pardoner shows repressive emotions and experiences as he tells Rohan, "When I returned home, I discovered that my fourteen-year-old son had fled to fight in Afghanistan. I couldn't come to your place the next day to get the birds because I needed to find him. That night, I caught the train to Peshawar." (58). The warlords took his son as in his poor, repressive condition he says:

Then, all of a sudden, we received this letter. Someone pushed it under the door. He is being held in the jail of an Afghan warlord. They apprehended him while he was fighting for the Taliban, and representatives from the warlord want to meet with me in Peshawar to discuss how I might free him. I don't have enough money to pay for the train ticket to Peshawar. My wife has already sold her earrings, and I have already sold my bicycle. They were our only sources of wealth. (58)

Rohan goes with him to save his son but the prisoners demanded for twenty thousand rupees to free the bird pardoner's son. After being free from prison Abdul's son became too fearful that adds to misery of Abdul's life as "The boy won't let any man come near him" (77). Abdul's son became so depressed due to life threatening situation that he started avoiding people. When Rohan asked him what's wrong he denied any problems and added, "I don't feel like being around anybody." (78).

When Abdul is asked why he doesn't have a job in the beggar role his answer shows how repressive the environment is for him: "I've never had anything so I couldn't take that job. I'm not sure why, but it's just turned me off. When you're no good at something you can't do it. It would be like making love with a statue." (79) He may also feel repressed through his son who no longer follows him as he used to due to fear of warlords.

Rohan's dad is also severely repressive to Rohan because he does not allow him to continue with his education after the death of his mother. He never allows him to go out with his friends or anything. He just doesn't listen and he's a very insensitive father. This is the reason why Rohan says "Dad, they're dead," and the father responds: "They might as well be," (88). To add up, Abdul's son is also very repressive to Abdul because he no longer follows him like before since he rescued him from the warlords in prison and just acts like a statue when asked about his role in beggar role. Rohan is also repressed since after taking in Abdul he's not able to finish his education as his dad doesn't allow him to go out and play with his friends. He just doesn't listen and he's a very insensitive father. This is the reason why Rohan says "It's fine, Dad" then he does not finish the sentence. "Dad, they're dead", then he does not answer and leaves. His dad is extremely repressive to Rohan regardless of changes in Rohan's life.

Repressive Emotions Related to Threat and Despair

Mikal's life remains an epitome of continuous repression and a collection of repressed experiences. He was captured by American and Afghanistan war lords. He was captured in Guantanamo bay under the conditions of strict torture, tensions, threat and fear of death. The first conflicting zone he has to pass through was his love with a girl who was going to marry his brother. He tells her a week before Naheed was going to marry Jeo: "Let's just leave" (7). He also tells her that he loves Joe as well: "I couldn't betray him. He is a brother to me" (9). He has to leave Naheed for the sake of his foster brother as he remarks: "If I don't see you, it could make things simpler for me. I need to learn to love him since none of this is his fault. I won't come again. I'll try to leave the city. It was the sixty-sixth day of her marriage and the last time she saw him" (9). During prison, he wished for Naheed as: "Mikal wants to see Naheed's face. Mikal wants to live with her in the room in Heer. Mikal must find Jeo" (70). His life has become a continuous struggle against the prevailing threats in society.

When Mikal was a child, his father was taken as: "The father was kidnapped by operatives of the government associated with the US, the adversary of Communism" (17). Mikal remained dreaming and wishing for his father. When Rohan adopted him and his brother Basie, he returned to his old house, showing his repressive emotions and love for his father as Mikal said to Basie: "I think he's alive" (18). He has to face repressed experiences when Afghani warlords kept him, he has to face suppression of desires: "Mikal became a prisoner of a warlord, who severed each of his trigger fingers and fastened the two pieces on a door frame with those taken from scores of other victims." (48). His life-threatening situation makes him use defense mechanism in order to mitigate the effect of such experiences in his life.

Mikal has to face individual repression as a prisoner. He was tortured but he was unable to do anything for him, his desires were captured and poisoned as: "Fearing gangrene, he asked them to remove the bullets from his body, but they refused. But then, when he was sleeping two nights later, a big gang of them attacked him with scalpels and knives. There was a report that the Americans had used pure gold bullets." (48). During his time in prison he has to face

severe conditions and has to work opposite to his will showing a repressive experience of his life as:

He has been bartered and sold among many warlords since his arrest in October, and as the weeks have passed, he has said fewer and fewer words, and on most days, he has said nothing at all. He worked as hard as he could because he was afraid of being shot for being nothing more than a mouth to feed. Another dread was being worked into submission. (68)

The warlord dispatched him to a mosque where the Americans would pick him up. Each suspected terrorist receives a \$5,000 reward from the United States. Afghani warlords were delivering them without any knowledge just for the sake of money-making. In the prison of Americans, Mikal was inhumanly treated during his interrogation because they wanted him to confess his relationship with Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar, or Ayman al-Zawahiri. His repressive and suppressive experience is shown as: "Mikal refuses to talk, so they take him to a windowless chamber, connect a chain to his wrists, and order him to lift his arms over his head so the chain can be fastened to a ring on the ceiling. The room is filled with brilliant light. Asleep deprivation cell" (90). They tortured him into confessing what he has not done in his life.

Mikal wants to search for Joe because he was unconscious when Joe was killed and was captured by warlords before he became conscious. At the American prison he started questioning again and again about Joe. American prisoners tortured him by beating a person and calling him Joe. He could not cope with the situation and asked for mercy for that person. When Mikal was set free from American prison because he had no contact with the terrorists, he dropped at the mosque but in his confusion, he killed two American soldiers in the helicopter and ran away. His repressive experience can be highlighted when he has nothing to eat, and his food is miserably bad as:

He extracts the bones of a jackal's faintly rotting corpse with the knife, cracking them open to suck out the marrow sealed inside, still untainted... He builds a fire and roasts the skinned rabbit, devouring every last morsel, unsure if his mutilated hands will grant him the same luck again... In despair, he grabs a snake by the tail and roasts it over an open flame. He travels to Pakistan for eight days. (112)

Mikal become unconscious for five days in South Waziristan at Akbar's house. He remains there for some time before going to Heer. When he went to Heer, he knew about Rohan's condition and Joe's death. His repressive emotion regarding his love with Naheed was shown as: "I haven't seen you in four hundred and seventy-nine days. I have the impression that I have been in 479 battles." (158). He also came to know about the death of his elder brother Basie who has been shot eighty-six times in an assault at Convent school that adds to his repression. His life leads him to repressive experience again when he has to leave Naheed in order to deliver money to Akbar's family. He caught there in a pitiable condition when he tries to help an injured American soldier.

This portion has explained the repressive emotions and experiences of characters. Every character in *The Blind Man's Garden* has repressive experiences as a result of war and severe social, economic, and political pressure. The characters of Mikal, Rohan, Tara, Yasmin,

Basie, Bird pardoner and his son, etc. show their psychological experiences, anger, and fear in different sets of circumstances. On an individual level, each character has used repression as their defense mechanism to cope with the disastrous situations of loss and death. War has changed their normal life into a serious of, distinguished fearful set of experiences. The emotional responses of all the characters change toward other people in society due to war and terrorism. They have faced a lot of repression issues in their lives and they have ways to defend themselves against the harsh effects of reality. They face individual repression, war repression, collective repression, psychological repression, social and cultural repression. Every character has faced different types of pressures in life. The characters like Tara and Mikal start their journey with a desire but when they come across different forms of uneven development resistance to globalization as well as different forms of forces that are used in war there is an interruption or halt in their desire. The characters commit several mistakes due to fear and anxiety in order to lead a normal life. The blind man commits suicide for a selfish and callous reason, to save his sight.

The people and the country of Afghanistan has a lot to suffer from war, terrorism and oppression due to intervention. The people have been at war for more than four decades. However, they are not yet ready enough to accept the conditions that they are facing. They feel the need of unity and cooperation with each other in order to establish peace in their country. The ethical test is how society conducts itself just like how individual characters are affected by war when they face it. The characters in *The Blind Man's Garden* are suffering from repression as a result of war. However, the story has not yet finished, it is continuing and the characters have to face many more situations with pressures and shocks of reality, which will also impact on their development.

Collective Repression in The Blind Man's Garden

This part of research deals with the repression on communal level. The whole community suffered due to some conditions such as the 9/11 attacks, invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, war and terror, a call to jihad, the murder of B. N. Bhutto, execution of Osama Bin Ladan, clash between East and West, history and politics, and October 2001 Neto Forces and Taliban. The psychic exploration of the characters is there as young characters; the grief of young generation is presented. The world trade centre incident shows a day of fire, miseries and problems: "Last month, the United States was targeted with a day of fire on its cities. As a result, Western forces have invaded Afghanistan. Some in Pakistan have dubbed September's terrorist attacks the Battle of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. According to the argument, there are no innocent persons in a guilty nation." (1). This shows that the whole community of Pakistan has become the victim of September terrorist attacks. It was the peak of grief. It was the climax. The whole world was shocked and there were many reactions on this slogan. This event reminded the people of Pakistan, who were the participants in these events, their losses, losses through millions of people and millions of dollars and they still want to find their target. They want to find their enemies. They are looking for "the evil ones" (2).

The blind man's garden is a symbol of each character which represents his or her idea about life (3). All characters are the product of their own culture and they are their own enemies. That is why they all want to be in the garden and enjoy their lives. However, it is impossible to live there. It is impossible to take out their enemies or the idea of those who were supposed to be terrorists in order to stop terrorism and fighting, or making peace and having a national

security system. There was a clash between two poles of politics, history, tribes and religions as well as between two groups of thinkers during Saddam's regime as well as after him (4). The blind man has a point of view of the garden. He is the only person who cannot live in the garden and therefore he is preparing himself to leave. This point shows that each individual character wants to find their own way. Each one is unique. They want to find their own reality, not another's reality because the other's reality has been destroyed and they have no idea about it or cannot see it or are afraid about it (5). There was a clash between two groups of thinkers during Saddam's regime as well as after him and therefore, they lost their lives along with Saddam in 1991. The blind man represents this clash between them (6).

Repressive Emotions of Devastating Society

The use of bird and bird pardoner is discussed, depicting people's false hopes. People are so depressed that they consider themselves as caged and became superstitious. Rohan had remarked to himself, "... the cage was large enough to contain a man ... The more serious the sin, the rarer and more expensive the bird required to atone for it" (2). There was a ray of promise for the future: "Fear not! Heer is on its way to assist you! In the hopes of being heard for thousands of years" (14). The repressive experiences under the strict system of warlords and Taliban in tribal areas of Afghanistan are depicted as:

On a street corner, a group of regular Afghans grabbed him and a Taliban soldier and threw him to the ground. Every ounce of rage—every rape, disappearance, public execution, every hand amputated during the Taliban regime's seven years, every twelve-year-old boy forced into battle, every ten-year-old girl forcibly married to a mullah eight times her age, every man lashed, every woman beaten, every limb broken. (22)

Mikal and Joe are betrayed and sold to warlords they saw a dead body of a person in a miserable condition and a cardboard was there as: "It claims that this is what happens to those who betray Allah's chosen Taliban." (24). Taliban's were brutally treating the people using the name of Islam. As shown by: "Whoever having power wishes to maintain it. That is true of both the Taliban and the West." (43). Islamic fundamentalism depicts the repressive emotions of people in the hands of fundamentalists as women were restricted to enter the graveyard. Yasmin, Naheed and Tara were beaten at graveyard and the women of Ardent Spirit mock them as: "Islam has plummeted as a result of individuals like you. Infidels are invading Muslim nations with impunity because they are filthy, ugly, and unpleasant." (46). The fundamentalist mentalities of Ardent Spirit a school of strict leaders have depressed the community. As shown by: "The women who work here wear a burqa and gloves whenever they wash, cook, or visit a patient. Here we are taught that the very sight of our skin corrupts men, so we must remain covered at all times." (47). The reason behind the occurrence of such repressive emotions and experiences is repression over women by warlords and Taliban in tribal areas of Afghanistan. Nadeem Aslam tries to depict how repressive emotions and experiences have developed the psychological state in tribal areas of Afghanistan. In this novel he uses bird imagery such as caged birds in Shaukat's house. The caged birds denote the emotions and experiences of the people in tribal areas of Afghanistan. The caged birds denote the negative emotions and experiences of the people in tribal areas such as: "...the cage was large enough to contain a man ... The more serious the sin, the rarer and more expensive the bird required to atone for it" (2). The mentalities of Taliban were depressed. People's hopes

were destroyed during warlords and Taliban regime. They consider themselves are like a bird in a cage with no possibility for future success. Such repressive emotions and experiences have developed repressive mindsets, which started from uneducated mullahs that misled masses.

Repressive Experiences due to War

When Rohan and Abdul went to Peshawar to save the son of Abdul from warlords the social repression is depicted there. Rohan sees a boy is weeping and expressing his repression due to warlords as:

They have us imprisoned. They do things to you that make you want to commit suicide. Please remove me... They have this game called 'Nail.' They begin with the younger detainees and inquire about their ages. If the child says twelve, twelve men are dispatched to him. He obtains fourteen if he speaks fourteen. They take him to a room, remove his trousers, and restrain him, and the entire room erupts in screaming. The guys shout louder than the youngster, as if they've gone insane or transformed into ferocious animals. As they do it to him, they yell, 'Nail! Nail! Nail!' (60)

The warlords treated a man like an object and negated their individuality. During the time of Mikal with a father and the son, the communal repression can be depicted when the boy pleads to Mikal as: "Please don't disappear ... The master'll punish us. He will kill us ... We have to go back ... The master is in our family. If we flee, he will torture them to find out where we are and compel us to come out of hiding." (73). The boys of the ardent spirit try to suppress their desires by oppression on others as they suggest, "Why don't we raid the school and kidnap everyone? Both the teachers and the students Make a list of demands public. We should ask the Americans to leave Afghanistan and release all of our brothers who are being held hostage by them." (84). They wanted to make it an international affair of torture and terrorism. This part of study deals with the repressed emotions and experiences at communal level as terrorism and war has depressed people and made them repress their desires. Terrorists have made them depressed, and they always find themselves under enormous pressure. The more they are suppressed, the more they also feel an urge to seek a better life.

The author has also applied this theory in relation to the fictional character of Nadeem Abbas. Nadeem is a writer of novels and short stories. He made his debut with *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013). In this novel, he portrays the life of a man named Nawaz Durrani who is a retired British army officer who lives with his wife and their two sons. His sons were competent soldiers and were killed in the war. He belonged to an affluent upper middle class family. He as a retired army officer is also a kind of social agent has the power to change the lives of other people. He is conscious of his status and power which was able to control people. His 'blindness' is connected with the fact that he can use his power in different ways, which makes him a 'blind man'.

During the war, he tried to save another soldier's life but he got caught in the crossfire. He was injured and lost his eyesight. After this incident, he had no option but to work at a coffee shop as a manager. But it was his chance to meet the other people and understand their life. He meets Salma, who was a worker at the coffee shop. Nadeem has never seen her as a woman but later he finds her loving him. He denies her as he doesn't have time in his personal

life due to his injury and job responsibilities. But after some time, he started to think about Salma and expressed his feelings for her.

Inhumanity Causes Repression

The department of police has become just opposite to their actual qualities of politeness, obedience, loyalty, intelligence, courteousness, and efficiency as a Pakistani citizen (129). As it is depicted that: "In Pakistan, it's impossible not to cringe every time the police solve a crime. There is no way of knowing whether the confession is real, and there is no way of knowing how many innocent people have been tortured to obtain even that." (129). Naheed goes to Peshawar without telling anybody at home, Basie went to police station, the inspector treated him as: "You state your sister-in-law is a widow. Have you explored the idea that she may have escaped with a yaar? He employs a vulgar Punjabi term for a woman's boyfriend." (130). The inspector also demanded that when she returns, he wants to interrogate her, but he can't help them search Naheed, enhancing Basie's repressive emotion.

When the students of Ardent Spirit tried to terrorize the community of Pakistan in Heer by assaulting a convent school, they made everybody feel terror. A woman revealed that: "You're traumatizing children. The children are exhausted and hungry and are not even allowed to drink water... Homesick for lost assurances, the children are falling asleep in clusters, the limbs going limp. The hands are holding on to fistfuls of each other's clothing and the place feels somewhat calmer, almost hushed" (149). To highlight the most pathetic situation: "The terrorists had forced women and children to stand on chairs in front of the windows, to stop the soldiers from shooting into the school from outside" (154). They have treated innocent people as objects for their own protection against government rescue operation. All these describe the condition of Pakistan which is why Awais explains that: "Pakistan is a kind of post-traumatic stress disorder" (110).

Repression in Pakistan, such situation is not a rare instance; it has been long since existed in Pakistan. These repressive attitudes and experiences are just not the end products of an interrogation or the result of an interrogator's tactics; they are rather, rather, the causes of those emotions which have been repressed. Repression here is not like the repression in psychoanalytic theory where it is treated as a kind of defense mechanism that produces an unconscious impulse or thought. It functions differently with respect to its content and audience, context and consequence, as well as its position in the narrative. Repression here implies the suppression of an experience or emotion by an individual which results in a gap between the experience and its acknowledgment or acknowledgement by a self-conscious. An acknowledgement of emotions or experiences cannot occur if it has been suppressed for various reasons or due to fear of facing those emotions or experiences again.

Continuous Repression in Prison

This study theorizes repressed experiences at social level soldiery is also stricken as a woman remarked on their condition as: "Let me tell him," she says. "He fought in a war. No one believes in ghosts more than soldiers" (176). The people that are prisoners are facing the most repressed experience of their lives as the condition of the protagonist Mikal and other prisoners have depicted continuous repression as: "The obscenities and pleas of the other inmates fill the chopper as it transports Mikal to the American jail. Some of them were shot while attempting to flee or resist arrest, and Mikal can smell the blood and tell that some of them have lost control of their bladders due to fear." (87). The situation in an interrogatory session is shown as: "But it is difficult to be sure. The innocent and the guilty both weep in

the interrogation rooms, leaving wet spots on the material of the jumpsuits as they wipe large tears on their shoulders” (173). Innocent people avoid the situation of enormous pressure by weeping in interrogation rooms.

This section has explained the repressive emotions and experience of character. The whole community has suffered due to war and terror both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The community acts as a unit that became the victim of social and political pressure due to depressive conditions in the surrounding atmosphere. Innocent people are considered culprits and tortured to make them confess they have not done. The repressive experiences of the whole society, from children to youngsters and from middle-aged to old age, have been discussed. Afghanistan is a religious country as religion dominates in their day to day activities. The backward culture, traditions and the oppressive government have overshadowed the development of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan are plagued by poverty and lack of resources for development; therefore, people are deprived from their smooth living. The author focuses on war-stricken life in villages surrounding the city of Quetta, Pakistan that have been hit by enemy forces. There is nothing more oppressive than war; it leads to destruction of life and property, as well as emotions and experiences for a normal individual. People tend to forget about everything else when they stand before war; therefore, it causes repressed emotions when circumstances occur like death or destruction.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed the repressed emotions and experiences in Nadeem Aslam’s novel *The Blind Man’s Garden* (2013). In this research paper, a profound argument has been presented about elements of repression due to the incident of 9/11, the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan that caused enormous social and political pressure, the execution of Osama Bin Laden that became a worldwide questionable issue, October 2001 clash between Nato Forces and Taliban that results in loss of several lives, clash between East and West that remains unsolvable, warfare and terrorism by American and Afghanistani war lords that causes destruction at a vast level. All these repressive emotions and experiences are discussed under the theory of psychoanalysis.

The major argument presented in this research paper is that repression is result of control of emotions and desire, a defense mechanism used by people. It leads to the repression of the characters either negatively or positively. In this study, the protagonist of the novel Mikal and all other major and minor characters have faced many repressive experiences in their struggling and staggering lives. They have to pass through such depressing and humiliating situations by controlling their emotions and desires due to prevailing atmosphere of fear and terror.

This research paper has explained the conditions of people due to war, fear, terror, prison, and communal, social, and political pressure. This research paper has explained the elements of repression from psychoanalytical perspective of different theorists. Repression is an element of psychoanalytic theory, so this study has highlighted psychology of characters. This research is descriptive, and it has described about the life of characters and most probably of the protagonist Mikal in a struggling and threatening atmosphere of war and terror.

This research paper has explained how repressive emotions and experiences affect people on an individual and on a communal level. This research has focused on the psyche of people who have to face continuous repression of emotions due to outside pressure of society due to

so called norms. A struggle between reality and fascination is shown that causes people to forget about their actual inner need. People are driven to modify themselves according to external social and communal pressure.

This research has explained the emotions of Mikal and his family due to threat of war, terror, and prison. The effects of war, the experiences of horror, grave dangers, trauma, and anguish of war in the lives of people in Pakistan and Afghanistan are discussed in this research. This study has explained people's repressive experiences in a community facing continuous changes, apparently solvable but inertly unsolvable problems and issues.

Main heading should be in font size 12 and bold while sub-heading should be in font size 11 and bold. Manuscript should be single spaced with font size 11. Data should be compiled systematically and briefly.

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