



## War, Terrorism and Authorial Stance: Appraisal Analysis of the Selected Pakistani Fiction in English

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### Abstract

This study focuses on Pakistani English Fiction, specifically examining its portrayal of contemporary terrorism. The research delves into the authorial Stance within this genre, analyzing how writers express their evaluations and stances. Primary data is drawn from two literary works, Bilal Tanweer's *The Scatter Here is Too Great* and Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden*, published in 2013. Employing a qualitative approach, the study conducts a detailed analysis of violent acts depicted in these novels, emphasizing the negative portrayal of terrorism. Furthermore, it explores the authors' techniques in creating poignant atmospheres to evoke reader sympathy for the victims. The theoretical framework employed is the appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2000), and the novels are analyzed through a close reading technique. This research contributes to a nuanced understanding of how Pakistani English Fiction addresses and critiques the complex and sensitive issue of terrorism in the contemporary world. This study contributes to the broader field of literature and specifically to the genre of terrorism novels.

### Introduction

In today's world, terrorism poses a significant challenge for the international community. Violence and destruction have become pervasive due to its rise. The aftermath of 9/11 has plunged us into an unending war, eroding peace and trust globally. This war has spawned terrorist networks, ideological conflicts, and strained international relations. Even creative works like films and novels bear its influence. According to Frank and Gruber (2012), "Like other academic disciplines that contribute to the current research on terrorism, the field of literary studies is still strongly marked by the impact of "9/11".

The 9/11 terrorist attack profoundly altered not only the world's geopolitical landscape but also left an indelible mark on literature. The chaos and societal upheaval of this event affected Americans and non-Americans. As a mirror of society, literature inevitably reflected these seismic shifts, capturing the trauma and transformation wrought by 9/11. Ramanan (2010) has presented the same idea in these words:

If the world changed after 9/11, literature also changed. Anyone writing after that event was shaped and informed by the event. American writers like Don de Lillo and John Updike and British writers like Ian McEwan faced up to terror in their ways. (p. 4)

Post-9/11 Pakistani fiction has keenly responded to the shifting global landscape. Literature created in Pakistan after September 2001 bears the imprint of these transformative events. Novelists have vividly portrayed the impact of 9/11 on Muslim-majority nations, capturing the complexities and repercussions of this pivotal moment in history.

This study explores Pakistani English Fiction, specifically examining how it portrays terrorism in the contemporary world. The study also explores the authorial Stance, where writers express their Evaluation and Stance. Two literary works, *The Scatter Here is Too Great* by Bilal Tanweer and *The Blind Man's Garden* by Nadeem Aslam, published in 2013, have been selected as primary data. Through qualitative analysis, the study investigates violent acts depicted in these works and examines the negative portrayal of terrorism. Additionally, it explores how writers create heart-wrenching atmospheres to evoke reader sympathy for the victims.

The novel *The Scatter Here is Too Great* provides a glimpse into urban life in Karachi, Pakistan, during a period marked by violence and extremism. The story unfolds as a bomb detonates during a crowded afternoon intersection, plunging the city into chaos and leaving its inhabitants devastated. Tanweer (2013) captures the profound pain and loneliness experienced by the people, offering a poignant portrayal of a city grappling with inhumane violence. Set against the backdrop of post-9/11 Pakistan, *The Blind Man's Garden* unfolds in the small town of Heer in the Punjab province, focusing on foster brothers Jeo and Mikal. In an attempt to aid wounded civilians without participating in the war, they go to Afghanistan, where they are betrayed and captured by warlords who sell them to American soldiers. Joe loses his life, and Mikal is taken into US custody. Jeo's father, Rohan, a benevolent and devout figure, founded the Ardent Spirit school, which radical Islamists later seized. Rohan's vision was destroyed by a warlord in Afghanistan when he attempted to liberate the son of a bird pardoner from him. Aslam (2013) portrays Afghan society amidst escalating tensions between American soldiers and the Taliban, using an initially exquisite garden as a metaphor that later turns dull and unstable. The novel explores the impact of war on ordinary lives as Rohan's family becomes victims of a conflict that disrupts their happiness, highlighting how innocent individuals bear the brunt of war and terror.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent decades, the incident of 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks have engendered trauma across the globe. As a result, violence, terrorism, and displacement became the core topics in literary works. Every writer, in one way or another, portrayed the victims and gave them a voice as to how they responded to these terrorist attacks. These contemporary issues greatly influenced the plot, setting, narrative, and even the story's characters. Suppose a writer portrays terrorism in his works to provide a real image of the world being bulldozed completely by violence. In that case, he will make it different from the Romantic stories where love, courtship, and relationships are common. So, these works require full and undivided attention to understand their technicalities and complexities.

#### **Significance of the Study**

Terrorism and its impacts are hot topics in Pakistan. The effects of terrorism on politics, education, security, and development are profound. Over the past decade, investigating its causes, consequences, and potential solutions has been crucial for Pakistani academia. This study contributes to the broader field of literature and specifically to the genre of terrorism novels. Additionally, the study delves into the writer's style and Evaluation within the selected texts. As mentioned by Hyland (2005), Academic writing has lost its traditional tag as an impersonal form, but it is seen as a persuasive attempt to reflect solidarity between reader and writer. By skillfully using language, writers align readers with their arguments, aiming to establish credibility and actively involve them in the discourse. This research contributes to discourse analysis by examining how writers tailor their texts to meet audience expectations.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To highlight the impact of rising terrorism on the social and political landscape with special reference to Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11
2. To explore the Authorial Stance and to describe how authors position themselves relative to their texts.
3. To explore the Stance of the authors towards American soldiers and the Taliban

#### **Research Questions**

1. How has the phenomenon of terrorism been portrayed in the selected Pakistani fiction in English?
2. How are the characters' responses evaluated, and how far do the writers create feelings of pity and fear in the characters?
3. Under what circumstances do the characters pour out their point of view? Does it convey the Stance of the writer?

### Literature Review

Terrorism involves the use of force to harm human lives, driven by political, ideological, or religious motives. It includes threats of violence to provoke fear and manipulate group behavior. (Turner et al. 1996)

Terrorism can also involve criminal groups using violence to intimidate people and seize control of a state by overthrowing the existing government. Scholars have provided varied definitions of terrorism, with some emphasizing terrorists' motives and others concentrating on their chosen strategies.

In the words of Underhill (2014):

Terrorism has also been defined as being a collective action and political act taken in the name of a group based on ethnicity, religion, nationalism, or ideological orientation to gain political needs through the use of violence and intimidation (p. 4).

Natasha (2014), in her book "*Countering Global Terrorism and Insurgency*" extensively explores the intricacies of terrorism, offering a comprehensive context for public comprehension:

While acts of violence are prevalent globally, Pakistan has particularly grappled with devastating terrorist attacks, causing significant societal upheaval. Historical records reveal that the country enjoyed peace, with people living in favorable conditions until the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. This invasion, among the most horrific attacks in history, disrupted global stability, invaded the peace of Pakistan, and ushered in enduring challenges (Michael, 2007).

The aftermath of 9/11 and subsequent attacks has profoundly disrupted Pakistan, shattering its socio-political structure and causing severe economic repercussions. Hamid, in *Discontent & its Civilizations* (2014), highlights the devastating decade when the annual death toll surged from 164 in 2003 to 3,318 in 2009. The impact is war-like, transforming daily life, especially in education and socio-cultural practices. Militants have targeted educational institutions across the country.

#### Pakistani Literature in English

Under British rule, English emerged as the preferred means of communication among the elites in the subcontinent, attaining a superior status. Those educated in England or elite institutions established by the British administration used English for intellectual expression (Ahmad, 2004).

In the early nineteenth century, a pivotal shift occurred in Pakistani literature as writers in the subcontinent began crafting fiction in English, gaining global recognition. English's elevated status gave Pakistani novelists a substantial readership, making their literary productions prominent internationally. Notable authors, including Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid, and Kamila Shamsie, have achieved bestselling status and won awards.

From the 1980s onward, novelists from this era received international acclaim, with the Pakistan Academy of Letters acknowledging English literary works for national awards. The academy has recognized Bapsi Sidhwa, Nadeem Aslam, and Mohsin Hamid.

Tariq Rahman's book, *A History of Pakistani Literature in English*, extensively discusses the trends and genres beyond fiction. It places Pakistani literature in the context of other third-world literatures, with chapters dedicated to Ahmad Ali, Zulfikar Ghose, and Bapsi Sidhwa. (Cilano, 2013).

Numerous Pakistani writers, frequently educated and living in the West, explore social issues, providing distinctive viewpoints. During the pre-partition period, Muhammad Ali, the founder of the Writers' Progressive Movement, expressed opposition to British colonization in his renowned work *Twilight in Delhi*. Ahmad (2010) analyzes this novel from a postcolonial perspective, emphasizing Ali's firsthand experience of the people's pain and suffering in the subcontinent. The novel effectively depicts the harsh reality faced by the Muslim population, skillfully addressing issues such as communal violence, massacres, and human rights violations.

This study examines terrorism-related themes discussed by Pakistani novelists without endorsing any specific group or displaying political bias. The focus is on portraying American soldiers and Afghan Taliban as depicted by the authors. The study maintains neutrality and avoids adopting slanted or biased perspectives on the ongoing sociopolitical turmoil.

Numerous investigations have delved into the portrayal of terrorism in literature, yet there is a noticeable scarcity of comprehensive studies examining the theme within Pakistani literature using an appraisal framework. The

present study aims to fill this gap. This study is unique as it employs the appraisal framework proposed by Martin and White (2000) to analyze the language utilized in the selected novels. The primary objective is to uncover how Pakistani authors employ linguistic devices in their works to denounce terrorism and its perpetrators vehemently.

### **Research Methodology**

This research employs qualitative methods for data collection, focusing on Pakistani creative writings in English that reflect the issue of terrorism. The study contextualizes its exploration by referring to the significant event of 9/11. Examining two distinguished works, *The Scatter Here is Too Great* by Bilal Tanweer and *The Blind Man's Garden* by Nadeem Aslam, published in 2013, the research aims to offer valuable insights into Pakistan's ongoing struggle with various issues, particularly terrorism.

These novels, considered exemplary in Pakistani Fiction in English, provide a unique perspective on the consequences of war, particularly post-9/11 scenarios. *The Blind Man's Garden* delves into the Afghan war from a Pakistani viewpoint, offering reflections on the impact of 9/11 on the Islamic world. The turbulent history of Pakistan has significantly influenced its literature, shaping the narratives of novels and poems. The research acknowledges the role of creative writers in reflecting the historical changes and developments in Pakistan. Poets like Habib Jalib have criticized extremism, advocating for mutual love, peace, and brotherhood. The analysis in this research will delve deeper into these literary works, providing a comprehensive understanding of their portrayal of the complex socio-political landscape influenced by historical events.

Emphasizing the significance of context in research, this study highlights the importance of understanding literary works by exploring various pieces that address the themes of terrorism and violence. Extensively discussing works from Punjabi and Urdu Literature, the research acknowledges the possibility of occasional deviations but recognizes these works as integral in establishing a comprehensive context for the study.

### **Close Reading Technique**

The close reading technique is employed to thoroughly examine and analyze the theme of terrorism, aiming to discern the writer's perspectives on the subject. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the selected texts. This technique can be best explained through Shanahan's (2013) and Fisher and Frey (2013) quotations. Shanahan (2013) notes that there are different purposes for each of the subsequent readings of a text. For example, he suggests that the first reading focus on "What does the text say?" Whereas the second reading should focus on "How does the text work?" and the third reading should focus on "What does the text mean?"

In literary criticism, close reading technique enhances comprehension and extracts meanings from complex texts. When meanings are not explicitly stated, readers must meticulously analyze every part of the text to unveil hidden meanings. For analyzing the theme, Fisher and Frey (2013) suggest that "Either the purpose is not stated or is purposefully withheld. The reader has to determine the theme or the message" (p.32). For this purpose, the study closely reads the selected texts to identify and extract pertinent passages for analysis.

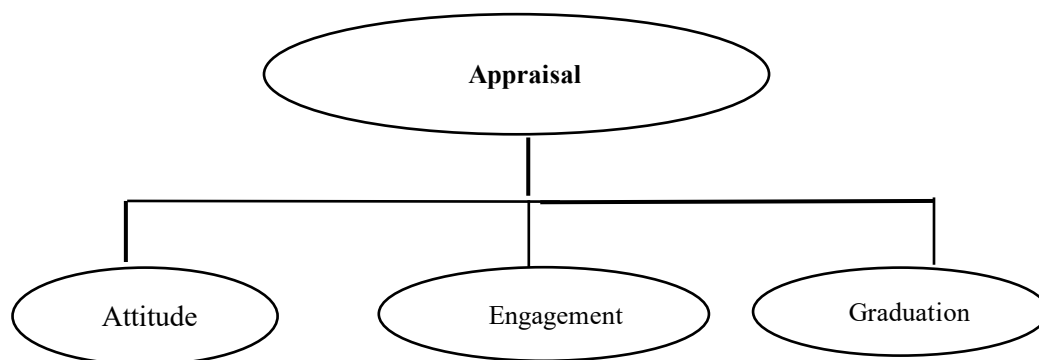
### **Theoretical Framework**

The present study employs the Appraisal theoretical framework developed by James Martin and his colleagues in 1990. This framework, widely utilized in social sciences research globally, offers a comprehensive approach to understanding Evaluation and Stance in a text. They were inspired by Systematic Functional Linguistics, which is a new approach to the use of language proposed by Michael Halliday. According to this approach, speakers use language to carry out different functions in a given context. These functions include using language to talk about our experiences of the world and to describe the state of affairs (Halliday calls it experiential meaning); speakers use language to interact and communicate with others, to establish and maintain relations with them and express their viewpoints on the world (called Interpersonal meaning). The last function of language use is to formulate messages to the expectations of the audience and to a specific social context (called textual meaning) (Thompson, 1996).

In contemporary discourse, writers frequently employ linguistic resources to evaluate and take a stance on phenomena, making the discourse less impersonal. This expression can be direct or implied, either presented in the text or presupposed. Therefore, the study utilizes appraisal to investigate how language is employed to evaluate, present perspectives, and manage interpersonal connections within a text.

In the words of Martin (2002), appraisal is "a framework for analyzing evaluation and situation in a text. It provides techniques for the systematic analysis of Evaluation and Stance as they operate in whole texts and in groupings of texts from any register" (P.1). Evaluation here indicates how the writer or speaker takes either a positive or negative opinion of participants, actions, and other worldly matters. It also includes how the writer passes judgment on other participants in the light of their actions and emotions. The same idea has been presented by Martin and Rose (2007): "More specifically, Appraisal is concerned with evaluation- the kinds of attitudes negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved, the ways in which the values are sourced and the readers aligned."

**Figure 1. An overview of appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005, p. 38).**



In this study, the Appraisal framework proves crucial for analyzing how writers pass judgment on various aspects using linguistic resources. The examination of linguistic resources is conducted within the three semantic categories—attitude, Engagement, and graduation—in a systematic manner. The study scrutinizes relevant statements and quotations from the selected works while also referencing contemporary fiction addressing themes of terrorism and turbulence. Additionally, research articles and general books focusing on terrorism's reflection in literature are considered. The study extends its scope to include insights from new, innovative, and interdisciplinary journals covering terrorism-related issues.

As previously mentioned, Appraisal theory explores three language phenomena: attitude, Engagement, and graduation. Attitude deals with the values through which speakers express judgments and associate emotional responses with participants and processes (White, 2001). It signifies how speakers or writers use linguistic resources to positively or negatively evaluate something, encompassing the assessment of people, characters, feelings, and situations. This category is further subdivided into effect, judgment, and appreciation.

Affect is divided into two factors: firstly, it can be either positive or negative, reflecting human emotional reactions. This expression can be direct, clearly stated in the text, or implied, recognizing that emotions are not always explicitly articulated. People convey their emotions directly through words that signify specific feelings or describe physical actions that convey emotions—such as shouting and yelling when angry or laughing when happy. Emotions, in this context, serve as a revealing element of a person's character. (Tian, 126)

Recognizing that emotions are individual responses crucial in shaping one's character, Appraisal theory operates under the premise that emotions are triggered by evaluations. In essence, individuals use emotions as a means to pass judgment on specific events or situations. Positive emotions, such as love, excitement, and ecstasy, arise when a situation is favourable, while negative emotions, like hatred, disappointment, and melancholy, surface when events hurt their feelings and self-esteem. (Bippus & Young, 2012)

Judgment is the Evaluation of human beings, their physical actions and how they respond to worldly matters. According to Foley (2011), "Judgment is concerned with how the speaker or writer evaluates people and their behavior" (P.125).

Here we explain all three components with examples;

1. I **adore** Elizabeth from the core of my heart.
2. He is **loyal** to his country.
3. Sara looks very **beautiful**.

The term "adore" in the first sentence reflects an emotional attitude towards Elizabeth, while "loyal" in the second sentence implies a value judgment aligned with certain social norms and values. Similarly, the term "beautiful" in the third sentence conveys an aesthetic value towards Sara. All these values fall within the category of attitude in the Appraisal framework.

### Engagement & Stance

Authors are inherently present in their works, consistently aiming to instill their viewpoints in readers' minds. In essence, writers forge connections between individuals and between people and ideas. Numerous studies affirm that a well-crafted academic text demonstrates the writer's awareness of their audience. Systemic Functional Linguistics aligns with this perspective, emphasizing that all language usage is influenced by distinct social and institutional contexts. In summary, writers tailor their texts to meet the expectations of their audience. (Hyland, 2005)

To make people take their work seriously, writers include different voices in their writing. Readers play an active role and can agree or disagree with what the writer is saying. It's the readers' choice whether they agree with the writer's arguments and opinions. Discourse usually has at least one voice, which is the writer's voice, when they express judgments and share their opinions. White (2005) calls it Authorial Stance, which is how writers present themselves and share their commitments, opinions, and claims.

Hyland (2005) divided voice into Stance and Engagement, two types of voice that contribute to the communicative goal of a discourse. Further elaborating on the point, he notes;

Engagement is an alignment dimension where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations. (p.176)

A crucial point is that writers aim to persuade their readers, considering their social background and employing linguistic resources deemed acceptable and valid within that context. To bolster their claims, writers endorse their statements and integrate them as active participants in the text. Like Hyland, Martin & Rose (2007) also divided voice into two categories: heterogloss and monogloss. The former denotes voices apart from the writer, while the latter pertains to the singular voice of the author.

In this study, Engagement is used to see how much the writer supports the statements of others, especially in terms of characters' responses to violent acts in society. The study aims to understand when and how the writer includes other voices in the text and considers their perspectives.

Characters in the selected works do not support acts of violence that put human lives at risk. It reveals how writers portray the characters resisting violent acts. However, this resistance is often expressed subtly through the words and emotions of the characters. The study is conducted to explore them.

### Graduation

It is the indication of values by which the writer graduates (increases or diminishes) the intensity of an utterance. Writers make use of linguistic resources to sharpen or blur the effects of the utterances. In the view of Martin (2005), there are more resources available for turning the volume up than for turning it down, such as intensifications, repetitions, and the use of intensified lexis (loathe for dislike). Like the examples;

**Raise** most dangerous, so terrible, quite obnoxious

**Lower** a little sad, a little bit of information

In the above examples the underlined words are used to intensify or lower the effect of the utterances. We say that disliked, hated and detested convey the same meaning but the effect they produce is quite different. This is called gradability. (Martin & White, 2005)

The present study focuses on linguistic tools utilized by the writers, examining how they enhance or soften the effect of the utterances. When characters in the novels endure the horrors of war and distress, the writers purposely

depict these scenes, utilizing linguistic resources to evoke sympathy in readers. These deliberate choices have been thoroughly examined in the analysis section.

### Analysis and Discussion

The main objective of this study is to explore the Stance of the writer towards certain violent acts. It is worth mentioning here that the meaning of a literary work cannot be understood just by reading its plot, but it depends heavily on the author's perspective. To fully understand a literary work, readers need to consider the ideological and moral views presented by the writer. Authorial Stance and reader response are the substance of literary experience; they are, accordingly, the proper subject matter of literary criticism. (Carroll, 2012)

The study uses an appraisal framework to explore Evaluation and authorial Stance in the selected works. This framework explores three types of Language phenomena: attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. The study analyzed the selected texts sequentially, taking into account the appraisal framework. It is as follows;

#### *The Blind Man's Garden*

Nadeem Aslam was born in Pakistan and now lives in England. In *The Blind Man's Garden*, he portrayed the victims of the American war on terror. This novel is set in Afghanistan, in a village named "Heer" located in Punjab province. Through ordinary people's lives, he visualizes the impact of 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror on the masses and sheds light on the sociopolitical circumstances of our country. At the time when the conflict intensifies between the American soldiers and Taliban, most of the children are trained in Jihadi camps and sent to Afghanistan. Through this novel, the writer delineates how these children are betrayed, tortured, and become a part of a war in which they have no interest.

The study analyzed this novel through close reading techniques to highlight the impact of rising terrorism on the social and political landscape of our country. The study highlights how the characters' responses are being evaluated by the writer and how far the writer conveyed their emotions, pity, and fear. Relevant texts have been taken from the original text to answer the research questions.

#### Graduation

It refers to values through which speakers or writers graduate (intensify or diminish) the effect of utterances. The writers make use of linguistic resources to sharpen or blur the effects of the utterances. There are more resources available to intensify the effect like repetitions, intensified lexis, comparative and superlative morphology (Martin, 2001). The study analyzes the works in the light of these resources to explore why the writers have use them? What are the motives of the writers in using such linguistic resources? The study answers all these questions in the following;

#### Extract 1

**Every** ounce of rage-every rape, every disappearance, **every** public execution, **every** hand amputated during the past seven years of Taliban regime, **every** twelve-year-old-boy pressed into battle by them, **every** ten-year-old girl forcibly married to a mullah eight times her age, **every** man lashed, **every** woman beaten, **every** limb broken. (p. 52)

Aslam (2013) portrays the way Taliban are treating civilians in Afghanistan. The Taliban are ruling with an iron hand, punishing and mistreating women, children, and old people. The author uses repetition to intensify the cruelties and brutalities of the Taliban. The word "every" is used ten times to further emphasize their mistreatment of people. Women were not allowed to work outside and were told to wear burqas from head to toe in public. The Taliban were violent and dangerous. In the novel, a Taliban soldier kicked a little dog out of their jeep and shot it dead with his AK-47. The driver was enraged when he heard a metallic sound from the burqa of a woman standing near the wall. It was the sound of a bangle or earring. The driver took out a leather whip with dozens of coins stitched to its length. Like the following:

The women huddle together and the driver whips this mass of dirty blue fabrics several times, running around to aim at whoever cries out, while with the stock of his AK-47 the other soldier tears open the head of the man who dares to intervene (p.64).

The author reveals the cruelty of the Taliban towards women and animals. Women face severe punishment for wearing jewelry, and a man who tries to help is brutally beaten. No one is considered innocent unless they obey the Taliban's commands.

### Extract 2

The tip of the foot-long dagger enters Jeo's face through the left cheek- going through the gap between the lower and upper jaw. The sharp metal cuts through the roof of the mouth and reaches under the brain. The blade **grates** against the bone of the skull that it **splinters**, and it **grates** again immediately afterwards when she pulls it out. (p. 75)

In the novel, Jeo and Mikal travel to Afghanistan to help the injured. They join a convoy, hoping to reach their destination and provide medical assistance. Mikal, a smart boy, guides the convoy using his knowledge of stars. Along the way, they face dangerous and shocking scenes. In one passage, Jeo hears the frightening sounds of tank shells, explosions, and gunfire in the distance (p. 56).

During the night, Mikal realizes they're headed the wrong way. He points to the stars to show the driver the correct direction. Suddenly, Jeo hears unfamiliar sounds—explosions, shells, and gunfire. It feels like their lives have entered a new and unsettling reality.

The writer uses intensified words, like "**awful**" and "**crump**," to emphasize the discomfort of the sounds. For example, "crump" is used for a thudding noise.

As they continue, the driver instructs them to fill water bottles. When they return, the convoy is gone, and they are handed over to the Taliban. Taken to a headquarters where Al Qaeda plans attacks, Mikal senses an imminent assault by American soldiers. Soon, grenades explode, gates shatter, and a chaotic battle ensues with screams, shouts, and bullets flying everywhere.

Jeo and Mikal get caught in a deadly attack, but this is just the beginning of their troubles. In a horrifying scene, a woman with a dagger attacks Jeo in their room. The dagger goes through his face, upper and lower jaw, reaching the brain. Jeo, a recently married medical student, utters his last words. War and terror have taken another life.

Jeo's wife, Naheed, spends time in their beautiful garden after his death. One day, a man brings Jeo's dead body, revealing the brutality he faced—broken, swollen face, blood, bruises, and bullet wounds all over. Tara, Naheed's mother, who prayed for Jeo's safety, hears a loudspeaker announcement of his death while sewing dolls for children. The news brings immense sadness to the family. As the passage reads;

"The words are like a blow to her head and chest but for several their meaning eludes her. The ground threatens to dissolve under her feet when she approaches Rohan's house where there is indeed a crowd" (p. 86).

For Tara the tragedy was unbearable as it left her daughter widowed and helpless. The words depict her response in a brilliant way like "**a blow to her head**" denotes the shocking event which has damaging effects on somebody and causes disappointments and sorrows. The sudden catastrophe shattered all her hopes for life. At this time, she was in a perplexed situation and did not know what to do.

### Engagement

Writers play a significant role in their works, aiming to influence readers with their viewpoints. To strengthen their arguments, they incorporate other voices, like characters, to express opinions and claims. In literary terms, there's a concept called "Raisonneur," where a character represents the author's perspective. In simpler terms, this character becomes a mouthpiece for the writer, echoing their thoughts. In "The Blind Man's Garden," certain characters serve as mouthpieces, expressing the author's viewpoints. Naheed's statement is particularly relevant, as it illustrates how characters articulate the writer's perspective in the story. As it is mentioned in the following:

**I am angry** at him for going and going without telling us. **I am angry** at you for not telling us about his intentions. **I am angry** at myself for not detecting it myself. **I am angry** at the Americans for invading Afghanistan. **I am angry** at Al-Qaeda and the Taliban for doing what they did. (p.344)

When Mikal returned from an American prison and met Naheed at Rohan's house, he noticed the once beautiful garden, representing innocence, now marred by the cruelties of war. They talked, and Naheed expressed how things



would be better if Mikal had been with her. Mikal asked if Naheed blamed Jeo for their sorrows. Naheed admitted Jeo's mistake of going to Afghanistan without her consent. She wondered how she and others remained unaware of his intentions, and Mikal's silence made the situation worse.

### ***The Scatter Here is Too Great***

This book, published in 2013, consists of nine interconnected stories forming a novel. Set in Karachi, where around 30,000 civilians were killed in various attacks and blasts that same year, the author, a resident of the city, portrays its changes. Despite the love for the city, witnessing its turmoil causes the writer deep distress. The novel serves as a haunting portrait of Karachi during violent times, offering a human perspective to a city plagued by inhuman violence.

The story revolves around ordinary people whose lives intersect after a bomb blast at Cantt station. They remain anonymous, connected only by this incident. The blast occurs during rush hour, causing chaos and destruction. The writer vividly captures the pain, loneliness, and tragedies of those whose lives are shattered by this event. The novel has been analyzed using the Appraisal framework, delving into its three parts.

#### **Affect & Graduation**

Affect indicates whether the writer has a positive or negative view about something and how he relates emotional responses to it. In the novel, the writer skillfully intensifies the emotional impact using linguistic resources.

In one part of the story, a teenager takes his mother's car without permission to go on a joy ride with his beloved to the sea. The car is precious to his mother, representing her savings. Despite the excitement, their journey takes a tragic turn near Cantt station when a bomb explodes. The chaotic scene, with smoke and dust, terrifies everyone. The boy becomes even more distressed when a stray bullet hits the car's windscreen, creating a hole. The writer effectively captures the overwhelming emotions of the boy during this intense moment.

I anticipated the bridge would **blow up** next. My hands felt too weak and I was **seething with anger**. **Why me? Why us? Why now? Why here?** 'Duck!' I shouted at her. 'Hunh?' her eyes were stunned and glued behind us. (p. 38)

The boy is shocked by the blast, witnessing people running from the horrific scene of bloodshed. The atrocity is so terrible that he loses his temper and shouts at his beloved, calling her "Duck" loudly. He fears the bridge might explode, causing more harm.

The writer uses strong words (underlined) to intensify the effect of the boy's utterances. Overwhelmed and burning with anger, the boy questions why he came there and why he has to endure this. This unique writing style effectively conveys his emotional response to the incident.

The writer's attitude, reflecting emotions and feelings in the writing, is evident in words like "dark," "fire," and "smoke" used in the passage. These words highlight the character's distress and the negative atmosphere in the city. The boy, initially seeking entertainment, now regrets coming and blames his beloved for planning the visit. Feeling young and weak, he struggles to cope with the miseries around him.

#### **Engagement**

In the final part of the novel, a character, a professional writer, serves as a voice for the author. He roams the city, trying to realistically portray its broken state in his stories. Similar to Nadeem Aslam, he explores old markets, taxi stands, and observes people daily, ending each day in depression. Despite his efforts, he feels his stories fall short in capturing the bottled-up grief in the city.

A call brings him to the hospital, where his friend Sadeq, present at Cantt station during the blast, has severe injuries. The hospital is chaotic with patients, stretchers, and little space to move. Witnessing a naked and severely injured man pleading for help adds to the writer's fear and depression.

His despair deepens when he discovers that Comrade Sukhansaz, a revolutionary poet and his father's close friend, is dead. Seeing the flesh and dead bodies nauseates him, realizing the city is dying and now only known for the bomb blast.

As the passage reads:

The bomb was going to become the story of this city. That's how we lose the city—that's how our knowledge of what the world is taken away from us—when what we know is blasted into rubble and what is created in its place bears no resemblance to what there was and we are left strangers in a place we know, in a place we ought to have known. (p.173)

The writer expresses deep emotions about a city that fell apart, causing his relationships to decay. The once magnificent city, of Karachi, now lies in ruins, losing its grandeur. The writer is tired of trying to capture the destruction in a complete story, concluding that true stories don't exist—only fragments reflect reality.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the research suggests that understanding terrorism can be gained from fiction. Examining *The Blind Man's Garden* and *The Scatter Here is Too Great*, the study argues that novelists provide a comprehensive understanding of terrorism, condemning both the Taliban and America for their actions. The novels depict the harsh realities in Afghanistan, where the Taliban mistreats children, warlords commit atrocities, and both sides violate human rights. The research affirms that Pakistani fiction accurately portrays societal issues, revealing the impact of 9/11 on Islamic countries. The study successfully addresses questions about literature's insights on violence, identifying perpetrators and victims of terrorism, exploring the lasting effects of 9/11 on Muslim nations, and understanding how authors express their perspectives. Writers and scholars consistently reject violence that endangers human life, advocating for peace and unity. The studied novels feature characters aspiring to a world free from violence and extremism, serving as a call for readers to strive. The recommendations for future research incorporate a requisition for more extensive investigations into terrorism novels spanning from 2001 to the present, with the objective of revealing differences and identifying overarching patterns. Scholars are recommended to diversify the thematic scope beyond war and terror to encompass aspects such as affection, empathy, and nationalism in the chosen literary works. Additionally, there is a suggestion to scrutinize the wider societal impacts of the 9/11 occurrence on politics, education, and socio-economic structures. Acknowledging the immensity of the terrorism and fiction domain, future investigations are implored to venture beyond the authorial standpoint and character sentiments. Furthermore, the extension of linguistic analysis beyond the components covered in the present study is recommended for a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter of an ideal society built on love and respect.

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