CHAPTER II

THE PORTRAYAL OF EAST AND WEST

IN NADEEM ASLAM’S MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS,

THE WASTED VIGIL AND THE BLIND MAN’S GARDEN.
CHAPTER II- THE PORTRAYAL OF EAST AND WEST IN NADEEM ASLAM’S
MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS, THE WASTED VIGIL AND THE BLIND MAN’S
GARDEN.

*The Season of the Rainbirds* (1993) is Nadeem Aslam’s first published novel. The story is set in a small Pakistani town in the 1980s. The novel captures the little town with a large number of characters. Each character is given emphasis in terms of the description. Otherwise, the peaceful village is set to some changes as a bag of letters surfaces. The letters were lost in a train crash and reveal the mystery of the death of Judge Anwar. The novel is a story of hidden secrets in the traditional orthodox stifling religious village. The tiny town is revealed on a vast scale, with multiple events in the novel.

*The Maps of Lost Lovers* (2004) is set in an unnamed community in the Britain. The novel unfolds the events circling the murder of Shamas’s younger brother Jugnu and Chanda. The fabric of the events is woven with the fine details of the life in *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* including religious practices and a closer look at the enclosed chunk of the imaginary town of immigrants in the England. Chanda and Jugnu were killed cold-bloodedly by her brother, Baara and Chhota, clearly a case of honour killing. The novel focuses on the honour killing, life of immigrants, their nostalgia and struggle of identity construction in the first and second generation of immigrants while keeping the focus on the family of Shamas and Kaukab.

*The Wasted Vigil* (2008) begins with the first day of Larissa Petrovna in Afghanistan. She is an art historian at the Hermitage in St Petersburg. The arrival of Lara Marcus in Caldwell’s house in Afghanistan connects the lives of the people related to her brother, Benedict. Lara is trying to find her brother, Benedict. He was a
seventeen years Old Russian soldier partly inspired by communism. Marcus is leading a secluded life after the death of his wife Katrina and disappearance of his daughter, Zameen. Zameen was abducted from their house and was never found. David Town and James Palentine are two Americans and CIA agents who had been working in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region for many years. David is a CIA informant under the disguise of a gem merchant. David and Zameen became lovers. Marcus finds a man unconscious, a radical Taliban member Casa. Marcus without any knowledge of Casa’s connection with the jihadi group shelters him in his house. Dunia is a school teacher in Usha. Despite several warning of dire consequences by Taliban, she continues teaching in the village. The novel reveals the emotions of the characters and how they survive in the war-torn country with their struggle and goals in the difficult life.

The setting of *The Blind Man’s Garden* (2013) is post 9/11 worn-out life in an imaginary town Heer in Pakistan. Jeo and Mikal are friends and foster brothers. At the wake of the US attack on Afghanistan, they want to help the neighbour country. The adventure by means of compassion for Islam brotherhood goes wrong when they are stranded to die under the command of Major Kyra, an operation head of the Terrorist group. Before her marriage with Jeo, Naheed was in love with Mikal. While she waits for their news, Jeo’s corpse reaches home after few days. Mikal is captured as a terrorist by American groups. Jeo’s father Rohan is the eponymous character, the Blind man. Rohan was blinded by an Afghani warlord and misses his dead wife, Sophia. The novel ends with the arrival of Mikal to unite with Naheed. *The Blind Man’s Garden* has a plot of a full circle event, everything coming to the same place with the fair and bitter life. Despite the barriers, East and West reaches to a harmonic level.
This chapter discusses the immigration in the UK, Pakistani communities and immigrant experiences, the role and violation of women in society. The political aspects and religious role are further studied. The chapter concludes with the structure of the novels of Nadeem Aslam and his writing style.

The political events around the world caused the rise of the immigrants in the Europe. In the 1970s most of the colonies were independent, and India and Pakistan with the newly attained freedom in 1947 was a tough phase. The patterns and numbers of refugees shifted relatively with the end of empire. British Nationality Act 1948 authorised the Commonwealth citizens to arrive in Britain. (Smith and Marmo, 23) Due to Post war labour scarcity Britain also offered work opportunities to Commonwealth citizens. The immigrants arrived in the UK after the upheaval in their home countries- Pakistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Uganda and Kenya.

During Jia government more Pakistan Muslims settled their communities in various parts including East London in Britain. News of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which was to remove the right of entry into Britain for Commonwealth Citizens, saw an influx of migrants from the Indian subcontinent, many of them Muslims. (R. Ahmed, Morey and Yaqin, 10)

It was a period in England when the attitude of the natives white towards the dark-skinned foreigners was changing. ‘By then it was the 1970s and because the immigrant families had to live somewhere and were moving in next door to the whites, there were calls for a ban on immigration and the repatriation of the immigrants who were already here.’ (MLL, 14) The impact of 1976, ‘new Race Relations Act (replacing previous legislation) introduced the concept of ‘indirect discrimination’ into the law.’ changed the outlook towards Immigrants mildly. (T. Chaudhary, 116) In South Asian Atlantic Literature 1970-2010, Ruth Maxey
articulates, in *Maps for Lost Lovers (2004)* the host country and home country highlights the gradual changes towards the forty years immigrants’ history in the England. The novel captured ‘the evolution of white attitudes to South Asian immigrants, into its account of contemporary British Asian communities.’ (32) The adaptability of the settlers in a new country begins with the shock, a cultural and societal. The response to the initial shock is absorbed with the reality to face a new life they opted for. The second phase would be the immersion into the new life. The prejudiced and nostalgic ones take more time to adjust and accept their new habitat. Immigrants are confused about the time wondered if the months were same in different continents. (MLL, 21) Aslam speaks as an ‘insider’ who is looking at the events from the point of view and objectivity of an ‘outsider’ to lay out the Pakistani immigrant strata in Britain.

The attachment to the native country, nostalgia is carried alongside the journey to maintain the identity in an assimilating civilisation. The new culture eventually slips into the immigrants and brings out the multicultural society. Most of the immigrants shift from the Eastern countries to the West; Europe, the US, the UK and Australia. *Radicalism, Anti-Racism and Representation* (2013) indicates, amongst the immigrants, the largest visible minority group in the United Kingdom are British Asians. ‘In order to give some indication of the growth and size of these groups, a few statistical estimates may be useful. ‘Between 1951 and 1984-6 the population of Indian and Pakistani origin grew from 35,800 to 1,157,000 and of West Indian origin from 15,300 to 534,000.’(Rees and Shaw qtd in Bonnett, 17)

Under the unfavourable reception and loathing from the Englanders, the immigrants long to go back to their natives. They try to connect with the homeland through various means. For Shamas, colours are important while playing a game of
hide-and-seek with his native country and England. Visuals are attached to the memory and by recreating he can bring back the sentiment to be home. He dreams of crossing Chenab (a river) towards Sohni Dharti and paints the walls of guest room with the same colours ‘blue, strawberry and yellow in the olive-green house in Sohni Dharti.’ is to be able to ‘conjure it up in the years of exile and banishment.’ (MLL, 7) When Kaukab attempts suicide drinking the coin contaminated water he realises the people in Sohni Dharti commit suicide in a similar manner. The impersonation declares her attachment towards her Pakistan. (italics added) The names of towns and landmarks were anglicised by British during their occupation of India and other territories. The British renamed cities and places to familiarise in colonised countries; it is West’s effort to reconstruct in the geographical form. Rightly put as ‘Our definition of this civilization is cultural/political and not geographical.’ (A. Ahmed, 7). The locals of Dasht-e-Tanhaii try to recreate the geographic familiarity by reconstructing the names of the roads as in the Pakistan ‘In Lahore, a road in this town is named after Goethe. There is a Park Street here as in Calcutta, a Malabar Hill as in Bombay, and a Naag Tolla Hill as in Dhaka.’ (MLL, 40) The location from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh synthesises the Indian continent respectively and underline the colonial past.

Aslam pays a literary homage to one of the most famous Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984) as he designates the town of immigrants as Dasht-e-Tanhaii. The word is translated in an assortment as ‘The Wilderness of Solitude’ and ‘The Desert of Loneliness’ in the novel. (MLL, 40) It is a remembrance and tribute to Faiz’s 1952 poem Yad (memory). Faiz was charged with the scheme to oust the government of Liaquat Ali Khan. (Rahim, 423) During his prison years, he composed the poem to reflect familiarity of detention and ordeal of separation from his beloved
country. Like Faiz’s yearning for merger became his survival during the rough phase, *Dasht-e tanhaii* has the theme of partition and unification. The intimately allied Sufi expression of an unreciprocated love and indispensable union in Faiz’s two famous poems *Subh-e Azadi August 1947* (Freedom’s Dawn) and *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* capture the despairs of sovereignty and *Hijr* (Partition). The similar memorandum is evident in the novels of Nadeem Aslam *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* chiefly illustrates mourning and ache of the Pakistani migrants. *Hijr* complies unrequited love of the nation in the novels of Aslam. Abid Tamimi’s Punjabi song in the *Maps for Lost Lovers*, ‘You ask for my address—the name of my town is Loneliness’, deepens the gloomy aloof town. (Italics in original; MLL, 387) The model of the fictional town is based on an actual area. Moore identifies, ‘*Maps* is set in the post-industrial north of England in a town loosely modelled on Huddersfield and centres upon a family who arrived from Pakistan in the 1970s.’, the heart of the immigrant population. (Modood qtd in Moore, 6)

Kaukab and Shamas are first generation immigrants. The first generation is not settled, and they are nostalgic immigrants in comparison to their next generation. *Maps for Lost Lovers* is ostensibly a novel about the deep emotions of love and faith amongst ordinary British Muslims. The brothers Jugnu and Shamas, represent divergence. Jugnu is the only first generation man with university education and well-travelled with a career in Science. Shamas is an assistant of the editor at *The First Children on the Moon*, a magazine across the India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Despite the age gap of fifteen years, they are a foil to each other with their liberal point of views.

Shamas and Kaukab’s family is disorganised. The children defy the strict religious norms followed by the family. The South Asian countries have a close-knit
family structure. (Ballard, 2) Their children Ujala, Mah-Jabin and Charag, belong to the second generation yet they are displaced. Charag as an artist cannot follow his dream under the pressure of the academic achievement. He is sent to the medical school to pursue science stream and had to give up his love for arts under the family’s expectations. Ultimately he decides to leave home and get married to a British woman Stella. Kaukab’s naivety and ignorance combined to radical religious ideas push her away from children. Her character generates sympathy and anger together. It is understandable as a mother she has a constant desire to be with her children loving mother’s love and good riddance vanish when it comes to religion. Kaukab and Shamas’ children are not set in the direction they wanted them to be. The strict parenting is part of her bringing up. ‘Parents are supposed to hit children.’ (MLL, 82) Kaukab did not hear from her youngest son Ujala for seven years. Charag does not visit her. Daughter, Mah-Jabin visits her often and stays closer to Kaukab than her brothers. In other words, she failed to be the mother she dreamed of being.

The sense of belonging to the England does not materialise in immigrant communities. No matter how Pakistan is, they can call their native land their ‘own’ in social and geographical senses. There is pride in immigrants to discern Pakistan as ‘a country of the pious and the devout, a place where boundaries are respected.’ (MLL, 90) In contrast to pleasant and favourable views on Pakistan, England ‘is a dirty country’ and the west is ‘full of hypocrites’ (MLL, 380-495). The severe detestation towards the host country is as perilous as chauvinism. Each confrontation with the racism springs connection and longing for the native country. Kaukab retorts Mah-Jabin’s concerns on Pakistan, asking what is wrong with Pakistan. It is an ideal untainted state for Kaukab raises this question to confront the Western counterparts of
her country. She idolises her native country completely, snubs the issues in the country altogether and believes in the image of perfect Pakistan.

The threatening undertone to the Islam from Western values is the paramount concern for Kaukab. As a precaution, she never deals with the people outside her cluster and makes sure her children followed the code. Contrary to this her husband, Shamas is a mediator between two cultures. He works as a community leader who is a link to the ‘white people’. As a community server, he helps Pakistani brothers with the legal matters, forms and other official red tape in contrast to that Kaukab’s few outings in her particular set of clothes for outdoor and prudence over the contamination from the white people in routine are upsetting. Kaukab recalls a handful of exchanges with white people by number. There now three occasions this year, five last year and none the year before. Her recent exchange with the white person is curt; she mumbles thank you to the delivery man. (MLL, 98) A telephone from Charag’s classmate about the homework shrinks him in fear that a call from outsider upsets his parents. His art teacher senses the potential of Charag, tries to convince Kaukab and Shamas to consent him study. Kaukab imagines these are impish attempts of ‘the whites’ to prevent the Pakistanis from stepping forward in life. (MLL, 176) A brilliant boy from the community was required to move to college it is ‘a conspiracy of the white men to get Pakistani children away from their culture.’ (MLL, 169) Chanda’s parents and Community thinks Shamas and Jugnu are corrupt and it is ‘their mission to corrupt every Pakistani woman they come across.’ (MLL, 253) Kaukab cannot cope up with the life around her. She is fascinated by the Westernised concepts like why white people drink and why the white women are shameless. The analogous hostile views for the US are expressed by characters in The Wasted Vigil. Casa identifies the American sympathisers as imperial and ‘the West’s
‘running dog’, manifesting disapproval of American culture and people. (WV, 241) He is trained to perceive West as the decay and the only enemy of Islam. He is the counterpart of Kaukab with his disgust for anything Western.

The threat from the West and White is cyclic in all novels. The community blames every adversity to the ‘the decay of western culture.’ (MLL, 384) All scientific inventions in West pose a threat to Islam. The invention of birth control is ‘West’s attempt at reducing the number of Muslims’ (WV, 93) Kaukab pours out her frustration ‘white people’s houses’ just start soon after that street and the Pakistanis in neighbourhood are not from ‘our part of Pakistan.’ (MLL, 59) The severity of xenophobia is concentrated; no one prefers people outside of his or her Pakistan village or region. Kids are threatened to be handed over to the white man and women are cursed to have their son married to the white woman. The community members have imagined the fear of the white and instilled in their children. The outright rejection of the western counterpart of Stella and Charag’s son is as ‘half Pakistani, half er...er...er...human.’ (MLL, 13-4) The naming of any native person outside coterie is always referred as the ‘white’. The postcolonial frame of mind of presuming white as the superior is overt. The community remains away from the life in England.

According to the data of Modood’s 1997 survey ‘Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage’ out of all other immigrant nationals, Pakistani are likely to habitat around the denser ethnic group suburbs. They are less likely to have partners from other ethnicities. (Richard Berthoud and Sharon Beishon, 63; Modood, 31)

The survey indicates there is no outside contact. The fenced communities are least liberal to accept the new people or places. The community in the novel is quite identical to the survey, resisting each alteration. It is ‘place of Byzantine intrigue and
emotional espionage’ where female and male contribute to spreading rumours about each other’s lives and destroy it. (MLL, 252) Kaukab feels highly scandalised whenever Stella (Charag’s wife) is in western dresses. Her expectation to see her daughter-in-law in the traditional clothes is not fulfilled is partly a reason for her disappointment. She is outraged when the length of Stella’s dress is a subject of the gossip in the neighbourhood especially women. The women are critical to the other women who are not the part of their conventional group. The huddle of women upholds the lives of young women in the neighbourhood. The latter group is the exposed to the British society at school and linked to the people outside the regular life of the community. Female are the centre place either victim or in control of their lives. Charag feels that entering into the community is to hear the women expressing a spectrum of emotions in voices ‘screaming, cooing, reassuring, out of control, in charge, shouting in pain, in pleasure, laughing, sobbing...like entering one large labour room.’ (MLL, 190) Chanda and Jugnu were on their visit to the home in Pakistan, Kaukab talked to the relatives to inform, they are sheltering two sinners. The pair was asked to leave the house and had to arrive in England thirteen days earlier. (MLL, 83) Kiran, Shamas’s friend and Indian Sikh woman in the neighbourhood often talk at length about her life. Shamas feels betrayed when she conceals her affair with Chanda’s young brother, Chhota to save her shameful affair to be public in the neighbour. This simply veil development of the case. The cohesion of the immigrants during the crisis is appalling and natural in the *Dasht-e-Tanhaii*. The members of community validate the murder by the Pakistani brothers. The community collectively murders the love and lovers. The ‘Love story of Sassi-Punnu’ a famous love story is a foil of the love story of Chanda-Jugnu. (MLL, 271) Suraya-Shamas love fails in the same manner. The lovers end up in the earth as their final meeting place.
Aslam considers *The Maps for Lost Lovers*. ‘an overview of race in Britain over the past 50 years.’ (Aslam qtd in Upstone, 103) Aslam’s Pakistani immigrants, a subsidiary faction in Northern England are trapped, deserted and frozen in a moment of time. They never go out of the secure settlement they fabricated. This stuffed, reticent, *djinn* believing steadfast devout strata of society is sceptical for anything Western around them. The attitude is noticeable in the limited exchange with the small web of community. The social integration and cultural assimilation are amiss. ‘some cultures (and indeed nations) are resistant to the very idea of integration and are uninterested in facilitating or even allowing hybridization. Most importantly, religion by definition resists hybridity.’ (Santesso, 60) Such cultures do not participate in the society and prefer the ghetto over incorporation. The landscape outside the homes position a contrast to the inner lives of residents in *Dasht-e-Tanhaii*, The illegal immigrant living in a tower to avoid legal confrontation dies, nobody notices except the girl living with him in the old forsaken tower. Mah-Jabin cannot befriend a boy or a classmate. The community members exchange confrontation of West outside the ‘own’ space is limited. Badr Dahya, a social anthropologist, has used the term ‘Myth of Return’ in 1974 for the first time in the context of Pakistani immigrants in Birmingham and Bradford.’ (98-102) Dahya’s term denotes the wistful, nostalgic migrants, they long for the home country but do not actually take a relocation trip to home. The novel does not document details of the world outside the family, therefore, building claustrophobic and melancholic tone to the narrative. The desire to restore the negatives of pictures from a neighbourhood studio is fulfilled by Charag to surprise his father. Shamas wishes to document the last twenty years of immigrant history, which is related to the actual studio. Aslam highlighted this during his conversation with Chambers that “Tony Walker’s Belle Vue portrait studio in
Bradford, which from 1926-75 was known for taking archaically formal photographs and the city’s immigrant workers and their families” (153)

Sofia in *The Blind Man’s Garden* moves to Lahore to pursue her education; the new place is not welcoming. She is excluded from the city circle; her conservative dressing bars her. Unlike the deracinated migrants fascinated of the former place and religious identity, her father asked to take off burqa to embrace the city. There are no conflicts in the reverse immigration as encountered by the immigration from East to West. Lara adopts burqa to assimilate in the surroundings in Afghanistan. She gets rid of the colours from her clothes to merge herself in the new place, absorbed in the blankness. (WV, 41) In the reverse immigration from West to East, Father Mede in *The Blind Man’s Garden* descended from the Cambridge don, Joseph Mede, a teacher of Milton. Father spent his childhood in Punjab during Raj. He is a kind man with humanity towards everyone in his adopted home. Marcus Caldwell, in *The Wasted Vigil*, is seventy years old Englishman resides in Afghanistan. Marcus’s father was a doctor on the Afghan frontier and was murdered by a tribesman in 1934, a few months before his birth. (WV, 39) He settles down in Afghanistan after falling in love with Katrina and readily converts to Islam to marry Katrina. Among villagers he is known for his adopted Islamic name ‘Majrooh’ (WV, 425) Thus, his identity is overlapped with his conversion in the new country. Marcus feels he is perceived from the Westerner’s point of view as a quintessence ill-fated white men who left his ‘own country in the West to set up home among them in the East and was ruined as a result.’ (WV, 84) The characters in *The Wasted Vigil* are interestingly immigrants. Katrina and Casa are from Afghanistan and belong to Afghanistan. The place is occupied by the Russian and American soldiers, and it cannot be conveyed with any other substantial symbol. Aslam as an immigrant author difficult to categorise. Claire
Chambers stresses the arrival of Aslam in UK is too late to label him a diasporic British Pakistani author or Pakistani author. He is ‘is situated in an in-between position, complicating conceptual boundaries between East and West.’ (British Muslim Fictions, 134)

Rushdie in his essay *Home Front* infers the popular coverage adds a negative and restrictive image for people, race, and culture eventually when it is stereotyped, ‘The point about the stereotypes is that in spite of their banality, in spite of their seemingly evident wrongness, they work. They have effects. They are at work in Britain today’ (Rushdie, 146) The West at the high pedestal to judge and control the countries in the Eastern parts is recorded in the other critics. This discussion is supported by Said, ‘The West is the spectator, the judge, the jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour.’ (Orientalism, 109) The immigrant experience can be an outer reform, the place, surrounding and the language group, the race of the people and the community changes. A dislocation is an external event. The movement of migrants in the world and the confrontation to the vivid languages and races, cultures mix in the western societies can balance the individual identity of the culture. Along the exchange, what are the downsides of the assortment of contradictory cultures in a place and damages it does the host country and the Diasporas culture? For Stuart Hall, cultural identity is constant transformation along the past and present. It is something beyond the place, time and geographic boundaries ‘a matter of 'becoming’ as well as of 'being', it belongs to the future as much as to the past. (Hall, 225) The strong sense of the self-image and persistence of the old identity in the new place creates confusion.

As discussed earlier once marginalised and sidelined, immigrants cling to their distinctive identity from the preceding country. Kaukab is the personification of the
dreamy rejected immigrants. She is denied to live the dream long perceived before arriving in England. As Shamas forgets Kaukab’s birthday, it becomes an identity decoder. White people might think Pakistani and Muslims are ‘animals’ and ‘Dumb Cattle’ for their failure to remember birthdays is more important. (MLL, 93) As per *The Location of Culture*, ‘Fixity as, the sign of the cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of the colonialism.’ (Bhabha, 94) Fixity as a term echoes the constraint. The concept of otherness is the result of fixity. This brings more issues in a multicultural society. Shamas witnesses the racial abuse towards the driver (MLL, 256). The violence breed from racism and attacks on the immigrant inmates is common. Chanda’s father informs Shamas, one of his sons was beaten up by his white inmates. (MLL, 243) Twenty black people dies in custody, a Pakistani teenager was discovered ‘dead in his cell.’, his white inmate has been charged with slaughter (MLL, 249) The house Jugnu bought from the Bengali parents after they went back to their country is known as ‘the house of death’ by the neighbours. Since ‘their son had been beaten to death in a racial attack by the whites’ (MLL, 230). The murders of the prosecutors in jail were overlooked or rather neglected by the authorities. Rushdie deduces in an essay ‘The New Empire within Britain’ Britain is undergoing a critical phase of its post-colonial period. The essay discusses Britain’s complicated relationship with the immigrants and multiple races. Racism is ‘not a side issue in contemporary Britain; that it’s not a peripheral minority affair’ the race-relations and tension arising from the situation to deal with multiple cultures and races are convoluted. (129) Troyna and Bruce add data based on, ‘a Home Office study, which was undertaken in thirteen selected police areas during the summer of 1981, reported that people of Asian origin were fifty times more likely than white people to be the victims of racially motivated offences.’ (62) The violent attacks on the brown skinned
people were higher and led to various crimes like racist profiling, the assaults and in severe cases the murder of the people of the Brown skin by white conformists. The novels transcend the boundaries between culture, countries and continents. Lindsey Moore summarises, the prime effect of the book is ‘to animate and nuance the lived experience of a particularized Muslim community, thereby challenging multicultural and war-on-terror-affiliated discourses extant in twenty-first-century Britain. (3) The immigration prototype has the same impression of the colour of immigrants.

It is not a revelation with the immigration policies in the Britain after the wave of the immigration. Rushdie classifies, ‘And still the word ‘immigrant’ means ‘black immigrant’ (Imaginary Homeland, 132) A young man steals the heart of his dead mother from the hospital because he didn’t want it to be transplanted to the black person. (MLL, 219) The treatment widens the gap ‘Are you tired of being treated like a coolie by the whites?’ says the helpline advertisement on Asian station for the immigrants to provoke them against the mistreatment in England. (MLL, 231) The tone of the racism is built up with abundant incidents of racism. The conclusive racism includes the Eastern man differentiating views for the women and the black man in the US army. Nabi Khan, a warlord, thinks the Western world humiliates Muslims by having them as their new rulers. He feels happy that rulers are man and white. It assures him that ‘at least there are not negroes or women.’ (WV, 242) White rulers are a familiar sight for the Easterners. The racism here is exclusive for women and black Americans.

The strict formation of the religion is a prominent feature in Eastern Muslim community. The blasphemy or the violation of the religious decrees are received with different approaches ‘The main difference between the Western and the Eastern reactions is that the former was - and is - generally milder than the latter.’ (Nettan, 77)
The frame of culture and religion is extended and fails to provide a space to the personal opinions since the inflexible model is not meant to enquire. The stifling religious restrictions take blasphemy seriously. The spread of religious practice and context in all aspects of daily life is the binding glue to people and religion. The *Namaaz* (a prayer in Islam) five times a day, is the sign of a true believer in Islam. A ‘proper Muslim’ possesses five qualities, the base of religion and also known as the five pillars of Islam, ‘Belief in the unity of God, performing daily prayers, giving charity based on one’s wealth, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and performing the *hajj* pilgrimage once in a lifetime, if one can afford it.’ (Fatah, 17) The creed of Islam is a prerequisite for a true Muslim. Being a ‘true Muslim’ includes total surrender to the Allah, absolute give in to the religious texts. A *fatwa* is a religious ruling – ‘an authoritative legal opinion given by a mufti (legal scholar) in response to a question posed by an individual or a court of law.’ *(The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, 85)* The fatwa of death was imposed on Tasleema Nasreen and Salman Rushdie for their novels, *Lajja* (Shame) (1993) and *The Satanic Verses* (1988) respectively. The religious boundaries and attachment are stringent. The immediate disastrous reactions to Rushdie’s novel opened up a debate on the validity of fatwa which was then issued by Ayatollah Khomeini⁹.

Kaukab is on the threshold of two extremes, is divided between her role of violent, callous woman and religious mother. Her upbringing plays a huge role to shape the rigid devotion. From a normal girl wanting to ride a bicycle and learn English, she turns to the cynical mother. Being a cleric’s daughter, she was raised to succumb to religious strictures. Her adherence to the Islam comes to the point that her sons do not remember the birthdays. Charag, Ujala and Mah-Jabin are victims of her imposed religious piety and expectations. They carve their independent path and
identity shedding the warmth of parents. Ujala turns out the rebellious kid in the family parades his sexual pleasures, completely aware that such acts can infuriate and pollute his mother. He leaves home after the bromide being mixed in the food by Kaukab. (MLL, 432-3) When she learns about Mah-Jabin’s suffering through the letter written by her husband in Urdu, she offers her impervious apology. The family get-together is one of the happiest times except for Kaukab no one tries to change the merrier mood. From mixing bromide with Ujala’s food to acknowledging Islamabad airport as the reminder of Allah’s greatness, Kaukab is impulsive and ardently religious. (MLL, 42)

Sophia’s husband Rohan is another character like Kaukab divided between his religion and his wife, Sophia. As an enlightened learned liberal woman with university learning and stands for forbearance and openness to humanity. Ironically compassionate woman was deprived of medicines on her deathbed by her husband. Rohan throws away a student from Ardent Spirit whose mother was a prostitute. Sophia backs up the women and student. Sophia’s audacious act astonished Rohan. He deduces this as an act of disobeying husband’s will. The matter becomes a catalyst to wreck their marriage life, and she leaves him in few days. Taliban used to smear any representation of a living thing and painted object for it is an un-Islamic practice. To save the paintings, Marcus overlaps the all living things on the painted wall with mud. On Sophia’s deathbed Rohan ‘burned’ paintings during her last hours out of fear that Sophia’s act of disobeying will be punished as this will lead to idolatry. He wants to repent for her act and is afraid she won’t be getting a place in heaven for such infidel behaviour.

Sophia was a good painter and co-founder of the school ‘Ardent Spirit’ with Rohan. Before building the school, Rohan had visited six places of Islam’s glorious
past; ‘From each, he brought back a handful of dust.’ (BMG, 8) The strong human values of school goes through changes in terms of its name and purpose under Major Kyra’s administration. When Rohan and Sophia founded it, it reads,

*Education is the basis of law and order.* Soon the word *Islamic* was added before Education, by Rohan himself, apparently against his wife’s wishes. Over the years it has been amended further, going from *Islamic education is the basis of law and order* to *Islam is the basis of law* and then to *Islam is the purpose of life*, while these days it says *Islam is the purpose of life and death.*

(Italics in the original, BMG, 31)

The changing title of the school projects the discrepant rigidity in the education system. The religious zeal transfers into the deep-seated beliefs. The training of the radical is described at length. Kasa’s training includes bomb and explosive making, cold-blooded killing and throat-slitting ‘while reciting the verse from the holy Koran which gives permission to massacre infidels and prisoners of war: *It is not for the Prophet to have captives until he has spread fear of slaughter in the land.* (WV, 119-121) In *The Wasted Vigil* aim of Fedella’s terrorist organisation is to convert Ardent Spirit’s school kids into the radical Islamic terrorists. Major Kyra is an expert in urban assault training with the record of successful ‘fearful guerrilla attacks on Indian barracks.’ (WV, 213) Under his management, the recruitment of the students to be trained inclusively in the Jihadi camps began. The recruitment and operations were conducted for the ISI to ‘carry out covert operations in Kashmir.’(BMG, 31) it throws shades on the religious frenzied.

Tara stitches the American flags to be burnt during the protest; the boy asks her to choose a material which takes more time to burn. Longer it burns more effect
and success of the protest it conveys in the media and press. Kyra suggests buying a camcorder to present ghastly images of the beheading of Father Mede to create havoc. On 16th December 2014, there was an attack on the Pakistani school in Peshawar. The attack on the Saint Josef forebears the actual attack which took place after the publication of the book. There were many small scale attacks on the schools in Pakistan where the children are threatened and stopped to attend the schools. Malalai is a temporary woman head of the tribe at the age of sixteen is a reminder of Malala, a child activist. (WV, 291) Dunia feels threatened for advocating education of girls in the Usha, her fear of a bullet in the head is analogous to attack on Malala Yousafzai in Swat valley. Malala Yousafzai was attacked ‘On 9 October 2012, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) accepted the responsibility of shooting 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai in Mingora, Swat’, she survived the wounds and started a campaign against the extremist Taliban to support the education of women in the Pakistan. (T. Rashid, 155) The destruction is juxtaposed with Dunia’s rejoinder. She holds unflinching courageous words for the crisis on Islam and affirms bravely after her father’s concern about her safety in leading the change in the village. ‘the bullet that has hit us Muslims today left the gun centuries ago when we let the clergy decide that knowledge and education were not important.’ (WV, 283) Dunia’s attempts to fight the restrictions against Taliban are ended with her kidnap. The novel does not reveal what happened to her. Her spirit and optimistic views are the examples of the women contributors in the small scale. Kyra’s head in charge is an officer ex-lieutenant general of Pakistan and wanted for the questioning for ‘his role to support Bosnian Islamic extremist in a war with Serbians.’ (BMG, 296) This nameless man fits the Pakistani lieutenant general Javed Nasir according to “Islamabad refuses to hand over ex-ISI chief to
Bosnia tribunal” Pakistan refused to hand him over to the UN over charges when he faked memory loss in a road accident. (Butt)

The religious establishments engaged with the lessons of violence, the noisy madrasa with naive children aware of the deficit, ‘Prayed the way they ate, with a deep hunger.’ (BMG, 14) Bihzad sees dead people and dying after an attack in Usha; he is embarrassed to sense ‘the pangs of hunger’ increasing with ‘smell the roasting meat’ in the field. (WV, 58) These two incidents conclude the real issues; poverty, inadequate food supplies and the growing unemployment in the region created agitation and frustration in youngsters to join the terrorist groups. The monetary refund to assure the welfare and good future of the family leads to the human bombing in the case of Casa and leader in the school siege Ahmad. Ahmad joins jihad after the death of his father in an ice factory. (BMG, 171) The Blind Man’s Garden sum ups the events taking place in the progressive USA and downtrodden East of Muslim majority countries

They talk earnestly about the crusaders and Jihad, of legendary weapons and famed warriors, and they are from all parts of Pakistan and the wider Muslim world, Egyptians, Algerians, Saudi Arabians and Yemenis, between the ages of sixteen and twenty and twenty-five recruited through a fatwa issued by the Saudi cleric Sheikh-al- Uqla, a fatwa praising the Taliban for creating the only country in the world where there are no man-made laws. (56)

The term jihad is defined in The Oxford Dictionary of Islam ‘From the Arabic root meaning ‘to strive’. It also means ‘to exert’, ‘to fight; exact meaning depends on context.’ (160) In Islam, there are five types of Jihad, Jihad against one’s own self, against tongue, against hand, Jihad against the pen. The last one is Jihad against Sword. Al-Qaeda, al-Askariya both are Arabic word which means ‘The Training
Base’, a foundation established by Osama Bin Laden in 1988 in Peshawar, Pakistan. (Gerges, 50) The escalation of the Taliban, a body of the Muslim soldiers, emerged within few years, ‘Taliban is the plural of Talib, which means seekers, generally associated with the knowledge of Religion.’ (Fatima, 37) It is an Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Qandahar, Afghanistan, founded by Mullah Mohammed Omar since 1994. (Mandeville, 225) ‘Taliban and al-Qaeda keep talking about something called "jihad" -- a word they have reduced to war. In fact, the word "jihad" has as many meanings as a rose has petals. To smile at someone when you don't feel like smiling is jihad. To be kind to someone when your own life is full of meanness is jihad. But no, they want only one meaning. (Aslam: Interview with Hong)

Aslam explained the term in a positive context. Jihad and Mujahid share the same root in Arabic. (Mandeville, 104) The terrorist organisation spread across the Afghanistan and Pakistan. Aslam slashes the core of the fanatics’ issues candidly. David Town wonders the first two words of the call to the Muslim prayers are also the Muslim battle cry; he marvels at the connection between the war and prayer. The life in Afghanistan became a battlefield for every day after the war.

The abuse of powers by religious head occurs when pleasure deprived clerics sexually abuse children in mosques. Regardless of the complaints from the parents, the cleric in charge is set free (MLL, 337) Nadeem Aslam spoke about issues in an interview with Kamila Shamsie, ‘despite the strong evidence and protests of the victim child’s parents, the paedophile cleric in Tipton was set free.’ The outcry of the radical Muslims over the defamation of the clerics in the Mosque restores him back to his pedestal. Earlier Kaukab declares the depraved white men blame doing unspeakable things to little children is manifestation of the blinded ardent followers who overlook
the real issues and blames West (MLL, 41) The jihadi training camps assault and bully boys, they are ‘forced to give pleasure to their seniors or other men’ inside the camps. (WV, 213-6) Such practices and the forced terrorism onto the youth are chronicled in the novel. In an interview with Aslam admitted, he wanted to discuss the religious ultraconservative; the Dewsbury mosque was founded by one of his uncles. (Interview with Razeshta Sethana) The Islamic misconduct publicised in Aslam’s fictional mosque in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is probably the Barelvi populist in the traditionally populated areas in Leeds. (Modood qtd in Moore, 6) Amongst all immigrants, Jugnu deal with butterflies is a suggestive occupation. He is out of Islamic religious theory box and corresponds to the progress and knowledge. His boat *The Darwin* was bought was in 1985. (MLL, 89) The naming suggests likeness with the RRS *Charles Darwin*, a Royal Research Ship and reminiscent of Darwin when the religious myopic interpretation kills him.

Religious superiority is stressed upon other religions and civilisations. Chronologically Islam is one of the most rapidly and widely spread religion. Kaukab thinks, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world.’ (MLL, 459) The whole matter is not limited to a country but about the glory and aspirations of Islam for Casa. The privileged West wants absolute affection but ‘the privilege is Islam’s.’ (WV, 243) The cleric declares his dream, having United States President accepting the Islam. There is an unvarying hope to build’ the Caliphate of New York’ and the Islamic Empire in the Western countries.’ (WV, 341) There are other minor fighters Dunia and the local folks James encountered in the Afghanistan are proud yet moderate Muslims. The unanimous voice of characters firmly believes in the supremacy of the Islam over any other religion in the world. The vast gap between the religions culminates while learning the Western history, Casa realises, ‘the
principal characters could easily be Christian or Hindu. Not minor characters, not
villains—but the heroes!’ (WV, 204) He is bewildered how Native Indians managed
‘to make the white Americans respect them?’ (WV, 209) The amusement and
curiosity on what can be done to make US respect Islam troubles him. The desperate
madness to see the spread of Islam is the aim of extremists (Kyra, the community
members in the Dasht-e-Tanhaii and Casa) in the novels. They want to see the role
reversed in the battle of the US and the Islamic States. Casa desperately waits for the
news of a Muslim army surmounts ‘an infidel land’ and anticipates a future when
‘the entire world’ would succumb to the Islam. (WV, 212-214) The
uncompromising fundamentalist inside him wants the supremacy of the Islam in the
world. This mad erroneous belief encourages them to degrade and denounce other
religion. Few comments on their religion turn into violent action in the moments of
heat. A trainee doctor takes radical Islam to declare shaving cream, and democracy
‘unIslamic.’ (MLL, 302) Christian, Shia and Ahmadiya children and the teachers
during the siege were divided from Muslims to be put aside to murder for their non-
Muslim identity. A seven-year-old Muslim child threatens white classmates to be
sent to hell for eating pork. (MLL, 231) Another innocent school girl with limited
understanding wonders benevolent Father Mede is Christian. Her fundamental
religious surroundings identify a non-Muslim as wicked sinners bound to surrender
to Islam or to be punished. She asks him, ‘Why won’t you convert to Islam? ’
(BMG, 200) Dr Varma and Dr Lockwood suggests the concerns of the inbreeding to
a boy, they get a reply,

Queen Victorian and Prince Albert were first cousins’ and the ‘Hindu’ woman
whose Gods have ‘eyes in the middle of their foreheads’ Lord Krishna and his
thousand girlfriends indeed! And they jeer at our Prophet, peace be upon him, for having just nine wives! (MLL, 253)

The damage is being done by the authoritative to the common God fearing Muslims. There is a tyrannical law by zealots in Usha, mourning or offering flowers at the grave of their family members is not allowed, Tara, a religious woman thinks, the contemporary time is very tough ‘When Muslims must fear other Muslims’ (BMG, 262) The damage is done to their own faith by the uncompromising revolutionaries. The unwarranted faith of Rohan killed Sophia and her art parallel to the Fakir in the chain in The Blind Man’s Garden is murdered by the al-Qaeda is the death of good Muslim at the hands of radical Muslims. The conformist aficionados are tracked from the readings of Mikal’s book, In the Sixteenth century, the religious heads persuade Sultan Murat III to destruct the earliest observatory in Istanbul as it would bring him the fury of Allah. (BMG, 20)

The terror-war ridden country Afghanistan and the role of the USA in the region is discussed in the next part. Afghanistan was captured by Taliban in 1996; they took control in Kabul, the capital of the Islam State of Afghanistan. Taliban renamed it the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan. Afghanistan led back to the Taliban era, the age of darkness that banned exchange of knowledge, art and education of women. The usual process of the growth is reversed. Following the 9/11 in 2004, the US and UK had planned a counter-attack on Afghanistan with the three motives. First, to locate Osama Bin Laden, a mastermind behind the attack, to destroy al-Qaeda, the organisation responsible for implementing the conservative and radical Islamic rules, a mass production of the terrorist training and crew and the third motive was to revoke the Taliban Government. Under the code name, Operation
Enduring Freedom on 7 October 2001 US and UK attacked the Afghanistan. (Clements, 189-90)

Afghanistan—a crossroads of history—seemed an appropriate place to discuss the meeting of Islamic and Western culture, the ‘civilising missions’ and the ‘bringing of democracy,’ Napoleon arriving at Alexandria and proclaiming that the teachings of the Koran dovetailed with the principles of revolutionary France…Coming from Pakistan, and belonging to the Islamic world, I can’t be aware of how politics affects our daily lives, how it is not just dry legislations and laws and statements. It’s visceral. (Aslam: Interview with Bookbrowse)

Afghanistan was ‘one of the greatest tragedies’ torn to various parts by ‘the many hands of war’ (WV, 14) The history of Afghanistan is traced to Western connection with its lapis lazuli being used by Cleopatra and Michelangelo, the latter used it to paint the blues on ‘the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.’ (WV, 18) The link serves the coherent past between Eastern and Western artists. The Wasted Vigil showcases interfere of US and Russia in the internal conflicts of Afghanistan. The cold war between US and Russia contested over the authority in the region.

In order of the events in The Wasted Vigil, the CIA’s collaborated with Pakistan with a view to training extremists in Afghanistan. The trained extremists were deployed to attack Russian foes in Afghanistan. The dominance of the powerful countries on the post-colonies is very much at hand. The pressure on the countries and interfere in the decision making and policies is widely practised. The concept of hegemony is the dominance of a state with another in respect to economic, military or political structure. West is the Hegemon. The cultural and social dominance of one state to another, one race to another includes the concept of hegemony. The cultural
dominance includes the values, the superior arts and language. The US government is the modern hegemony parallel to the past counterpart Britain. The concept of Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks* (1948) expounds that one dominant class can rule and ruin the values and the culture of the ruled class. Like the foremost West supremacy in respect of Industries that stretched to the cultural ascendancy. The shady practices of CIA are yet another model of hegemonic dominance, ‘bringing thousands of Korans in the Uzbek language, a translation the CIA had commissioned from an Uzbek exile living in Germany…encouraged in the USSR, to make Russian Muslims rebel against the Moscow.’ (WV, 171)

The anti-establishment dialogues pose questions on the treatment of the captives and natives. Mikal goes under the ‘questionings from the CIA, FBI, MI5, MI6’ along goes the threats and various methods like sleep deprivation, strip searches, forced nudity, beating and prolonged stress positions to find his connections with Laden and Mullah Omar. (BMG, 218) While the intelligence agencies tried to extract information, he is tortured for his ‘threatening behaviour.’ (WV, 168) In *The Blind Man’s Garden* Naheed meets Mikal after waiting for months and years, she is not angry at al-Qaeda and Taliban only but blames Americans for assaulting Afghanistan.

The questionable role of the US to support the *mujahideen* has been criticised in Rushdie’s *Shalimar, The Clown* (2006). The novel insinuates the connection of the US to train the extreme forces in Afghanistan to fight against Russian. The corruption of Pakistani officers adds more trouble as Pakistan made sure the fund from the Saudi, US and other contributing countries against the extremist was ‘channelled only to the Islamic fundamentalists guerrilla.’ (WV, 178) After 9/11, it was demanded that Pakistan tackles terrorism in the North East region. Pakistan’s motive behind the backup is to earn favour from the global power thus becoming a collaborator to
prolong the US dominance in East. ‘We in this country,...—are by destiny rather than by choice—the watchmen of the walls of world freedom.’ Kennedy speech reinforces the role of the United States to play a watchdog in the world affair (WV, 271)

Apart from the appalling living conditions and terror, the inevitable influence of war in Afghanistan changes the meaning of ‘normal’ every day. AK47, Kalashnikov are now the integral part of their lives, children inherit guns and missiles. (WV, 14-35) Not just Taliban soldiers exert the gun power freely, the kids firing guns and selling books that encourage violence is a common sight. Katrina notices a former student with a rifle. Taliban regime, hand amputation of Marcus, stoning of Katrina, fall of Bamiyan Buddha, death by exsanguinations and jihadi attacks sum up the Afghanistan under the war. The brave men of ‘East and West are slaughtering each other’ in the Afghani terrain (WV, 419) The violence becomes the very part of the life that Kasa misses the war, for him, it brings ‘clarity.’ (WV, 415)

The anti-American wave is trailed to the range for India and Israel. Before the siege, outside the St. Joseph a van blares through the loud speaker, ‘We’ll reduce America to the size of India, India to the size of Israel, Israel to nothing.’ (BMG, 201) Israel has attracted revulsion from the Islamic countries. The wrath and fanatic reaction for Israel15 in every Muslim country date back to the formation of the country. Geographically it being an only Jew nation surrounded by the Islamic countries had been fighting the external attacks of the Syria, Iraq and Iran. The hostility towards the America is directed to India and Israel. The rebels are waging war for ‘the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India’ for the disputed Kashmir land (Italics in the original; BMG, 288) Ahmed Rashid confirms, while Pakistan failed to win the favour of the US. The stand of India remained strong in South Asian and, ‘Pakistanis began to compare India with Israel.’ (58)
The twofold role of Afghani warlords was decisive throughout the war of US and Afghanistan. The sides were chosen on the highest financial favour they receive. The warlords take 5000 American dollars to deliver one jihadi to the US. The supposedly Taliban members are sent to the US base devoid of any evidence. In the 1980s CIA ignored Gul Rasool’s role in drug trafficking. Naturally one of the authoritative warlords in the region, he is able to provide aid to the US. The facilitating fixture secures his position. The similar policies were applied in the Vietnam to ignore the drug trafficking of the anti-Communist guerrillas. (WV, 162)

The Wasted Vigil marks the three continents in the worn out Afghanistan. Marcus has fatherly affection for Lara. Lara and Zameen were born in the same year, 1963. (WV, 20) The inability of the outsiders to understand east and the Eastern people is highlighted in every single novel of Aslam. US agencies fail to understand issues of Afghanistan and Pakistan. ‘What did they, the Americans, really know about such parts of the world, of the layer upon layer of savagery that made them up?’ (WV, 179)

David Town is the American spy is under the pretext of a dealer in gemstones. He fell in love with Marcus’s daughter, Zameen after she escaped the Russian abductors. She lived with him prior to few months of her death, but he fails to protect her disappearance and death. Cara Cilano asserts in Post-9/11 Espionage Fiction in the US and Pakistan: Spies and “Terrorists” (2014), it is evident he fails to understand the life of an orient woman,

David’s inability to conquer Otherness not just through his failed attempts to “save” Zameen but also through his inability to control and to know entirely the circumstances of her life. That the American fictions lack such a critically comparative impulse but possess a knack for conquering Otherness becomes evident when read against Aslam’s novel. (126)
The natives are diacritical against US’ endeavours to elevate the political hierarchy. West interference for the natives of Pakistan and Afghanistan is an incomprehensive act. It indicates the upfront inability to decipher the ‘West’ people and culture altogether. The Cleric is astonished to see a foreigner. His memory of the white people is a race that has dropped a bomb on Pakistan during the First World War. The old man admits seeing no ‘a real white person’ before in his life. (BMG, 359) The concern over how to treat the white man, like a hospitable host, the family of Fatima’s brother-in-law is clueless what to offer the American guest. The question Mikal, ‘what does he eat?’ (BMG, 367) A Westerner, is beyond the understanding of the Eastern local. Mikal was held captive with the American soldier by Pakistani landlords. He recounted when he was a captive by the Americans, he had no idea what they wanted from him and frightened of treatments given to the detainees. Another old man in the village magnified his fear; Pakistanis would never know what the Westerners want. To know them one need to eat, wear, breathe in the same air in the manner of the foreigner. ‘You have to be born where they are born... No one from here can know what the Westerners know. The Westerners are unknowable to us. The divide is too great, too final. It’s like asking what the dead or the unborn know.’ (BMG, 397)

The inability to comprehend the west is a conundrum for the villagers and people from the interior parts of the country. The rejection of the West is symbolised when the land of Ardent Spirit was gifted to Rohan’s great-grandfather ‘by the British as a reward for his loyalty’ during the insurgency. (BMG, 252) The family denounced it until Rohan decided to build a school there. The ability to read through the other culture by no means takes place. As a result rupture between the US and the native of
East seems extensive to revamp, it indicates the far-reaching gap similar to extra-terrestrial ‘otherness’.

Marxism rivets the events in *The Blind Man’s Garden*, David’s great-uncle murdered by US patriots and fanatics for his Marxist beliefs. The family had to go astray from regular life due to communism in their hometown. Lara recalls under the Communist Russian government’s stringent commandment the textbooks in the school were controlled, the words were replaced. Shamas was a Marxist earlier. Basie is inspired from ‘Castro, Che and Marx’ the essential Marxist thinkers. (BMG, 319)

Despite the differences, on a meeting point, the characters realise the similarity between the lives in East and West. Tara marvels what does the flag, the lines and the stars suggest in the American flag. Pakistani flag also has a star and half-moon, trying to understand and curious to seek the similarity to synthesise. The protagonist, Harun-al-Rashid of *Thousand and One Night* is paralleled to Queen Elizabeth II when she is sneaking out at night to see what the country needs. Harun-al-Rashid did the same night watch in Baghdad in *Thousand and One Night* is compared to the Queen and vice-versa (MLL, 9) During the concert of Nusrat, an anti-immigrants group paints the wall with ‘NF Rules’ which is modified to NFAK Rules. Moore commented, ‘in the modification of racist National Front graffiti to read “NFAK Rules” in reference to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’ (162) The music synthesising the hatred towards the anti-immigrant troop. Marcus recalls his encounter in 2010 with the Afghani woman under panic after the news of the Americans’ arrival in their region. She feared the American soldiers would be a threat to herself and her two daughters. They run towards the desert. While on the run, she meets a group of the Taliban soldiers who were about to assault. The timely intervention from the
American soldiers saves their honour. (WV, 133) The incident reminds what Spivak famously phrases ‘White men saving brown women from brown men’ as the educating duty of imperialism in ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (296) It is a break from the stereotype for the natives to see West rally and assist them as well. Despite the sour relations between East and West, the good will of humanity preserves.

The gender and sexual identities of women and its role in the religious oppression of female are enormous. The novels raise a big question on the honour killing, domestic violence and rape laws, divorce laws, all summarises the subjugation of the female. The rate of termination of female foeticide\textsuperscript{16} is comparatively higher in the Asia. The rate of killing is comparatively higher in Pakistan in South Asia\textsuperscript{17}. This is the same issue in India and Bangladesh as well. The high level of dowry and no return on the investment of the brought and education in the female child are some of the reasons. The relative insecurity of a female at any stage of her life in society in male dominant world worries parents. Childhood, adulthood or the old age a single woman and a married woman always lives under the threat of assaults in various forms. Barra finds out his wife is carrying a child, they do a test which is definitely illegal in the Britain. In patriarchal prerogative, he asked his wife to terminate the pregnancy. The practice must be practised by the immigrant doctors, as a result, she terminated the female embryo. (MLL, 497)

The idea of shame is attached to the South Asian countries. The honour-\textit{Izzat/Iijat} (an Urdu word for honour) ‘In its narrower sense izzat is a matter of male pride. Honourable men’. (Ballard, 5) The shame is defined as defamation of one’s reputation based on their words. The verbal commitment is taken seriously, and the breach is socially unacceptable. ‘What the ideas of honour and shame and good reputation mean to the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is a huge deal. This
Honour is a collective effort of the family, the daughters and sons of the family are also responsible for carrying the torch of the family honour by committing themselves to the wishes of the family for their marriage and relationship. Jugnu, Dipak and Ujala fail to carry the honour codes of their Islamic family. Kaukab expressed her disappointment towards them on every chance she gets, ‘Kaukab’s perspectives on the traditions imported from an invented Pakistan is contrasted with more critical voices’ (Cordula, 178) The responsibility of holding all moral codes of the family and society results in honour. Shame can stem from the broken codes of the honour. Thus honour and shame are opposite in nature. The female of the families is considered honour of the household. The male hierarchy prevails in the South Asian countries. Men orchestrate the duties as a caretaker of the families. The desire to get further education, rebellion to be with the person of their choice or a simple reason of suspicion can kill them in the name of honour killing.

The confinement and disturbing ritual killing of a Muslim girl because she was in the love of a Hindu boy by her family is one of the unsettling incidents of violence against women. She was tramped with feet and beaten to death by a cleric while her parents read the Koran upstairs. (MLL, 266) During a heated argument, Kaukab slaps Mah-Jabin, hit her head on the wall many times, in a feat of rage, she wields the knife. Mah-Jabin responds, ‘Here we have proof that Chanda was murdered by her brothers, that a family can kill one of its own...’ (MLL, 163) Suraya’s husband wields a knife at her under tipsy with the threat, explaining her order of male hierarchy ‘The role of the woman is to give life. The role of the man is to take it.’ (MLL, 228) The women in Afghanistan prefer the death by water as their right over the ropes and blades and
other things men use to control and overpower animals. They decline to be controlled with the objects which are used to control animals for their self-esteem ‘a final assertion of dignity, one last proclamation of their humanity.’ against the torture of the male partners, caretakers, brothers and fathers. (WV, 130) Tara comes to know that women in Afghanistan are wearing the burqa even after the fall of Taliban. She contemplates women are in burkas because they are wise enough to stay low key. She recounted the incidents she had witnessed in her lifetime.

During her adult life there has not been a single day when she has not heard of a women killed with bullet or razor or rope, drowned or strangled with her own veil, buried alive or burned alive, poisoned or suffocated, having her nose cut off or entire face disfigured with acid or the whole body cut to pieces, run over by a car or battered with firewood. Every day there is news about a woman who has had these things done to her in the name of honour-and-shame or Allah-and-Muhammad, by her father, her brother, her uncle, her nephew, her cousin, her husband, her husband’s father, her husband’s brother, her husband’s uncle, her husband’s nephew, her husband’s cousin, her son, her son-in-law, her lover, her father’s, her husband’s enemy, her son’s enemy, her son’s enemy, her son-in-law’s enemy, her lover’s enemy. (BMG, 113)

The police investigation to probe into the disappearance of Chanda and Jugnu is named after ‘Operation Ivory’, means there was every possibility of finding bones to gather. (MLL, 30-7) Pakistan is one of the top countries of honour killing. Pakistani human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) estimate that there are about 1,000 “honour killings” every year. (World Report 2015, 422) The murder of women is seen as a bold step in order to keep family
honour intact. It is unlawful yet prevalent in the South Asian countries. The real numbers might differ, Aslam, brings the same issue in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. ‘According to the Home offices statics, 116 men were convicted of murder last year as opposed to just 11 women.’(MLL, 198)

To discontinue domestic violence against women and girls, forced marriage, acid attacks, rape, murder through so-called honour killings, acid attacks, it needs a cultural change. Otherwise, the legal format has failed to abolish the practice.

In considering the characteristics of honour cultures, it is worth noting that ‘cultural’ and ‘male violence’ explanations of HBV are actually highly consistent with each other since both stress how beliefs and attitudes concerning defined gender roles and control over women give tacit justification for violent action (K. Roberts, 73)

Acid attacks, also known as acid assault or vitriolage is a common crime in Pakistan. According to Human Rights Commission 2014 Report, the number of acid attacks is rising, targeted to women and girls. (‘Honour Crimes and Acid Attacks’, 218) The Pakistani attacks are described as typically the work of husbands against their wives who have dishonoured them or women attending schools. Katrina is stoned at the age of sixty-one under the charge of an adulteress. A ritual performed by a woman is not valid according to Sharia. She challenges that the female cleric is not inferior to the male cleric. Her wedding with Marcus by a female cleric automatically voids her alliance. The nullified marriage ceremony reckons her Adulteress by the Taliban and Sharia law. To set an example of her, the Taliban
decides to create a public spectacle after the prayer. The death of Katrina (259-61) by stoning is implemented without anyone’s protest.

The stoning of women for adultery is still being carried out with the partial support of the society. (Burki, 2) Every stoning incident has taken place outside the formal legal system of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tribal leaders manage local courts called jirgas and decide on accusations of adultery and stone a woman to death. In a report of Commission of Human Rights, it is noted that women in the areas are helpless once the accusation of the adultery is on them. There is a providence of release for a man, but the woman is a scapegoat. (Surah 4, verses 15-16. qtd in Amor, 33) In The Wasted Vigil, Katrina is stoned, and Marcus is spared.

Shamas falls in love with Suraya when Suraya seeks a candidate to marry and divorce him to get back to her husband. According to the Islamic laws, the second marriage is necessary to perform for her reunion with her son and husband. Mehd Rubya notes, ‘in Islamic law, a husband's right of divorce is absolute and need not be exercised through a court. The husband can exercise this absolute right without citing a cause. If the formula of repudiation is pronounced in jest, in drunkenness or even under compulsion, it is still considered to be valid and effective.’ (260) Chanda is reckoned a non-divorcee as per this law since her husband disappeared after arriving in England. Sharia law is particular strict for women mostly to hinder their freedom in absolute terms from the financial, domestic, religious and political life.

Girls are a responsibility in the South Asian countries including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The wedding ceremony costs a huge amount. The reception of girl child is not positive. Suraya thinks she is fortunate and ‘thankful to Allah that she doesn’t have any daughters.’ (MLL, 220) The daughters are married off at the early age. The early marriage in the Pakistani and Bangladesh immigrant community
is higher. Katharine Charsley’s *Transnational Pakistani Connections: Marrying Back Home* (2013) is research on the forced marriages in England. Her research supported by arguments and data concludes Pakistan is still one of the top countries with forced marriage. Katharine establishes the base for such marriage is the cultural connection with Pakistan. She notes, ‘the power of marriages, above all life course decisions, to ensure on-going transnational involvement is not lost on parents eager to maintain connections with places and kin they left behind when they themselves migrated.’ (120)

Biradari and clan system formed on the extended immediate blood relations. For the majority of Pakistanis, Marriages take place in Biradari ‘Biradari mediates between kinship locality and zat (caste)’ (M. Ember, R. Ember and Skoggard, 477) and represents the order and status of the caste and ranks accordingly. The marriages help the Pakistani and Bangladeshi cousins to get an entry in the US and UK. That is why ‘More than half of the married 15-36 Bangladeshis and Pakistanis had had their spouse chosen by their partners.’ (Modood, 385) Chanda, Mah-Jabin and Suraya, they all are married at the age of 16. The education is not a priority, so they are off to marriage at an early age. It is precisely the period of university education when female are prone to influence of the western world; the college is anticipated the time to leave the claustrophobic homely atmosphere of domestic life. They are taken to Pakistan under the guise of visiting family back in the country, kept in the dark about upcoming weddings. The wedding takes place in Pakistan without any interference of the British laws. ‘While the age of marriage is generally on the rise, early marriage – marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 – is still widely practised.’ (‘Early Marriages: Child Spouses’, 2) According to the data of the Integration Hub, Transnational marriages are common ‘Around half of all Muslim Pakistanis living in
Britain married someone from Pakistan.’ (‘Society and Everyday Life’ unpag.) The number of forced marriage is high in Pakistani ethnic group. The census states, ‘The forced marriages can be between two people, one from the UK and one from somewhere else, or between two people from within the UK. The country most commonly linked to cases of forced migration was Pakistan: 44 percent.’ (‘Society and Everyday Life’, unpag.) Pakistanis are on the top again with the highest number of forced migration. The child marriage is not a gender specific issue. The forced marriages are not entirely allocated for the female child. Mikal answers a kid on the inquiry who is in the back of his car; he replies that he is taking his brother to bride’s house after the refusal from brother; he is tied in the back of the car. (BMG, 376)

According to Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929\(^{18}\) (No XIX) in Pakistan, the minimum marriageable age is 18 years for a male and 16 years for a female (Section 2). The religious tradition is credited to validate the child marriage in Maps of Lost Lovers; the prophet ‘was nineteen when he married a woman of forty’ ‘in his sixties when he consummated his marriage with a nine-year-old’ (MLL, 189)

Although child marriage is uncommon in Western democracies such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, recent studies suggest that immigrant and diaspora populations in these countries are perpetuating the practice. In 2011, the British government handled approximately fifteen hundred forced marriage cases, half of which involved girls under the age of eighteen, and a majority of which involved immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. (Vogelstein, 6-7)

A cleric warned Casa in his childhood at a madrassa, ‘A woman seen is a Western idea.’(WV, 212) It resonate the fact that skin of a woman can create an uproar in some culture and such outrageous impressions are being inculcated in
children. The outfit restrictions substantiate burqa. The dressing of a woman is the reflection of her modesty and character. Casa recalls the teachings of the holy book which specifies the why restriction on the movement of a woman is necessary. ‘Muhammad, peace be upon him, had said when a woman steps out of a house Satan is delighted. (WV, 214) Casa is threatened to see the female usually. Monalisa’s picture surprises Zameen that ‘-- women in the West could wear veils.’ (WV, 69) It is a stereotype of the East. Even though, the rules for women are harsh and there is no code of conduct for men the rape laws are draconian. Sofia Sanchez-Grant (2008) notes, ‘the female body as a site of oppression has always been the means by which patriarchy exerts control over women.’ (78) Rape is a taboo for any civilised society. The rape laws in Islam require four witnesses; they have to be male. (MLL, 226) This does not give any chance to let victim defend herself. The female body is subjected to the torture by her husband and parents in the extreme cases. This has to do with the male ego to control his companions and females. Margaret Abraham’s *Study of Sexual Abuse in South Asian Immigrant Marriages* (1999) highlights male sexual aggression as a norm within South Asian marriages which normalises women’s experience of sexual abuse. Tara, Naheed’s mother, lives a life of a widow. She had been treated cruelly in her life. Being widow with a daughter marred her every chance to get married again. Whenever she had received marriage offers, the men always wanted to get rid of her girl child, Naheed. Her encounters with the vilest side of the system came through her assault; when she went to register a complaint in a police station, it was useless until she can produce four male witnesses to authenticate her claim. The rape laws are practically a loophole for rapists because it is difficult to hold a case on the grounds of rape. In *The Wasted Vigil*, Benedict rapes Zameen, feels the remorse and repeats it next night. In a horrendous episode a mother of the bride instructs the
bridegroom ‘Rape her tonight.’ (MLL, 124) Suraya had been confident to voice her opinions in the family affair in her early life, the confidence to be brought up in the West. Self-assured she marched into the home of the adversary and became a scapegoat of the family feuds. The members of the rival families surround and cage her in the home. Her honour becomes the matter of the pride for them. They falsely declare they have raped her. It is often considered as a victory to sexually abuse women of the rivals’ families. True to this Rushdie manages, ‘Pakistan neither wants nor needs a legal system which makes the evidence of women worth less than that of men.’ (Imaginary Homelands, 54)

The torture by male and other family members is common. Pei-Chen- Liao while discussing the idea of home by J Douglas Porteous19 in ‘Home, the Territorial Core’ refers that home is a ‘preferred and desired space of identity and security, however, does not set up a boundary between the home and non-home and the self and non-self.’ (104) This leads to the sense of insecurity among female since the home is not a safe place for them. The home a place to comfort is not the case with the victims of domestic violence. The cruelty of the violence against women does take place in the household. The domestic violence disregards the definition of the home. For immigrants Kaukab and Suraya, the security threat at the hands of the white is understandable. Lara’s experience of travelling into the Afghanistan as a single woman is positive. It indicates the home is not always a place to feel safe and life outside the home is not as threatening as feared by the women. People were friendly and generous towards her except a boy who ‘attacked her with the tyre iron’ for disobeying Allah’s rule by keeping her feet in the East, the direction of Mekka. (WV, 124)
Barra and Chotta are examples of volatile Muslim men. The year Ujala was born; Shamas slapped his wife called her ‘haramzadi.’ (202-3) The term haramzadi is used for the women repeatedly by their male controller husbands, fathers and brothers. Chanda’s father, otherwise loving father and husband takes the turn to abuse his wife and daughter. Chanda’s father calls his wife an ignorant, stupid woman ‘Haramzadi’ and ‘Kanjari’; he extends his abuse for his daughter, ‘badmash kutia’ (MLL, 199) Chanda is abused as a ‘little whore’ by her brother and Mah-Jabin has been branded ‘wanton shameless English whore’ (MLL, 90; 183) by her husband. The verbal abuses turn into the physical torture to establish his male superiority over the foreign born woman. Mah-Jabin is threatened by Kaukab’s behaviour at home, and her husband turns out a violent. Dipak’s mother is beaten by her sister’s husband. He ties two sisters by trapping their plaits in a trunk lid, locked the trunk and enjoy his sadistic nature. ‘Muslim women in the West will benefit more from the dominant Western culture that is adhered to by the majority of the population, and that offers them good opportunities to shape their lives according to their own insights.’ (Hirsi Ali, 29)

Irshad Manji and Ayan Hirsi Ali had been advocating female rights in Islam. Their writing focuses on the logical and contemporary interpretation of the religious book, Quran. Hirsi has been supporting the idea to re-evolve and interpret the concept of Sharia law. Irshad Manji is filling the gap of ambiguity in the interpretation of the Quranic verses and has been encouraging Muslims to debate the religion grounded on the concept of ijtihad. It is a liberal concept that highlights the debatable side of the faith. It let the believers question the religious scriptures.

The unswerving aesthetic history of Islam is part of all works of Aslam. The Bihzad painting inspired house of Marcus and Katrina is dedicated to five senses, and
with layers after layers in a crescent shape, Bihzad influence is replicated in previous novel *The Wasted Vigil* with paintings of Bihzad and Marcus’s grandson is named Bihzad. The liberal Islamic history is unfolded with the music in the Al-Kindi, one of the earliest philosophers and the scientist of the Arab world and Al-Shirazi, an eminent astronomer in the fourteenth century, and Muhammad’s marriage with Khadija and Malalai. The story of *The Blind Man’s Garden* is based in the fictional city of Heer. Aslam answered he chose the name because her legend is imbued with rebellion. ‘She had rebelled to be with a man her parents were dead set against.” he said. The screening of the Punjabi film Heer Ranjha was banned in Jhang, the city where it was based. From this incident, Aslam made up his mind “to dedicate the entire town to her. The next 11 novels I plan to write will also be based in Heer.” (Interview with Sonia Malik) The fiction supply extensive symbolism. Chakor, Shamas’s father, is a personification of the Unified India. He represents the country as a whole before the partition. He was a Hindu boy; Dipak was transferred to Pakistan during the final ambush carried out by the British General in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Amritsar in 1919. He lost his sister during the war unsure whether she died or survived and stayed in India. The traumatic event results into the loss of memory. Here the loss of the one integral part of the family, his sibling, a sister. This justifies the correlation between India and Pakistan. One is separated from the other under the vindictive powerful ruler. The defeat in the war with the Hindus over East Pakistan traumatised Chakor. (and rest of the country) Chakor cut his tongue and in his state of the delirium before his death. The cutting of tongue implies the loss of free speech. The silent pain suffered by millions of families in one of the bloodiest histories of the separation, the delirium as the partition caused the loss of loved ones to both sides of the border. He cuts his tongue ‘before setting fire to himself’ to
silence his screams in case he wants to cry out for the help. (MLL, 120) The silence suffering and unaccounted deaths of innocents after partition are thus implied.

The embodiment of Jinnah along the historical, symbolic characters is part of Aslam’s novels. Jasmine flower (*chameli* in Urdu) is national flower of the Pakistan. The blind man Rohan is Jeo’s father. Jeo is actually a foil of Jinnah’s envisioned Pakistan, as it dies a premature death. When Rohan visits Jeo and Basie’s house, he is in the trademark outfit of Jinnah ‘a shervani frock coat and a Jinnah cap’ (BMG, 23) The blind man symbolism is accepted in agreement of the political figure as ‘The blind man is Jinnah, envisioning a country on the basis of amazing ideas..the garden surrounded by jasmine flowers is Pakistan,’ (Aslam: Interview with Sonia Malik).

The age of the characters is chronicled accurately. David Town is ‘forty-eight years old this year.’ (WV, 49) David met Zameen when he was twenty-seven years old when he meets Lara he is forty-eight years old. The time span of events is captured with accuracy. It shows the craft of Aslam as the duration generally gives a new dimension to the period of longing, waiting. It intensifies the exact time length of the waiting period. When Jeo’s waiting period was tough for his ex-love. The specified events in the forms of days really hit the cord. Seven years Kaukab and Shamas didn’t hear from Ujala. Two years and seven months, she didn’t see her grandson. Mah-Jabin will be ‘twenty-seven year this year’ (MLL, 129) Shamas is sixty-five. Charag is thirty-two years old. The age of the characters in the past and present is given consistently and tactfully. In a thread of continuity David, a CIA agent in *The Wasted Vigil* is also a CIA agent in *The Blind Man’s Garden* who questions Mikal about his reaction of Twin Towers. David shows the poster of Twin Towers to Mikal in one of his interrogation to warn him not to take the US lightly (BMG, 193) thus, encapsulating the stand for the West.
There is a great deal of similarities between the characters, events in the novels with the actual incidents. In an interview with Marianne Brace Aslam admitted to being inspired by the real life incidents, ‘each incident in the novel is based on a true case’ (Aslam: Interview) Innocent deaths during the terrorist attacks and the torture of the captives in the camps of the US base are close to realities. “There is nothing in my novels that isn’t being discussed on a daily basis in the newspapers published in Pakistan and in the rest of the Muslim world. (Interview with M. O’Connor) There are a lot of resemblances with the real life characters. The autobiographical events get a fictitious touch as when. ‘beating his son almost unconscious for flying a kite which he considered unIslamic, or for blowing on his whistle or dribbling a ball in courtyard—asking a child to apologize for being a child.’ pronounces children to be moderate. (MLL, 119) The man is inspired by his maternal uncle, Uncle Shujahat. He used to destroy children’s playthings because it represents living beings as idols. (‘God and Me’, 2006) The character of Shamas fits Aslam’s father; he was a published poet and former communist. There is a hint of similarities with the character of Mikal to the author himself, Mikal’s parents were communists, he contempt and questions violence like Aslam’s point of view. Charag takes BSc in Chemistry, the degree author himself has pursued. (Aslam, 178) The son, Charag loves to paint like Nadeem Aslam. Aslam admitted he misses painting the most when he is busy. (Interview with Samantara)

In Maps for Lost Lovers, ‘It has been said that Wamaq Saleem did for Pakistan what Homer did for the Mediterranean and what the Bible did for Jerusalem.’ (MLL, 222) The poet Wamaq Saleem appears in his other novels. (BMG, 324-7; The Season of Rainbirds, 96; WV, 239) Aslam opened up in an interview with Chambers about Wamaq Saleem featuring in all his novels as a popular Pakistani poet. Wamaq Saleem
is the pen name of Aslam’s father. While he is exiled from his country by the military regime, he had to leave writing. Aslam expressed his wish that his father will appear in all novels of Pakistan, as a poet which he never became due to financial restrictions and the responsibility of the family. (Chambers, 135-8) In an interview with Shamsie, he mentioned his father was a published poet, in a Pakistani magazine *Lail-o-Nahar*. To fulfil his father’s dream, he would keep paying homage to his father in his novels, a niche to the aspiring failed poet. (Interview with Shamsie)