

## Cultural Hybridity in Nadeem Aslam's Maps for Lost Lovers

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research article is to highlight the significance of cultural choices to establish one's identity as well as to affirm that migrant identity is not a given but rather a product of lived reality, something always in process in a culturally hybrid world. It is to explore the ways in which Nadeem Aslam advocates hybrid world, a world in which heterogeneity and diversity are to be tolerated as sources of cultural enrichment and safe living. In *Maps for Lost Lovers* Nadeem Aslam has explored these matters which plague the post-colonial world marked by polarization, hybridity and assimilations. Complex phenomenon of cultural hybridity in post-colonial era provides the background to this study. Three aspects of cultural identity will be focused regarding hybridity: individual migrants, post-colonial history and Language. In review of literature critical approaches towards cultural hybridity and work of Nadeem Aslam have been explored in context of the topic. Homi k Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) provides the undercurrent to this work.

**Keywords:** Post-colonial, Migrants, Culture, Hybridity.

**Abbreviations:** i- Maps for *Maps for Lost Lovers* ii-Aslam for Nadeem Aslam

### Introduction

"We find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion." (*The location of culture*: 1994, p1)

Intellectuals had been contemplating about the transient nature of human life but what has boggled the scholars of present era is the transient nature of identity. Post-colonial persons find themselves in the moment of transit, in a world marked by a paradoxical combination of violently proclaimed cultural differences and the complexly interconnected networks of globalization, in a world where quick communication, global economies, increasing number of migration of people across continents have drastically shaken old views of the formation of cultural identities.

Cultural hybridity is one of the dominating subjects of contemporary fiction around the globe, but particularly it becomes of significance when it is analyzed in the works of prominent contemporary South Asian writers, like Nadeem Aslam, who have post-colonial perspectives to produce waves in literary field by exploring the heart of families at the crossroads of culture, pinpointing its hybridity and diversity. Socio-political scenario of the last half century intimidated such writers with tremendous scope to see into cultural dichotomies as well as the resolutions to resolve the related issues. Nadeem Aslam, among the group, is a comparatively young and promising writer echoing Bhabha in his contentions. He, as a diaspora writer, reflected upon issues related to race, religion, history and language under the umbrella of cultural identity.

Nadeem Aslam has embarked on this by quoting Octavio Paz in the beginning of *Maps for Lost Lovers*: "A human being is never what he is but the self he seeks." It manifests Aslam's range for identity explorations. The novel revolves around Shamas, who seems to have different pulls in his veins; born to a Hindu father and a Muslim mother who was not a strict follower; grew into a young man, a poet having roots in Muslim culture but turned into a communist after he stopped believing and opted exile to avoid the atrocities in Pakistan of 1950s; came back after a decade and married Koukab, daughter of a cleric and returned to England for not finding a meaningful job in Pakistan. His life over there opens up a classic spectrum of an immigrant's life, posing all sorts of challenges and threats to his cultural identity. Carrying the burden of re-presentation, he never detached himself to the East while trying to be attached to the West by finding a third place. His wife, however, resists cultural onslaughts. To the contrary, their children try to assimilate. The way Shamas family confronts the reality speaks volumes about the fluidity of identity, setting in the process of transformation and proving that our universe is divested of absolutes.

Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, its histories and cultures should be taken like constantly intruding on the present, demanding that human beings should transform their understanding of cross-cultural relations. Cultures do not move in homogeneous empty time but are related to time and space. Consequent upon, cultural identities are also vulnerable to time and space. This shows the importance of history and historical events in the construction of cultures and excites the researcher to look into this interplay how in post-colonial world it is always the past that redefines the present. The authority of dominant nations and ideas is

never as complete as it seems, because it is always marked by anxiety, something that enables the dominated to fight back.

Bell hook's paper, "Marginality as a Site of Resistance" (Hooks, 1990) provides the researcher another reason to explore. In fact, it objectifies that hybridity is a site of creativity and power, which Bhabha calls 'third dimension' where post-colonial subjects 'recover' themselves. It is a space of sharing which eliminates the category of colonizer/ colonized. It breaks open the fixity of colonizer's cultural authority allowing the subjects to construct their identities in an unending process. When Bhabha talks about a 'shared text, a way of talking ...to bring language to a space of community and conversation that is never simply white and never simply black' (Bhabha, 1994: p.24) he is inviting the subjects to enter the 'third space', 'the site of marginality' a space of resistance. The study takes it like an objective to show how the characters of Maps, both men and women come alive and empowered in a 'shared text' to be a part of hybridity's on-going process.

Chamber Clair says, "Given his relatively late arrival in the UK, he is neither a diasporic 'British Pakistani writer' nor a Pakistani writer, but is situated in an in-between position, complicating conceptual boundaries between East and West" (Chamber, 2011).

So to say Nadeem Aslam himself is an embodiment of all the features of hybrid identity; a perfect concoction; a man born in 1966, in Gujranwala a town in the north of Lahore, with less than humble beginnings, leaving Pakistan in his early teens, not knowing English Language leading a hard life, yearning to rediscover his identity and roots in foreign lands and later developing his fictional characters and situations to reveal all these auto-biographical details. Aslam spent his adolescence in Huddersfield, near Bradford. Whilst he is not British Asian according to conventional requirements of birth in Britain, he claims a hyphenated identity and has described himself as culturally a Muslim but a non-believer, indicating both opposite pulls and pushes in his veins.

Homi K Bhabha's critical approach emerging chiefly through *the Location of Culture* (1994) has provided the undercurrent for this research work as the researcher intended to apply his theory of cultural hybridity and stemming out of it hybrid identity. Beside Bhabha, views of Spivak, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy also provide the critical supplement for this research work. . In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha comments on hybridity as a moment "when other denied knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority- its rule of recognition," (Bhabha, 1994:114) He takes hybridity as 'third space' which 'enables other positions to emerge'. (Bhabha, 1994: .211) It is not the consequence of one or more cultural forms thrust together. It is much more than simple mixed-ness of cultures: it is not the consequence of 'dialectal sublation' which implies the synthesis of thesis and antithesis. It is a place of productivity where something starts showing its presence and so it should be celebrated.

## Review of Literature

Dimensions of the topic necessitate explorations through two important areas of relevant literature: critics related to cultural hybridity and critical approaches to Nadeem Aslam's works. Part I, hence, includes critics like Robert Young, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall and Homi K Bhabha.

Cultural hybridity may be related to that part of human nature that yearns for creativity, newness and heterogeneity irrespective of time and space. Robert Young in his book *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in theory, Culture and Race* (1995) analyses the history of the concept of 'Hybridity'. He traces its breeding through 19<sup>th</sup> century racial theory<sup>1</sup>. He is of the view that racial theory was developed in cultural, historical and scientific terms. He argues that this theory has survived into the modern era despite all the attempts to mitigate it. "He considers all the ways in which the colonial archives are themselves littered with evidence of an obsession with categories of hybridity and syncretism." (*Routledge Critical Thinkers* 2006:150). Young believes that hybridity for Bakhtin is contestatory and politicized. It welcomes the challenge of division and separation. So Bakhtin's hybridity puts contradictory points of view against each other in a conflictual structure. Young believes that this conflictual structure retains 'a certain elemental, organic energy and open-endedness'. (1995:21-22) It is this potential of hybridity which can reverse the 'structure of domination in the colonial situation.' (1995: 23) Bhabha describes this same potential of hybridity as 'third space of enunciation' (Young, 1995).

Paul Gilroy's book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) presents a study of the intellectual history of African people. He gives the concept of Black Atlantic which according to him is a space of transnational cultural construction. He makes those peoples a symbol of his idea of diasporic people who witnessed the Atlantic slave trade. His idea of double consciousness implies cultural hybridity, as it illustrates that Black Atlantic is striving to be both European and Black through their relationship to the land of their birth as well as to their ethnic political constituency being absolutely transformed. Gilroy does not view identity in absolute terms, but as something that is fluid and shifting (Gilroy, 1993).

<sup>1</sup> Robert young in the first chapter entitled "Hybridity and Diaspora", p10-18, of the book has elaborated the intermixing of races and termed it as racial theory.

Stuart Hall considers culture as a critical site of social action and intervention where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled. Hall believes identity to be affected by history and culture, rather than a finished product; he sees it as on-going production. Hall's work covers issues like hegemony and cultural conflicts. Taking a post Gramscian stance he regards Language use as operating within a frame work of power institutions, politics and economics which presents people as producers and consumers of culture at the same time.

Bhabha's version of cultural hybridity is more comprehensive wider and applicable than most of the post-colonial thinkers. Shifting hybridity from its racial connotation to the semiotic field of culture he pinpoints its creativity. He believes that post-colonial condition requires novel concepts and formulations to capture the increasingly complex world we live in. He has demonstrated that the third space had been and could be very useful in future for the post-colonial subjects. In *the Location of Culture* (1994) he comments on hybridity as a moment when 'other denied knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority.' (Bhabha, 1994:114) In an interview titled *Third space* he says, 'For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge'<sup>1</sup>.

The emergence of some fixed form of culture is not possible. Bhabha's term imply that there is no such thing as purity of culture. Conclusively post-colonial world is all about impurity or hybridity of cultures. According to Bhabha when two or more cultures come along a space is created, which he termed as "third space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994: 37). Cultural identity is formed in this contradictory and ambivalent space. He insists more on Hybridity's on going processes than mere hybridity. The third space breaks open the fixity of cultures, brings diversity to enrich it further and allows to construct and contest identities in an unending process.

Part II summarises the analytical articles of Clair Chambers, David Waterman, Amina Yaqin, Fiona McCulloch, Lindsey Moore, Pomar Amer Miquel and Cordule Lemke. All of them have focused Nadeem Aslam's potential as a progressive literary figure, who can venture through all options, as well as the worth of his work in context of post-colonial cultural issues and their relevance to history and language.

Clair Chambers, a well-known English writer, critic and a lecturer in postcolonial literature at Leeds Metropolitan University, an author of *British Muslim Fiction: Interviews with Contemporary Writers*, (2011) gives credit to Nadeem Aslam as one of the most influential British Muslim writers. He stands 6th of thirteen in the content list of her book. "Multiple award winner, Nadeem Aslam is a lyrical chronicler of religious abuses both in his native Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan, and in South Asian communities in England." (2011: 19) The success of Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, "the most gorgeously written British novel of the year", using the words of Boyd Tonkin, Independent proves that Aslam is strong and clear in his condemnation of superstitions associated with Islam, which harm many people, particularly women."(2011: 137) Beside this his work reflected upon how Muslims of South Asian origin prone to experience poverty, social alienation and racism more than other minority groups in British society due to Islamophobia, which has spread quickly after the attacks on America in 2001 and the ensuing 'war on terror'. (Chamber, 2011)

David Waterman in his article, 'Memory and Cultural Identity: Negotiating Modernity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*' has established the need of re-membering more than just remembering in the process of preserving community cohesion and Identity within the diaspora culture of Dasht e Tanhai. For that he has strongly recommended Exemplary memory rather than literal memory; this recommendation goes quite in line with Bhabha's exploration of third place in the process of determining cultural identity. These immigrants have suffered a great cultural trauma in the face of partition in 1947; exile afterwards aggravated their feelings; depriving them of their favorite seasons; of their cultural manifestations. Waterman takes novel as "clash of civilizations" in Samuel Huntington's sense about a cross examination of concepts such as traditional Islamic values and modern Western culture; rapid social changes and feeling of cultural vulnerability, especially within a diaspora. It is precisely this contact zone Nadia Butt uses the term to denote "the space of cultural plurality in today's transcultural world" (p155) among and between cultures which Aslam probes in all its convulsions. He further argues, that the binary clash formula of traditional versus progressive is used by Aslam as a complex aggregation of myths. Ideas of cultural contamination and integration, Islam and the community/ nation, margins to question orthodoxy, the contemplation of absolutes through cultural representation and the generation's techniques to steer the course through the present as they look to the future. (Waterman, 2010).

In her essay "Cosmopolitan ventures during times of crisis: a postcolonial reading of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's *Dasht-e-tanhai*" and Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*", published in *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), Amina Yaqin engages with two writers whose work includes elements of both internationalism and cosmopolitanism. Generations apart they connect with the idea of the national from positions of exile igniting a very contemporary and historical debate on the position of faith and the location of culture in the modern postcolonial nation (Yaqin, 2013).

<sup>1</sup> Interview is retrieved from [www.wsp.kultur.uni.bremen.de](http://www.wsp.kultur.uni.bremen.de) on 26-03-2014

Like Amina Yaqin Fiona McCulloch in her book *Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary British Fiction*, (2012), part II Cosmopolitan Cartographies, chapter entitled ‘fellow Humans: Cosmopolitan citizens in Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) explored the ways Nadeem Aslam navigates through the interstices of religious and racial divisions in contemporary British societies. Rather than passively accepting the cultural divisions, he sharply criticized the multicultural isolation and attempts to reposition his ‘fellow humans’ at the inter face of cosmopolitan connectivity (McCulloch, 2012).

“British Muslim Identities and Specters of Terror in Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*” by Lindsey Moore is based upon the insight she gained through her reading of Gerrit-Jan Berendse and Mark Williams’ *Terror and Text: Representing Political violence in Literature and the Visual art*, (2002)<sup>1</sup> who suggest the need for “not only re-politicized modes of understanding but also a new grammar of response”, while measuring the challenges faced by creative writers and artists in the aftermath of 11 September, 2001. Their rationale is not that history recommenced with the destruction of the Twin Towers. Rather, they call for considered alternatives to “war-on-terror” rhetoric that, as Judith Butler puts it, “in its slosly metonymy, returns us to the invidious distinction between civilization and barbarism” (*Precarious Life 2*)<sup>2</sup>. She explores ways in which Nadeem Aslam’s second novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) participates in the construction of British Muslim Identities after 9/11. She is interested in knowing how a writer is involved by virtue of his cultural affiliations in national and transnational constructions of Islam might engage the “apparently ‘new’ and all consuming ‘grammar’” of the war on terror and “keep making art in the face of terror itself.” Two preliminary questions about the function of literature arise, one pertaining to an oft-cited “burden of representation” and the other to the status of art and its ambiguous relation to truth.

Pomar Amer, Miquel in his article “Kaukob in *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam: Representing and subverting the unspeakability of the Subaltern.” *ES.Revista de Filologia Inglesia* 33 (2012): p253-270 has analysed the character of kaukob the matriarch of the family, as a subaltern in both its literal and metaphorical sense and has pointed out the certain ways where she subverted this position, reaching quite close to find the third place for herself. Nadeem Aslam delineated Kaukob as an ambivalent character who must confront opposite discourses in the aftermath of the murder of her brother in law Jugnu and Chanda his beloved. He used Spivak’s famous and best known contribution to the Subaltern studies. In her assertive conclusion the subaltern is unable to speak (1999:308) the writer has applied Spivak’s statement in an interview that by ‘speaking’ she refers to” a transaction between the speaker and the listener,” (Landry and MacLean 1996:289)<sup>3</sup> not merely to actual utterance of the words. Spivak acknowledges that “we are never looking at the pure Subaltern. There is then, something of non-speakingness in the very notion of subalternity.” (Landry and MacLean 1996; 289) So, to the writer subalternity is a gradable category, not exclusively defined by its unspeakability alone. Therefore, the distinction between public and private spaces is crucial to understand how Kaukob is characterised in such a way that she fits the two interpretations of the subaltern’s unspeakability.

Cordule lemke ‘s article “Racism in the Diaspora: Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost lovers*” (2004) explores how the rhetoric of racism shape the construction of identities in Aslam’s *Maps*, as the portrayed community uses racist stereotypes to guard themselves not only against cultural predominance of white population but also against their Asian neighbours. Racial and cultural purity treated as the moving force of daily spectrum of the vicinity. In the course of the novel the difficulties of linking cultural features with racism are foregrounded. With Etienne Balibar<sup>4</sup>’s introduction of a distinction between primary and secondary features of identity into the discourse of the creation of national identity as a background this article sets out to unravel the different strands of identity and their connection to racism (Lemke, 2008).

### Analysis of the Text

*Maps for Lost Lovers* seems to be an affirmation of cultural hybridity as espoused by Bhabha and as it is practised by Salman Rushdie and his predecessors in their novels. Nadeem Aslam in his contentions is pretty close to these two prominent literary figures. The novel abounds in plenty of such examples, ideas and illustrations to vindicate his following of the lines of those who through their literary work assert that safe and happy future of humanity lies in art and love and not in violence and obstinacy in matter of cultural identity; in giving and utilising the spaces in-between cultures and not in sticking to one’s guns; in bridging the cultures and not in cultural clashes and in providing opportunities to grow and not in blocking the way of hybridity which is almost irresistible in this post-colonial, post-modern, globalised, cosmopolitan world.

<sup>1</sup> Berendse, Gerri-Jan and Mark Williams,eds. *Terror and Text:Representing Political Violence in literature and the Visual Arts*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: the Power of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Landry, Donna and Gerald MacLean 1996: “subaltern talk. Interview with the Editors”. Landry, Donna and Gerald MacLean,eds. *The Spivak Reader. Selected works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New york: routledge, 287-308.

<sup>4</sup> Etienne Balibar, we, *The People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, transl. by James Swenson(Princeton: Princeton university Press, 2004) p1,9,26, 28,29.



The researcher's explorations through the text with the aspects of Bhabha's cultural hybridity resulted in the following features to be analysed:

1. Dast-e-Tanhaii, a hybrid place, a sort of palimpsest
2. Migrants cultural hybridity
3. Hybridity of History
4. Hybridity of the Language

Dasht e Tanhiyan, the centre point of action in the novel, is a hybrid place having Pakistani, Sikhs, Bengalis and English people as its inhabitants, manifesting their theological institutions like Mosque, Temple and Church. Its lake has carved hearts on the poles of the xylophone jetty enclose initials in Urdu, Hindi, Bengali as well as English. The place represents the manifold nationalities that came under the rule of the British Empire.

Concealment of the name and location of the English town, on the part of Aslam, paves the way for the appropriation of the metropolitan neighbourhood by the diaspora South Asian community and reverses the imperialist colonization of the immigrants' home countries. The re-naming of streets and landmarks within the neighbourhood further supports this argument and highlights the reverse appropriation of social space.

The various nationalities of the Sub-continent as they poured in the town 'changed the names according to the specific country they themselves are from — Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Sri Lankan. Only one name has been accepted by every group, remaining unchanged. It's the name of the town itself. Dasht-e-Tanhaii'. (*Maps*, p29)

As Cordula Lemke has pointed out, the process of the multiple re-naming according to the immigrants' various cultural backgrounds transforms the neighbourhood into "an enormous palimpsest". Taking up the street names which the British introduced into their colonies on the Asian subcontinent and transplanting them to the immigrant community in Britain can be read as a strategy of decolonization. The palimpsestic transplantation of the colonial structure onto the British soil renders the original structure hardly discernable underneath the different names and accentuates the "transitional status of all cultures". Though the town becomes an illustrious example of post-colonial cultural issues, bringing in typical conflicts and confusions, faced by its mixed-cultures inhabitants yet it is a place where endeavours are underway to resist the process of hybridity. This resistance is to demonstrate the scope and consequences of futile efforts.

Although the characters share a similar cultural background and the experience of exile, their religious differences and their fear of interacting with white people paralyze them. Representative of this mind set is Koukab, who did not know 'what lay beyond the neighbourhood', and how to deal with strangers.

"[she was] full of apprehension concerning the white race and uncomfortable with people of another Sub continental religion or grouping". (*Maps*: p32)

The inability to interact with people of a different skin colour or different religious beliefs renders Koukab to be lonely and destitute.

### **Migrants identities**

*Maps For lost lovers* explores the difficult and ambiguous evolution a migrant undergoes in the translation from East to West, from purity to hybridity while establishing their identities. Majority of its characters are immigrants from South Asian nations, mainly from Pakistan—who are making new lives for themselves, attempting to determine their cultural identity. How much should they retain from home, and how much can be added from the adopted nation are the queries to make their lives perplexed. Cultural choices made by the first and second generation migrants determined the course of their lives.

Dislocation and loss of identity occurs when a person moves from one country to another. Throughout the novel the characters, particularly, belonging to the first generation of migrants are forced to accept that their identity is no longer singular, though their past also prevents them from fully entering the culture of their new homes. They are split between the two worlds. An inability to embrace this newness or a refusal to adapt to a new life in the West could, according to Nadeem Aslam, ultimately destroy the migrant as is observed in the case of Koukab; and ability to valorise interstitial places helps the migrants to establish themselves in the centre, as is manifested through Koukab's children.

Homi Bhabha asserts that the split subject, one divided between two Cultures, is the most relevant characterization of the modern age. He explains that it is the "split subject that articulates, with the greatest intensity, the disjunction of time and being that characterize the social syntax of the postmodern condition" (Bhabha 1994:307). Thus, the most poignant expression of the ambiguous nature of today's world is the individual migrant. Throughout his novel, the protagonist Shamas, despite having the position and ability to organise migrants, and to be more specific, Pakistani community does not indulge himself in it nor he joins the opposite White community exclusively. While Nadeem Aslam attempts to express in *Maps for Lost Lovers* the experience of South Asian community of East London, its heterogeneity, its struggles, its hopes, the true spirit of the novel lies in individuals who must confront their inner dichotomy between East and West. The writer uses

the characters of Kokab and Shamas as symbols to explore this issue of personal hybridity. Any way he does not assert that all migrants have the same experience as Kokab and Shamas and that would essentialize what is actually a widely varied and intensely personalized experience. Nadeem Aslam does, however, make the point that while the material circumstances of migrants may be different, the issue of being trapped with one's in-between-ness is the same for all those who migrate or those who experience dislocation due to any reason. This fundamental struggle is highlighted in the seemingly divergent lives of two strong individuals, husband and wife, shamas and Koukab.

Taking Shamas first he pursued his own idea of *the good*, keen to become that which he most cherished. In contrast to Shamas' desperation to shed his tradition, Kokab is proud of her Sohni Dharti heart. *Maps for Lost Lovers*, in this sense, is the story of two painfully divided selves: for Shamas the division is secular and societal: he is torn...between Lahore and London, between East and West. For the other, koukab, the division is spiritual, a rift of the soul. Both strive to retain wholeness in their identity, despite being pulled in two different directions.

Shamas does survive. His time among the immigrants at Community Relationing Office teaches him that he cannot entirely escape his past and that there are many different ways to be British. He becomes involved in various issues of his adopted community, trying to be equally good with Sikhs (Kiran and Family), Hindus (Poorab Jee), Christians and Suraya a companion there he had never imagined. Furthermore, Shamas eventually faces up to his own past as well as the great varieties of love and death comes to understand the importance of family, of home, of roots no matter where one goes in life.

Ultimately both Kokab and Shamas are faced with the challenge of accepting and understanding their own hybrid natures, as every migrant must do. The task is certainly difficult. Shamas exercises in the liminal way to maintain both his roots and his English influence. This cultural multiplicity is a positive thing. Taking the novel in this way it seems to celebrate hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics and art. This intermingling which could never happen without a migrant to perform it, is exactly *how newness enters the world (Imaginary Homeland: 394)* and this is where Nadeem Aslam's debt to Bhabha's version of cultural hybridity becomes evident, as it seems to be in accordance to the aspirations of Shamas and his Family(excluding his wife).

Bhabha states that the act of negotiating the migrant identity is crucial in the development of newness in culture. Migrants find their places somewhere within the cultures of home and location, by dissolving boundaries and erasing limits they open up to new spaces. Bhabha states that these subjects who are neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between* "find their agency in a form of the future where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory" (1994:313). This is vindicated particularly through Charagh, the eldest son of Shamas and Kokab, by Ujala and Mah Jabeen in general; their accounts of lives illustrate that the migrant, living inside the in-between spaces of culture, is neither wholly dependent on the past nor simply passing a meaningless present. Their march towards accepting their hybrid cultural identity throws light on the hope and beauty of a life in-between.

For the descendants of first generation immigrants, the confusion of cultural identity is something to be with them from the very first moment of their lives. In most cases, their home experiences directly collide with the outside world; they feel perplexed to come up to the expectations of the conflicting nature of two cultures in the beginning. But as they grow young, they feel inclined to the culture of the land. Whereas first generation immigrants find it difficult to accept being British Asian due to their strong ties to and nostalgia for their roots, for their mother country, their children are usually unwilling to be labelled the same because they consider themselves simply British. Apparently, the second generation is more of a 'post-in-between generation'. Their identity confusion, if it is there, derives from other sources than their parents' and they have their own different ways to deal with it. The researcher found that there are two major types of second generation immigrants in this respect: the 'rejecters', who opt for assimilation to avoid confrontation, such as Jugnu and Ujala of *Maps for Lost Lovers*. There is a second category and that is embodied in the hybrid character of Charagh, whose multiple and fluid identity represents a 'new way of being British' (Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette*" p18). He considers himself to be first and foremost English, but at the same time he acknowledges a sense of cultural responsibility towards his roots and learns to accept his identity confusion and hybridity. However in both categories British culture dominates, probably, they simply can't help it as there is no way back for them. Their disillusionment with their parents' culture makes the choices easy for them. Mahjabeen and Chanda, after their bitter experiences in Pakistan, become more open to new possibilities, to the process of hybridisation.

Actually the parents' cultural choices, made out of a traumatic past and adhered to out of a sense of familiarity and security, has in fact done a great deal of harm to their children, which results in the parents' suicidal loss of hope at the end of the novel. Koukab and shamas are left empty handed; the predicament of Chanda's parents has no remedy.

But hope here is, hope to challenge absolutes through artistic and cultural expression; rather than providing the answers of a religious or a political ideology, literature and other forms of artistic expression are an inquiry; great literature, by asking extraordinary questions, opens new doors in the minds of readers. Early in the novel, it

is jazz music that brings people together, whatever their gender, religion or age, reducing the distance between people(s) by insisting on their status as human beings:

“The record would begin and soon the listeners would be engrossed by those musicians who seemed to know how to blend together all that life contains...by the end of the piece, the space between them would have contracted, heads leaning together as though they were sharing a mirror. (p13)

Similarly, in the middle of the novel, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s widely attended concerts are presented as cultural bridge and as tools to voice unorthodox points of view. Interstitial places encourage and empower them to give vent to their heart feelings. To them Pakistan was a poor country because ‘the Whites stole all its wealth, beginning with the Koh-i-Noor diamond’ (p 46) and to counter the fear of thrown out of Britain, ‘they plan to put up a fight and say they ‘ll go back with pleasure as soon as the Queen gives back our Koh-i- Noor.’ (p47) Aslam’s characters valorise the interstitial places, suggestive of their being a part of the process of hybridisation and suggestive of their being empowered through it.

## History

It becomes quite evident that whatever points Nadeem Aslam has executed about the history in his novel certainly have the colouring of his own thoughts, experiences and prejudices as all human beings have this tendency. He embraces the postmodern concept of the hybrid, believing in the plurality of meanings. He privileges a postmodern space or third principle that blends both sides of binaries: east/west, secular/religious, real/fantasy, and colonizer/colonized and foregrounds hybridity over clarity and open-endedness over closure. In this the work is adaptable, creative, fluid and have depth. Just like Nadeem himself, Shamas is a perfect representation of the hybrid man, born with —multiple allegiances and Identities. He is a character of mixed backgrounds—the son of a Hindu Chokor and a Muslim Mahtab. Furthermore, a celebration of hybridity and diversity in history will ultimately open a place for the growing number of migrant or transnational people, such as Nadeem Aslam himself, who do not fit into expected national or cultural categories. The constant revision and additions will ultimately keep history alive because it will be flexible enough to accommodate the changes taking place in the world.

Much of Nadeem Aslam’s work addresses the political and social problems of modern India, Pakistan, or migrant communities/individuals abroad in the context of history. Beginning with *Season of the Rainbirds*, *The Wasted Vigil*, *Maps for Lost Lovers* till *Blindman’s Garden* Aslam has been testifying that History is not just a matter of past. What becomes important for its continuity in the present is to see it and present it keeping in view of all the inequalities, injustices done to the colonised people living anywhere in the world. *Maps for Lost Lovers* reflects upon history for India and Pakistan that is extremely heterogeneous and diverse, stuffed with stories and images and ideas—a hybridized history. The beginning of the novel with heavy snowfall, which is crystal clear to reveal all the buried objects under it, symbolises the history, which may be explored by the migrants now through their own perspectives. This narrative opens up a place in the historical record for those who previously were marginalized by essentialist national histories. The novel follows its convoluted path through the twinned histories of Shamas’ family and Pakistan India itself. Furthermore, a celebration of hybridity and diversity in history will ultimately open a place for the growing number of migrant or transnational people, such as Nadeem Aslam himself, who do not fit into expected national or cultural categories. The constant revision and additions will ultimately keep history alive because it will be flexible enough to accommodate the changes taking place in the world.

## Language

Nadeem Aslam uses unique language throughout his novel to emphasize the linguistic hybridity of Pak- India, and, in a larger sense, the hybridity of language itself in the postmodern age. English, he seems to argue, is no longer the property of the colonizers alone, but is being remade into the global language —english, a language that reflects the truly hybrid nature of today’s world. It has immense capacity to adjust different cultures and languages in it.

According to Bill Ashcroft and others, the hybridity of the language destabilizes that binary relationship between English, the language of the erstwhile imperial centre, and —english, the language which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world. Aslam shows that the English language can be and is being transformed to represent all varieties of experiences and cultures. As the identities are shifting so is their language. English is now a truly global language.

Throughout his novels, Aslam enthusiastically celebrates this hybridized form of English that has been remade into an almost cosmopolitan language. Aslam uses whatever seems to work, sprinkled with bits of Urdu, eclectic enough even to accommodate cliché, unbound by any grammatical straightjacket. Cultural hybridity generates more chances of knowing and learning through art and literature of one another. Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* exhibits many such endeavours. The writer has introduced the art work of Abdur Rehman Chughtai entitled as ‘Muraqqa-e- Chughtai’ (an illustration of the verses of Ghalib)

and 'Naqash-e Chughtai' published in 1928, 1934.

The moths are also a link to Islamic literature, one of whose central themes is the quest for the beloved. Man's search for his lover is his soul seeking God.<sup>1</sup> "There are various images within the Indian sub continental literary tradition, moth and the flame is one." There are other Islamic literary references, too, from the *thousand and One Nights* to Wamaq Saleem's poetry. The sections of the novel have also been decorated through the images, of a deer sitting beside a small cypress tree growing out of a jewel, drawn through the same work. Each chapter was so minutely embellished as the Persian and Mughal miniatures. Both images and ideas in the backdrop of sub-continent have been incorporated dextrously by Aslam in English.

### Conclusion

The research provides insight that the version of Bhabha's cultural hybridity has been in accordance with the aspirations and opinions of migrants in the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* and can be taken like a performativity of it to great extent, as most of the migrants residing in Dasht e Tanhain seem to be moving within the third space, produced by the closeness of eastern and western cultures. It demonstrates rather two sides of the same coin: what when hybridity is acted upon and what when it is resisted. Different levels of assimilations enunciate actually different levels of their curiosity to settle in. With the exception of Koukab and a few women of her type, all other characters determined the courses of their cultural lives with the awareness of this phenomenon; they know the urgency to survive in an alien culture neither permits hostility towards it nor it compels them to relinquish their own culture altogether. They exhibit that identity is fluid, indeterminate, a product of enunciation that is formed contingently at the border lines of cultures. It is relational and always in flux. Shamas's sons and daughter, part of the generation that must attempt to forge a link between the Pakistani and British parts of their lives without being consumed by anger or pulled apart by conflicting demands, thus providing a practical illustration of Bhabha's concept of third place of enunciation, where new cultural identities are formed. If, taken in post-colonial context, they are the subjects/subalterns who are strengthened by hybridity and can speak as well; if, taken as common men and women they have been empowered by their unique position from where they cannot go back and cannot leave their new places.

No doubt, Cultural hybridity has offered solutions to many post-colonial problems like transmuting time to space, with the present struggling out of the past to construct the future and empowering the subjects to make their way. The post-colonial world is one in which destructive cultural encounter is changing to an acceptance of difference on equal terms. Yet, if carelessly cultivated, it can lead to threats and dangers. Some of Koukab's cries about Charag, Ujala, Jugnu and her grandson become meaningful in this context. What Koukab says in anticipation of the future of her grandson, a hybrid product, has tremendous food for thought:

"Who would no doubt begin to chase girls as soon as he is in his teens, and be sexually active by the time he is fifteen, thinking display of wantonness and sex before marriage was the norm and not a grave sin! The little boy would no doubt marry a white girl and his own children would too: all trace of modesty and propriety would be bred out of them..." (p309)

At the same time one should be careful enough while commenting upon religious associations of others. The way Shamas and Jugnu hurt Koukab by passing disrespectful remarks about Islam cannot be taken like elaboration of empowerment, therefore, cannot be recommended on the pretext of cultural hybridity.

Immigrants in *Maps for Lost Lovers* are found complaining about the atrocities committed by the white people in sub-continent. While sitting in the centre they raise great hue and cry against racial behaviour of them thus exhibiting their courage mustered through their exploration of interstitial positions.

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<sup>1</sup> An Interview of Nadeem Aslam with Marianne Brace dated 11th June, 2004.



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### **A Wingless Bird**

I am a Wingless Bird  
No one can understand my dread  
Sitting all alone, I see other's flights  
Over valleys, ocean and mountain height.  
Soaring high they all seem to me  
Whimsical, comfortable and exultant.  
Hardly they bother about the morass  
Of those who are left behind like me,  
Whose wings have been cut by a brutal force  
The urge to fly keeps my inside quivering  
My wretched wingless body keeps on shivering.  
Why not me?  
Who is to reply?

By Nighat Parveen

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