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Cultural and Linguistic Hybridization: A Critical Study of Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lover*

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Abstract

This research paper aims to center on Pakistani diaspora literature and especially attempts to analyze Pakistani-born British writer Nadeem Aslam through Bhabha's concept of *cultural hybridity* and also focuses on the interplaying between linguistic and literature to analyse Nadeem Aslam's fiction through *language hybridization*. *Maps for Lost Lover* is, one of the most important novels in diaspora literature, presented the quest of identities, lack of identities, linguistic hybridization, cultural hybridity. It is to explore new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization and wants to show the maintenance of a sense of balance among values, customs and beliefs of two or more different cultures.

Dashta-e-Tanhaii, as a multicultural place with residents like Muslims, Sikhs, Bengalis and British, occupies a central place in the novel. Where we see cultural hybridity. Nadeem Aslam has shown the reality of Pakistani immigrated people in Britain. Linguistic hybridization defines as a process of frequently code-mixing. The structure of one language is applied to the vocabulary of another language. This is language hybridization that is a resultant process of frequent code-mixing. There are many examples of language hybridization, borrowing words and code-mixing such as *mung dahl*, *dhak-dhak*, *dhram*, *chuk-chuk*, *parvardigar*, *kameez*, *aloo bhurta*, *Assalamualaikum*, etc. Thus, this paper analyses the fiction *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) through Homi K Bhabha's concept of *cultural hybridity* that's knowledge enriches readers' understanding of literary pieces and can supplement their knowledge of literary interpretation.

Keywords: cultural hybridity, linguistic hybridization

Introduction

Nadeem Aslam is a well-known name in the annals and corpus of Pakistani writing in English. He is one of the most important post-colonial immigrant or diasporic writers from the Third world, but he is now settled in the First World. Nadeem Aslam's novels combine a nuanced interpretation of international socio-political conflicts and a depiction of the effect of local communities. Himself a Muslim and immigrated, Aslam has focused on the life and travails of the Muslim and immigrated people. Aslam has painted the realistic picture of Post-Independence Pakistan in his own colour combination realistic, multicultural issues, religious discrimination, religious orthodoxy, re-cultural Islam, cultural hegemony, cultural hybridity generation gap etc. He has been remaining successful to depict the real picture of Pakistani events such as the 9/11 event and the unjust death of sentence of the 9th Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on July 5, 1979. Nadeem Aslam is a British-Pakistani author. He was born on June 11, 1966, in Gujranwala, Pakistan. He immigrated to Britain with his family to escape the Pakistani President Zia-Ul-Haq's dictatorship because his father was a communist poet and director in Pakistan. He studied Bio-Chemistry at Manchester University in Britain, but dropped out his third year, due to become a full-time author. He was the author of five novels and a short story namely *Season of the Rainbirds* (1993), *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), *The Wasted Vigil* (2008), 'Leila in the Wilderness' (short story)

published in *Granta* 112 (2010), *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013) and *The Golden Legend* (2017).

In 2004, Nadeem Aslam published his second novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers* in which he depicts the picture of the murder of a pair of lovers named Jugnu and Chandra. There are other characters such as Shamas, Kaukab and their children and society members. Nadeem Aslam wants to depict realistic pictures of religion, nationalism and love relationships among the people of *Dashta-e-Tanhaii* (Desert of Loneliness). *Dashta-e-Tanhaii*, as a multicultural place with residents like Muslims, Sikhs, Bengalis and British, occupies a central place in the novel *Maps for Lost Lover*. Nadeem Aslam focuses on the twelve months in the life of Jugnu's brother Shamas and Shamas's wife Kaukab, exposing the life and immigrant community after the incident and criticizing their Islamic faith and traditions. Chanda and Jugnu were ruthlessly murdered by her brothers Bara and Chhota, which was clearly a case of honor killing. The novel focuses on honor killing, first-generation immigrants, the lives of immigrants, their nostalgia, and the struggle for identity formation among first and second-generation immigrants, focusing on the family of Shamas and Koukab.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research paper is to be analysed the selected fiction of Nadeem Aslam through Homi K Bhabha's rare concept of *Hybridity* the main objectives are following;

- To critical analyse Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* through Homi K Bhabha's rare concept of Hybridity.
- To introduce British diaspora novelist Nadeem Aslam.
- To highlight the discrimination of the Muslim community abroad in *Maps for Lost Lovers* of Nadeem Aslam.
- To see the domination of Pakistani christens in *Maps for Lost Lovers* of Nadeem Aslam.
- To interplay between linguistic and literature to analyse Nadeem Aslam's fiction through *language hybridization*.

Significance of the study

The research paper is to be significant as it highlights Homi K Bhabha's concept of Hybridity and critical insight into the selected fiction of Nadeem Aslam through these concepts. This research paper creates awareness among readers about Pakistani diaspora literature. Thus, this research paper will be established that knowledge enriches reader's understanding of literary pieces and can supplement novel values of literary interpretations. It will create reference material and provide scope for further study.

The limitation of the study

The limitation of this research paper will be confined to analysis *Maps for Lost Lovers* of Nadeem Aslam through Homi K Bhabha's rare concept of Hybridity. This paper limits the boundaries of this study to explore or analyse the conditional relationship between the traditions of Islamic values and contemporary Western culture. This paper wants to interplay between linguistic and literature to analyse Nadeem Aslam's fiction through *language hybridization*.

Research methodology

This critical insight into the selected fiction of Nadeem Aslam through *language hybridization* cultural hybridity will be the central agenda of this research paper using textual, descriptive, evaluative, interpretive, critical and analytic methods. The M.L.A Handbook of Research 8th Edition will be followed in the citation and documentation of resources.

Data collection

For this research paper, the data will be collected from primary and secondary sources.

I. Primary sources

Primary data collected from the first hand e.g the first-hand data is also known as primary data which are following:

- *Maps for Lost Lover*.

II. Secondary sources

A secondary Source is a source that provided second-hand or non-original information including references books, articles, shadhganga, Wikipedia, etc. that are analysed to find out cultural hegemony and cultural hybridity in the selected fiction of Nadeem Aslam.

Review of literature

In essence, an attempt has been made to present a review of previous studies, in which there is direct or indirect relevance for this study. It is likely to provide a glimpse of the work done on the studies related to cultural hybridity and cultural hegemony in the selected fiction of Nadeem Aslam.

In their research paper 'Voice of Dissent: A Critique of Nadeem Aslam's Representation of Islam' Ahmad Khan, W and Ullah, M wants to develop a critique of Nadeem Aslam's prejudiced representation of Islam in his novel *Maps for the Lost Lovers* by saying that he criticizes Islam for oppressing women. He has shown Muslims as backward and diabolic and Islamic is depicted as a primitive religion in the novel *Maps for the Lost Lovers*. Thus, Khan and Ullah come to a certain conclusion about Islam and its cultural values by depicting Muslims as the contemporary other. Western cultural values are compared with Islam by giving superior status to the West ^[1].

Iqbal *et al.* want to elaborate on the concept of Islam in their research paper 'Concept of Islam in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004)'. Through this novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Nadeem Aslam expresses his dissatisfaction with the representation of Islam by immigrant Muslims after the incident. In his novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, he has shown the negative portrayal of Islam by Muslims. The misinterpretation of Islam, the double standards of mullahs, the use of Islam for personal gain, the plundering of the innocent, the attitude of secular characters towards Islam and apathy towards religion are discussed in this research thesis with special reference to *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Thus, Iqbal *et al.* have been remaining success to find out a certain conclusion. Nadeem Aslam tries to point out corruption,

¹ Ahmad Khan, W *et al.* (2014) 'Voice of Dissent: A Critique of Nadeem Aslam's Representation of Islam' Vol-14 (2) The Dialogue. P- 171- 81

hypocrisy, dualism, distaste and extremism, misinterpretation of religion and intolerance of Muslims. Nadeem Aslam is not against good Muslims but he condemns and disapproves of those who do not understand the true spirit of Islam [2].

Ravindran wants to see the reflection of migrating settlers' life in Dash-E-Tanhai in her research paper 'Trans-cultural Existential Dilemma in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lover*'. Ravindran searches on the female characters such as Kaukab and Surrayya and expresses the psychological conflict which hunts them from framing their own space and identity within a trans-cultural scenario. Thus, Ravindran comes to a certain conclusion that Surayya and Kaukhab adopt hybrid states as a mark of their resistance [3].

In their paper 'Cultural Hybridity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*', Arif and Parveen explore the domination of the Muslim's culture, migrate identity, tolerated as sources of cultural enrichment and safe living through western society abroad in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lover*. There are three aspects of cultural identity to focus on regarding hybridity such as individual migrants, post-colonial history, and Language. Homi K Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) provides the undercurrent to this work especially his rare concept *Cultural Hybridity* [4].

Bhabha's version of cultural hybridity is more comprehensive and applicable than that of post-colonial thinkers. The transfer of hybridity from its racial meaning to the figurative realm of culture, he points to its creativity. He believes that the post-colonial situation requires new concepts and formulations to enable us to capture an increasingly complex world. He has demonstrated that the third place was and may be very useful in the future after 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' [5].

Cultural hybridity & linguistic hybridization

The term *Hybridity* common sense meaning is referred to a mixture. Cultural Hybridity is new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization and wants to show the maintenance of a sense of balance among values, customs and beliefs of two or more different cultures, but it is not a new cultural phenomenon. Eurasian culture, which is a mixture of Asian and European culture in British Raj India, is an example of hybridity. In the colonial and postcolonial literature, Hybridity is one of the most

prominent concepts introduced by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* and it is Homi K Bhabha who complemented Edward Said and coined the term *Hybridity* in his book *The Location of Culture*. In the words of Crish Barker:

"Indeed, the notion of hybridity has played a significant part in destabilizing the very idea of an unchanging culture that has secure locations since hybrids destabilize and blur established cultural boundaries in a process of fusion or creolization. One can make a distinction between structural hybridization that refers to a variety of social and institutional *sites* of hybridity, for example, border zones or cities like Miami or Singapore, and cultural hybridization that describes a range of cultural responses from separation and assimilation to hybrids that destabilize and blur cultural boundaries" [6].

Cultural hybridity is one of the most demanding subjects in the contemporary global literature in English, but particularly it becomes a significant subject in the fiction of Asian writers like Kamila Shamsie, Rohinton Mistry, Mohsin Hamid, Nadeem Aslam, Kiran Desai, etc. who want to show the real picture of maintaining a sense of balance among identity, customs, values, language, practices of two or more different culture. Cultural hybridity is espoused by Homi K Bhabha in his notable book *The Location of Culture* and it is practiced by Salman Rushdi in his fictional and non-fictional works. Nadeem Aslam, as one of the greatest diasporic writers, wants to highlight the realistic situation of immigrating people in western countries. Cultural hybridity has been presented as a certain aspect in his fiction *Maps for Lost Lover* based on location, culture, language, identity, etc.

Dashta-e- Tanhahi is made up of two Urdu words *Dashta* (دشت) which means into English 'desert' or 'wildness' and *Tanhahi* (تنہائی) which literary translates into English 'loneliness or 'solitude'. The combination meaning of *Dashta-e- Tanhahi* is 'the Wildness of Solitude' or 'the Desert of Loneliness'. With his naming of the home of a Muslim community in Britain as "Dasht-e-Tanhahi", Aslam gives a key referential preface to the iconic twentieth-century Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz. It was Faiz Ahmad Faiz who highlights *Dashta-e- Tanhahi* in his most masterpiece Urdu poetry collection *Yaad. Dashta-e- Tanhahi* is a popular Urdu poetry which is composed by Faiz Ahmad Faiz.

"Dasht-e tanhai men, ai jan-e jahan larzan hain
Teri avaz ke sa'e, tere honton ke sarab
Dasht-e tanhai men, duri ke khas-o khak tale
Khil rahe hain tere pahlu ke saman aur gulab
Uth rahi hai kahin qurbat se teri sans ki anch
Apni khushbu men sulagti hui maddham maddham
Dur-ufaq par, chamakti hui qatra qatra
Gir rahi hai teri dildar nazar ki shabnam
Is qadar pyar se, ai jan-e jahan, rakkha hai
Dil ke rukhsar pe is vaqt teri yad ne hath
Yun guman hota hai, garche hai abhi subh-e firaq
Dhal gaya hijr ka din, a bhi ga'I vasl ki rat" [7]

² Haroon Iqbal, Javed Iqbal, Rahmat Ullah, Ahmad Ullah, Syeda Fizza Amir Shah. (2021). CONCEPT OF ISLAM IN NADEEM ASLAM'S *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004). Pal Arch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 18(4), 6167-6176. Retrieved from <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/7238>

³ Ravindran, R. (2018). 'Transcultural Existential Dilemma in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lover*'. JETIR, Vol- 5 (8) Pg. 775-78

⁴ Arif, Shahbaz *et al.* (2014) 'Cultural Hybridity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lover's* Vol-4 (25) IISTE. P-57-65.

⁵ Bhabha, Homi. K. *The location of culture*. Routledge, 2004

⁶ Barker, Chris. *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage Publications, 2004. Print.

⁷ 'Yad' (Memory) from the collection *Dast-e saba* (1952)

“In the desert of my solitude, my love, quiver the shadows of your voice, the mirage of your lips. In the desert of my solitude, from beneath the dust and ashes of the distance between us, bloom the jasmines and the roses of your presence.

From somewhere close by rises the warmth of your breath it smolders in its own perfume – gently, languorously.

Far away, on the horizon, glistens drop by drop, the dew of your beguiling glance.

With such tenderness, my love, your memory has placed its hand on the cheek of my heart

That although this is the dawn of our farewell, it feels as if the sun has set on our day of separation and the night of our union is already at hand”^[8].

Nadeem Aslam wants to depict realistic pictures of religion, nationalism and love relationships among the people of *Dashta-e-Tanhaii* (Desert of Loneliness). *Dashta-e-Tanhaii*, as a multicultural place with residents like Muslims, Sikhs, Bengalis and British, occupies a central place in the novel. This place is intertwined with monuments such as mosques, temples and churches. People speak Hindi, Urdu, Bengali as well as English. In the social picture, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs live with each other, united only because they are immigrants from other countries and surrounded by a Godless white society. The people of this city do not accept the culture and customs of the white people, because they do not want to adopt a living culture for themselves. Thus, the various nationalities of the Sub-continent as they changed the names according to the specific country, they had immigrated from various country such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Sri Lankan. Only one name *Dasht-e Tanhaii* is the name of the town that has been accepted by every group.

“As 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. Because it was difficult to pronounce the English names, the men who arrived in this town in the 1950s had re-christened everything they saw before them. They had come from across the Subcontinent, lived together ten to a room, and the name that one of them happened to give to a street or landmark was taken up by the others, regardless of where they themselves were from. But over the decades, as more and more people came, the various nationalities of the Subcontinent have changed the names according to the specific country they themselves are from—Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, 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: p52)^[9].

Migration is referred to the process of going from one country, region or place of residence to settle in another religion or place country. The duration of this new settlement varies, they face many difficulties to quest their identity in searching for a better life or for economic or educational reasons. Migration is one of the most important themes in Asian diaspora literature. Among diaspora

writers, Nadeem Aslam presents the realistic picture of searching for a better life in the Western world. Nadeem Aslam presents the difficult and ambiguous evolution a migrant undergoes in the translation from East to West, from purity to hybridity while establishing their identities. Most of his characters are immigrants from South Asian nations, mainly from Pakistan—who are making new lives for themselves, attempting to determine their cultural identity. Dislocation and loss of identity are the central points of his fiction. The characters belong to the first generation of migrants. They 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. In the novel, Nadeem Aslam highlights the suffering from questing their identities in Britain:

“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, the real truth, the undeniable last word, the innermost core of all that is unbearably painful within a heart and all that is joyful, all that is loved and all that is worthy of love but remains unloved, lied to and lied about, the unimaginable depths of the soul where no other can withstand the longing and which few have the conviction to plumb, the sorrows and the indisputable rage—so engrossed would the listeners become that, by the end of the piece, the space between them would have contracted, heads leaning together as though they were sharing a mirror. All great artists know that part of their task is to light up the distance between two human beings”^[10].

Nadeem Aslam once again shows cultural identities through his characters like Chandra. He mentions their loss of identity:

“His heart kicking, he listened as the jury convicted Chanda’s brothers today. Feeling weightless and heavy at the same time, he heard the judge say that the killers had found a cure to their problem through an immoral, indefensible act; a cure, a remedy—and their religion and background took care of the bitter aftertaste. Their religion and background assured them that, yes, they were murderers but that they had murdered only sinners. The judge said that Chanda and Jugnu had done nothing illegal in deciding to live together but, Shamas knows, that the two brothers feel that the fact that an act is legal does not mean it’s right”^[11].

Hybridization is not the only phenomenon in language but also a phenomenon in many cultural domains. Hybridization is referred to the separate and distinct entities or processes that produce another entity or process (hybrid), which shares certain characteristics with each of its sources, but which is not purely structural. Hybridization is a phenomenon that blurs the boundaries of many disciplines in the field of ideas such as Cultural Studies, linguistics, Chemistry, etc. In linguistic, Linguistic hybridization define as a process of frequent code-mixing. The structure of one language is applied to the vocabulary of another language. This is language hybridization that is a resultant process of

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dasht-e-Tanhaii>.

⁹ Aslam, Nadeem. Maps for Lost Lovers. 2006.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Aslam, Nadeem. Maps for Lost Lovers., 2006.

frequent code-mixing. The structure and grammar of any language are applied to the vocabulary of another language. Nadeem Aslam uses unique language throughout his novel to emphasize the linguistic hybridity of Pak- India. In his novel, most of the characters use the hybridity of language as Pakistani language is applied to the vocabulary of western language. They use Urdu or Hindi words in English. English is remade into the global language to connect globalization-English, a language that reflects the truly hybrid nature of today's world. It has immense capacity to adjust to different cultures and languages. Code-mixing and linguistic hybridization between Urdu and English are seen in Aslam's fiction writings. From Pakistani languages, he borrows various words such as *mung dahl*, *dhak-dhak*, *dhram*, *chuk-chuk*, *parvardigar*, *kameez*, *aloo bhurta*, *Assalamaulaikum* etc. Many proverbs are borrowed from Urdu and the Hindi language of Pakistan. Nadeem Aslam presents the lack of immigrant's competence of English speaking. They use hybridity of language:

“And it too was hopeless: what was a person to do when even things in England spoke a different language than the one they did back in Pakistan? In England the heart said “boom boom” instead of dhak dhak; a gun said “bang!” instead of thah!; things fell with a “thud,” not a dharam; small bells said “jingle” instead of chaanchaan; the trains said “choo choo” instead of chuk chuk...”^[12] (*Maps* p60)

Conclusion

After summarizing the various above aspects in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lover* on the basis of the above analysis of the text and review of literature, the researcher ultimately comes to a certain conclusion that Nadeem Aslam has portrayed the difficulties of the Pakistani diaspora with brilliance. Nadeem Aslam himself is a diaspora, so he feels himself which he writes. At the age of 14 years, he immigrated to Britain, but he comes back to the theme. According to *The Herald* (London), it compares to other Indian diaspora writers such as Rohinton Mistry and Salman Rushdie by saying, “An extraordinary work, echoing Rohinton Mistry and Salman Rushdie, but entirely, and unmistakably, the product of a wholly original mind.” *Maps for Lost Lover* is one of the most important novels in diaspora literature. Nadeem Aslam presents quest of identities, lack of identities, linguistic hybridization, cultural hybridity in his novel *Maps for Lost Lover* through his characters Jugnu and Chandra, Shamas and Kaukab. Thus, Aslam has been remaining successful to depict the real picture of the condition of Pakistani immigrated people in Britain.

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¹² Aslam, Nadeem. *Maps for Lost Lovers*., 2006.