

**Love as A Force for Women's Liberation and Identity in Nadeem Aslam's  
*Maps for Lost Lovers***

**Aamer Shaheen<sup>1</sup> and Sadia Qamar**  
Government College University, Faisalabad

**Nazia Kirn**  
Government Degree College for Women, Chak Jhumra, Faisalabad

**Abstract**

The present study focusses on Nadeem Aslam's use of love plot in his novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) as the means of showcasing resistance to a misogynist culture in a fictional multicultural town in England: *Dasht-e-Tanhaii*. The Chanda/Jugnu love plot, contextualizing the complicated dynamics of a multicultural society, serves the purpose of granting the female characters a peculiar sense of liberty and identity in the wake of an oppressive male dominant society and culture. The study reflects critically upon the Chanda/Jugnu love relationship by employing feminist thoughts of Gayatri Spivak supported with Erich Fromm's ideas about love. Reading Aslam's female characters, through Spivak's (1988) perspective, as the speechless subalterns of the Third World, the paper endeavors to establish Aslam as a Third world, albeit male, intellectual who grants his female protagonist Chanda to pursue love as a speech action to defy her subalternity in a social milieu essentially designed by an imperialist patriarchy. Fromm's (1956) notion of learning and following the art of love, as a sole recourse to seek out solutions to the problems of human existence, remains a guiding principle to understand the Chanda/Jugnu love plot. The study, exploring Aslam's use of women's love as an emancipatory force helping them raise their voices to reclaim their freedoms and identities, is significant as amid other critically evaluated social issues presented in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, the issue of Love as an emancipatory force for women's liberation and identity had remained neglected and in the background.

**Keywords:** Nadeem Aslam; Erich Fromm; Love; *Maps for Lost Lovers*; Pakistani-British Fiction; South-Asian Fiction; Gayatri Spivak; Feminist Theory

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Aamer Shaheen, Lecturer in English, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan. E-mail: aamershaheen1979@gmail.com

## **Introduction**

The work of an author is best understood within the socio-political context in which the work is written. An author problematizes the contemporary issues and traumas to make his readers aware of the current happenings. Nadeem Aslam, being a Pakistani-British diasporic, utilizes his personal experiences, to enrich his fictive plots, and contextualizes them within a global scenario to bring universal depth of emotions and intellect to his works. *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) showcasing the conditions of South-Asian immigrants in Britain, states all the troubles of the immigrants in the form of memory, sense of loss, indifference, alienation, rootlessness, and in-betweenness. The novel highlights the socio-political scenario of immigrant societies from the Third World countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Although the people belonging to the Third World have migrated to an alien land of the West, they have remained unsuccessful in integrating in a new culture. They practice their own cultures that often clash with the host culture. Aslam's novel investigates the situation when contesting cultures co-exist at the same time and affect women's lives in particular. He chooses to take England for his setting and creates a distinct town in England for the Asian immigrants called *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* where they form a multicultural society. In *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Aslam presents the problem of migration and the dilemmas of immigrants in an alien land where they feel homelessness, alienation, in-betweenness, insecurity and pain and do not prepare themselves for assimilation and mingling.

The story has a crime of honor-killing in its background that is perceived in different ways by different people. Aslam creates a complex multicultural society facing the communal clashes for superiority within and the threat of hostile out casting from without. Immigrants' obstinacy in their rejection to mix-up in host(ile) culture and the complicatedness of generational gaps and the younger generation's tendency to adopt and mimic foreign culture are the tensions that are aroused in the novel. The older generation always seems in a dilemma whereas the younger generation is not ready to accept their totalitarian views about the foreign culture.

## **Literature Review**

The novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, has attracted a lot of critical attention. The following passages in this section attempt to highlight some of the representative observations made by various scholars. Lemke (2008), reading the novel, talks about the rhetoric of racism which adds to the formulation of multiple nature of identity in a plural culture. The article involves the exploration of the forming of racial stereotypes which act as tool for the migrants to preserve their own distinctive identities and derogating the West by

considering them demonic as there is also an ever-present truth of different religion, a strong reason of difference and otherness. Butt (2008) shows the refusal of the immigrant community, particularly the older generation to integrate and assimilate in the new multicultural and diasporic society and shows their retreat into the close shells of their own indigenous culture that is opposite to the foreign-alien culture. Moore (2009) throws light on the issues of terror and horror which shocked the world soon after 9/11 taking support from the ideas of Gerrit-Jan Berendse and Mark Williams who suggest the need for the presence of new kind of grammar and re-politicized ways to understand the changed nature of things even in the literary representations.

Kanwal (2012) takes up the study of both Aslam's novels *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *The Wasted Vigil* to bring out the issues of trauma of migration, memory of home, feelings of sufferings and melancholy in a hostile culture and the continuous national consciousness in an alien land. By taking the theoretical ideas from Freud, Butler, Abraham and Torok, Kanwal brings out the above mentioned elements from both the novels respectively. McCulloch (2012) explores the ways in which Aslam's novel brings out the intersections of gender and race in a British multicultural society and thus correlates the issues of race, ethnicity gender and a plural culture. She further points to the complex web of multicultural identities putting the migrants into the dangers of in-betweenness and rootlessness, and the unwillingness to accept the fluidity of identity in a global world (pp.77-108).

Sarfraz (2013), reading the novel, throws light on the representation of the image of Islam in a postcolonial text. The article, using theoretic perspectives of Foucault and Said, illuminates the functions and power of representations in creating an image in the mind of the readers. Yaqin (2013) analyses together two literary texts of two Pakistani writers: Faiz Ahmad Faiz's *Dasht-e-tanhai* and Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, one being a poem and the other a novel respectively, which showcase the issues of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. She establishes through her study that Faiz responds to internationalism only after assuring the security of national sovereignty in it and Aslam yearns for universal love to cope with the problems of a multicultural society by turning towards the ideal model of cosmopolitanism. Waterman's (2015) study of the novel showcases the issue of migration of Pakistanis to a hostile land and the afflictions of memory and cultural identity resulting out of it. He believes that troubles further increase in form of their division into younger and older generations and a complex web of relations exists as their notions of home and identity differ from each other (pp. 111-137).

The literature review clearly indicates that how the critics have minutely engaged themselves with Aslam's multifaceted novel and at the same time

confirms the significance and scope of our research which explores the hitherto neglected theme of women's love to serve as an emancipatory tool for women's liberation and identity in a misogynist culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The present research takes Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's feminist thought alongside Erich Fromm's notions about love to read women's love as an emancipating force for their liberation and identity. Before we do that it is pertinent to have a round-up of feminism and its central ideas. Feminism can be described as a set of movements that started in different parts of the world to claim rights for the women in social, political, economic and religious fields. These movements questioned the representations of women in literary writings from male perspectives and a re-writing of history and politics was aimed in order to highlight the significant roles played by women (Barry, 1995, p. 121). Patriarchy can be defined as any social order that accepts the superior position of men and reduces women to inferiority. Patriarchy holds such a dominant role in the society that it forces women to blindly believe in its assumptions and definitions about them. Patriarchy generally nourishes in a misogynist culture where men are the sole decision makers in every matter of life including the fortunes of females' lives. Patriarchy promotes traditional gender roles that define men as rational, superior, decisive and strong while defining the women as emotional, submissive, and nurturing (Tyson, 2006, p. 85). Patriarchy exploits the natural position and subverts it for its own benefits as men and women are biologically different but the descriptions of heroic attributions only ascribing to men and their positive potentials highlight the evil politics of patriarchy that makes the definitions according to its own will. Feminism takes this uphill task to unveil the social and cultural politics that regulates the whole system of patriarchy (pp. 85-87).

Patriarchy naturalizes itself into the psychologies of women and they unconsciously promote its unreasonable conditions. It leaves no choice for women by dividing them into either good or bad women. Their lives have to be approved by the rules of patriarchy if they want to be called a "good girl". Patriarchy demands unreasonable compromises from women in form of their indifference toward all the issues outside their homes. It completely controls the lives of the women and denies any right to them. They are considered to be the "angels" of the houses by highlighting their tasks in form of nourishment, breeding and other domestic chores. Patriarchy works in such an authoritative way that it internalizes its biases in such a natural way that patriarchal women never question them. It thus objectifies women and describes all those women "bad" who do not fulfill its expectations (pp. 89-91).

## Love as A Force for Women's Liberation and Identity

After discussing the main aspects and ideas of feminism, the paper particularly tends to Spivak's ideas of post-colonial feminism. Spivak's famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) does not only talk about colonial subaltern rather she calls every one subaltern who experiences the inferior place in the society whether it be a colonized person, an exploited worker or a traumatized woman exploited by men or patriarchal society. Spivak discusses the afflictions and dilemmas of the third-world women on account of their double exploitation by colonialism and their own misogynist patriarchal culture: "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the women disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (p. 306). Spivak talks about the definition of women which she herself notices and says: "My own definition of a woman is very simple: it rests on the word 'man'" (Spivak, 1996, p. 54).

Spivak, broaching the inability of Eurocentric theorists like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari to represent the voice of the Third World subalterns, declares that "the subaltern cannot speak" until the Eastern Third World "female intellectual", although with her restrictive power of representation as it still remains the representation of the subaltern speech instead of being the subaltern speech, stands to own her role of representation (Spivak, 1988, p. 308). Spivak in her choice for the female intellectual to represent the Third World female subaltern may be reductive in establishing the capacity of an intellectual who, if genuinely intellectual, has to be above gender based roles and loyalties. Aslam, as the present paper tends to evaluate, is one such an intellectual with his baggage of duties to represent the marginalized (especially the subalternized women even living in the First World spaces) of the Third World by projecting the literary re-presentation of the plight of women as described by Spivak that the Third World subalternized woman not only "disappears" to "nothingness" but is also "violently shuttle[ed]" in her social performances as she is trapped between "patriarchy and imperialism" (p. 306).

After discussing Spivak's ideas about feminism, we move toward Erich Fromm's ideas regarding 'love' that support and substantiate the idea of women's rights by believing that love is the only solution to the problems of human existence. Spivak's advocacy for women's rights coupled with Fromm's idea of love informs our analysis of Aslam's fictive women. Fromm, describing love as an answer to the problems of human existence in his book *The Art of Loving* (1956), makes us realize that it is not a passive phenomenon that awaits for its abrupt happening rather human beings need to initiate willingly and actively learn this art in order to sort out or lessen the problems of their lives (pp. 2-7).

Fromm's solution to human problems through love is closely related to Aslam's novels where the barbarities and cruelties of patriarchy are making women's lives absurd and meaningless and they need to take a solid tool to resist that hegemony and claim for their rights. The subaltern women can fight for their liberation and identity by taking support from Fromm's notions about love. Fromm's crucial truth, unknown to the people, is that throughout their lives people run after meaningless and superficial worldly pursuits and do not hold the power of love that is the only solace to the discomforted souls.

Spivak talks about the need for women's self-realization and individuality in order to solve their problems as they are human beings with reason and intellect given by God. Fromm seems to be relevant to Spivak about the same notion when he talks about the reason, as gifted by God to mankind, and says that human's having reason is like "life being aware of itself" (p. 8). Fromm also talks about the countless problems and miseries of man's life and presents a solution to all these problems in form of love: "To have faith in the possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon, is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man" (p. 133).

Fromm also talks about the essential difference and separation of male and female sexes but he promotes the idea of 'union' to understand the difference without which there would be anxiety. He says: "The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love- is the source of shame...[and] is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety" (p. 9).

Aslam's novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, showcases the traumas of the Third World women which Spivak highlights in her theoretic perspectives and Fromm's notions about love relate to their taking love as a speech action, an emancipatory tool to liberate themselves and retain identity in a misogynist patriarchal culture.

## **Discussion**

### ***Misogynist Culture and Aslam's Fictive Women***

The novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, covers many instances where women are ill-treated and men decide their fates and destinies. The situation becomes the worst when the hypocrite culture operates by brainwashing the minds of the women and turns them into patriarchal women. Kaukab, belonging to the older generation of women and Suraya, the middle aged divorcee of a Pakistani man, both are the typical patriarchal women, who think and behave in accordance with the rules, set by a typical male-dominated way. The misogynist culture programs the minds of such women in a way that it seems natural to them that

women are born inferior and hence are completely dependent on men. Aslam parallels these patriarchal women with the younger generation of women: Mah-Jabin and Chanda, who are in Tyson's words, the perfect example of the "recovering patriarchal wom[e]n" (Tyson, 2006, p. 87).

The most insensitive act that is very common in the misogynist culture is the forced marriages of women. The novel bears witness to female characters that are suffering from this affliction. An interesting fact to notice is that there is not even a single male character that has to undergo a forced marriage. But almost all the women characters in the novel, although living in a very different and modern locale: England, cannot get rid of their indigenous conservative cultural baggage as long as their conservative males do not want so.

Chanda, a girl with the changing eyes in different seasons, is forced to marry her cousin at the age of sixteen and sent to Pakistan by her father and brothers, is a victim of child marriage, a common custom still present. Consequently Chanda is divorced. Uninfluenced by the first experience, the parents arrange her second marriage with another Pakistani boy. After some months she is divorced again. She has hardly recovered from her previous mishaps that her family arranges another marriage and this time she is married to an illegal immigrant who wanted only the British nationality and had nothing to do with the fact that the girl was divorced twice.

Mah-Jabin is another female character who is suffering from the insensitivities of the male dominant culture and traditions. Her mother Kaukab, who is a typical patriarchal woman, suggested and hurriedly arranged Mah-Jabin's marriage with her Pakistan based cousin when her mind was clouded by her anger and angst after a one-sided thwarted love affair. Mah-Jabin did not find any comfort and emotional warmth in that marital bond but her mother is not concerned with her daughter's unhappiness at all as she is more concerned about the institution of marriage and its entailing responsibilities. These trials and tribulations of an incompatible marriage have caused mental harm to Mah-Jabin that has completely gone unrealized and unnoticed by everyone.

Suraya is another miserable victim of the mercilessness of males. Suraya is a woman who suffers the most. She is married to a typical Pakistani who does not respect her. Suraya's education and modern thoughts are taken negatively. Her voice is suppressed when she tries to raise her voice against the violence of men against women. First she is divorced by her drunkard and irrational husband and then she has to undergo the humiliating ordeal of hunting a suitable match for a secret "Hallalah Marriage" in England to reclaim her previous husband at Pakistan to save the family repute.

Another pathetic and miserable character in *Maps for Lost Lovers* who bears the merciless cruelties of patriarchal culture and society is a girl referred to as a Muslim girl. She is punished for loving a Hindu, instead of teaching her with love and care the difference of religion, as her parents hurriedly marry her off to a boy from Pakistan first and then to an old man. Further the text records her culmination: “She was killed during the exorcism arranged by the parents with her husband’s approval” (Aslam, 2004, p. 266). The callous inflictions, borne by that girl, are neither questioned nor objected to by even a single person. The men, in the fictive world of Aslam, do horrible things to women in the name of religion or culture. They hypocritically, justify their evil practices, under the guise of religion and tradition. The parents are equally to be blamed for their ignorance and destroying the lives of their children by forcing them to marry according to their personal likes and dislikes.

There are many anonymous female characters in the novel who become prey to the cruel society and its merciless men who do not give any importance to women and consider them nobody or just silent puppets with no say in their lives and fates. The women die in repeated pregnancies but the husbands are not ready to have mercy upon them. Their lives are completely controlled by the men who do not let the women enjoy their lives freely as they themselves do. An unnamed Pakistani girl is raped by her uncle mercilessly and gets pregnant but there is no one to do justice to her rather she is held responsible and is considered culprit. Women are not given any respect or regard rather they are considered inferior and demons as it is believed by the people: “Women and infidels: minions of Satan both!” (p. 278). At another place, the novel exhibits the patriarchal notion about women that reduces them to no body and degraded creatures: “a woman should be a creature of the home and the night” (p. 338). Such notions further add to their humiliation and degradation where they are not treated as normal human beings of flesh and blood with reason, and emotions. Rather they are considered only puppets whose tasks are to make their husbands happy and give birth to their children. A poor girl who is unable to conceive promptly is described by her husband in the novel as “a stony valley that had wasted all his seed” (p. 157).

The preceding discussion about the condition of women in a misogynist culture shows that how men do absolute injustices to women and deprive them of their due rights and privileges.

### ***Love as a Counter Force to Safeguard Women’s Liberation and Identity***

After alluding to the injustices of a misogynist culture, the present study tends to focus on the revolutionary and radical stance of women in form of love taken as a counter force to safeguard their liberty and identity in a male-

dominated, patriarchal and misogynist culture. The novel portrays many female characters who suffer from injustices and barbarities but the present work particularly throws light on emancipating love of women that is enough for them to resist that stifling and congesting culture. Love has been used as an emancipatory tool by the younger generation of women who suffer a lot in their lives and finally take love to resist the male-chauvinism and patriarchy. All the atrocities done to them finally make them radical and rebellious because they are no longer fearful of any danger as their lives are already the epitomes of sufferings and miseries. After experiencing the extreme sufferings and cruelties, they decide to react and resist and do exactly the opposite to what their culture and males expect. Mah- Jabin and Chanda are the two main revolutionary and rebellious characters who have now decided to go exactly against their patriarchal culture. If Love, Liberty and Identity are taboos and prohibited for women, they tend to seek them in their lives and face the opposition of men and society fearlessly. These women will set an example for other women to fight for their rights and liberty against a cruel culture. Their revolutionary natures and ideas are direct strike on patriarchy and its misogynist culture. The novel also highlights the reactionary attitude of society and men toward these rebellious women, but it does not affect them, even if death itself impedes their way, as they are adamant and determined to regain their due rights from the society that has never granted them voluntarily what has always belonged to them.

### ***Mah-Jabin's Radical Nature***

Mah-Jabin, is the only daughter of the incompatible parents: Kaukab (a Conservative Fundamentalist) and Shamas (a Marxist Liberal). She is studying at university and does not stay at her home. Kaukab had taken advantage of her daughter's heartbroken condition as at the age of sixteen Mah-Jabin's one-sided crush for a neighborhood boy had come to an end after his marrying a Pakistani girl. She had blindly acquiesced to marry her paternal cousin in Pakistan- a marriage suggested and hastily arranged by Kaukab- to avoid the pangs of seeing her crush happy with his Pakistani bride. But the physical pains given to her by her Pakistani cousin husband were no less. Her husband taking her as a British slut gave her cigarette burns and sewing needle pricks in her thighs. Unable to bear her husband's sadist nature she returned to England after two years of her marriage. After experiencing the unsuccessful marriage, she is not ready to let herself down any more even by her own mother. Her first daring act is that she has divorced her Pakistani husband by herself as she was not happy with him. She is bold and independent enough in her decisions that she did not care about her mother's intense opposition. Her mother did not accept that divorce because that was not according to Pakistani laws but Mah-Jabin gives a damn to such stifling laws. She did not return to her husband again in her life in spite of her mother's intense insistence. She even decides to get her child

aborted secretly without disclosing it even to her mother because she thinks that her life is independent and she, being an individual has the right to decide about her own future. As described in the text: “she had induced a miscarriage by taking quinine tablets for a fortnight ...” (p. 156).

She is a girl who takes initiative and dares to contradict the native laws and traditions which are dearly loved by her mother. Her mother is the matriarch of the house and never allows her children to ignore their traditions and culture in a new country and culture but the children rebel against their mother’s stifling attitude that does not allow them (Charag, Ujala and Mah-Jabin) to stay at their own house. Mah-Jabin is a very sensitive and caring girl. She never forgets her limits as she adopts the radical behavior without disrespecting her mother or her endeared culture. Kaukab, on the other hand is not ready to mold herself according to new environment and culture. Mah-Jabin is a female character that did not bear the injustices of her society and culture rather took her life-changing decisions by herself at a very early age. After returning from Pakistan, she prefers education and modernity rather than spending a passive life of a divorcee. She does not care about her mother who thinks that she is still married and divorce given by a woman is not accepted at all by the native society. She says to her daughter: “Yes, I do want you to go back, because in the eyes of Allah you are still married to him. You may have divorced him under British law, but haven’t done so in a Muslim court” (p. 164).

But Mah-Jabin is adamant and determined in her decisions and never returns to Pakistan again to live with her husband. She spends a liberal life and stays at university hostel by occasionally visiting her parents. While visiting, she involves in a disastrous argument with her mother that leads to a fight between mother and daughter. She openly condemns her mother’s narrow-minded and stifling traditions and has a fighting argument with her mother. She criticizes her mother for strongly advocating the congesting laws that have ruined the lives of so many people around especially the women. She openly discourages her mother’s disastrous traditions that have ruined the lives of so many women including Chanda, Suraya and the Muslim girl. She makes her mother realize that her so-called traditions have caused great harm to her.

Mah-Jabin’s fight with her mother is actually her fight with the patriarchal culture and traditions that are the real cause of discomfort and are made just to entertain the rights of men. Kaukab does not realize the dangers of such culture and traditions but loses her children in protecting and advocating the unreasonable laws of patriarchy. Mah-Jabin strongly opposes Chanda’s murder in the name of honor-killing. She is pained to see her mother not realizing the miseries of a fellow woman but blindly condemning her for leading an indecent life. Mah-Jabin does not approve her mother’s criticism that did not do anything positive for poor Chanda. Her views and conflicts with her mother

seem to ask her that why did she not do anything to help Chanda when she was in never-ending wait for her husband? There is no one to ask the men who deserted Chanda but everyone is ready to kill her when she has a love-affair with Jugnu because she has gone against their traditions and laws. Although the novel doesn't show Mah-Jabin having any love life after divorcing her Pakistani husband, her advocacy for taking Chanda/Jugnu courtship as a normal human emotion, makes her stand with the murdered lovers. The value of human life, for the likes of Mah-Jabin's mother, is nothing rather they worship the dead and conservative traditions. She asks, ironically, her mother: "How many times had she been married before she met uncle Jugnu? Twice? Three times? Yes, if it doesn't work once, try again, because you are bound to hit the target eventually ..." (pp. 163-4).

Mah-Jabin resolves evermore to free herself from the shackles of a patriarchal society after Chanda/Jugnu honor-killing. She does not care about the consequences and daringly fights with her mother that symbolizes her fight with the stifling and congesting patriarchal culture that has ruined and devastated the lives of women. She is pained to see that her mother continuously condemns Chanda even after her death that makes her infuriated. She says to her mother desperately: "My god, for all of you she probably didn't die hard enough: you would like to dig her up piece by piece, put her back together, and kill her once again for going against your laws and codes, the so-called traditions that you have dragged into this country with you like the shit on your shoes" (p. 163).

The above statement by Mah-Jabin is enough to notice the breach of difference between the older and younger generation. The words "your laws and codes" depict that the younger generation did never feel at home with their own native culture that impeded them to integrate into the foreign culture. Mah-Jabin turns against her mother because she still insists her to go back to her Pakistani husband. The girl feels the pain that a mother thinks more about her illogical culture than of her children. She never realizes what her children want rather blames the foreign culture that has turned them into rebels. Mah-Jabin feels so low when she sees her mother pretending to be right. She strongly resists the idea of women's arranged marriages and labels them "organized crime called arranged marriages" (p. 151). Mah-Jabin is a recovering patriarchal woman and her words show her contempt for a patriarchal culture that grinds women to an extent that they are reduced to nothing and nobodies.

### *Chanda/Jugnu Love Plot*

Chanda is the central character and her love affair with Jugnu is the central plot of the novel. She belongs to a Pakistani immigrant family living in

Britain and has two brothers: Barra & Chotta, who murder her in the name of family honor. She is mercilessly killed because of her illicit love-affair with a man named Jugnu. The question here arises that what compelled her to commit such a crime in spite of being aware of her family and its laws? The reason behind this as discussed above is that Chanda's life had become equal to hell because of the stifling laws and rules that never allowed her to be herself and enjoy her individuality. Rotting with the wait for her 3<sup>rd</sup> lost husband, who, it seems, had used his marriage with Chanda for immigration purposes, Chanda attempts to give meaning and color to her life by choosing the path of love. She enters into a relationship with Jugnu beyond the boundaries of any traditions and laws. Chanda/Jugnu love plot serves as the backbone of the novel and records a contrary statement to established norms of a patriarchal conservative society of '*Dasht-e-Tanhaii*'.

### ***Chanda's Revolutionary Love***

The society does not have any objection on the wrong doings and misdeeds that men do and grips only women for deviating or disobeying its biased rules. The revolutionary behavior of women like Chanda's love for Jugnu and Mah-Jabin's rebellious nature show that women are done with the patriarchal culture that usurps their freedom, and individual identities. The women seem to fight against the naturalized hypocritical laws of male dominated society. Chanda is a prototype for all the girls and her daring relation encourages other girls to realize their position in the society and find their due rights and identities. Chanda, after being divorced twice, is married to a third person who leaves her without forwarding any reason. She is the one who has to wait for her husband in spite of no hope of his return. Her family considers her a shame and the brothers do not want to be called Chanda's brothers anymore as the girl is unfortunate and unlucky for the family. They want her to be in a veil (*burqa*) so that people might not recognize her because she is a girl whom every man leaves. No one finds fault with the men who had deserted her. Chanda's sufferings and miseries have turned her into a woman who now has come to realize the hypocrisies of society and its men.

This realization filled her with anger and disgust and she took an extreme step in order to assert her individuality. By doing exactly opposite to her conservative culture, she claimed for her identity and liberation. She took emancipating love, a sort of love that was considered a taboo for women in a patriarchal culture. Chanda, after a tiring wait, decided to marry Jugnu but her traditions and culture did not allow her to marry another man without seeking divorce first from her lost husband. She did not want to contradict her religion and its laws but the cruel society forced her to do so. No one was there to help her find her lost husband to get her a divorce to set her free. Chanda, helpless to reach a legal solution to her predicament, stooped to living with Jugnu without

wedlock. In doing so, she did not care about her hypocrite brothers who did never love or respect their sister and became thirsty for her blood for damaging and destroying their so-called respect and reputation in the society. Revealingly, Chanda's younger brother Chotta was also having an illicit relation with the Sikh girl, Kiran which he did not see as a taint to his family name and honor. Chanda did not care about her society and people's stinking remarks against her who were of the view: "O just think how the girl Chanda managed to destroy her entire family" (p. 372).

Aslam seems to support the idea of love in his novel as it is the right of every human being to enjoy this beautiful emotion. But the narrow-mindedness and cruelty of the society turned this emotion into a sin as they did not allow it in a normal way. As the authorial interjection in the novel explicitly counters: "Islam said that in order not to be unworthy of being, only one thing was required: love. And, said the True Faith, it did not even begin with humans and animals: even the trees were in love. The very stones sang of love. Allah Himself was a being in love with His own creations" (p. 91).

Chanda paved the way for other girls to raise their voices against the injustices of society. The path may be awkward and off-track but the patriarchal society truly deserved it. Chanda was ruthlessly murdered by her brothers but her death does not denote her as a failure. She was strong enough to take such a daring stance in that society. She took the daring step of revolutionary love in spite of getting intimidated by its consequences and results. But she rebelled against such laws to make the men and society realize that women are not mere puppets and dolls to be played with rather they are individual human beings with intellect and emotions.

Aslam through Chanda/Jugnu love plot shows that society and culture are quick in finding faults with women only and do not care about the atrocities and injustices committed to them in the name of religion and traditions. So, by incorporating Chanda/Jugnu love plot as a revolutionary force, Aslam wants to unveil the gigantic truths and heinous realities of society that seem natural on the surface. Women are living in an atmosphere where they are chained in the name of culture and traditions. Chanda cannot remarry until her third lost husband divorces her, Suraya needs a man to remarry and divorce to get back to her previous husband in Pakistan. Mah-Jabin is constantly forced to return to her husband against her own will, the Muslim girl is murdered mercilessly with the consent of her parents. These situations, as depicted by Aslam, prove that women cannot help but take the path of love as a speech action to resist a misogynist patriarchal culture and preserve their rights and privileges by having their liberties and identities. Many a Chandas may die in their pursuit of love but that is after all a happy death.

## Conclusion

Spivak's postcolonial-feminist ideas advocate the rights of the Third-World women duly represented in Aslam's novel and Fromm's notions about love assist to read Chanda/Jugnu love plot, in particular, as a symbolic speech action to goad Third World subalternized women, in general, to claim their liberty from the stifling, conservative and fundamentalist patriarchal culture by choosing to take the path of love.

The paper focusing on the issue of Women's love as a force to sustain their liberation and identity concludes that women can be successful in their struggles to preserve their individuality and liberty by using love as an assisting tool in patriarchal and extremist cultures. Aslam presents two different sets of women characters: Kaukab and Suraya vs Mah-Jabin and Chanda. The former bear inequalities and barbarities of patriarchy and fundamentalism (patriarchal women) while the later react and resist the stereotypical and hypocritical notions of the misogynist culture (recovering patriarchal women) that shows hatred toward women by considering men superior and rational. By juxtaposing these two sets of women, Aslam shows his readers that the former set of women, by merging themselves within a misogynist and patriarchal socio-cultural framework, may find a living but that is more deadening than the social suffocation and physical death which Mah-Jabin and Chanda have to bear respectively. The analysis proves Aslam to be an anti-patriarchal writer who provides strength and force to women in their emancipating love and makes them conscious about their rights and individualities while discouraging the barbarities and injustices committed to women by the powerful institutions. The study culminates with noting Aslam's intellectual and emotional tendency toward his female characters and his advocacy of women's rights and identities by presenting them powerful with the help of their love, no matter what may be the consequences. Aslam, through *Maps for Lost Lovers*, seems to make the same statement as that of Fromm: "any society which excludes... love, must in the long run perish of its own contradiction with the basic necessities of human nature" (Fromm, 1956, p. 133).

A lot of work has been done on *Maps for Lost Lovers* from multiple perspectives including multiculturalism, globalization, diaspora, memory, exile, hybridity, homelessness, in-betweenness, alienation, fundamentalism, and conservatism by different researchers. In spite of widely explored aspects of the novel, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. The present paper not only aims to fill one such gap by pointing out the hitherto overlooked theme of women's struggle for liberty and identity through their emancipating love in Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* but also opens up a new avenue for the future researchers to explore Aslam's female characters from his other fictive ventures from the perspective of love as an emancipatory force.

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