

## ANALYZING GENDER STEREOTYPES THROUGH THE ALTERITY PARADIGM IN ASLAM’S MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS

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### **Abstract**

*Alterity and Identity have become emerging themes in the multicultural literary discourse. This paper seeks to explore the gender stereotypes through the paradigm of Alterity/Identity in Aslam’s novel Maps for Lost Lovers (2004), whereby each character strives to live in a foreign land, poles apart in terms of culture from their native land Pakistan. In an endeavor to demystify the construction of Alterity through the gender roles, the Western land is thought of as foreign and not desirable for the Pakistani community. In the realm of Post-colonial study, the novel engages itself with the identity construction of both genders in a culturally hybrid land. This research rests on the frameworks provided by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha about identity, gender roles and hybrid cultures. Taking into consideration Li’s philosophical concept of Alterity, the research concludes that the characters of British Pakistani community, as typecasts of gender roles, some easily assimilate in the foreign culture in contrast to those who refuse to do so and retain their native identities and roles which they bring with them as legacy from their homeland. Hence, Alterity/identity is evident through the intersection of gender roles in the light of Islam.*

**Keywords:** Alterity, Identity, gender stereotypes, Otherness, hybridity, culture

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## **1. Introduction**

British South Asian population has boomed in the post-war era. Ballard (2002) maintains that majority of the population can be divided into four major categories. Right off the bat, there are the Gujaratis, inside a present populace around seventy-five percent of a million, about 80% are Hindus. The most significant class includes Punjabis, inside a present populace of around a large portion of a million, 80% are Sikhs and the rest are Hindus or Christians. Thirdly there is a significantly more generous assortment of Punjabi Muslims: well over a large portion of a million in number. To wrap things up there are the Bangladeshis, with numbers presently moving toward a fourth of a million, they are overwhelmingly drawn from District Sylhet in the far north-east. In the literary field, when we proceed towards the twenty-first century, it takes into account several modes that were not to be seen or heard of before. The new transformation of the literary flavor is global, and Bhabha (1990) explains that it emerges from “the interstices- the overlap and displacement of domains of difference where the intersubjective and collective experiences of ‘nationness’, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.” (Location of Culture, 2). The fixed identities create a whole new possibility of cultural hybridity (ibid). Edward Said (2003) also talks about the same concept and contends that all cultures are involved in one another; hybrid and heterogeneous. Cultural hybridity also seems to fascinate feminists and global literature can be viewed in terms of gender coupled with cultural hybridity. As Friedman (1998) argues that the hybridity is one concept that “offers feminism new ways of moving beyond the exclusive focus on difference” and calls hybridity as intercultural mixing.

Hybridity not only can be seen from a cultural perspective, but also from the lens of gender. Young (1995) agrees that “heterogeneity, cultural interchange and diversity have now become self-conscious identity of modern society” (4). Thus, hybridity can be studied with a cultural perspective as well as in terms of biological connotations. Hybridization, thus, inevitably poses a dangerous challenge to the comfortable dualisms (nature/culture, natural/artificial, female/male) upon which patriarchal hegemony is based. Hence, the hybridity can be a biological phenomenon but cultural intervention bears the responsibility for the act of creation. Not only the cultural critics, but also the contenders of feminism have concluded that hybridity is useful in defining the concepts of identity. Desai (1998) said in an interview that she was never aware of the term feminism. All she knew was that it is the women community as whole that they are able to resolve their memories and accept the

choices that they made. Sizemore (2002) states that gender identity is best understood as narratives, and women identities become valuable to be observed if consciously written from a place of hybridity as in the case of Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*.

## 2. Alterity/Identity and the gender roles

Alterity as defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary is "The state of being Other or different." Czarniawska (2008) says that identity is term used in everyday life while Alterity, in Post-modern literature and times, has begun to be a part of the esoteric writings and is expected to be understood only by a few enlightened group people. How would the natives look different from the Colonialists and how would the working class differ from the bourgeoisie even if they imitate them or wear the same clothes. Thus, she contends that "there are too many differences, and too little differences" (3). The issues of Alterity and personality were conceived in connection to people, they were exchanged, by similarity (Lamoreaux, 2003) and country states. Along these lines, the development of the character worldview in the nineteenth century was likewise no doubt associated with the ascent of patriotism (Anderson, 1983/1991). Individuals gathered inside the new fringes frantically had to realize what they had in like manner, as the propensity was for them to see excessively numerous distinctions. This attempt was so successful that, in the opinion of Ian Buruma, 'identity' is behind most of the present world troubles:

""Identity is a bloody business. Religion, nationality or race may not be the primary causes of war and mass murder. These are more likely to be tyranny, or the greed for territory, wealth and power. But 'identity is what gets the blood boiling, what makes people do unspeakable things to their neighbors.'"" (Buruma, 2002, p. 14).

Alterity and identity and have two varied perceptions, however, they can be seen through the dimensions of inclusion and exclusion. One perception of the concepts can be taken from the Foucaults school of thought that claimed, 'the forceful exclusion and exorcism of what is Other is an act of identity formation' (Corbey and Leerssen, 1991, p.11). The other perception by post-Hegelians, is that the interplay of the two terms is dialectal term, which shows its results in the form of 'increasing expansion and incorporation, assimilating or at least harmonizing all otherness in terms of expanding identity' (ibid. p. 11). Moreover, Taussig (1993) believes that the concept of mimesis in the 'yielding into the Other.' Hence, there are various dimensions to the concepts of alterity and identity. One being, attributed ('they are different and therefore not us') the other, incorporated ('they are actually very much like us'). And finally the

affirmation of the difference (yes, we are different). Aslam (2004) has employed these dimensions of Alterity and identity paradigm through the stereotypical characters, who perform the roles in such a way as to adhere to the perceptions of the two concepts, male characters like Shams and Jugnu, by assimilating and incorporating into the Western world, foreign land, Dasht-e-Tanhai. "Shamas. Jugnu. England. The White race" (Aslam, 2004, p.83). Therefore, they seem to accept, yes! They are very much like us, thus making it the perspective of the natives as well.

"Deleuze's anti-Hegelian project suggests that negativity is the last point on the identity continuum constituted by The Same, The Similar, The Analogous and The Opposed, and needs to be distinguished from affirmation of difference" (1968/1997: 265).

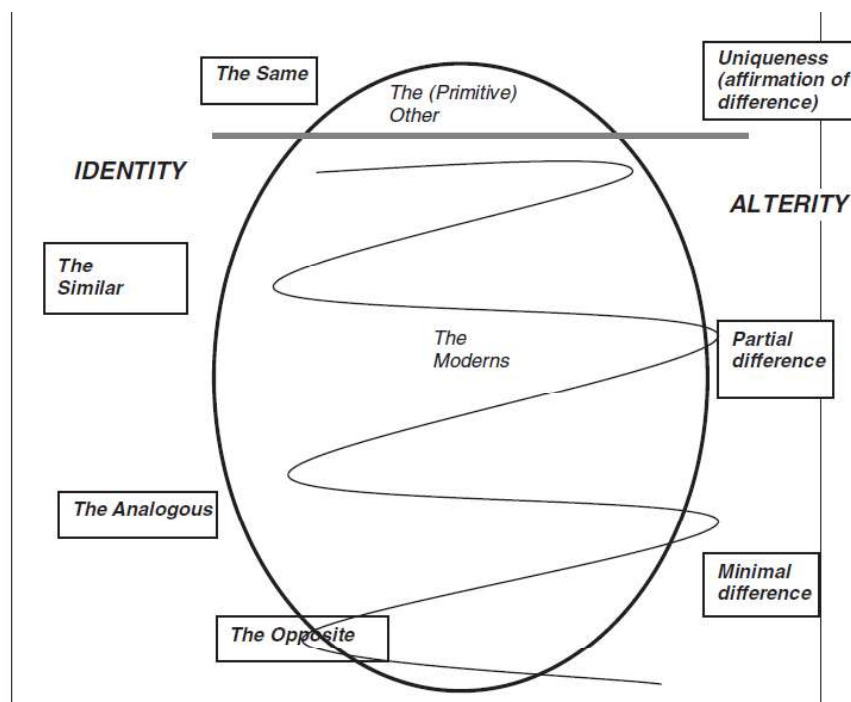


Figure: 1 Identity- alterity interplay (Czarniawska, 2002: 35)

According to de Certeau (1975, 1988), the same can be seen as an ideal on the identity continuum, it is not so. It is only The Primitive who returns to The Same, and therefore does not progress. The Primitive Other is the one who imitates, and The Moderns, emulate and hence perform even better. Moderns give themselves the most space and engage themselves in the alterity/identity interplay. However, The Primitive Others, characters like Kaukab, one extremist female character, the

daughter of a cleric, are kept on the extreme and repeat themselves and thus remain unlike the rest.

### 3. Literature Review

Postcolonial literature with its theme woven in multiculturalism by Hybrid authors has been in vogue since the recent ages. Literature, from the point of view of society in a foreign culture, has been the major focus of Pakistani British writers. They hint not only on the geographical displacement of characters but also on the psychological displacement which the migrant Muslim community faces in diasporic situations. In attempt to present this, Pakistani hybrid writers make their characters generalized and stereotypical and that makes the perception of the Western world towards Pakistan.

Aslam has bestowed his novel the power to express the experience and dilemma of "transcendental homelessness." Raibaud et al (2015) contends that Pakistani English novel came to its existence with full force with emergence of a group of young writers. Other hybrid Pakistani writers like Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsi have paved their ways to Multiculturalism in their novels. In Hamid's novel "*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," Changez faces the repercussion of being a foreign top graduate but this quality still condemns him from being assimilated in the foreign society and hence is treated as the other. "*The Case of Exploding Mangoes*" by Pakistani British writer Muhammad Hanif also portrays the Western thought about the involvement of Pakistan in the Taliban-led crisis in the West. Kamila Shamsie takes the writer back into the time of World War 1 ranging from countries like Japan to South Asia and America. "*My son: the fanatic*", by Hanif Kureshi also depicts the affinity of the younger generation towards fundamentalism, who find it too constraining as they tend to find it having no freedom, no diversity. His story revolves around Parvez, a British born character, born in a Muslim family, however, grows up to be secular and is shown to eat pork. The other contrasting character, Shahid, leaves this "society soaked in sex" and becomes a fundamentalist. Similar is the dichotomy portrayed by Aslam in this novel. Kaukab, who is the daughter of a Mullah, does not 'soak' herself into the 'Westernized' Eastern society but her children, turn out to be secular. Aslam also, poignantly suggests the failure of secularism and the inability of the fundamentalists to accustom themselves into the Western society. The term 'Fundamentalism' has been defined in various ways by numerous writers, however, Britannica (2012) quotes that it is "a type of militantly conservative religious movement characterized by the advocacy of strict conformity to sacred texts." (p. 56) Aslam does not make an effort to foreground the liberal relaxations provided in Islam.

If he does, it is only through the characters of Parvez and Shahid, who are shown to be Muslims living under the Western umbrella. The question that needs to be analysed is that the representation of Islam and its societies in the West is the actual mirror of Islam or is the way the West perceives it.

Kanwal (2015) discusses the issues of Muslim diasporic communities in the novels of Uzma Aslam Khan, Muhammad Hanif, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie and Nadeem Aslam. The disorientation is at the heart of her analysis of these novels, while foregrounding the conflict of Eastern societies with those of the West. Nadeem Aslam’s “*Maps for Lost Lovers*” has been under the microscope since the time it came into the literary world. Weingarten’s (2011) study inspects the elements of traditional Claustrophobia whereby the genders and the religious identities coincide. It investigates how the immigrant community views the lost lovers and the prevailing conflicting perspectives of the diasporic community. Representation of Islam and a postcolonial analyses of Aslam’s novel is undertaken by Sarfraz (2013) in her article. She constructs the fact that Islam is misunderstood by the West and quotes Said (1978) for whom Orientalism is not merely an academic concern but a discourse which enables us to see East through the lens of the West. It is a corporate institution that constructs ways of controlling and manipulating the East by creating knowledge about it (Said, 1976). Cultural Hybridity as observed in *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Arif and Parveen (2014). They place their observations on the foundations laid by Robert Young, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall and Homi K Bhabha (1994). Bhabha (1994) takes Hybridity as a ‘Third Space’ which ‘enables others position to emerge.’ Amer (2012) has explored Spivak’s concept of Unspeakability of the Subaltern. He explores the fact that it is precisely the conscience that the actual subaltern voice is heard, without any mediator involved in the process of decoding. The concept of ‘Otherness’ is also analyzed by Bengtsson (2008). His concept of Otherness does not only include the subjugation of women but also the Pakistani community and the flaws it inherits as a result of diaspora or the wrong interpretation of Islam in the West. The way the novel participates in the construction of British Muslim identities is examined by Moore (2009) in her article “British Muslim Identities and Spectre of Terror.” Aslam in his novel, MLL, has made his characters typecast with regards to identity, gender roles and Alterity and in my research of analyzing these, I will explore them while focusing on the focal characters mainly, Shamas, Kaukab and Suraya.



#### **4. Methodology and Research Questions**

The exploration techniques comprise of translating and looking at/differentiating inside the novel under review. The paper will likewise utilize anecdotal and recorded materials so as to set up the social and political atmosphere in which the craftsman composed. While chipping away at this subjective research, I will bolster my discoveries with a noteworthy number of basic articles on Homi Bhabha (1994), Edward Said (1978), which bargain particularly with the subject of sex parts, societies, social orders and religion woven in the postcolonial setting. Li's (2002) idea with respect to Alterity will likewise make the premise of my exploration. How the gender stereotypes work in a cultures which is hybrid and how the female stereotypes of Aslam struggle and strive to fit into the Muslim society to fulfill its expectation by maintaining the norms of the English culture, no matter how altered their view is, is what I find a literature gap in the course of its analysis. I will explore the facts of Muslim society which it inhibits in the light of Islam as well as how the West conceives the idea of a Muslim community as its own subcultural group. Aslam's novel revolves around two distinct poles thus creating a dichotomy: East (inferior) and the West (superior), home and exile, men and women, fundamentalist and secular, Islamic and un-Islamic, Pakistani society and the Western ones. In the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, MLL henceforth, by Nadeem Aslam, I will take up the issue of the perception of gender roles that the West has, in the light of Islam, and how it intermingles with the societies of the Muslim immigrants who are camouflaged by the western societies, how the West perceives Muslim societies and that is what is highlighted by Aslam. I will interpret these concepts in the context of the novel where point of intersection between the societies will be foregrounded. The chief questions which I will investigate are:

- 1) How does Aslam incorporate the gender stereotypes in order to survive in a hybrid culture within the alterity/identity interplay?
  - a) In what ways does Kaukab fit herself in a Muslim society residing in England, while keeping her Muslim identity intact?

#### **5. Intersection of Alterity/ Identity with Gender roles and religion in MLL**

Li (2002) maintains that it is normal for the underestimated individuals who are seen as "others," to build up a "twofold awareness" trying to be socially hybridized, and to expect benefits in remote groups. Be that as it may, "the development of hybridity in both settings of expansionism and globalization is not in light of equal social collaborations between the predominant and the subordinate gatherings" (13). He

argues that only "the selected few" are allowed to become acceptable in the culturally hybrid phenomenon. These are the ones whom Spivak (2000) calls 'Metropolitan Hybridists.' Li's concept of 'generalized alterity' is the one where the dominant group considers the whole world of the Other as one. However, the differences among the group of the Other, the marginalized group, still remain and respond to the oppression differently. Aslam's characters have responded to the oppression Dasht-e-Tanhai, which is inherent in the very name itself, differently.

"Stunned, Kaukab knew that it was the white woman's presence that was really responsible for this utterance of Jugnu...he felt emboldened to say such a thing in her company – he may have thought these things before, but the white person enabled him to say that out loud" (Aslam, 2004, p. 52-53)

The female character Kaukab, the Primitive Other, who lives in her own extreme, does not assimilate with the White race, constantly sticks her memories to her own native land Pakistan and her own religion. In Li's words. Such characters are not 'progressive.' After the return of Chanda and Jugnu, Aslam, who becomes the mouthpiece of Kaukab, says,

"The decadent and corrupt West had made them forget piety and restraint, but the countless examples in Pakistan had brought home to them the importance and beauty of a life decorously lived according to His rules and injunctions, Pakistan being a country of the pious and the devout..." (Aslam, 2004, p. 90).

Gilborn (2006) argues that Islam is perceived as the religion causing socio-political unrest in societies, where women are subjugated and oppressed and also breeds terrorism. Feldman (2012) adds further by saying that the notion of fundamentalism is gravely associated with Islam and that Muslim societies are harsh upon their own inhabitants as well as the foreign societies these Muslims live in. West rejects Islam and Islam rejects West, is a common perception yielded as an aftermath of colonialism as well as the terrorist attacks. Recent attacks by the ISIS have created a historical construct which is hard to divert or reconstruct (Feldman, 2012). Bhabha (1994) sees these relationships as binary and that this binary division cannot hold itself the process of colonial discourse. The aftermath of colonialism is seen by Bhabha (1994) in his book *Location of Culture* where he highlights the concept hybridity in socio-cultural, political, economic and various other fields of life (Selden). It has always been a common belief that Muslims have been an obstacle in the path of the success of the West, in one way or the other. Sarfraz (2013) in her article concurs to the fact that Muslims, especially the Arabs have been successful in their hostility and confrontation



with the Europeans. And this according to her, has been contributing to creating a political and a negative image of Muslims, in the context of their religion.

Bengtsson (2008) however, has proved that in MLL, it is the white race that is the Other, and not the Pakistani community. Dyer (1997) believes that it is always the white people who are considered norms, who are not racially seen or named. But Aslam has some characters in the novel, who have remained unnamed throughout. Otherism in the novel, however, does go with its usual definition. Aslam has dealt with Alterity, how the foreign community views the Pakistani community and vice versa. Both are Others for each other, and how they perceive each other. John Rawls' contention that objective people have moral ability to wear "the shroud of numbness" with a specific end goal to perceive one's and the other's "unique position" that uncovers rise to rights and qualifications for every single individual. To Rawls, seeing "contrasts" could encourage a defense of social abuse, while unseeing "contrasts" encourages the quest for equity (1971). Shamas is one male character, who wears this 'veil of ignorance' intentionally. This is not only to avoid conflicts with the Primitive characters, but also to clear the differences between the two paradigms of the identity continuum. Shamas, a secular in the opinion of many readers, and a communist in the opinion of Kaukab, hides many incidents, which were a norm for the Modern but a blasphemy for the Primitive. When Suraya, wearing a scarf, as her Muslim identity, talks to Shamas, he is constantly struck with the conflicting norms of the oxymoronic cultures. *"This was here in England and, according to the statistics, in one Pakistani province alone, a woman is murdered every thirty-eight hours solely because her virtue is in doubt"* (Aslam, 2004, p. 196). Hence, male characters like Shamas, in MLL, ignore the sensitivity of the native norms in order to assimilate and accept the foreign cultures. Kaukab is not only one stereotypical female character, who is viewed by the Whites as a typical Muslim woman, but also who was extremely hostile to accept the newly found norms and hence, was not ready to merge. In Gunning's words, Kaukab is *an* "ageing Muslim mother who sees her faith as the purest expression of love..." (2010, p.16). She felt blessed not only because she was not amongst the Whites but also because she was privileged to be the daughter of a cleric. This is what, according to her, set her apart from the White women, who weren't as blessed. Ujala, Kaukab's son is shown to be born in the Holy month of Ramazan, the writer very skillfully portrays the stereotype element by writing, *"Who else but a cleric's daughter would have been blessed by such an event!"* (Aslam, 2004, p. 200). Mah-Jabin is a character in contrast to Kaukab, and is constantly accused of being Un-

Islamic because she divorced her husband under the British law. Where Mah-Jabin is shown modern and assimilated, from the perspective of alterity, Kaukab refuses to submerge herself into the foreign land. She calls England “a country where sin is commonplace.” But she also refuses to go to Pakistan because her heart is where her children are, like a devoted mother. Religion and motherhood, stay as protective shields for her, whenever she feels unsafe by the external threats of the White world. Kaukab, Suraya and Shamas, present their gender roles with distinct identities and intersect in the realm of gender and identities. Aslam’s characters are presented with the interrelation of gender and identity, whether religious or cultural (Weingarten, 2011). Hence, Alterity is present at both macro and micro level. The dichotomies not only exist between two variant cultures, but also among the people of same religion, in accordance with their bringing up. Shamas being a secular, Suraya is shown to be a moderate young lady and Kaukab being a strict Islamist, who justifies each act of hers through Islam. Female characters, accept their personal suffering, use their gender roles by accomplishing their goals through Islam.

On one hand where we see a couple eloped, we have another troubled female character Suraya, who again is representative of women who have no relations with their husbands, and yet have not been sent a formal divorce. “She is not barred to him permanently: if the woman who has been recklessly divorced can fulfill the requirement that Suraya is having to fulfil, then the original husband can possess her again” (Aslam, 2004, p. 215). The rounded characters of Aslam, Shamas, who says he dreams of “*crossing Chenab towards Sohni Dharti*” and Kaukab, who recalls her children’s name before dying, “*My Charag, my Mah-jabin, my Ujala... Sons and daughters, on hearing that their mother is dying, are supposed to come to her side immediately to ask her to cancel their debt, the debt they incurred by drinking her milk*” (ibid, p. 209). Suraya, has been sent to Pakistan where she is to marry a man whom she has never met knowing that her in-laws and her husband were “*in the awe of the fact that she was from England*” (ibid, p. 225). At this point, Aslam (2004) generalizes the character of Suraya, whereby a girl to be married has never seen her husband-to-be and that Pakistanis look up to England. With this representation, comes in, again, the dwindling concept of alterity where West perceives of Pakistanis as a state where people are ‘conservative’ and opposite of what Shamas is shown, ‘communist.’ Suraya’s husband is another stereotypical character, ‘*who wouldn’t even let her bangles make sound.*’ (ibid, p. 227) and said before Talaq, “*the role of a woman is to give life, and the role of a man is to take it*” (ibid, p. 228). Aslam keeps

his barbarous characters unnamed, unaccepted and very far from assimilating. Aslam touches upon the misconceptions of Islam, perhaps as perceived by the foreign inhabitants, through such characters:

“Every day the clerics of the mosques all across the subcontinent... were visited by thousands of distraught couples, and every day the Muslim newspaper-here in England, and there in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh-received letters from men who said they loved their wives and children dearly, that the word Talaq was uttered by them only in anger- but Allah’s law is Allah’s law and nothing could be done” (2004, p. 229).

Such instances, where norms of a culture are transcended onto another one, who then perceive it with their own lens, and hence, Aslam brings in interplay of Alterity/identity in the novel. The women characters, refuse to accept and merge into the foreign land, not only by not welcoming their rituals but also by the refusal of accepting their daily women magazines. “They deem it vulgar and pornographic” (2004, p. 231). Both cultures, are in quite contrast to each other, not ready to accept each other’s norms. The only couple where the White and Pakistani are merged in the couple of Chanda and Jugnu, who are never found in the novel in person, and who are suspected to be murdered. Giorgi (2016) believes that when it comes to women rights, equality and deconstruction of gender roles, religion is often perceived as an obstacle. Joan Scott uses the word *Sexularism* to show the difficult, often unarticulated relationship between secularization, women’s rights and gender equality (2009). Women and religion are on the same side – the “wrong” side – of the secularization process (Scott, Herzog and Braude, 2009). With regard to Islamic feminism in particular, female academics like Gole (2000), Ahmed (1992), Yamani (1996) and Mir-Housseini (1999) address, although from different perspectives that the relationships between religion and women, showing that a feminism deeply-rooted in religion does exist. Stephanie Latte Abdallah recognizes three different traditions of Islamic feminism: a critical theology movement, formed mainly by female academics, which offers a global analysis and an Islamic feminism that amounts to a “universal, post-identity, hybrid and certainly post-colonial feminism” (2013, p. 222); a second current of religious feminist activists, which adopts a pragmatic perspective tightly linked to citizenship and which firmly criticizes laws that are seen as discriminatory against women; and a third movement made up of exponents of political Islam, engaged in the defense of women’s rights in the public sphere while valuing the role of women with regard to morals and family life. Aslam (2004) in MLL has touched upon the feminism of these sorts but this is one aspect of my delimitation. Clements (2013)

has worked on identifying the Orientalism in the novel with the perspective of global spheres. “Aslam’s tendency to foreground certain characters’ human “universality” may – as Kadir (2004, p. 7) warns – be ‘a function of the universalizing impulse in the cultural optic of those [privileged bodies] doing the worlding’ in ‘world literature’. It could mislead Aslam’s desire to ‘circumscribe the world [and its people] into manageable global boundaries’ in order to bolster a particular civilizational view” (Kadir, 2006, p. 73).

Weingarten (2011) argues that in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Pakistan is glorified and is given prestige by giving its characters the characteristics of role models. The male characters create a patriarchal society. In which men are shown to be either working or having secular mindset or are portrayed as clerics. Female characters, wait at home for their men, are fearful of talking to stranger men outside and harbor negative feelings and thoughts towards the other white women. One of the ways in which Aslam’s females and male cleric characters award themselves of a higher status is by linking themselves to the notion of Islam. The gender identities, hence, strike with the religious identities where female characters already are trying to survive with the norms of the patriarchal society. Thus the characters of Aslam are stereotypes, representing a typical Muslim society, with harsh clerics, stay-at-home female characters and males as secular and easily integrating into the foreign land, having more exposure of it. Cooke (2002) points out that, “Those to whom a Muslim identity is ascribed participate in a Muslim culture and community without necessarily accepting all of its norms and values.” He further states that Muslims can be secular and only occasionally observe some of the rituals and create a military identity for themselves. Both the generic characters, stand in strong opposition to each other. However, it is through the female characters who make an effort to maintain the Islamic laws in a sharp contrast to the white women. It is the women like Kaukab, who cling to the Muslim norms. The presence of male characters like Shamas, an understanding of intercultural norm has been portrayed. The unnamed male clerics, create a second type of male stereotypical role, which is prevalent in Pakistan also.

Said (2003) identifies construction of ‘type’ as one of the major strategies in texts which aim at being Orientalists. Aslam’s clerics fall into this category where one character represents the whole class. The male members of the society, so rigid in their Islamic believes, are barbarous towards women. One is described as having a “beard large enough for peacocks to nest in” (Aslam, 2004, p. 186). How in the name of Islam, they torture women, by calling them diseased with jinns:

"The Holy man heated a metal plate until it was red hot and forced her to stand on it...the arms and legs broken by a cricket bat. The front of the chest had caved in as though she had been jumped on repeatedly" (Aslam, 2004, p.186).

## 6. Conclusion

Aslam's MLL is a novel which deals with complex human phenomenon such as identity, Alterity, and the gender roles specified in hybrid cultures. The novel makes it visible that formation of identities through various gender roles deals with a lot of problems. It is not done without the interference of religion, which in turn brings the view of opposing cultures when brought face to face. Both genders, male and female play their roles to form identities and set typecasts for the readers of both cultures, English and Pakistani. Men in MLL, however, are presented as stereotypical images of violence and culprits of subjugation of women. Mahjabin's husband is one example where Westerners perceive Islam as having a patriarchal flavor and does not give any liberty to women. He thinks women are born to serve and should be "*submissive to their men*" (Aslam, 2004, p. 306). Shamas' elder brother is another fundamentalist figure, torturous for the women. Contrary to this group of savage men, is another group of characters, Shamas, Charagh, Jugnu and Ujala. Aslam gives these characters another lens to view Islam and women, who drink and keep girlfriends. Two extreme views of Islam and roles it specifies for both genders, through the lens of the West, and of Western gender roles, through the lens of Islam, have been presented. Female characters bring in extremity and moderation both, with the gender roles specified to Kaukab and Suraya respectively. Kaukab, who suffers an internal struggle, views the world from an extremist's lens, refuses to merge into the Whites and through this Aslam reveals the perception of the White world about women in Islam. Suraya plays her role moderately well, however, it is through her that Aslam is able to generate other typecasts including her husband.

There is vast spectrum of areas which still need to be addressed in this novel. Through the study of Richard Dyer and Li about whiteness and Alterity, one can probe into the matters of feminism in detail and focus more on the plot as well as the language, through which the two concepts have been highlighted.

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