

## EXPLORING EXISTENTIAL CRISES IN NADEEM ASLAM'S MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper seeks to analyze the exploration of existential crises in Nadeem Aslam's Maps for Lost Lovers, by examining the characters' struggles to reconcile their own principles with the external pressures and oppressive customs of society. The data was collected from a close reading of the text, as well as through a comparison of the novel to different schools of Existentialism (Jean-Paul Sartre 1943; Albert Camus 1942; and Friedrich Nietzsche 1882). It explores existential crises as it focuses on two individuals, Suraya and Shamas, attempting to live their lives according to their own principles while negotiating the external pressures of society. The novel is divided into sections that represent the four seasons and follows Suraya's journey from divorce to a relationship with Shamas, to the eventual realization of the impossibility of their union. Additionally, the novel serves as a criticism of oppressive customs and practices, such as honor killing, prevalent in Pakistani culture and religion. Aslam's novel provides a unique perspective on the struggle of individuals to find balance between their own desires and the weight of existing customs. The research findings suggest that Aslam's novel effectively examines the tension between the individual and society, as well as the pain and brutality of dislocation, highlighting the existential crises of individuals in the face of restrictive and oppressive customs.*

**Keywords:** existentialism, oppressive customs, existential crises, honor killing

### INTRODUCTION

Existentialism is a philosophical perspective that focuses on the individual's experience of existence and their struggles. It is a way of thinking about the world in which individuals are free to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their actions. Existentialism emphasizes the importance of looking deeply into one's own life and asking questions such as "Why am I here?", or "What is the purpose of my life?". It acknowledges the irrationality of the universe, yet encourages individuals to make rational decisions that suit their individual needs. Various theorists have used existentialism in their work to explore the concept further.

Jean Paul Sartre and Søren Kierkegaard are two of the most prominent figures in the philosophical movement of existentialism. Along with James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Samuel Beckett, they are often referred to when discussing the field of modernism. Existentialism is an exploration of key concepts such as absurdity, anxiety, meaninglessness, the non-existence of God, and free will.

Existentialism is a philosophical movement and set of theories that emphasize the importance of free will and choice in the life of an individual. It focuses on the individual's struggle to make sense of their place in an often meaningless and absurd world. It is a reaction against traditional philosophies which emphasize the importance of predetermined purpose or a higher power. Existentialism suggests that humans are responsible for defining their own purpose and creating their own meaning in life. It

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was popularized in the 20th century, particularly after World War II, by figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre who famously stated “We are aware of who we are and fully responsible for our existence”.

Existentialism is about taking control of your own life and creating the life you want for yourself. Jean Paul and Soren Kierkegaard both believed that humans have complete freedom and autonomy to choose what they want to become and create their own lives independent of any external forces, such as God. This means that people should take responsibility for their own lives and strive to create a life that is noble and beautiful, a life that is created through their own free choices.

After the World Wars, people began to focus on their own individualism, rather than attempting to fit into the chaotic and purposeless universe around them. Existentialism stresses on the importance of individual existence in a meaningless and chaotic world. There is no universal consensus on what exactly it means to be an existentialist, as the ideas of the various philosophers who are considered to be existentialists differ greatly from each other. Existentialists hold that the only thing anyone can be certain of is their own existence, and that all other knowledge of the universe is random and without purpose.

Existentialism is the idea that a person's life is not predetermined and that they have the freedom to create their own meaning. According to Sener (298), human beings are able to realize themselves through their own qualifications and decisions. This concept has been explored in various research studies and articles, with Antonia Case's article "You are your life. And nothing else" (2014) being a notable example. In this article, Case discusses the idea that humans are responsible for creating meaning in their lives, even in a world that may be seen as absurd and meaningless. Furthermore, Soren Kierkegaard's definition of existentialism is that it consists of a series of choices that bring meaning to life, but ultimately the responsibility for those choices lies with the individual (Antonia, 2014).

In Nadeem Aslam's novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, existentialism is explored through the character of Shamas. One example of this can be seen when Shamas realizes "how it must've got there, such accursed practices such godlessness" (Aslam, 2004, p. 30). This quote hints at the idea of existentialism, which holds that people have the freedom to make their own decisions and accept responsibility for the results of their decisions. In a relevant Bible passage, it is stated that “in the last days there will come a time of difficulty, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud” (Bible Gateway). This sentiment is echoed in the words of M.F. Moonzajer, who proclaimed, “I have no fear of after death life! Even if there is such thing, it is God who should be worried. I am sure I have good reasons to present but I am not sure he might have good excuses for his injustice” (Moonzajer, “Godlessness”). These two sources both suggest that in the “last days” there will be a heightened presence of godlessness, with people prioritizing themselves and their own interests over religious faith. This idea is further supported by the fact that many people are turning away from traditional religious practices in favor of more secular lifestyles. Thus, it appears that the “last days” may indeed be a time of increased godlessness.

The novel is a representation of the culture of Pakistan, and it also covers the concept of Christian existentialism in it. The term "Christian Existentialism" is used in the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* to describe the loneliness and godlessness of the white society in which the two lovers live. The protagonist, Chanda and Jugnu, live in a society called *Dasht-e-Tanhai*, which translates to "loneliness". They are not able to openly display their love due to societal expectations, which forces them to lead a life of isolation and despair. The line “they live in a society named as *Dasht-E- Tanhai* (loneliness) seemingly godlessness with white society” (*Maps for Lost Lovers*, 11) refers to Christian existentialism in that their love and relationship is not accepted by society and therefore their existence is meaningless and without purpose. Christian Existentialism is a philosophical movement that focuses on the individual's relationship with God and the world. The individual must find their own meaning and purpose in life and must make their own decisions about how to live and how to find satisfaction and joy. The concept is highly relevant in *Maps for Lost Lovers* as it explores the challenges faced by two individuals who are not accepted by society due to their love. The characters are forced to make decisions about how to live their lives and whether or not to pursue their love in the face of societal opposition. It is through this exploration that the concept of Christian Existentialism is highlighted. Existentialism is examined in the book *Maps for Lost Lovers* through its exploration of the challenges faced by two lovers who are not accepted by society. The novel highlights the individual's relationship with God and the world, and the need to find one's own meaning and purpose in life. The novel also

speaks to the idea of loneliness and godlessness in a white society, which is a reflection of the challenges faced by the two lovers.

A major idea of Existentialism is the assertion by Jean-Paul Sartre that "man is doomed to be free," which is illustrated in the book *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Chanda and Jugnu, two lovers who are killed because of their romance, are the main characters of the book. This tragedy serves to illustrate the concept that, once we are sent into the world, we are accountable for all we do, regardless of how stupid or pointless it may seem.

Kiran, character in the novel, displays the idea of free will in her own journey. Despite the opposition of her family and conservative society, she chooses to marry Kaukab's brother, a Muslim, as she wishes. This demonstrates the idea of free will, and that we are responsible for our own choices, no matter how much they may conflict with the beliefs of society. This concept of free will is further examined in the article "Small Murders" by Atish Kumar, which investigates how the book *Maps for Lost Lovers* tackles the philosophical idea of Existentialism. The author reflects on how the novel's themes of meaninglessness and free will demonstrate Sartre's view that "man is condemned to be free". Ultimately, the novel serves to illustrate how we all ultimately bear responsibility for our choices and actions, no matter how meaningless or absurd they may seem.

Jean-Paul Sartre was a French philosopher, novelist and playwright, who is known for his work in the fields of Existentialism and Phenomenology. He often discussed themes of meaninglessness and Nothingness in his works, such as "I could not think clearly about my death, but I saw it everywhere" (Sartre, *The Wall*). These themes of nothingness and hopelessness are explored further in *The Wall*, where Ibietta, the protagonist cannot distinguish between life and death, demonstrating the existentialism of the story. In *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Chanda debates Shamas about the same issue of atheism "My parents were responsible for marrying me with the godless people, so you should stay a Hindu without any concept of God" (*Maps for Lost Lovers*). These themes of meaninglessness, Nothingness and godlessness are explored by Sartre in his works, and demonstrate the existentialist ideas that he is so famous for.

This study explores the existential crisis i.e. an emotional state which arises when an individual has no meaningful purpose in life. It is a kind of emotional breakdown caused by the realization that life is without meaning. An individual experiences a feeling of emptiness, anxiety, and fear as a result of this realization. For example, an individual may question the purpose of their life, feel overwhelmed by their circumstances, and struggle with feelings of hopelessness and despair (Barrett & Greenberg, 2020). Thus, existential crises can be seen as a reaction to the realization that life is without purpose and that life is ultimately meaningless.

### **Existential crisis**

Existential crisis is a term used to describe a period of intense questioning, self-doubt, and confusion about one's life. It is a normal and natural part of life and an important part of growth and development. Existential crises can occur during times of transition and change, such as starting a new job, going through a divorce, or dealing with the death of a loved one. They can also involve feelings of emptiness, confusion, and a lack of purpose. While these crises can be unsettling and difficult to work through, they can also lead to a greater sense of self-awareness and understanding.

Existential crises can manifest in different ways. The individual may struggle with feelings of meaninglessness, emptiness, or a loss of control. They may experience physical symptoms such as headaches, insomnia, or digestive issues. They may also feel a deep sense of loneliness and disconnection, even in the presence of others. Existential crises can also be accompanied by feelings of anxiety, depression, or both.

The experience of an existential crisis can be confusing and overwhelming. It can be difficult to make sense of the intense emotions and thoughts that arise, and to know where to turn for help. Fortunately, there are many resources available to help individuals who are going through an existential crisis. Talking to a mental health professional can be a useful tool for exploring the thoughts and feelings associated with the crisis and for developing strategies for managing and resolving it. Additionally, lifestyle changes such as exercising, meditating, and engaging in creative activities can also be effective in helping to reduce the intensity of the crisis.

Existential crises have been studied and discussed by philosophers, psychologists, and other thinkers for centuries. Existentialism, first appeared in the middle of the 20th century, is centered on the individual's experience of existence and quest for meaning. Philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre

(1943), Albert Camus (1942), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1882) explored the concept of an existential crisis and its implications for the individual. These thinkers identified various aspects of life that can be sources of existential crises, including death, freedom, and responsibility.

Psychologists have also studied existential crises and have identified various factors that can contribute to their onset. These include the individual's beliefs and values, life events, and relationships with others. Additionally, there are certain personality traits, such as a tendency to be introspective or to focus on the future that can also increase the likelihood of an existential crisis (Friedman, 2020). The experience of an existential crisis can be a difficult and overwhelming one. However, it can also be an opportunity for growth and personal development. By taking the time to explore and understand the thoughts and feelings associated with the crisis, individuals can gain insight into themselves and their lives that can lead to greater self-awareness and understanding. Additionally, talking to a mental health professional, making lifestyle changes, and engaging in creative activities can all help to reduce the intensity of the crisis and provide a path toward resolution (Wong, 2020). In short, existential crisis is a natural part of life and an important part of growth and development. Existential crises can be difficult and overwhelming to experience, but with proper care and support, individuals can work through them and come out on the other side with a greater understanding of themselves and their lives.

### **Background**

In the beginning of the story, Shams is outside on a chilly, snowy night, looking out over the landscape and reflecting on life in a poetic way. *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a tale of two individuals, Suraya and Shamas, attempting to live their lives according to their own principles while negotiating the external pressures of society. The novel is divided into sections that represent the four seasons, and follows their journey as they attempt to find a way back to each other. According to Islamic law, Suraya must marry and divorce another man in order to be reunited with her first husband and kid after her spouse granted her a divorce. She starts dating Shamas in the hopes that he will be the answer to her problem, but things don't turn out the way she had hoped. The novel examines the tension between the individual and society, as well as the pain and brutality of dislocation. The narrative of a Pakistani immigrant family residing in London is presented in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. One of the characters, Chanda, is murdered by her brother in the name of honor. The novel serves as a criticism of the practice of honor killing and other oppressive customs prevalent in Pakistan's culture and religion.

The previous research on Aslam's novel (Weingarten, 2011; Iqbal, Shoukat and Khan, 2021; Mirza, 2017; Shaheen and Qamar, 2019; Ahsan and Raza, 2021; Mumtaz, 2022; Lasorak, 2022) has revealed various aspects of the text. The research has exposed the characters' lived experiences and identity in terms of gender, religion and migration. Sarfraz (2013) explored the image of Islam in Nadeem Aslam's novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Drawing on Edward Said's theoretical model of Orientalism, Sarfraz analyzed the novel's representation of Islam and Muslims, and found that it "presents a reductive view of Islam and reinforces its stereotypical image of fundamentalism" (p. 508). Furthermore, Sarfraz suggested that Aslam's "perception of Islam has reminiscences of Orientalists" (p. 509), indicating the complicity of postcolonial works with a neo-colonial imperial agenda. As such, Sarfraz's research reveals how the power of representation can shape our understanding of a culture and lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes. Batool, Tehseem, and Faiz (2020) highlight how cultural hybridity is reflected in the discourse and how it can be studied using discourse stylistics. In a further study, Batool, Tehseem, and Shah (2022) explore identity crises in Nadeem Aslam's novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* through the framework of Conversation Analysis. Using 16 exchanges and 87 clauses, the authors show how characters in Aslam's novel attempt to break away from their culture, and how these attempts can be observed through the framework of Conversation Analysis. Burton's (1980) framework has been employed to reveal the ambivalent nature of the power relations between characters, and to demonstrate how conversational roles and topic control are interchangeable. It provides a valuable exploration into how immigrants living in Britain negotiate their identities and cultural ties in Aslam's novel.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research paper is based on the concept of existentialism in Christianity, as framed by Soren Kierkegaard. The framework emphasizes the importance of individual choice and responsibility for one's life and existence. The framework further states that a person's life choices construct his existence, and each individual must make independent choices to live a meaningful life. Furthermore, the framework suggests that there are three main points from which to

understand life choices: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Existentialism is also a form of criticism against idealism, which states that a person's life is nothing but his own. Finally, the framework acknowledges the presence of God in Christian existentialism, even though it is often seen as an absence. This research paper will analyze the concept of Christian existentialism in Nadeem Aslam's novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, exploring how the characters understand and respond to their own existence and the concept of God.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

1. **Data Collection:** The primary data is collected from the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* and secondary data is collected from books, journals, online essays and online articles.

2. **Data Analysis:** The collected data is analyzed qualitatively and comparatively by outlining the themes, characters and symbols of the novel.

3. **Research Approach:** This research is exploratory and explanatory in nature. 4. **Research Design:** This research adopts the qualitative, comparative and explanatory research design.

5. **Research Instruments:** The research instruments used in this research are the text of the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* and the secondary sources collected from books, journals, online essays and online articles.

### **ANALYSIS**

The novel tells the story of Jugnu and Chanda, a couple who live in the small town of Dasht-E-Tanhai. At first, the story appears to be an investigative one, but soon it becomes evident that the story focuses on the couple's fate. Jugnu and Chanda choose to live together, but the residents of their community do not support their choice. This leads to their families, neighbors and other members of the community ostracizing and persecuting them. As a result, the couple is eventually killed in a hate crime. The novel then follows their story and explores the themes of love, loss, persecution and forgiveness. It also delves into the consequences of their death on their families and the community at large. In the end, it offers a profound and inspiring statement on the need of love and tolerance in a society that is frequently split along religious and cultural lines.

Shamas, Jugnu's brother, opens the narrative as he anticipates the first snowfall of the year while reflecting back on the events that have taken place in the past. The reader might get a glimpse of the conflict between society and individuals through the characters in the novel. Jugnu, a girl from a Sikh family, and Chanda, her Muslim boyfriend, are at the focus of the narrative. Jugnu and Chanda's relationship is forbidden as it goes against the social norms of the day. Despite this, the two continue to fight for their love against all odds. The story follows their journey and how they must find a way to keep their love alive in the face of all the obstacles that stand in their way.

The protagonist of the book is a divorced Pakistani woman who is looking urgently for a Muslim man who will marry her and then divorce her so she can go back to her own country and be with her ex-husband and child. The son in the tale wants to go to medical school but is unsuccessful and is eventually persuaded by his white girlfriend to pursue art instead. Due to the shame of being abused, the wife is unable to tell anyone the real reason why she left her husband. The book presents hundreds of existentialism-inspired stories and examples that draws reader's attention. Aslam writes, "But it is there even when absent, drawing attention to its own disappearance" (5), suggesting that the presence of absence can be felt and affects people's lives in subtle ways.

When examining the examples from the text, there are two ways to consider the existential element. On a literal level, it implies focusing on what is present in the environment. On a contextual level, it encompasses creating meaning in a seemingly hopeless situation. This concept was further explored by the researcher in the form of symbols, demonstrating the idea of nothingness and meaninglessness present in life. As Stephen Hawking once said, "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless" (Hawking, 1988).

Shamas, the protagonist of the novel, was standing on his balcony feeling disheartened. Despite his knowledge of the traditions of his community, Shamas was extremely depressed following the murders of two characters Jugnu and Chanda. He was determined to find out the reason for their deaths.

Finding meaning in situations where there appears to be none is a concept known as existentialism, which is demonstrated in the novel. The same concept is echoed in other pieces of literature, such as in the *Times*, which encourages parents to ignore "meaningless nonsense" (*Times*,

2009). Additionally, Aslam's novel depicts a character searching for meaning in his own life, attempting to discover meaning in what he desires (Aslam, 3).

According to existentialists, it is important to find meaning in one's own life for their own benefit (Boucher, 2010). This idea is evident in the scene where the character is trying to make sense of their lives contemplating on the murder of Jugnu and Chanda in the name of honor. The character in the example is trying to make sense of their life after killing two other characters in the name of honor, which makes this point clear. This event has made it challenging for people who have immigrated from Pakistan to the United Kingdom, and makes it further complicated for them to adjust and comprehend the significance of their life. This idea is evident in the given example where the character is trying to make sense of their lives following the murder of two characters on the name of honor. This event has caused a difficult transition for those who have migrated from Pakistan to the United Kingdom, making it difficult to understand the meaning of their lives on the name of honor. This event has caused a difficult transition for those who have migrated from Pakistan to the United Kingdom, making it difficult to understand the meaning of their lives.

The protagonist Shams stands on the balcony while thinking about the murder and his own existence. Like the other characters in the novel, he attempts to make sense of his own existence and discovers that existentialism is the pursuit of meaning through the midst of adversity. According to Joseph Campbell, while there is no meaning to life, each of us creates our own meaning. Since you are the answer, it is pointless to ask the question (Meanings of Life). It emphasizes that one should look within themselves to find the answers they seek.

Existentialism is the belief that individuals have the power to create their own meanings of life. Likewise, Camus contends that if you keep trying to figure out what happiness is, you'll never find it. If you are seeking the purpose of life, you will never live (Albert Camus, Happiness: Meanings of Life). This idea is reflected in the example of someone trying to breathe but being unable to do so due to their undesirable life situation illustrates this concept (Map for Lost Lovers, 33). This highlights the idea that it is up to us to find our own meanings and create our own happiness. Nothingness is a central theme in the novel. This is demonstrated through the character of Jugnu, who is unable to find his purpose and meaning in life. He is unsure of what to do in response to a knock on his door and in his life in general. This feeling of nothingness is common in existentialist literature, as it is an integral part of existentialist philosophy. He "does not know what to do" is a phrase that implies he is feeling lost and confused in life. He has no direction and is unable to find any purpose or meaning. This feeling of being overwhelmed can lead to anxiety, which has been extensively studied as a part of existentialism. Too much anxiety can cause people to become stuck in a state of existentialism, where they don't know how to move forward in life.

In Aslam's novel (45), the protagonist is paralyzed by the shock of the death of his brother, Jugnu. This paralysis serves as a powerful symbol for the anxiety and fear felt by the characters and readers when confronted with the existential struggle of Pakistani migrants. This representation of anxiety is a clear example of existentialism. The protagonist expresses his desire to end his life, but is unable to do so due to the obstacles that the world throws in his way. "He said, I want to leave this life, but the world won't let me go", (Aslam, 8). This line illustrates the feeling of being trapped, and how the protagonist feels powerless to the forces of the world. This line can be interpreted as an example of existentialism, as it conveys the image of a person struggling to find meaning and purpose in life while navigating a difficult environment.

There are two type of conflicts in Jugnu and Chanda's story: First, the conflict between the character and his family and second, the conflict between the character and his environment. Likewise, existentialism investigates the idea of meaninglessness and emptiness in existence. According to existentialism, when meaninglessness in life becomes prominent, it can lead to nothingness. This results in a conflict between individuals and their environment, as well as between individuals and their family.

In Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger*, the protagonist's desire to leave his life due to its lack of meaning and purpose serves as an example of existentialism (Camus, 1942). The protagonist's choice to take his own life is an extreme example of the conflict between him and his environment, while his strained relationship with his family is an example of the conflict between him and his family. Albert Camus argued that to live authentically, one must accept the absurd (Camus, 1942). In other words, one must accept that life cannot be logically or rationally described but still find a way to live with purpose and meaning. Camus believed that the human condition is not logical and that life is ultimately

meaningless, which can be a difficult realization to accept (Camus, 1942). He believed that by accepting this reality and embracing the absurdity of life, one can live authentically and with purpose.

Existential crises can be observed in Kiran's words: "But I was not able to do anything" (Map for Lost Lovers, 14). This statement makes us think that Kiran was struggling with the conflict of man Vs society. Kiran was a part of the society but he was unable to do anything against it. He was also struggling with the conflict of man Vs nature because he was unable to change the nature of the society. These two conflicts were leading him towards nothingness and existentialism. In the story "Dasht-e-Tanhai," conflict is an important theme. The protagonists, Jugnu and Chanda, live in a migrant society but their love for each other is strong. They are murdered for the sake of honor which shows the struggle between man and society. The individual, their choices, freedom, and free will, as well as the struggles that lead to nothingness, are at the center of the existentialist philosophy. Kiran, a character in the story, struggles with both of these conflicts. He is part of the society and is unable to do anything against it, showing the conflict of man vs. society. He is also unable to change the nature of the society, an example of man vs. nature. These two conflicts lead Kiran to nothingness and existentialism, as expressed in his statement, "but I was not able to do anything" (Aslam, 14).

When one realizes that life has no purpose or that they have no control over the universe, they experience an existential crisis, which is described as a condition of confusion, terror, or despair (McLeod, S. A. (2020). *Existential Crisis. Simply Psychology*). It is an intense feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. Feeling of alone and helpless in the world. This existential crisis can be divided into four main categories: fear of death, fear of the unknown, fear of failure and fear of betrayal. The feeling of being powerless and helpless can be extremely overwhelming and can lead to depression, anxiety and even suicide. (Deurzen, E. (2011). *Existential Psychotherapy. London: Sage Publications*). Kiran voices her feelings of powerlessness in the face of the situation: "I don't want to see them or work next to them to I don't mind working next if I am forced to, as long as I don't have to speak to them, as long as I don't have to talk" (Aslam, 223). This quote from the novel shows the state of despair and helplessness of the character, which is a result of existential crisis. The character is overwhelmed by the situation and does not have any way out of it. This is a common feeling associated with existential crises, where a person feels trapped and unable to make decisions in their life. In this case, Kiran is unable to choose whether to work with her former colleagues or not, and her inability to make a decision is indicative of an existential crisis.

Existential crises is the state of confusion, despair, and hopelessness some people experience when they start questioning the meaning and purpose of life. It is a feeling of emptiness and a nagging sense that life is meaningless. Existentialism is the philosophical exploration of the meaning of life and its implications. It is a concept that encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own choices, to be aware of the potential consequences of their actions, and to think critically about the world and their place in it. By understanding the implications of their choices, individuals can make more conscious and meaningful decisions.

In Galatians 5:13, the Bible speaks of living a life of freedom, however not to use this freedom to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, but instead to use it to serve one another in humility and love. The characters Chanda and Shamas are portrayed as questioning the nature of God and their place in the world. This idea is representative of Christian existentialism, which emphasizes faith in God and questioning the nature of his will (Aslam). Thus, these two works demonstrate a similar sentiment of living a free life, yet not for the purpose of self-gratification, but rather for the purpose of serving others with humility and love. The novel incorporates Christian existentialist's beliefs, which involves having faith in God as an obligatory component of religion. The primary characters of the story, Chanda and Shamas, challenge the notion of God's nature by engaging in a dialogue about their beliefs. (Szabo, 2017).

Nadeem Aslam sheds light on the reason why people may have faith in God. The background of the novel is comprised of Pakistani immigrants who left their country for England. It reveals that the Pakistani immigrants had been through a difficult experience, which had left them in a state of distress. This, combined with the limitations imposed on them due to their religion, made it difficult for them to maintain faith in God. Aslam writes "He is not a believer, so he knows that the universe is without saviors" (Aslam, 56). When we compare it with a biblical reference it shows Nadeem Aslam Uses Christian existentialism in the story to reveal the existential crises of the characters. The people in the Psalm (78:22) did not have faith in God's power to save them, so they did not put their trust in Him.

(Bible, Psalm, 78:22). This lack of faith translated into an unwillingness to put their trust in God. As the Psalm states, "they did not put their trust in Him" (Bible, Psalm, 78:22). This lack of trust in God's power to save them implies a lack of faith in His ability to provide for them.

The novel examines religious beliefs particularly faith in God in the context of an English community of Pakistani immigrants. The story follows Jugnu and Chanda, a couple whose love results in their exile from the community. Aslam explains that the migrants' experience of displacement and the limitations imposed by their religion make it difficult for them to maintain their faith in God (Aslam, 2004). Through their story, Aslam conveys the idea that faith in God can provide solace and comfort in times of difficulty and uncertainty.

"What do you want me to say to you?"

"Nothing." "

Who is the one treating the all?"

"Why are you believing?" (Maps for Lost Lovers)

Throughout the story, the characters are questioning each other's faith in God. The first line, "What do you want me to say to you?" implies that the speaker is asking what the other person wants to hear, which could be a sign of doubt about their faith. The second line, "Nothing," suggests that the speaker may be trying to avoid the conversation, perhaps due to their lack of belief. Lastly, the third line, "Who is the one treating the all? Why are you believing?", implies that the speaker is questioning the other's faith and is asking why they have chosen to believe.

In short, Chanda and Jugnu make an effort to coexist without getting married in spite of social mores and cultural customs that ban it. This conflict between societal expectations and personal desires is a common theme in existentialism, which makes it a key element of the story. By challenging the status quo and attempting to live a life of their own choosing, Chanda and Jugnu are embodying the main philosophy of existentialism.

## CONCLUSION

Through the characters of Jugnu and Chanda, Aslam demonstrates how Existential crises can be used to explore the complexities of living in a hybrid society. By examining the characters' struggles, the novel shows how the hybrid identity of immigrants can be both a source of confusion and conflict. It also highlights the importance of self-reflection, understanding, and acceptance in order to create and maintain a sense of belonging in a new environment. Ultimately, Map for Lost Lovers reveals that Existential crises can be a powerful way of exploring the complexities of living in a hybrid society. By examining the characters' experiences of Existential crises, Aslam offers insight into the struggles of immigrants, and how they negotiate their identities in order to create a new sense of belonging in a foreign land. As such, the novel serves as an important reminder that Existential crises can be used to explore the complexities of living in a hybrid society. Aslam also demonstrates that Love is a powerful force that can break through the boundaries of society and culture. The story of Suraya and Shamas demonstrate that love can prevail over the rules and regulations of society, despite any hardships that may arise. However, the novel also serves as a reminder of the tragedy of honor killings, and how this practice can tear families apart. Ultimately, Maps for Lost Lovers demonstrates how even in the face of adversity, love can be a source of strength and resilience.

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