

### ***I. Brick Lane: A Narrative on Cultural Identity***

Monica Ali, was born in Dhaka, East Pakistan in 1967, to English and Bangladeshi parents and grew up and settled in England. Her first novel *Brick Lane* (2003) is an epic saga about a Bangladeshi family living in the UK which explores the dynamism of immigrant experience. It was shortlisted for the 2003 Man Booker Prize for the fiction and adapted in to a film, released in 2007. *Brick Lane* portrays the story of Nazneen who comes to England from Bangladesh at the age of eighteen with her husband Chanu, who is both pompous and ineffectual. Chanu, her husband, is much older than Nazneen as well as being physically repulsive becomes bitter and irascible. Despite his superior education, he is not appreciated by his white colleagues at the council and is socked. Unlike Chanu, when Nazneen arrives in London she can speak only two words in English. Soon, she finds herself in the role of dutiful wife and mother. Not only that she always realizes an outsider an immigrant in a foreign land, but her Bangladesh roots keep her in a subservient role in the family.

However, it is her affectionate relationship with Karim rather than her husband Chanu, that Nazneen gradually gains self confidence and learns the art of survival i.e. assimilation with the dominant culture. As a result when her husband plans to return back, she determines to stay in the country of her adaptation. Thus, in *Brick Lane* Monica Ali attempts to present the innermost vision of an Islamic woman trapped between two distinct cultures: the Islamic and the English culture. The former seems very oppressive and restrictive where modes of socialization and cultural practices are highly based on fate where as the latter seems to be very open, liberal, flexible as well as prestigious. Through Nazneen, Ali exposes a hidden world, and often a detailed and fascinating glimpse of dialogue and negotiation between Islamic as well as English culture on Brick Lane, England. Through the developing character as well as

a variety of social-political, culture and contemporary contextual factors and discursive practices Ali exposes multiple trajectories of cultural immigrants of living.

Since Nazneen was born and brought up in Islamic culture and has to develop a sense of belongingness in the new and similarly, her identity is created in the crucible of social-political, cultural, sexual and notional positions. Identity is matter of individual choice and mediated by custom. It is never universal. In this regard Stuart Hall asserts:

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outsider representation. (110)

Identity is not as transparent as we think. It is always complex. Identity is never universal but the production of discourses regulates it. Identity is constituted by representation as well as certain cultural social background.

Identities are the product of discourses which regulates the person's worldly perceptions. As Mark J. Smiths notes: "Social identities are, therefore, accomplished through struggle; they are fluid and open to continual transformation and they are never complete but unfinished business" (80). Nazneen too discovers her self-empowerment and self-identity through struggle in the society. Her effort shows that identity formation in a variety of social and political movements is engaged in a complex articulatory practices. Thus, identity is a product of fragile connection established between the various elements of language and is also bound by the codes and conducts which are themselves the product of cultural practices. Similarly a noted scholar, Connel West writes:

Identity is fundamentally about desire and death. How you construct your identity is predicted in how you construct desire. And hope by conceive of death: desire for recognition, quest for visibility; the sense of being acknowledges; a deep desire for association-what Edward said would call affiliation. (16)

Ali's protagonist Nazneen is a symbolic subject who is culturally and discursively structured and whose identity is in the process of change. Islamic girl Nazneen-dreamer of English life style seems very obedient, respectable in the beginning but latter on discovers her self-identity and empowers herself.

Since Nazneen was bought up in Islamic culture and follows the rule and norms of her society; she can't oppose fatalism because her Bengali society trained to live that way. Similarly, she never opposes her modes of socialization in the new culture to release her from the trap of the so-called traditional way of life. She makes indirect efforts. She gradually assimilates herself with the mainstream culture. In this regard Eillen Reinbeck asserts:

Nazneen acts as a traditional, dutiful, and useful wife. After accepting whatever cards fate deals her, however, she casts a critical eye at the actions of her friends, her sister and her mother. She questions whatever she can actually control her life. She starts to break free, first with small subtle acts of rebellion and then an affair. Finally with the interest of her children in mind, she takes a giant step toward becoming her own woman. (42)

Hence, Ali has made a bold attempt that Nazneen represents woman of east basically the Bangladeshi and Islamic one. She is traditional, dutiful and respectable and seems very sincere yet she is able to take right decision at right time. So through these

features, Ali has tried to expose the qualities of the eastern culture as well as modes of socialization.

Ali's *Brick Lane* is a novel about the protagonist's cultural identity which is fluctuating and has been presented through Nazneen's contingency situations and discursive representations. The formation of the identity of the protagonist Nazneen can't fulfill complete because of socio-political cultural issues attracted to her personality. Thus, basically the novel revolves around Nazneen's owning and disowning of cultural identity as well as her way of living and her struggle in England for survival.

Monica Ali has attempted to lesson her reader about the features of eastern and western culture by presenting two distinct nature of cultural practices as well as distinct nature of characters. Thus Ali sounds autobiographical in her portrayal of the character, brings a deep sense of contemporary reality through Nazneen. Like Ali herself, her character brings a deep sense of contemporary reality and also grabs holds of English dream, longs for a grand success in England.

Ali's mouthpiece character Nazneen has arrived in the new world in a state of psychological revolution which causes her to pursue emancipation from the oppressive world of males especially from the companionship of Chanu, and the sense of psychological and religious exploitation. She faces a lot of problems both at home and abroad. Nazneen is not directly/ deliberately committed to any sort of pursuit for emancipation but the gradual advancement for her personality creates a situation that she gets prepared to release her from the emotional and cultural male-made codes. So, in course of time Nazneen frequently expresses her attitude of resentment towards cultural codes in general and towards Chanu in particular.

Theories of cultural encounter and cultural identity are taken as the tool or perspective of analysis to fulfill the goals of this research. To elaborate the notion of identity in relation to ethnicity, gender, role, cultural dislocation, hybridity cultural disparity and conflict and the ideas from cultural critics has been borrowed. Ali has tried to lesson her reader why Nazneen changed her identity along with her way of living. Ali elaborately portrays Nazneen transformation as a western individual from an Islamic woman trapped to the web of cultural differences. Hence, Nazneen's is in a state of flux, torn between and among different cultural polarities. As Stuart Hall puts:

Identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narrative of the past. They are both imposed and self-made, produced through the interplay of names and social roles foisted on us by dominant narratives together with the particular choices-families, community, and individuals make over how to interpret, and resist, those impositions as well as how to grapple with their real historical experiences. (113)

Hence identity is constituted at the intersection of cultural and social representations. Any identity is the production of representation along with cultural discourses and is conducted by human characters whose voices engage in a dynamic interchange of belief, attitudes, sentiments and other expressions of state of consciousness.

After all this research focuses on the issue of identity in relation to culture and subjectivity of the protagonist. It also discusses how it is created, presented and portrayed in terms of the oblique expressions and situations of characters especially the protagonist and the narrator of the novel. Thus, the novel displays the issue of identity and includes the whole range of ideas and factors determining the identity of

and individual; the cultural, geographical, ethnographical, racial, religion, class and gender among others.

Thus, in the novel *Brick Lane*, Nazneen though is an Islamic Bangali woman by birth but in the course of time she disregards her orthodox culture and accepts the cultural system of English culture. Similarly she exchanges her Bangladeshi village home for a block flats in London, east England. Likewise, she tries to learn some English language to do her duty to her husband and to create her own identity. She also faces a lot of obstacles and hindrance to adjust there without the ability to speak English properly. Thus she finds advanced life in multicultural society. She realizes new culture is quite different from her indigenous culture. Hence she talks about essential of language and other ways of English life style for the success of every immigrant in England. Thus, she understands how cultural ethos ties one's desire to create identity.

This thesis has been divided into different chapters to elaborate the study of identity with respect to the central characters. The first chapter includes the general introduction to the study and also presents the hypothesis and elaborates the statement of problem against the backdrop of different critic's commentaries on the novel. The second chapter elucidates the methodology employed to study the text. The principle theoretical tool employed in this research is cultural encounter in relation to Homi K. Bhabha, Chris Barker, and Stuart Hall and among others. The third chapter presents an extensive textual analysis to reveal how the novel documents the instances of cultural disparity and the identity formation of the central character in restrictive socio-political, cultural, notional and ethnic boundaries. The fourth chapter concludes the research with a brief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis and summarizes the findings of the analysis.

## II. Cultural Encounter

Edward Said argues that, "culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, dominate, legitimate, denote, interdict and validate". In short, the power of culture can be seen functioning as "an agent and perhaps the main agency of powerful differentiation, within its domain beyond it too" (9). Culture for Edward Said thus is not simply a positive doctrine of the best that is thought and known as for Arnold but a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best. This double faceted view makes one aspect of culture more powerful than the other. Culture thus becomes a powerful means of domination and appropriation in the multicultural social context where different cultures meet and grapple, in short encounter each other.

However, cultural encounter facilitates a pattern of mutual adjustment and reciprocal give and take by offering a space enough for co-existence and meaningful identity between cultures. When two or more cultures come together, the meeting of cultures is marked by struggle that matches the tension relationship between absence and presences, hollowness and emptiness. The juxtaposition of two cultures generates a moment of self-transformation of prevailing patterns in the light of new experiences. Cultural encounter is a process which takes various modes like interaction, acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, dialogical engagement and so on. In the context of globalization the encounter of diverse cultural traits and complexities are modified due to the constant contacts and cultural identities are becoming hybrid, in-between, and multicultural.

The basic mode of cultural encounter is dialogical engagement or interaction where two diverse culture meet, there emerges a conflict as well as a adjustment. The conflict and mutual enmity are the facts of human relations through which communication or dialogue between cultures is possible where negotiation takes place

for mutual and meaningful engagement in a new, social and cultural milieu. Cross-cultural dialogues are highly used in the non-western, post-colonial/ a post independent which established new metaphors of nationhood to write new history and to create and frame defining symbols for the purpose of imagining the nation.

In today's context societies are becoming what Mary Louse Pratt calls "contact zone" where different cultural traits come in contact; they meet, collide, clash, grapple, in order to belong to it. So, contact zone is the space where the realization, assimilation, syncretism and cross-cultural dialogues are negotiated. As Stuart Hall observes:

We do not stand to the same relation of the 'otherness' to the metropolitan centers. Each has negotiated its economic, political and cultural dependency different. And this 'difference', whatever we like it or not, is already inscribed in our cultural identities. In turn, it is this negotiation of identity which makes us, vis-a vis one another, Jamaican, Haitian, Cuban, Guadeloupean, Barbadian, etc. (114)

The common history-transportation, slavery, colonization has been profoundly formative which does not constitute a common origin. There always remain the difference and conflicting situation. Similarly, numbers of vocabularies are related to the idea of contact zone like 'transculturation' and 'safe houses'. Transculturation aims to replace overly reductive concepts of acculturation and assimilation. According to Pratt, trans-acculturation is "a process where by number of subordinated or marginal groups select and meant from materials transcultured by dominate or metropolitan culture" ("Arts" 65). While subjugated people can not really control what emanates from the dominant culture, they are determined to varying extents what they absorb to their own.



Transculturation not only refers to the metropolitan modes of representation of its periphery but also the formation of metropolis by subordinated periphery. Along with transculturation, ethnography and 'safe house' is the phenomenon of the contact zone. It refers to "the social and intellectual space" Pratt writes" where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degree of truths, shared understanding temporary protection from legacies of oppression" (Arts 71). Where there is a legacy of subordinate groups of need places for healing and mutual recognition- safe- houses- to construct shared understanding, knowledge and claims on the world. That they can bring in to the contact zone. However, the idea of contact zone denies the homogeneous sovereigns community embodying values like equality, fraternity and liberty which the societies often profess but systematically fail to realize.

### **Cross-Cultural Negotiation in the Contact Zone**

The idea of 'contact zone' was first developed by Mary Louise Pratt in her seminal book *Imperial Eyes*. Contact zone is "a social space marked by the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjuncture and whose trajectories now intersect." In this regard Mary Louise Pratt uses the term "contact zone" to refer to the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come in to contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, conditions, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (4). Thus contact zone is a space where one culture mixes with another culture. A contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizer and the colonized, self and other, native and non-native, not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in

terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within asymmetrical relations of power.

Though, characterized by the asymmetrical relation of power, "along with rage incomprehension, and pain," contact zone, at the same time offers" exhilarating moments of wonder and revelation, people historically and geographically separated come into contact with each other establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict. Contact zone includes identity with the idea, interest, and histories of other. It involves transculturation and collaborative work. Comparison between elite and vernacular cultural forms, often the space for people to uncover confront and reflect on suppressed aspects of history and ways to "Move into and out of the rhetoric of authenticity." It proves "ground rules of communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the concept of cultural mediation" (72).

In the contact zone, when two diverse cultures meet, there emerges an initial stance of conflict. As a mode of social and cultural interaction conflict occupies a prominent place in the annals of human history. Conflict and mutual enmity are the chief trademarks of human relations through which communication or dialogue between cultures is possible. Being an umbrella term contact zone does not take a single mode rather a process of various modes it takes, like assimilations, adjustment, acculturation, hybridity, diaspora, cultural dislocation, and displacement.

One of the most widely employed and most disputed term in cultural encounter is hybridity which refers to the creation of the new transcultural form of the contact zone produce by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term hybridity refers to the cross- breeding of two species by grafting or cross pollination to form

third species (key concepts). Hybridization takes many forms linguistic, cultural, racial and so on. The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha whose analysis of colonizers and colonized relation focuses their interdependency and mutual construction of their subjectivities. A hybrid culture location always does not allow the merger or assimilation but mostly the partial adjustment and hybrid cultural practices.

All cultural statement and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the third space of enunciation where cultural identities always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalence space which for Bhabha, makes the claim to a hierarchial 'purity' of cultural untenable. The recognition of this ambivalence space of cultures and identity may help to overcome the exploit of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition hybridity within cultural difference:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this third space have a colonial or a postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend in to that alien territory may open the way to conceptualizing an international, cultures but on the inscription and articulation of cultures hybridity. (Bhabha 38)

It is the 'in between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture which makes the notion of hybridity so important. It is frequently used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange' and the idea of equal exchange.

'Hybridity' can be understood by referring to Bhabha's notion of 'mimicry' and 'ambivalence'. The 'ambivalence' in post colonial discourse refers to the cultural cross-over of various sorts emanating from the encounter between colonizer and colonized alien and native. It is the mixture of both parties where second one act in the consent of first one. The colonized adopts the colonizer's culture, language and values

thinking that it is superior and is mimed to be such. The mimic men never become pure white men, and what they mimic also as mockery or parody. Mimicking the colonizers, the colonized becomes almost the same but not the quite though they want to acquire the superior position of the colonizer. As Bhabha says:

The menace of mimicry is its double vision which is disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object. (88)

Thus, mimicry can be both ambivalence and multi layered. Along Bhabha's line Ashcraft, Griffiths and Tiffin have further defined ambivalence as, "the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonized and colonizer. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer" (12). The colonized as a mimic man is not the same person as the colonizer though he wants to be so by wearing a mask to imitate the colonizer. Such mimicry of the colonizer places the colonized in an 'ambivalent hybrid space' or 'in-betweeness'.

Mimicry reveals the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse; almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction. The consequences of this for post colonial studies are quite profound for what emerges through this flow in colonial power is writing that is post-colonial writing. The menace of mimicry does not lie in its concealment of some real identity behind its mask, but comes from its 'double' vision which discloses the ambivalence of colonial discourse and also disrupts its authority. Mimicry is then "the sign of a double

articulation", a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" the "others" as it visualizes power:

Mimicry is also the sign of inappropriateness; however, a difference or recalcitrance, which cohere the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both normalized knowledge and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha 86)

The appropriate objects of a colonial chain of command are also inappropriate colonial subjects because what is being set in their behavior is something that may ultimately be beyond the control of colonial authority. This inappropriateness disrupts the normality of the dominant discourse itself. The threat inherent in mimicry then comes not from an overt resistance but from the way in which it continually suggests an identity not quite like the colonizer. This identity of colonial subjects is almost the same but not quite means that the colonial culture is always potentially and strategically insurgent.

Hybridity like mimicry, Bhabha argues, subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formally-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self. Hybridity thus can be seen, in Bhabha's interpretation as a counter narrative a critique of the canon and its exclusion of their narratives. Hybridity, thus is an expression of everyday life in the post-empirical era. It continuously alters the national and international. Hybridity draws on local and transnational identifications and generates historical new mediations. Such 'mediations' are new because they are located outside the

official practices of citizenship situated in the intentions of numerous legal and cultural borders, which undercut hegemony.

Hegemony, initially a term referring to the dominance of one state within the confederation, is now generally understood to mean, domination by consent. Fundamentally, hegemony is a power of ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination thus, exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more stable and inclusive power over the economy and other state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. Hegemony implies a situation where a historic bloc' of ruling class faction exercises social authority and leadership over the subordinate classes through a combination of force and, more importantly consents.

Hegemony is temporary settlement and series of alliances between social groups which is won and disown. Further, it needs to be constantly rewon, renegotiated, for culture is a terrain of conflict and struggle over meanings. Hegemony is not static entity but series of changing discourses and practices intrinsically bound with social power. It should be understood in terms of "how structures of signification are mobilized to legitimate the society interest of hedonic groups" (6). Since hegemony has to be constantly remade and rewon, it opens up the possibility of a challenge to it. That is, the marking of a counter hegemonic block of subordinate groups and classes.

Thus, one of the central arguments of cultural studies is that the object of study culture, is a zone of contestation, competing meanings and versions of the world constantly fight for ascendancy and pragmatic claim to truth. In particular, meaning and truth in the domain of culture are constituted within patterns of power. It is in this

sense that the 'power to name' and to make particular description is a form of cultural politics. Issues of cultural representation are 'political' because they are intrinsically bound up with question of power. Power as social regulation, which is productive of the self, enables some kinds of knowledge and identities to exist while denying it to others. In this regard Bennett's writes: "The relation of culture and power, which most typically characterizes modern societies are best understood in the light of the respect of the respects in which the field the field of culture is now increasingly governmentally organized and constructed" (25)

For Bennett, culture is caught up in, and functions as a part of, cultural technologies which organize and shape social life and human conduct. A cultural technology is a part of the 'machinery' of institutional and organizational structures that produce particular configuration of power/knowledge. Culture is a matter not just of representations and consciousness but of institutional practices, administrative routines and spatial arrangements.

Along Bennett's line one can argue that cultural hybridity produced by the black diaspora does not observe the power that was embedded in the moment of slavery nor the economic push pull of migration. Since, diaspora identities are constructed within and by cultural power. It has become a constitutive element of our cultural identities. Thus, the cultural identities of rich white men in New-York are of a very different order to those of poor Asian women in rural India. While we are all parts of a global society whose consequences no one can escape, we remain unequal participants in the globalized era, which thrives on contact zone.

### **Assimilation and Adjustment**

Cultural meeting does not always result in fusion or merger. It may rather to partial adaptation or adjustment through cultural borrowing. Assimilation happens

when the respective cultures fall each other on a more nearly equal or roughly comparable basis. Assimilation is a process where individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar, share same sentiments, values and goals and the attitudes of many persons are united and developed into a unified group. In this regard Fred Dallmayr quotes Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, assimilation is "a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated by them in a common cultural life" (14). The process of assimilation or cultural adjustment is closely related and affiliated to the process of acculturation. Individuals within the acculturating group, lose the ties with their original culture and adapt habits, customs, values, norms and other behavioral patterns from the dominant culture. Assimilation facilitates partial adaptation and goes finally to assimilation because it is a continuous process characterized by the fusion and adjustment of various cultural traits and qualities.

In the context of the post imperial era assimilation is greatly a betted and intensified by nationalism along with the idea of nation state. As Fred Dallmayr quotes Rupert Emerson:

In the contemporary world the nation is for greater portions of man kind the community with which men must intensely and most unconditionally identify themselves[...] the nations is today the largest community which [...] Effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the claims both of the lesser communities within it and those which cut across it [ ...] in this sense nation can be called "terminal community". (15)

Now a days, the most frequently discussed example of cultural assimilation is the United States. A large numbers of immigrants from many parts of the world are



progressively integrated into the dominant social, political and cultural fabric of it. The 'melting pot' rhetoric is massively applied there. Still, through 'diversity visa' fifty thousands people from different parts of the world enter in the States as immigrants each year. But it is not the fact that such activities are not in non-western societies. Of course they, too, carry the 'melting pot' rhetoric. Many immigrants are steadily socialized or assimilated into the prevailing way of life of the nation states like Africa, India etc. with their accent on individual initiative and the profit motives. The 'melting-pot' rhetoric is not sufficient enough to depict truly the cultural conflicts and clashes of these societies, since it is difficult to find a homogenous cultural co-existence. This is to say that the assimilating groups while acquiring new cultural values or making adjustment with the alien culture, still maintains an indigenous solidarity. So, one will fail to be totally adjusted and assimilated with the new alien culture.

Assimilation is not always motivated and stimulated by the hegemonic influence rather it may turn otherwise. Fred Dallmayr quotes:

Assimilation is not only or exclusively a policy imposed from above, that is, a process whereby a hegemonic culture is disseminated by an elite to subordinate segments of the population. Sometimes [ ... ] the hegemonic culture holds a powerful attraction for subordinate groups eager to gain social acceptance or recognition, and thus to terminate discrimination. Where such acceptance is pursued deliberately and with some promise of success we are in the presence of acculturation through upward mobility. (17)

Thus, cultural difference never becomes 'complete' and 'univocal' because it moves in symbolic formation from one enunciatory position to another leaving it further open

to cultural translation. The demand for the full representation of cultural difference is bound to lead to the loss of meaning.

### **Acculturation**

The term "acculturation" is widely used in cultural anthropology. This concept is related to the medium or process of social and cultural change. Acculturation refers to the process to the process where diverse cultural traits and complexities are modified because of continuous contact by making the cultures and cultural identities mixed or hybrid. Thus the society becomes multicultural one. This history of each society is characterized by a set of values, beliefs and practices concerning behavioral pattern each culture has a codified exhaustive set of institutions.

Acculturation includes those incidents, which result when groups of individuals having different culture come into contact for a long time. There is modification or change in original cultural pattern either in one or both groups. Through the process of socialization and acculturation the process of cultural transformation goes ahead.

Cultural interactions stem from the prolonged contact between two or more sets of norms and values which can also be extremely different from one another and such contacts may extend "from domestic contact to global interactions" and "between hegemonic western cultural and developing non-western societies" (Dallmayr 14). Acculturation can be the result of cooperation or competition. In reference to the cooperation, cultural exchange and reciprocal support can occur and in context of the competition, there seems conflict between the cultures to be superior in front of the one.

Acculturation usually applies to ethnic minorities, immigrants indigenous people exposed to refugees, which can be globally considered as acculturating groups

because they are mostly forced to adopt the cultural system where they live in. Cultural modification concerns the changes a cultural group has to introduce in collective as well as individual behavior, in order to co-exist and interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social and cultural system. Acculturating individuals manage to acquire values and behavior characterizing the dominant culture in which they live, at the same preserving their own traditions and habits. But it requires the creation of effective interpersonal relationship with both groups without losing personal identity.

### **Diaspora and Migration**

From Greek meaning 'to disperse', diaspora historically refers to the exclusive dispersion of Jewish almost 4000 years ago. Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homelands in to a new religion, is a central historical fact of colonization. Although the concept of diaspora has been epistemologically and semantically derived from those of dispersal experience of those ancient Jewish, people of the distant past in the present context has come to merge into the issues raised in postcolonial theory. Colonialism itself was the radically diaspora movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world. Due to the wide spread effects of these migrations, settled regions were developed historically. Then a large number of slaves were shipped to the plantation colonies to supply where the local population could not supply the need. The practices of slavery and indenture thus resulted in the worldwide colonial diasporas. Analyzing the history of colonial diaspora Aschrof and others writes:

Indian population formed (and form) substantial minorities or majorities as diverse as the west Indies, Malaya, Fiji, Mauritius and

colonies of Eastern and southern Africa. Chinese minorities found their way under similar circumstances of all these regions too, as well as to areas across most of South East and the Spanish and Latin American dominated Philippines. (256)

Even during the second world war, because of heavy casualties and disturbance in the normal lives of people, many of them fled helplessly as war victims' and refugees to foreign countries, later most of them chose to settle down there in foreign lands permanently even second class citizens after the wars were over.

After the Second World War, formerly colonized nations such as India, Ghana, Kenya and others became politically independent from the colonial power and regime. In many countries, the national movement began with the strategies of reforming their countries after their political after the political independence. As the nationalist movement failed in their mission, people began to get disillusioned, and the rapid succession of capitalism and the globalization pushed them westward. Searching better life and higher income, people began to migrate westward, which is increasing day by day even in the present time. Consequently, diaspora has been as significant diaspora movements have been those of colonized people back to the metropolitan centers of Europe, and western countries like Britain and France have, substantial minorities of diaspora ex-colonial people by now.

The descendants of the diaspora movement generated by colonialism have developed their own distinctive culture which both preserve and often extend and develop their original cultures. The development of diaspora cultures necessarily question the essential model to interrogate the ideology of unified 'natural' cultural norm, an approach that underpins the center/margin model of colonialist discourse.

Both of the modes of migration, either the migration led by the imperial European or British in terms of cheap laborers and slaves, or migration that occurred in the periods of late capitalism and the globalization in the post colonial phases, has created a significant number of diasporas. All these migrants are displaced from their homelands. The displacement from homelands not only refers to the spatial dislocation but also signifies the displacement from their origin, their root and their culture, as well.

Therefore, in the diasporic state, their sense of exile, their nostalgia for homelands, their sense of humiliation and the identity crisis that they face and sometimes even their feelings of "in-between-ness" become the everyday life-experiences. Some diaspora writers have recreated their very dispersed sensibilities in their fabulous literary writing. Regarding diaspora sensitivities, an Indian critic Sudhir Kumar writes:

The diaspora consciousness [...] presupposes the predominance of such feelings as alienation, dispersal longing for the ancestral homeland, a double identification with the originary homeland and the adopted countries, identity crisis, remembering myths related to the homeland protest against discrimination of all sorts in a new land etc, the metaphor of imaginary homelands does not cum up the conditions of the diaspora communities well. (70)

Diaspora writing basically focuses on the experience of immigrant people. The immigrant as they resettle in new land have to face a lot of different problems in terms of all aspects like culture, language, way of living and others. They are always considered to be outsiders by the native people. Thus diaspora writings capture both

the problems and experiences of the immigrants. The writers in such texts try to recollect their past through the help of memories, nostalgia and familiar myth.

Conventionally, a diaspora is the movement of the Jews away from their own country to live and work in the other countries. At present it is taken as the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country. Diaspora involves travelling and broader crossing and it has been adopted to describe a similar range of cultural affiliation connecting other groups who have dispersed or marginalized/migrated across national boundaries. It refers to dislocation, forced like slavery or voluntary like migration. In this connection AsChroft and others writes:

Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions over the entire world. The widespread effects of these migrations continue on a global scale. (*Key concepts 69*)

Diasporic movement from one place to another in the colonial period has created sense of dislocation and alienation because the diasporic communities could not fit themselves in new cultural context to some extent.

Now a day, diaspora has been used in the studies of race, ethnicity and gender to describe the range of cultural affiliations connecting other groups who have been dispersed or migrated across national boundaries. People of diaspora have an access to a second tradition quite apart from their own racial history. To live in diaspora is to experience the trauma of exile, migration, rootlessness and the life in a minority group haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back. As Salman Rushdie writes: "I have been in a minority group all my life, a member of an Indian

Muslim family in Pakistan and now as a British Asian" (4), creating an imaginary homeland and willing to admit though imaginatively that s/he belongs to it. People in the diaspora have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truth and their identities are at once plural and partial. Though people in the diaspora feel torn apart between two cultures and though the ground is ambiguous and shifting it is not an infertile territory to occupy. As Stuart Hall argues:

The diaspora experience is defined not by essence or purity but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity by a concept of identity which lives and through, not despite difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference. (119-20)

In fact, the diaspora experience is related to the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity as well as the identity and hybridity.

In nutshell, in the contact zone cultural encounter may result in cooperation or competition between cultures. In the first case exchange and mutual support can take place while in the second case hostility and conflict may arise. The second alternative is most frequent one. Acculturation only seldom occurs as a bi-directional process. More often, cultural modification concerns the changes a cultural group has to introduce in collective as well as individual behavior, in order to coexist and interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system. It usually applies to ethnic minorities, immigrants, indigenous people exposed to colonization, refugees, which can be globally considered as acculturating groups. Because of the involuntary character of the acculturation process minorities are mostly forced to adapt to the cultural system they live in, in order to cope with the dominant environment and

become an active part in it. For such adaptation became a must for the meaningful cultural identities.



### III. Cultural Co-existence in Ali's *Brick Lane*

When two cultural systems come in contact with each other, at first they collide with each other. But gradually one cultural group begins to accept the cultural systems of neighboring culture. When they both begin to accept each other's cultural values, it leads the community to social harmony. In such social harmony each cultural group can grow and perform their cultural practices. Such type of social agreement is known as cultural coexistence. In the novel *Brick Lane*, Nazneen, though is an Islamic Bengali woman by birth but in the course of time she disregards her orthodox culture and accepts the cultural system of English culture. She avoids using burkha. She begins to wear western style as jeans pants and shirts. Thus, her hunger for English language and culture bridges her with western culture.

*Brick Lane* is a debut novel in which Ali brings forth multicultural ethos. The theme of conflict as well as relationship of cultures has often been repeated issues in Ali's most of the novels. Monica Ali, being a cultural critic has treated cultural issues in the novel through the vivid character's portrayal against the backdrop of specific socio-cultural milieu. In her novels, most of the protagonists are alienated because they are not average people but individuals who are unable to relate or communicate and to establish their own identity themselves with the people around. Similarly, on the other hand they are bound with some social instructions, norms and values. Because of such notion they feel alienation and such alienation motivates them to quest for identity and meaningful life in the present.

In *Brick Lane* Ali tries to foreground the spirit, norms and values of various cultures to reveal the complex negotiation between them through various characters both insider and outsider. So, in the process of acculturation when two cultures meet new culture does not become an obstacle that deprives one of his/her personality. But

they can be indispensable sources of knowledge and identity and self-empowerment. Similarly, when two cultures are merged then there comes the process of enhancement in the life style. One gets many chances for learning new and good ways of life style. His/her life style can spend whatever he/she likes. Furthermore s/he can use new lenses to see critically and become able to compare and contrast own cultural life style with other and s/he can create one's own identity. So acculturation brings new visions for life. In post modern world everything is uncertain and incomplete. In this point Razia says, "This is the England you can do whatever you like "(413). Similarly, the mouthpiece character Nazneen is grown up as Islamic culture changes her identity along with her way of living style in her life journey. Nazneen being an Islamic woman struggles with her personal identity in a foreign culture that really empower herself to exist in the society.

*Brick Lane* is an epic- saga about a Bangladeshi family living in UK which explores the immigrant experience. It portrays the story of awakening of Nazneen (Tannishtha Chatterie), a woman who was shipped off at the age of seventeen in an arranged marriage to an older man, Chanu. So Ali portrays the internal journey of Bangladeshi girl Nazneen and her husband Chanu after they are transplanted from Bangladeshi village to the Tower Hamlet Council estate by an arranged marriage. As Nazneen has grown in the Islamic culture and also trained to follow the Islamic codes of life and modes of socialization. She holds that the future happiness and welfare depends entirely on her husband and her fate:

As Nazneen grew, she heard many times this story of 'How You Were Left To Your Fate. It was because of her mother's wise decision that Nazneen lived to become the wide-faced, watchful girl that she was. Fighting against the one's fate can weaken the blood. Sometimes, or

perhaps most times, it can be fatal. Not once did Nazneen question the logic of the story of *How You Were Left To Your Fate*. Indeed she was grateful for her mother's quiet courage, her tearful stoicism that was almost daily in evidence. Hamid said [...] naturally saint. She comes from a family of saint. So when Ruphan advised her to be still in her heart and mind, to accept the grace. "God to treat life." I have no complaints or regrets to tell you, said Nazneen. I tell everything to God. What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. This principle ruled her life. It was mantra, fettle and challenge. So that when at the age of thirty four, after she had been given three children and had one taken away, she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover. (11)

Here, Nazneen, the central woman character, is socialized in a traditional Islamic culture. So, she believes that marriage is a religious sacrament for her good life. She believes that her future happiness and welfare depends upon entirely on her husband as well as so-called religious rites/fate.

Before marriage, Nazneen was taught by her mother and set in such a way that she had strong faith in fate rather than action while she was in Bangladesh. Nazneen can not deny fate due to her mode of socialization. However, she has made indirect efforts to release her from the trap of the old, traditional, basically the Bangladeshi way of living. She says that the God is all in all since he is the source of strength, energy, even capacity to decide something. The god has the power. Nothing can care except the God's will and human longing for mercy. So, God knows everything she says: "He knows the number of hairs on your head. Don't forget" (89). Along with,

she is worried when Hasina kicked against the fate when she eloped with Kubla, factory saw mill owner at the age of sixteen. She says it worried her that Hasina kicked against the fate," No good could come of it. Not a single person could say so to"(16). Thus Hasina's elopement adds Nazneen in the strength to fate because it is determined by fate.

Ali's protagonist Nazneen who after a traumatic birth in 1967 grows up in Pakistan and is turned upside down at the tender age of seventeen is forced to an arranged marriage to an older man. She exchanges her Bangladeshi village home for a block flats in London East England. It is new world for Nazneen as Daniel Revision takes Nazneen's new experience in London as a rebirth (21). So, in this regard we can say that the rebirth of Nazneen is not biological but cultural and psychological. London is a better place for her to advance her personality by practicing new cultural norms and values. *Brick Lane's* main character Nazneen, is herself Britain's new face, an immigrant garment worker, stitching zippers and buttons in her public housing flat. An unspoiled girl from the village arrives at the age of eighteen when her father arranges her marriage to forty years old Chanu. She speaks no English and her daughter will teach her later and also her friend Razia. In this context she further depicts:

"I would like to learn some English" said Nazneen. Do you know why I am going to learn English said Nazneen as she was learning? So that when my children start telling dirty jokes behind my back, I'll able to whip their backsides. Nazneen struggle to her feet. I have to go now. Don't forget the medicine. I have to go because I am going to college. I am going to learn English. (38)

Thus, London is not home for Nazneen so in this new world pining for home is difficult for her. She does not know English more than two phrases, 'sorry' and 'Thanks'. So, she tries to learn some English language to do her duty to her husband and to create her own identity.

Similarly, Nazneen wants to remove from her husband's compulsion as Chanu explains "The only complaint I could make is she can't put my files in order, because she has no English. I don't complain though I say, a girl from the village: totally unspoilt" (17). Although at the beginning she does not complain her husband similarly, Nazneen praised her husband and she even feels happy with conjugal life:

What matter is being smart. Nobody smarter than my husband. Can you believe? We live in block of flat is three storey high. Our places have two rooms. No veranda but I go up on roof. Three is brown stone floor it cool your feet. We have bed with metal spring a cabinet and two chairs in bedroom. I fold saris and put in box under bed. In living room we have three cane chair a rug one tool (Malek like to put feet on) a crate is only temporary before we getting table. Also paraffin stove I keep under shawl for the making tidy crate. Hardly any cockroach only one may be two I see time to time. Even we have nothing I happy. We have love. Love is happiness. Sometimes I feel to run and jump like goat. This is how we do on way to school. But not much room for running here and I sixteen year old and married woman. Everything good between us now. I do not let my tongue make trouble for it as my husband say. Just because man is kind to wife it do not mean she can say what she likes. If women understanding this no one will beat. (19)

Nazneen believes that in a multicultural society everything can be done if people have incessant efforts. She finds the way people behave in the new culture is quite different from her indigenous culture as in her homeland. She and her family face a lot of problems. They are compelled to live with two small rooms without veranda just taking ass happiness.

Similarly, she also respects her Bengali culture and roots. So, she could not fight against the fate even in England. In the novel, Ali treats the cross-cultural relationship between Muslim and Europeans where people from different culture and race try to develop a bond of mutual understanding on a common cultural ground. At times, they preserve their heterogeneity but their sole concern is to develop a reciprocal relation in order to share a common cultural way of life. In this regard, Chanu's quotations seem very remarkable:

I am talking about the clash between western values and our own. I am talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity and heritage. I am talking about the children who do not know what their identity is. I am talking about the feeling of alienation engendered by society where social racism is prevalent. I am talking about the terrific struggle to preserve one's sanity while striving to achieve the best for one's family. I am talking about crap! Chanu looked at Dr Azad but his friend studies the backs of his hands. "Why do you make it so complicated?" said the doctor's wife. Assimilation this, or alienation that! Let me tell you a few simple facts. Facts: we live in a western society. Fact our children will act more and more like westerners. (93)

Obviously, the culture emerging out of multiplicity becomes hybridized. The older culture becomes intolerable to the children born in a new culture. Right from the very beginning of the life they have become adaptive and get assimilated with the ways of life from their surroundings. Furthermore, the parents also attempt to preserve their identity and heritage.

Nazneen's husband Chanu seems against the new generations' desire. He advocates against the loss of heritage and identity on the part of new generation. He wants them to confine their real identity in limited space and does not show seriousness about that. In the name of preserving identity and heritage, Chanu doesn't seem to give freedom to Nazneen and his daughters Bibi and Shahana to acquire education in foreign land as:

"I would like to learn some English" said Nazneen. Chanu puffed his cheeks and spat the air out in fuffee. It will come. Don't worry about it where's the need any way?" He looked at his book and Nazneen watched the screen. "He thinks he will get the promotion because he go to the pub with the boss. He is so stupid he does not even realize there is any other way of getting promotion' Chanu was supposed to be studying. His books were open at the table. Every so often he looked in one, or turned a page. Mostly, he talked. pub, pub, pub. Nazneen turned the world over in her mind Another drop of English that she knew. There were other English words that Chanu sprinkled into his conversation, other things she could say to the tattoo lady. At this moment she could not think of any. (28)

Indeed, every individual is always in the process of becoming. S/he wants to live with prestigious life in their life. Nazneen is in the very process as well to create her own

identity and her self empowerment. The desire for learning English is self-evident that she wants to make her adjustment in the English culture. Frankly speaking, she dares to cope with the multicultural society despite the fact that she has the scarcity of many things such as language, academic qualification/certificates, self earning and so on. So, she is very inquisitive and interested. Moreover to prove it Nazneen brings the reference of her intimate friend Razia who is going to the college to learn English. As she says:

'Razia is going to college to study English'

'Ah good'

'Perhaps I could go with you, do you know why I am going to learn English?'

'Well perhaps!' He didn't look up from his book. I can go then?

You know, I should be reading about politics, Nineteenth century elections. But they make it so dry you can learn a lot from novels as well. All sorts of things you can pick up about society politics, land, reform, social division, And it is not so dry.'

'Will it be all right from me to go?'

'Where? He rolled on to his back to look at her. His belly showed.'

'To the college with Razia'

'What for?'

'For the English lessons:'

'You're going to be mother'. (162)

Chanu is only engaged in complaining against the English culture and in boasting his disagreements. He is pompous, oppressive and he restricts one's unalienable virtue i.e. to educate, although, Nazneen makes ceaseless effort to go to the college.



Similarly, in course of time, Nazneen becomes the mother of three children. Her first child Ruku dies untimely and the last two daughters Bibi and Shahana remain alive and are highly influenced by the English culture. Their dressing up, language, mannerism and so on is English. They are more inclined towards Nazneen than Chanu. Thus, Nazneen makes her daughters aware of the cruel and monopolizing nature of Chanu. He forces Nazneen not to send them to school in England. In this regard Nazneen says:

Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali Classical music. His written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her Kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. If she could choose between baked beans and dals it was no contest. When Bangladesh was mentioned, she pulled a face. She did not know and would not learn that Tagore was more than poet and Nobel Laureate, and no less than the true father on her notion. Shahana did not care Shahana did not want to go back home. (147)

Thus, Chanu's daughters are highly affected by the European life style. They don't believe the 16<sup>th</sup> century traditional notion of Bengal as "paradise of Nations." Similarly, they show high inclination towards European fashions as talking in English, wearing jeans and T-shirt. They didn't wear burka even if Chanu's forces them. Similarly, Bibi and Shahana are not ready to go back to Dhaka. They are highly influenced by English Culture, "we go on the interest at school" said Shahana in English. Chanu pretended not to hear. Bibi held on to her plaits. She tried so hard that she could not think of anything else." I'd like to see Kadam again" said Nazneen (164), but Chanu wants to restrict her about such misdeed towards their culture. So he says:

"In the sixteenth century Bengal was called the Paradise of Nations. There are our roots. Do they teach these things in the school in England? Does Shahana know about her Paradise of Nation? All she knows about is flood and famine, Whole Bloody country is just a bloody basket case to her". He examined his text further and made little approving, purring noises. If you have a history, you see, you have a pride. The whole world was going to Bengal to do trade. Sixteenth Century and seventeenth century. Dhaka was the home of textiles. Who invented all this Muslim and damask and every damn things? It was us. All the Dutch and Portuguese and French and British queuing up to buy. (151)

Thus, in order to reflect on the hybridization of cultures existing in the England Ali has taken Nazneen, her sister Hasina and her two daughters Bibi and Shahana as major characters. Nazneen talks about essential of language and other ways of English life style for the success of every immigrant in England.

Thus, Monica Ali highlights that people can adjust and assimilate to foreign norms and values in foreign land. Nazneen who herself is an immigrant from Bangladesh brought up in Islamic modes of socialization gets some trouble in English culture in the beginning. For Nazneen the way people behave in the English culture is quite different from indigenous Bangladeshi culture of their homeland. Nazneen is not an exception that as an immigrant. She also faces a number of obstacles and hindrances to adjust there without the ability to speak English properly. So large number of immigrants face many ups and down in England in course of their stay and professions.

*Brick Lane* is perhaps the most popular place of Britain inhabited by the Bangladeshi immigrants. So, their life styles are diverse. It is the profession that determines the type of life, way of living and his/her identity. Because of being uneducated and narrow minded, immigrants cannot occupy the prestigious jobs. Nazneen is living in the world of diverse clashes in term of class, culture, race and gender. Nazneen does not know English more than two words/phrases. "I can just speak two words as sorry and thanks". She gradually energizes her to seek for liberation as well as identity from divergent barriers. In this regard her husband, Chanu does not seem to have freed Nazneen in order to quench her thirst of education and English language. Thus, Ali provokes that Islam women do have long for free and open life style. Nazneen is in her 'Melting Stage' in the new world for she is instructed how Bangladeshi live in Tower Hamlets:

The room was almost square, like her own sitting room, with a door to the hallway and another to the bathroom. Half the space was filled with Children's paraphernalia, plastic toys, colonies of dismembered dolls, a small and rusting bike, a high chair folded against the wall, two neat piles of children's clothes, an array of footballs in various states of deflation, a child-size wooden table covered in crayon scribbles. A single bed stood against one wall, and the other furniture crowded together beneath the window. So that the arms of the chairs and sofa touched one another. Taria slept in the single bed and Shefali still slept with her parents. There was space to grow. Three point five people to one room. That is a council statistic Chanu told Nazneen. They cant stop having children or they bring over all their relatives and pack

them in like fish in a tin. It's a Tower Hamlets official statistic, three point five Bangladeshi to one room. (39)

Thus, Immigrants are alienated and face a lot of problems in foreign world. As immigrants they and their children are to be brought up in a new culture. Then, obviously, parents remain in dilemma which culture they should better to follow by their children. People must be accustomed to their own way of life. So, naturally they prefer their children to follow the same way. Nazneen speaks no English and Nazneen's new land becomes so narrow. London is not home for Nazneen although she wants to adjust there due to her husband's victimization as well as victim of Bangladeshi culture and Islam.

Nazneen brings a tailoring machine and starts working on that in order to make money. On the contrary to Chanu, by bringing a tailoring machine she copes with the new English culture so smartly. She becomes able to adjust her along with children despite the fact that she is not a college graduate like Chanu. She begins having faith in action rather in fate and moreover she takes mother's moral lessons and the Islamic code of life critically. As evident in the text:

There was special dispensation for pregnant woman. If she chose to a ,Nazneen could do namaz women for her chair. She had tried it once and it made her feel lazy. But it was that the imams had thought of it. Such was the kindness and compassion of Islam towards women. Mind you, if any imam had ever been pregnant would they not have made it compulsory to sit? That way, no one could feel it was simply down to laziness. How did I come to be so foolish, thought Nazneen. What is wrong with my mind that it goes around talking of pregnant imams? It

does not seem to belong to me some times; it takes off and thumbs its nose like a practical joker. (55)

Likewise, Nazneen buys a tailoring machine in Brick lane and starts working on that in order to make money which adds fuel to strength her adjustment in the new land. Further, Chanu is almost twice older than Nazneen so she is not satisfied mentally and physically with him. For the demand of her sexual desire and passionate love, she falls in love with a boy, Karim and gets solace of youth and sexual contentment. Her longings for many things go on throughout her mind day and night. She says if she had a job she would make decisions on her own way how to adjust in foreign land. Moreover, she says "if I had a job I would be able to save. I have many desires to fulfill such as having a job, saving money as well as sending money to Hasina to get relieved from economic troubles" (57). Nazneen wants to live independently. She really wants to emancipate from so-called husband's restriction and orthodox culture.

The arrival of Karim in the romantic, emotional and sexual world of Nazneen substitutes Chanu where Karim is young, emotional and faithful in love with Nazneen. Nazneen has been having fruitful solace of human life in Karim since they met each other. Some people call their relationship illicit love affair who are influenced by some kind of the biased ideology. But Nazneen is never conscious about that matter, for she has never felt contended in the companionship of Chanu. She is inclined to Karim who knows her feelings and respects her love for western life style. Through Karim Nazneen gets romantic love:

He kissed her on the mouth and he led into the bedroom. Get undressed, she said and set in bed. He left the room; she got changed in to her night dreams and lay beneath the streets. Through the window she looked at a pattern of blue sky and a scrap of white cloud [...]. She

turned her face into the pillow and moaned and when he kissed the back of her neck she moaned again. (252)

Thus Nazneen's romantic love affair goes on in the companionship of Karim. Both of them have beautifully created their own world which is entirely different from the world prescribed in Islam culture where every person is guided by fate and religious restrictions.

She realizes however that such a wonderful and romantic love affair which she feels with Karim cannot be accepted in the orthodox Islamic culture. Thus, with Karim Nazneen gets sexual emancipation and the chance to gain some knowledge. Her liberation from Islamic way of life is indeed a great slap on the face of her husband and a bold step ahead to create her own identity and self dependency. Thus, Nazneen has totally entered the world of knowledge from the world of ignorance. Similarly, she understands how cultural ethos ties one's desire to create identity. She understands and realizes how she used to be ruled by her father. She is highly influenced by Karim's life style as she says:

A picture of him came into her mind. Karim in his jeans and trainers sitting at her table, bouncing his leg Karim with a magazine, feeding her slices of the world. Karim in his white shirt rubbing his smooth jaw, telling her all the things that lay hidden just outside her window.

He knew about the world and his place in the world. (345)

Thus, Nazneen's attraction towards Karim is infact her inclination towards English culture and life style. She rejects the notion that Bengal is a Paradise of Notion and she changes her views and her clothes; her entire life as well. She puts on a skirt and Jacket and pair of high heels then she shows drastic change in her life style. Similarly she is also totally free from oppressive culture in England. Nazneen went to the

bedroom and lay down on the bare matters. She slept a dreamless sleep. A vision rise before her; "Chanu sitting on aero plane, trying to peer out of the window, Nazneen lifted him up and put him on her knee" (455).

Thus, Nazneen now feels as if she were in the heavenly world. She is in the state of freedom. Not only that she feels that she has entered the world of knowledge from the world of ignorance. She understands and realizes how to adjust and establish in the new land. Gradually, Nazneen has been successful to explore her own self. She has been in illusion because she is always walking in the path of father and Chanu rather than herself. So, in England she sees differences within herself. The old Nazneen and the newer are distinct not physically but psychologically and intellectually. Thus, she changes her life, creates own identity and adjust in new land within Karim. As she says:

"I am not going" said Nazneen. It occurred to her that she could have done this before. What kept her tied to the corner of the room? The children are not going. "All Right", Karim said again. We can talk again after the march. I have got ten thousand things to do. I know I had to tell you. The juggler caught his last three hoops about his neck and flung his arms out to receive his ovation. He was a thin man with an enormous mouth. The mouth never stopped smiling. (376)

Thus, Nazneen feels initiated by Chanu's activities. She has begun fighting in the field of conjugal life as a quest for identity from the exploitation of the Islamic culture and male domain especially of husband Chanu. Likewise Shahana, grown in the English environment feels comfortable to speak English but she along with Bibi and Nazneen is not allowed to speak in the house. "We are not allowed to speak English in this

house, said Shahana. It is the stupid rule in the first place. When Chanu went out the girls frequently switched language" (154).

On the contrary, her husband Chanu can't satisfy in the multicultural society. So, in the contact zone cultural encounter may result in cooperation or competition between cultures. In the first case exchange and mutual support can take place while in the second case 'hostility' and 'conflict' may arise. To elaborate this view we can take Chanu as a prominent character. Chanu is an educated university scholar who had highly optimistic vision in the beginning. He is an immigrant from the east as well which stops him from being successful. In the culture it does not make much difference whether the immigrants university graduates or peasants. As Chanu recollects:

"When I was a young man. I had ambitions, Big dreams. When I got the aero plane, I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be red carpet laid out for me. I was going to join the Civil Service and become Private Secretary to the Prime Minister." As he told the story, his voice grew. It filled the room. That was my plan. And then I found things were a bit different. These people here did not know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the like on their heads, what can you do? He rolled a ball of rice and meat in his fingers and teased it around his plate. I did this and that. Whatever I could, so much hard, so little reward. More or less it is true to say I have been chasing wild buffaloes and eating my own rice. You know that saying? All the begging letters from home I burned. And I made two promises to



myself. I will be a success come what may. That's promise number one. Number two, I will go back home. When I am success. (26)

No doubt life is just a journey which must be completed at any cost. As a social being one has to perform his/her role according to his/her capacity and skill. On the other side the family members and other related people expect money and other kind of cooperation from those who immigrate to work in the developed countries like England. For they didn't know how complicated and challenging life are living in the foreign land. They have never undergone such diaspora experience.

Through the view point of Chanu, the difficulties people face in Brick lane can be seen and realized. Similarly, the way people behave in the English culture is quite different from the indigenous Bangladeshi culture in their homeland. Nazneen and Chanu are not an exception that they as immigrants face a number of obstacles and hindrances to adjust in the new world due to being non- white and not having capacity to speak English perfectly. Rather they face huge number of obstacles in England in their stay, and professions. In fact, the immigrants are no longer given opportunities in accordance with their qualification as well. Rather they are deprived of being successful in their future. They are looked down as no more than animals as:

And you see, to a white person we are all the same: dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan. But these people are peasants, uneducated, illiterate, and close minded without ambition. He sat back and stroked his belly. "I don't look down on them, but what can you do? If a man has only ever driven a rickshaw and never in his life held a book in his hand, then what can you expect from him?" (21).

These lines stated by Chanu clarify that immigrants are not only oppressed and hated by the white people but others as well. At that moment Chanu recalls his home and he

wants to return home with his family but Nazneen does not become ready to go back. Although, he has a degree holder in English literature he can't fit in England ,in English culture and even with his uneducated wife Nazneen in the foreign land. Chanu becomes a misfit who seems neither to have mixed up with the whites nor Bangladeshi immigrants. He only dreams of being promoted as:

Chanu filled the silence with his laugh. "My wife is just settling in here". He coughed and shuffled in his chair. "The thing is, with the promotion coming up, things are beings to go well for me now. If I just get promotion confirmed than may things are possible. (24)

Thus the Diasporic life of immigrants is full of hopes in the initial phase of their adjustments. They see a lot of possibilities in their journey. Chanu, a Bangladeshi immigrant, thinks about getting promotion. However, being failure, Chanu has decided to go to Dhaka. Indeed he wants all family members to go along with him but Nazneen diplomatically convinces him that their daughter Bibi and Shahana will feel difficult enough to adjust in Bangladeshi culture. As Chanu recalls:

In all my life I feel this is the best decision I have made to take my daughter back home. I am preparing them. You see, to go forward you must first look back. We are taking some stocks of the glorious British Empire. When I was in school, do you know what we learned? The English gave us the railways. As if we should get down on our knees for this'. He appealed now to his public. 'Do you think they would have brought the railway if they did not want to sell their street or their local motives? Do you think that they brought us railways from the goodness of their hearts? We needed irrigation systems, not trains'. (205)

Chanu's Family however don't show readiness to return back but with a common compromise that Nazneen with Bibi and Shahana will leave London for Bangladesh later, Chanu returns to Bangladesh. Nazneen along with Bibi and Shahana remains in England. Nazneen changes her identity along with her way of living in her life in new land. Similarly, Nazneen who was initially ignorant about English language and culture turns to be capable of existing in the multicultural society whereas the so called university scholar Chanu cannot cope with the new culture and society. That's why he finally returns to Bangladesh alone leaving Nazneen and two daughters Bibi and Shahana in England.

Thus, Nazneen, an Islamic passive woman, although guided by the Islamic modes of socialization where her human virtue, identity, self-dependency, are restricted due to cultural practices when she was shifted to England becomes able to create her personality and independent identity. She realizes that the place is open and flexible and allows the personal growth. She changes herself from a submissive to a conscious woman. Thus for her new culture becomes the source of identity, knowledge and empowerment; the tool for survival. Because of cross-cultural life her identity is created and living style is changed. Multicultural situation for her becomes the source of identity rather than combative entity. It becomes a kind of theatre where various social, political, ideological, causes engage with one another. Thus offering every chance for struggling individuals to assert selfhood enter a fruitful communication promote co existence, and above all to create an identity.

#### IV. Conclusion

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is a mirror where the process of acculturation and assimilation of immigrants are clearly portrayed. In the novel, Ali has maintained her standpoint by showing the drawbacks of the Bangladesh Muslims and predicaments which they have been facing since their arrival in England. Nazneen, main character of the novel was from Islamic culture but latter adopts western norms, values and beliefs. Because of her affectionate relationship with Karim rather than her husband Chanu, that Nazneen gradually gains self-confidence and learns the art of survival –i.e assimilation with the dominant culture. As a result when her husband plans to return back, She determines to stay in the country of her adaptation. Thus, the novel exposes the fascination and enchantment to western culture.

Hence, *Brick Lane* is a novel about the protagonist's cultural identity which is fluctuating and has been presented through Nazneen's contingent situation and discursive practices. Ali elaborately portrays Nazneen's transformation as a western individual from an Islamic woman who really trapped in the web of cultural difference. Hence, Nazneen Identity is in a state of flux, torn between and among different cultural polarities. Hence, Ali's exposes Nazneen's multiple cultural positions. Nazneen grown up in the orthodox Islamic culture, finds England puzzling and odd in the beginning but her immense longing for English language and culture energizes her to seek for liberation from divergent barriers. The desire for learning English is self evident that she wants to make her adjustment in the English culture. Gradually, Nazneen copes with the English culture and after that she becomes able to sustain with children.

Thus, Nazneen, as Islamic passive woman although guided by the Islamic modes of socialization where her human virtue, identity, self-dependency are

restricted due to cultural practices. But when she was shifted to England, she realizes that this place is open and flexible and allows for the personal growth. She changes herself from a submissive to a conscious woman. She starts to take her mother's words of moral and Islamic codes as full of criticism. Similarly, she buys weapons like a tailoring machine and starts working in order to create her own identity and becomes financial independence which is indispensable for her self empowerment.

It can be argued that, Ali through Nazneen, suggests that new cultural milieus is not an obstacles to built personality. It becomes the indispensable source of knowledge. It helps to create personal identity. The superiority of the cultural determinism of the novel erects the thesis that no one can escape from the strong grips of culture. Culture thus, becomes a powerful means of domination and appropriation in a multicultural social context where different cultures met and grapple, in short, encounter each other. After all, Nazneen, the innocent, unknown to English, flexible, alterable woman, finds life comfortable and sustainable as well as emancipated in the multicultural society while Chanu, the boastful, highly learned and capable of speaking English fluently becomes a failure in the English culture goes back to Bangladesh with a great expectation of being a success over there. Thus, through the developing character as well as a variety of social-political, cultural and contemporary contextual factors and discursive practices Ali exposes multiple trajectories of cultural immigrant's identity as well as way of living.

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