

I. Introduction

Monica Ali as an Author

Hilary Mantel and Alex Clark, two of the judges appointed by *Granta* to ascertain who would be among the best 20 British writers of the next decade, described many of the books under consideration as "not that strong" and "absolutely shocking". It may explain why they did not hesitate to choose two writers whose first novels had not yet been printed: Monica Ali and Adam Thirwell. Ali's *Brick Lane* is certainly an impressive debut.

Monica Ali has been compared to Zadie Smith, but the two have little in common beyond demographics. Smith's comedy is more frantic, and while her prose is exhilarating, it's also self-dramatizing. Ali's eloquence is more firmly restrained; the language of *Brick Lane* seems both deliberately unflamboyant and metaphorically precise. In fact, the English novel *Brick Lane* resembles Smith's *White Teeth* but Timothy Mo's *Sour Sweet*, a similarly naturalistic account of immigrant life. And behind Ali and Mo one feels the enabling weight of the 19th century, of a history of novels about people cut off from their origins, adrift in Europe's great cities-books absorbed in the everyday, in a sense of life inconclusively passing. Thus Ali joins Zadie Smith in the 20, and the two have a great deal in common, not only because of their cross-cultural backgrounds, their intimate knowledge of what it feels like to be an outsider in Britain, and their Oxbridge educations. Ali is the child of a British mother and a Bengali father. In *White Teeth*, Smith chronicled a particular down-at-heel corner of north London from the perspective of two multi-racial families, while Ali focuses on an equally shabby estate near east London's Brick Lane, occupied almost exclusively by Bengalis.

Both of them have highlighted a city that is largely foreign territory for most of its citizens, heralding a welcome new "state of England" novel, which is what the *Granta* judges purport to seek. Ali's *Brick Lane* is the story of Nazneen, a docile teenager from Bangladesh who finds herself packed off to London to marry fat, ineffectual, pompous Chanu. She, unlike her younger sister Hasina, has always allowed fate to take its course, since the day of her birth in the village of Gouripur, then part of East of Pakistan, in 1967, when her life hung in the balance for five days and fate decided in her favor, a sequence of events drummed into the child by her embittered and unhappy mother.

Her beautiful sister Hasina elopes with her lover, but Nazneen is a dutiful daughter, wife and mother, who find solace in God. The twists and turns of their lives are paralleled, as one fight against the disappointments and humiliation that threaten to overwhelm her and the other slowly emerges from her sublimation to grab fate by the throat and be the maker of her own destiny.

Background to *Brick Lane*

Many people aren't acquainted with *Brick Lane*, in the east of London-not as the English are with Piccadilly or Oxford Street. So people should get the map and find the Tower and go north a bit, then a little east, and there they will see it, a gently curving half-mile. They may recognize some of the names around it: Jack the Ripper worked in Whitechapel, and Shoreditch was home to London's first permanent stage, where "The Merchant of Venice" had its opening its opening night. *Brick Lane* itself was once just that, a track down which carts rolled from kilns in the countryside to construction sites in the city.

Bricks aren't made here now; instead, the street has another product. In the 18th century the French Protestants fled here. They made good. One hundred years later, the Jews came. The Chinese came here as well. Now Chanu's own people have arrived, the Bangladeshis whom the outsider most often sees waiting on tables in the Lane's many "Indian" restaurants. Long before curry, however, this neighborhood was cooking generations of new English men and women.

Ali's first book *Brick Lane* has spent most of this summer on the British best-seller lists, a popular success fueled by a critical one: earlier this year, Granta named her as one of Britain's 20 best young novelists. It was a remarkable choice. She hasn't yet published a word but no one who reads "Brick Lane" will doubt its justice.

Brick Lane's main character, Nazneen, is herself one of Britain's new faces, an immigrant garment worker stitching zippers and buttons in her public housing flat. An unspoiled girl "from the village," she arrives in London at the age of 18, when her father arranges her marriage to 40-year-old Chanu. She speaks no English, and Charm sees no need for her to try. Her daughters will eventually teach her, and also her friend Razia, who learns "so that when her children start telling dirty jokes behind her back, she will be able to whip their backsides. At first, however, Nazneen's England is so narrow that she's afraid to leave what's euphemistically called the "estate," and her only distraction is the exotic televised image of Torvill and Dean. "Ice e-skating," she calls it.

London isn't home, not for Nazneen, and even less so for Chanu, who plans to go back to Bangladesh where he thinks he is a success. But success never comes. Chanu's degree is never finished, and he frames his certificate for "cycling proficiency" instead. It's easy enough to laugh at him, but like Nazneen herself the

English also learn to appreciate his kindness-and realize too, from the "unhappy" eyes in his "round, jolly face," that he already knows he has failed.

Chanu is too ineffectually warm-hearted to be overbearing, yet even a gentle man has his limits/When he sees his elder daughter, Shahana, start to grow into her tight jeans, he begins to plan the family's return, success or no, to the Dhaka his children have never seen. Though he's neither so funny nor quite so heartbreaking, Chanu inevitably recalls V.S. Naipaul's Mr. Biswas. That's not a limitation. Chanu doesn't stop being himself, but he also belongs to a recognizable tradition, and so does "Brick Lane". The Significance of the Study

A captivating work from a debut novelist Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* brings the immigrant milieu of East London to vibrant life. With great poignancy, Monica Ali illuminates a foreign world; her well-developed characters pull readers along on a deeply psychological, almost spiritual journey. The story revolves around the frequently tragic-comic and permanently-resigned-to-her-fate Nazneen, born an apparent stillbirth in a village in Bangladesh, and married off to Chanu, with whom she moves to London. This is where the story really begins; occasionally dipping back into life in Bangladesh through the regular letters Nazneen's sister Hasina sends her.

Life in Tower Hamlets, the concrete skyscraper monstrosity that doubles as home for too many immigrants and working-class locals, is the background for Nazneen to, at first, adjust to, and eventually embrace, in a foreign country. Ostensibly, this recipe could be a formulaic depiction of the Asian experience but in the partial manner. At the same time

Ali spices it up with a deliriously dark and dry sense of humor, the kind that has one sniggering inside knowingly for hours and the kind that makes Britain such a hotbed of comic talent.

It isn't just funny though, as it also provides a simultaneously sharp and moving portrayal of life in a working-class estate in Britain. For years Nazneen's life meanders along, interpreted occasionally by elongated bouts of daydreaming about ice-skating, the obligatory housework and correspondence from Hasina. Her marriage to Chanu similarly rolls along; he is content that she is an "unspoilt girl from the village who works hard", and she is happy that he doesn't beat her.

Chanu turns out to be true comical pivot around whom much of the humor is based. Although he works in an administrative capacity at the local council, Chanu is a thinker, a philosopher, a student of the world, a social commentator, an academician, an educated misfit amongst a thoroughly immigrant lot, or so he believes. A legend is only in his mind. But while at first his dreams, grand schemes and big ideas for business, academia and political analysis are charmingly revolutionary to his wife, after years of much thinking and little action, they elicit only silence, and a sarcastic one at that, from her. Eventually, the silence turns to a cynical sympathy.

Other characters who inhabit her world are equally well-layered. There is Mrs. Islam, the archetypal South Asian matriarch with a penchant for martyrdom, and a profitable sideline that can't yet be disclosed. Or Razia her neighbor, a downtrodden wife, whose husband dies a hilarious death, but one who defies traditional norms and embraces Britishness and fights out a living for herself and her children.

Above all, there is Karim, a young, feisty ideologue, a symbol of a new Asian youth, and one who believes in fighting for his rights too well. As well as being the leader of a socio-political movement, he delivers speech against the English people's racist behaviors encourages immigrants to keep up fighting for their rights.

In course of presenting a mirror of the Bangladeshi community, Ali has extremely got inclined towards the taste of the European readers. She does not seem to be fair while dealing with the character, Chanu who represents the Bangladeshi educated scholars. Whatever attitude Chanu is shown to have towards the Bangladeshi immigrants who are from the working class, is not of his. Rather that is of the author who in order to insult their culture and religion has intentionally created the character like Chanu to vomit her feelings and attitudes for the Sylhetis and the other Bangladeshi immigrants. This is why the study of the book from the perspective how the immigrants are misrepresented has been too much crucial.

Literature Review

Since the first publication of Ali's *Brick Lane*, it has been responded in many ways and a host of critical attitudes have come up as well. Ali has not been afraid to bump in to many issues, of gender, justice, theology, philosophy and individuality. Most often the novel has been researched for the protagonist's psychological advancement. The search for freedom the old tradition seems to have been the indispensable goal of Nazneen. The very quest can be proven with single evidence from the text that is as follows: Nazneen wondered why her husband spoke of her as 'she'. If she had more energy, she decided, she would find this irritating. She marshaled her resources for getting up, and ignoring Chanu's continued admonishments. (329)

Daniel Levisohn takes "Nazneen's new experience in London as a rebirth"(2L). The rebirth of Nazneen is not biological but cultural and psychological. London is as a better place for her to advance her personality by practicing new cultural norms and values.

Margaret Forster has found *Brick Lane* as a very special novel since it has given her everything such as entertaining, moving and fascinating.

No doubt the novel is very colorful due to the mingle of various cultural practices from both the east and the west. Similarly Claire Dederer states: "Over the next decade and a half Nazneen grows into a strong, confident woman who doesn't defy fate so much as bend it to her will" (32).

Dederer has shown Nazneen as a developing character who can't have opposed fate due to being trained to live a fatalistic life by her mother. However, she has made indirect efforts to release her from the trap of the old tradition basically the Bangladeshi way of living. In this way Eillen Rieback takes Ali's *Brick Lane* as an excellent a debut novel that captures the struggles, the cultural clash, and the frustrations of a family caught between two worlds. Rieback further 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 whether 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 interests of her children in mind, she takes a giant step toward becoming her own woman. (42)

Hence Ali has made a bold attempt to state that Nazneen represents women of the east basically the Bangladeshi and Islamic ones. She is traditional and shy. It means women of that culture do have these qualities. Ali thus uses stereotypes often used by the westerners to insult the easterners. To earn name, fame and money Ali has used the same card in *Brick Lane*. A very critic states:

The depiction of the Sylheti community might have been too rude for a guest audience but to us who are Bangladeshis living here that closely resembles the state of Sylhetis living in Britain-like it or not! Monica Ali, a non-Sylheti Bangladeshi herself, 'might have' played typical Western cards in portraying an Eastern society but that doesn't change the real picture. (18)

After all the above mentioned criticism is too much relevant since it contains the intended goal of the author. In fact Ah' effort to portray the picture of the Sylhetis in the wrong and stereotypical form is objectionable. As a writer Ali should not have misrepresented a society about which she does not have the deep-rooted knowledge. Without having studied well she has just played a game to win the huge favor of the European readers and let her position reach at the top in her respective career. This researcher has even intended to cope with the book by finding out how Ali has misrepresented the Sylheti community and hurt the sentiments of the Bangladeshi immigrants.

II: Bangladeshi Immigrants in Diaspora and their Misrepresentation

Diaspora

From Greek meaning 'to disperse', diaspora historically refers to the exclusively dispersion of Jewish almost 4000 years ago. Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homelands into a new region, is a central historical fact of colonization. Although the concept of diaspora has been epistemologically and semantically derived from those of dispersal experiences of those ancient Jewish people of the distance past, in the present context it has come to merge into the issues raised in postcolonial theory. Colonialism itself was a 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, continued on a global scale, many such 'settled' regions were developed historically as plantations or agricultural colonies to grow food stuffs for the metropolitan populations. A large number of slaves were shipped to the plantation colonies to supply the labor where the local population could not supply the need.

After the slave trade, and when slavery was outlawed by the European powers in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the demand for cheap agricultural labor in colonial plantation economics was met by the development of a system of indentured labor. This involved transporting, under indenture agreements, large population of poor agricultural laborer from population rich areas, such as China and India, to the areas where they were needed to servive plantations. The practices of slavery and indenture thus resulted in the world-wide colonial diasporas. Analyzing the history of colonial diaspora Aschroft writes:

Indian population formed (and form) substantial minorities or majorities in colonies as diverse as the West Indies, Malaya, Fiji,

Mauritius and colonies of Eastern and Southern Africa. Chinese minorities found their way under similar circumstances to all these regions too, as well as to areas across most of South East and the Spanish and later 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 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 peoples by now.

The descendants of the Diaspora movements generated by colonialism have developed their own distinctive cultures which both preserve and often extend and develop their original cultures. The development of Diaspora cultures necessarily questions the essentialist model to interrogate the ideology of unified 'natural' cultural norm; an approach that underpins the centre/margin model of the 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 this Diaspora state their sense of exile, their nostalgia for homelands, their sense of humiliation over the identity crisis that they face with and sometimes even their feeling of 'in-between-ness',. Especially it is sensed by the descendants of diasporas which becomes extremely intense and irrepressible. Some diaspora writers have recreated their very dispersal sensibilities in their fabulous literary writing. Regarding diaspora sensitivities, an Indian critic Sudhir Kumar points:

The diaspora consciousness as some critics aver 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 experiences of migrant people. The migrant people as they resettle in foreign countries have to face a lot of different problems in terms of all aspects like culture, language, food and others. They are always considered to be outsiders through eyes of native people. Diaspora writings capture

both the problems and experiences of the migrants. The writers in such texts try to recollect their past through the help of memories, nostalgia and familial myth. The writers not only re-visualize their history of origin, offer the reader all exotics and fantasies of their homelands, and compel us to re-examine its authenticity. They also reaffirm their distinct identity as subjects constructed by diaspora. Therefore, on the account of immigrant people both as recreating their history and making an appeal for their marginalized identity, the dispersal writings hold the significant position in the literary genre.

Despite the immense popularity in diaspora writing the theory of diaspora is not free from controversies. The diaspora writers and theorists have been assailed for being inauthentic and misrepresenting the reality. They are also critiqued for using more fantasy and exaggerating the reality of their faraway homeland in order to create an aesthetic effect on the reader or to engage large audiences. Despite the adverse criticism, fantasy is still an inevitable part of the diaspora writing. It is only a source that makes it possible for the immigrant characters to be connected between their past and present.

In the same way Diaspora politics is the study of the political behavior of transnational ethnic Diasporas, their relationship with their ethnic homelands and their host states, as well as their prominent role in ethnic conflicts. The study of Diaspora politics is part of the broader field of Diaspora studies.

To understand a diaspora's politics, one must first understand its historical context and attachments. A diaspora is a transnational community that defined itself as a singular ethnic group based upon its shared identity. diasporas result from historical emigration from an original homeland. In modern cases, this migration can be historically documented, and the diaspora associated with a certain territory.

Whether this territory is in fact the homeland of a specific ethnic group, is a political matter. The older the migration, the homeland, and the migration route have not yet been accurately determined. A claim to a homeland always has political connotations, and is often disputed.

Self-identified Diasporas place great importance on their homeland because of their ethnic and cultural association with it – especially if it has been lost or conquered. This has led ethnic nationalist movements within several Diasporas, often resulting in the establishment of a sovereign homeland. But even when these are established, it is rare for the complete diaspora population to return to the homeland, and the remaining diaspora community typically retains significant emotional attachment to the homeland, and the co-ethnic population there. Diasporas are thus perceived as transnational political entities, operating on behalf of their entire people and capable of acting independently from any individual state.

Hence it seems to be necessary to talk something more especially about Indian diaspora. The Indian Diaspora today constitutes an important, and in some respects unique, force in the world culture. The origins of the modern Indian Diaspora lie mainly in the subjugation of India by the British and its incorporation into the British Empire. Indians were taken over as indentured labor to far-flung parts of the empire in the nineteenth-century, a circumstance to which the modern Indian populations of Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and other places attest in their own peculiar ways. Over two million Indian men fought on behalf of the empire in numerous wars, including the Boer War and the two World Wars, and some remained behind to claim the land on which they had fought as their own. As if in emulation of their ancestors, many Gujarati traders once again left for East Africa in large numbers in the early part of the twentieth century. Finally, in the

post-World War II period, the dispersal of Indian labor and professionals has been a nearly world-wide phenomenon. Indians, and other South Asians, provided the labor from South Asia which has been the main force in the transformation of the physical landscape of much of the Middle East. Meanwhile, in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, Indians have made their presence visibly felt in the professions.

Who and what is an Indian? How we are to characterize the Indian Diaspora community as Indian given that it is constituted of such diverse elements as South Asian Hong Kong Muslims, Canadian Sikhs, Punjabi Mexican Californians, and Gujarati East Africans now settled in the U. S. by way of England, South African Hindus, and so forth? In the United States, at least, the Indian community has occupied a place of considerable privilege, and many Indians could deflect the moment of recognition that Indian ness and being American do not always happily coincide. In recent years, with a declining economy on the one hand, and the congregation of Indians in clusters that visibly put them apart on the other hand, Indians have for the first time become the targets of racial attacks.

However, unlike Indian communities across the world might be, they all maintain some sort of tenuous link with the motherland. The most likely candidate for a force of bonding would be, of all things, the Hindu feature film, a phenomenon unique to the Indian Diaspora: what Hollywood is to Western Europe, the Bombay Hollywood is to the Middle East and East Africa. The modesty, not to mention Puritanism, of the Hindi film is said to explain its appeal to the Islamic world; and though we may well contest that interpretation, it is worthy of note that Hindi films found in grocery and video stores across the U.S. often carry subtitles in Arabic, one language which is indubitably not spoken by any Indian community in the U. S.! The

Indian arranged marriage might furnish another such facet of a common culture.

Newspapers published by Indian communities flourish everywhere, and they invariably carry a section with matrimonial advertisements. Though these very ads help Indians to locate one another, they pose difficult questions about otherness of certain Indians in relation to Americans, and the internal otherness of certain Indians in relation to other Indians.

The religious practices of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims in the U. S. and other overseas communities might be assisting in transforming the nature of religious faiths in India itself. Hindus all over the world are showing alarming signs of susceptibility to a resurgent and militant Hinduism; indeed, it is even arguable that they seem to know the meaning of Hinduism better than do Hindus in the motherland. Why do overseas Hindus, particularly in the North American Diaspora, appear always to out-Hindu the Hindu? In thinking of the Indian Diaspora, other questions that come to the fore include: relations between parents and children; race relations between Indians, blacks, and whites; the place of Indian food and music in the preservation of Indian communities; the responsibility, if any, of the Indian Government to overseas Indians; and the future prospects of the Indian community in the U.S.

Irrespective of diaspora's traditional meaning with the emergence and dissemination of the post colonial theory of discourse the term 'diaspora' was commonly applied to cover a range of different cultural and ethnic groups held together by shared cultural or religious commitments and having some sense of exile from a place or state of origin and belonging. Within cultural studies it is used to describe a dynamic network of communities without the stabilizing allusion to an original homeland or essential identity. That is, Diaspora, these days, has been used in the studies of race and ethnicity to describe a range of cultural affiliations connecting

other groups who have been dispersed or migrated across national boundaries. People of the Diaspora have an access to a second tradition quite apart from their own racial history. To live in Diasporas to experience the trauma of exile, migration displacement, rootless-ness and the life in a minority group haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim to look back. As Rushdie writes, “I’ve been in a minority group all my life a member of an Indian Muslim family Bombay, then of a Mohajir migrant-family in Pakistan and now as a British Asian”(4), creating an ‘imaginary home land’ 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 truths and their identities are at once plural and partial. Though people in the Diaspora feel torn apart between two cultural and though the ground is ambiguous and shifting, it is not an infertile territory to occupy. As Hall argues:

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

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

Thus the concept of diaspora helps critique the essentialist nation of identity in the name of innovation and change by promoting ethnic sameness and differences-‘a changing same’. Moreover, it is used to describe a dispersed, intellectual formation or the spread and interlamination of ideas. Because of this the global development and

variety of forms, cultural studies itself has been described as ‘diaspora story’ and cultural identities are represented as hybrid or diaspora identities.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to selected cultural and sometimes physical characteristics used to classify people into groups or categories considered to be significantly different from others. Commonly recognized American ethnic groups include American Indians, Latinos, Chinese, African Americans, Europeans, etc. In some cases, ethnicity involves merely a loose group identity with little or no cultural traditions in common. This is the case with many Irish and German Americans. In contrast, some ethnic groups are coherent subcultures with a shared language and body of tradition. Newly arrived immigrant groups often fit this pattern.

In fact it is important not to confuse the term minority with ethnic group. Ethnic groups may be either a minority or a majority in a population. Whether a group is a minority or a majority also is not an absolute fact but depends on the perspective. For instance, in some towns along the southern border of the U.S., people of Mexican ancestry are the overwhelming majority population and control most of the important social and political institutions but are still defined by state and national governments as a minority. In small homogenous societies, such as those of hunters and gatherers and pastoralists, there is essentially only one ethnic group and no minorities.

A race is a biological subspecies, or variety of a species, consisting of a more or less distinct population with anatomical traits that distinguish it clearly from other races. This biologist’s definition does not fit the reality of human genetic variation today. We are an extremely homogenous species genetically. As a matter of fact, all humans today are 99.9% genetically identical, and most of the variation that does occur is in the difference between males and females and our unique personal traits.

This homogeneity is very unusual in the animal kingdom. Even our closest biological relatives, the chimpanzees have 2-3 times more genetic variation than people.

Orangutans have 8-10 times more variation.

It is now clear that our human races are primarily cultural creations, not biological realities. The commonly held belief in the existence of human biological races is based on the false assumption that anatomical traits, such as skin color and specific facial characteristics, cluster together in single distinct groups of people. They do not. There are no clearly distinct “black”, “white”, or other races.

The popularly held view of human races ignores the fact that anatomical traits supposedly identifying a particular race are often found extensively in other populations as well. This is due to the fact that similar natural selection factors in different parts of the world often result in the evolution of similar adaptations. For instance, intense sunlight in tropical latitudes has selected for darker skin color as a protection from intense ultraviolet radiation. As a result, the dark brown skin color characteristic of sub-Saharan Africans is also found among unrelated populations in the Indian subcontinent, Australia, New Guinea, and elsewhere in the Southwest Pacific.

The actual patterns of biological variation among humans are extremely complex and constantly changing. They can also be deceptive. All of us could be classified into a number of different “races”, depending on the traits that are emphasized. For example, if people are sorted on the basis of stature or blood types, the geographic groupings will be clearly different from those defined on the basis of skin color. Using the B blood type for defining races, Australian Aborigines would be lumped together with most Native Americans. Some Africans would be in the same race as Europeans while others would be categorized with Asians.

Historically in the Western World, human ‘races’ have been defined on the basis of a small number of superficial anatomical characteristics that can be readily identified at a distance, thereby making discrimination easier. Focusing on such deceptive distinguishing traits as skin color, body shape, and hair texture causes us to magnify differences and ignore similarities between people. It is also important to remember that these traits are no more accurate in making distinctions between human groups than any other genetically inherited characteristics. All such attempts to scientifically divide humanity into biological races have proven fruitless.

Hence it is clear that people, not nature, create our identities. Ethnicity and supposed “racial” groups are largely cultural and historical constructs. They are primarily social rather than biological phenomena. This does not mean that they do not exist. To the contrary, “races’ are very real in the world today. In order to understand them, however, we must look into culture and social interaction rather than biology.

The sociologist Max Weber once remarked that the whole conception of ethnic groups is so complex and so vague that it might be good to abandon it altogether. Nevertheless, Weber proposed a definition of ethnic group that became standard among social scientists:

Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for groups formation; furthermore it does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists. (389)

In this way anthropologist Ronald Cohen, in a view of anthropological and sociological studies of ethnic groups since Weber, confirmed that while many ethnic groups subjectively claimed common descent and cultural community, objectively there was often compelling empirical evidence that countered such claims. In the same vein Harold Isaacs has identified other diacritics of ethnicity, among them physical appearance, name, language, history, and religion; this definition has entered some dictionaries. Social scientists have thus focused on how, when, and why different markers of ethnic identity become salient. Thus anthropologist Joan Vincent observed that ethnic boundaries often have a mercurial character. Ronald Cohen concluded that ethnicity is “a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness” (387). He confirms Joan Vincent’s observation that “Ethnicity [...] can be narrowed or broadened in boundary terms in relation to the specific needs of political mobilization” (386). This may be why descent is sometimes a marker of ethnicity, and sometimes not: which diacritic of ethnicity is salient depends on whether they are scaling them up or down depends generally on the political situation.

Ethnicity and race are related concepts .Both are usually defined in terms of shared genealogy. Often ethnicity also connotes shared biological traits. In 1950, the UNESCO statement *The Race Question*; signed by internationally renowned scholars suggested that if people are referring to a group marked by shared religion, geography, language or culture, they should “drop the term ‘race’ altogether and speak of ‘ethnic groups’ ” (142-45).

In some cases, especially involving transnational migration, or colonial expansion, ethnicity is linked to nationality. Many anthropologists and historians, following the work of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson see nations and nationalism as developing with the rise of the modern state system in the seventeenth

century, culminating in the rise of “nation-states” in which the presumptive boundaries of the nation coincided with state boundaries.

Thus, in the West, the notion of ethnicity, like race and nation, developed in the context of European colonial expansion, when mercantilism and capitalism were promoting global movements of populations at the same time that state boundaries were being more clearly and rigidly defined. In the nineteenth century, modern states generally sought legitimacy through their claim to represent “nations”. Nation-states, however, invariably include populations that have been excluded from national life for one reason or another. Members of excluded groups, consequently, will either demand inclusion on the basis of equality, or seek autonomy, sometimes even to the extent of complete political separation in their own nation-state. Under these conditions- when people moved from one state to another, or one state conquered or colonized peoples beyond its national boundaries- ethnic groups formed by people who identified with one nation, but who lived in another state.

Sometimes ethnic groups are subject to prejudicial attitudes and actions by the state or its constituents. In the twentieth century, people began to argue that conflicts among ethnic groups or between members of an ethnic group and the state can and should be resolved in one of two ways.

The novel *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali draws varieties of criticisms from its readers since the novel centralizes on the ethnic issues especially about the people from Bangladeshi origin living in England. In other words the immigrants who undergo diverse problems are even falsely represented by the writers who cut boundaries of honesty and real reflection just for the sake of their career development. Monica Ali is found misusing her right as a writer to quench the thirst of many readers from the west of the British origin. A community leader states:

The book *Brick Lane* is a good work of literature, but is insulting to the community. People are disgusted about the film, and while the authorities have given permission for it to be filmed here, it does not mean they have permission from the community. We will do what the community wants us to do. We are not going to leave it as it is. They have no right to do filming in Brick Lane (34).

In the same way Abdus Salique threatened to burn Ali's book at a rally on Sunday which is expected to be attended by hundreds of protesters. He said the rally would be peaceful, adding that he was trying to deter fringe elements who could become violent from attending. But he added: "If she has the right to freedom of speech, we have the right to burn books. We will do it to show our anger. We don't like Monica Ali. We are protecting our community's dignity and respect" (14). The depiction of the Sylheti community might have been too rude for a guest audience but to us who are Bangladeshis living here that closely resembles the state of Sylhetis living in Britain-like it or not! Monica Ali, a non-Sylheti Bangladeshi herself, 'might have' played typical Western cards in portraying an Eastern society but that doesn't change the real picture. Of course there are exceptions but reality is not too comforting. Anyway, now a new battle of words has started between the infamous Islam basher Salman Rushdie and the matriarch of the women's liberation movement, Germaine Greer, who famously burned her bra in the 1960s.

Germaine Greer defended the residents of Brick Lane saying: "Ali did not concern herself with the possibility that her plot might seem outlandish to the people of Brick Lane"(35). She added: "As British people know little about the Bangladeshi people in their midst, their first appearance as characters in an English novel had the force of a defining caricature" (36). Rushdie asserts in this context stating:

I totally agree with the above comment by Germaine Greer. As the British people don't have much idea about Bangladeshi community, they might get a false idea about Bangladeshis in general. ...But I guess the Sylheti leaders are not fighting for Bangladesh, they are fighting for British Sylhetis only! If they cared about Bangladesh and Islam, they would and should have done many things over the last fifty years or so . (5)

It is the fact that the discriminatory attitudes displayed by some non-Sylhetis towards Sylhetis in the Diaspora betray their own frustrations, insecurities and lack of success in life. Non-Sylhetis often stereotype Sylhetis as uneducated and as not being proper Bangladeshis as a means of voicing their disapproval about the Sylheti tendency to stick to their own community and to marry within their own community. They see long-established Sylheti families holding down good jobs and able to navigate the complexities of modern life and feel resentment and hate. It is so because they feel out of place given the different Sylheti language and culture. One should not blame non-Sylhetis too much but help them integrate better into the mainstream.

A prominent critic, Agitpapa avers regarding the novel's issue:

The book is about a Muslim woman working her way through a couple of men, out of purdah, and out into the brave new world of "English style" freedom. It certainly does nothing to combat the current pernicious Western prejudices against Islamic societies and may even be seen as helping to prop the threadbare Anglo-American excuse for the horrors being perpetrated on Muslims in the Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon, namely that of "spreading freedom". So

what I'm saying is that although Nazneen's story may be totally credible, real, and well-told, the context in which the telling of that story takes place explains both the interest in book and the reactions against it. (12)

After all distinct critics' diverse attitudes towards *Brick Lane* are appreciative since all have different critical lenses to look at the same thing in the individual way. Despite having the novel drawn various opinions, the issue raised in the present promulgation is the best suited and most appropriate one. It is really factual that Monica Ali the daughter of non-Sylheti father has trickily misrepresented the community without having sound and actual knowledge about the Sylhetis. It must be her personal motive to receive the favorable responses from the White Christians who are her intended readers. In the same vein her English bringing up seems to have been one of the most salient reasons behind creating the work of over imagination and fantasy. Speaking truly Ali is very much biased towards Islamic religion and its followers as these people are the disgusted and hated ones to the White Christians. The central character Nazneen is indeed her mouth piece that is found criticizing the Islamic way of life so minutely and subtly that she appears innocent and sympathy winner everywhere throughout the novel. Ali has also shown the fact that the opponents of the English culture and life turns to be failure through the reflection of Chanu, the husband of Nazneen. His failure is not the personal and individual one. Rather it represents the failure of the whole non-westerners who go to the European countries with high ambition and glamour in order to have hilarious career in the respective disciplines. Hence it gets pretty clear that Ali is responsible for all these slaps given to the cheeks of the non-westerners especially to the Islamic people.

III: Ali's Prejudice against Sylhetis

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* continues to court controversy among the British Bangladeshi community due to its negative portrayal of Sylhetis. The majority of British Bangladeshis originate from the Sylhet division in Bangladesh. Monica Ali originates from Dhaka. There has always been rivalry between Bangladeshis from the mainly rural and peripheral Sylhet and those hailing from the major metropolitan areas like Dhaka and Chittagong. Sylhetis are usually stereotyped as being uneducated and cliquish: for instance preferring their children to marry within the Sylheti community. They are not considered 'proper' Bangladeshis. Sylhetis are fiercely protective of their own language, family-oriented community culture and conservative practice of Islam. It is the preoccupied concept of Ali that Sylheti community has got these negative features. This is why *Brick Lane* reflects such images. In this context Abuusa says:

Freedom of speech, expression or freedom of writers/film makers doesn't anyway give them impunity from hurting others through their works whatever it's full of fine art/artistic/high-winged imagination. Majority has the moral obligation to protect the minority in their domain and on the other hand, minority should always be wary about their actions that might hurt sentiment of the majority.(21)

The central character, especially the mouthpiece of Ali, Nazneen is portrayed as a docile teenager from Bangladesh who finds herself packed off to London to marry fat, ineffectual, pompous Chanu. She unlike her younger sister Hasina, has always allowed fate to take its course, since the day of her birth in the village of Gouripur, then part of East Pakistan, in 1967, when her life hung in the balance for five days and fate decided in her favor, a sequence of events drummed into the child by her

embittered and unhappy mother. Beautiful Hasina elopes with her lover, but Nazneen is a dutiful daughter, wife and mother who find solace in God. The twists and turns of their lives are paralleled, as one fights against the disappointments and humiliation that threaten to overwhelm her and the other slowly emerges from her sublimation to grab fate by the throat and be the maker of her own destiny.

Chanu, a Bangladeshi immigrant is presented to be very much hostile to the life style of the Sylheti community. He is highly educated and has earned his degree from the University of Dhaka in English. He boasts and differentiates him from other people living in Tower Hamlets since they are uneducated and illiterate. Ali through this character has expressed her biased attitude towards the Sylhetis settled in Brick Lane. Hence Ali tries to show the countenance of the Sylheti community in a designed way that can please the British. Chanu seems to be much hateful to the Sylheti community which in reality is not so relevant. When Chanu is talking to Nazneen about the Sylhetis in this way, he states:

Most of our people here are Sylhetis. They all stick together because they come from the same district. They know each other from the villages, and they come to Tower Hamlets and they think they are back in the village. Most of them have jumped ship. That's how they come. They have menial jobs on the ship, doing donkey work, or they stow away like little rats in the hold.... And when they jump ship and scuttle over here, then in a sense they are home again. 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. Close-minded. Without ambition. (28)

It gets pretty clear that Chanu is made to speak the inner thought of Ali. In fact Chanu as a Bangladeshi common person does not have this negative attitude towards the Sylheti community. It is Monica Ali who has attempted her level best to reach the test of the English looking for the appropriate situation to insult the easterners. Nazneen as the mouthpiece humbly accepts what Chanu tells her to do since she represents the women who belong to the Islamic society and brought up in the orthodox Islamic culture. It is a great slap on the face of the non westerners. In this vein a very referential idea is written in *The Guardian* a regular daily newspaper published in England:

Your article about Brick Lane residents' response to the filming of Monica Ali's novel gave the mistaken impression that there was a united Bangladeshi community in the area threatening protest and keen to stop the production of the film of this supposedly "insulting" novel. Your readers may wish to know that there is no such united and censorious front. There are many differing Asian voices in the area. Few of them are as punitively adamant as the chair of the Brick Traders' Association, who, according to *Asians in Media*, leads a small minority of Sylheti traditionalists and has overblown the size of local protest. (14)

Monica Ali herself seems to be spreading seeds of racism throughout the novel. Her intention here is to show Bangladeshis and Sylhetis as the racists and they have got the concept racial feelings. Furthermore she conveys a message that the Bangladeshis are scared of the English and want to keep them away from the English. No where through *Brick Lane* Ali presents the English falsely and negatively. Whatever mistakes are often created, the Bangladeshis and Sylhetis are made

responsible for. Chanu in the text seems to have been a strong racist since he is shown in the same way. Thus his wife the mouthpiece of Ali Nazneen says:

My husband says they are racist, particularly Mr Dalloway. He thinks he will get the promotion, but it will take him longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem.' Chanu had begun, she had noticed, to talk less of promotion and more of racism. He had warned her about making friends with 'them', as though that were a possibility. All the time they are polite. They smile. They say 'please' this and thank you that. Make no mistake about it, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in back. (72)

On the surface Chanu seems very aware of the racial matters. But Ali has deliberately made Chanu speak in this way. Ali misrepresents the Bangladeshis as they are not racist and do not have such temperament. Rather they are always humble and meek in dealing with the English so that they can easily settle over there. Chanu is not an individual here. He indeed stands for the educated Bangladeshis. In order to insult the Islamic Bangladeshis Ali has made Chanu speak like this. In order to defame the Islam religion Ali brings about some references from Islamic communities and shows the worst aspect of them. She as an intellectual does not seem serious with the sentiment of people practicing certain cultural norms. Rather she attacks on such communities exposing even the unusual practices. Had Ali been fair in dealing with her fictitious power and ability she would not have touched only the dark side of Islam and its followers. Chanu the intended drunkard is forecast he may begin enjoying pork as he is dinking alcohol at the moment. Furthermore Nazneen is made to speak that even the Saudis drink and they are hypocrites according to her husband

Chanu. In fact it is a great slap on the face of author's position that must be maintained in very fair manner. Hence the textual evidence can be presented: "My husband does not say his prayers, thought Nazneen, and now he is drinking alcohol. Tomorrow he may be eating pigs. Of course, all the Saudis drink," said Chanu. "Even the royal family. All hypocrites. Myself, I believe that a glass every now and then is not a bad think" (110).

Ali has indeed changed the reality and presented Chanu the representative of the Islamic and Bangladeshi community as a bad practitioner in order to provide the Christians a golden opportunity to crack jokes over Muslims and easterners.

Ali's sharp-witted tale explores the immigrant's dilemma of belonging. Nazneen the mouthpiece of Ali moves who is in the mid- nineteen-eighties after an arranged marriage with an older man as scripted in the original text. Seen through Nazneen's eyes, England is at first utterly baffling, but over the seventeen years of the narrative, she gradually finds her way, bringing up two daughters and eventually starting an all-female tailoring business. Meanwhile, the more outwardly assertive characters-her comically pompous husband, her rebellious sister back in Bangladesh, and a young Muslim activist with whom Nazneen has an affair- lose their bearings in their various attempts to embrace or reject their heritage. In Ali's subtle narration, Nazneen's mixture of traditionalism and adaptability, of acceptance and restlessness, emerges as a quiet strength. Hereby Ali through the emphasis on the marital life of Nazneen's sister Hasina tries to again attack on the Islamic culture especially the marriage system. Hasina's revolutionary nature and act is highlighted to say the fact that marriage partners are no more independent to choose their spouse. Rather their parents take this responsibility and choose marriage partners for their children. In case any girl or boy chooses themselves, it is taken as a revolutionary step in the Islamic

community. Ali's way of presenting this is somewhat biased and insincere since she does not forward the positive aspect of this system. No doubt every thing has got both aspects. In the same way marriage system in the Islamic culture is not an exception.

While talking the issue of the Sylheti community it would be noteworthy to bring out the nature of reaction by the Sylhetis on the publication of *Brick Lane*. Although the Sylheti community was offended at first when the book first came out, somehow it settled down later on. But the controversy has been re-ignited again when a decision was taken to turn the controversial book into a movie. Protests were all around Brick Lane to stop the filming and the Sylheti leaders were quick to express their anger over the depiction of their community in the book. It could more clearly be proven through a report from BBC:

People living and working in an area of East London are unhappy at plans to film the adaptation of Monica Ali's book, *Brick Lane*, in the area. They claim the book "insulting" towards the predominately Bangladeshi community of Brick Lane" (8).

Hence it gets pretty clear that the author of the book *Brick Lane* was preoccupied with the concept that the Bangladeshi community is indeed a conservative and its people are too much superstitious and orthodox while writing the book. Her stand point is not impartial in any way of the deal. In the support of this fact Shoreditch states:

The book is a good work of literature, but is insulting to the community ... People are disgusted about the film, and while the authorities have permission for it to be filmed here, it does not mean they have permission from the community ... We will do what the community wants us to do. We are not going to leave it as it is ... They have no right to do it in Brick Lane.(11)

It is remarkable to bring about the reference of Nazneen as she is shown a strong follower of Islamic life style that she has learnt through her bringing up at mother's home. She believes in the supernatural power. God does not come in his real shape. Rather he sends angels to test human beings. Nazneen's mother was like a teacher of the fatalistic life who used to tell numerous stories about the supernatural elements. She remembers how Amma defined the earthly life:

Nazneen turned and looked at her and Amma smiled, showing her curved yellow teeth. God tests us', she said. Don't you know this life is a test? Some He tests with riches and good fortune. Many men have failed such a test. And they will be judged. Others he tests with illness or poverty, or with jinn who come in the shape of men-or of husbands. She took hold of the hem of Nazneen's nightdress and being to tug at it. Come down here to me and I will tell you how to pass the test.(322)

Here Ali intentionally modifies the reality and presents the cultural belief of Muslims in an ugly manner. It is the duty of every mother to pass some commendable suggestions to their children. Nazneen's mother has done the same. To have a belief in the God is no more totally harmful and mischievous. Rather it is a way of comforting and saving oneself from the peril. Fate is taken for granted not only in Islam but also in other religions such Hinduism and Christianity. But Ali has over emphasized on destiny as a determining factor to the material life. It is a sort of Ali's prejudice against Islam and Bangladeshi community.

Similarly there are other defaming factors to Islam and the Bangladeshi community provoked in *Brick Lane*. The Islamic culture on the fatalistic life enforces Nazneen to walk in the path drawn by imam in the *hadith* in spite of the fact that she is in the accultured society where everything seems to be possible through human

incessant efforts. Nazneen is herself an immigrant from Bangladesh. The way people behave in the English culture is quite different from the indigenous Bangladeshis in their homeland. Nazneen is not an exception that she as an immigrant faces a number of obstacles and hindrances to adjust her in the new world due to being non white and not having capacity to speak English sufficiently. Rather there have been a huge number of immigrants who undergo many ups and downs in England in course of their stay and professions. Brick Lane is perhaps the most popular place of Britain inhabited by the Bangladeshi immigrants. Their lifestyles are diverse. It is the profession that determines the type of life one is living. Because of being uneducated immigrants cannot have occupied the prestigious jobs. But the problem arises since they are said to be close-minded and compared with the monkeys. It is inhuman to present immigrants as animals. In fact this point invites a number of reactions from the Sylheti community. There is no problem that they are deprived of prestigious jobs. To some extent it would be real that they are looked down upon as no more than animals. However, Ali should not have evoked anger in the people of that community by hurting their sentiment. The textual evidence would be appropriate enough to clarify the fact:

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. 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?' (28)

The above remark as stated by Chanu clarifies that the immigrants are not only oppressed and hated by the white people but by the non whites as well. No doubt life

is just a journey which must be completed at any cost. As the social being one has to perform her/ his role according to her/his capacity and skill. If someone hates another human fellow on the basis of her/his job, the very person can not be good at dealing with. Chanu expresses his disgusting attitude towards the working immigrants and tries to prove him superior to other immigrants before Nazneen. Thus he is made misfit who seems neither to have mixed up with the whites nor to the Bangladeshi immigrants. He only dreams of being promoted. In fact it is a great irony made By Ali on the nonwestern intellectuals. In this Chanu is a type of them who dreams of getting promoted in the English land: “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 beginning to go well for me now. If I just get the promotion confirmed then many things are possible. (32)

In fact the diaspora life of immigrants is full of hopes in the initial phase of their transplantation. They see possibilities a lot. Chanu, a Bangladeshi immigrant thinks of getting promoted so soon that many things can get possible. Although his wife, Nazneen has been a village girl, she is slowly settling in the new commercial world where reason rules over emotion. But before Chanu’s arrival in England, he had uncountable numbers of ambitions and dreams for he has got certificates. As he gets to the intended place, England, he finds things entirely different from his preconception. No doubt Chanu is educated, university scholar and highly optimistic. At the same time he is an immigrant from east as well which stops him from being successful. For the white people from the whites whether they are university graduates or peasants. Hence Ali has drawn a deliberate picture of a Bangladeshi intellectual which is excessive and intolerable. Chanu thought in this way:

When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got

the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a 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 his story,.... These people here didn't know the difference between me... and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the lice on their heads.(34)

As a matter of fact the family members and other related people do expect money and other sorts of cooperation from those who as immigrants working in the developed countries like England. How complicated and challenging life immigrants are living in the foreign land can hardly be thought by the relatives since they have never undergone such diaspora situations. It is the bitter truth. However, Ali's intention is not here to sympathize with the miserable condition of the immigrants. Rather she intends to provide opportunities to the European readers so that they can derive pleasure out of cracking jokes over immigrants' failure and false dream. When Ali's mouthpiece Nazneen is in her melting stage for the new world, she is instructed how the Bangladeshis live in Tower Hamlets. This can be seen through Chanu's perspective:

Three point five people to one room. That is a council statistic,' Chanu told Nazneen. All crammed together. They can't 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 Bangladeshis to one room. (49)

The misrepresentation of immigrants is obviously seen in this detail. Ali without being a little bit soft to the Bangladeshis she releases her inner feelings. This kind of description is an additional source of pleasure to the European readers who are always

looking for similar type of fictitious life. In fact Ali has just attempted to fulfill the demand of the European readers in order to prosper her writing career which is not good and considerable on the human ground.

Ali's *Brick Lane* hides the reality and exposes that thing meets her necessity. By modifying realities she seems to have tried to balance drawbacks of the Bangladeshi Muslims and predicaments they have been facing since their arrival in England. However, she fails in doing so.

When children are to be brought up in a new culture, it is certainly somewhat difficult to the parents since they are in dilemma which culture they had better inculcate in the children. Every one is accustomed to their own way of life. So naturally they prefer their children to follow the same way. In diaspora situation thus life becomes difficult due to the identity crisis. Gradually immigrants go on losing their real identity and get compelled to adapting in the new one which always threatens to their original norms and values. This really happens in the life of Bangladeshi immigrants who are represented by Chanu:

I'm talking about the clash between Western values and our own. I'm talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve ones identity and heritage. I'm talking about children who don't know what their identity is. I'm talking about the feelings of alienation engendered by a society where racism is prevalent. I'm talking about the terrific struggle to preserve one's sanity while striving to achieve the best for one's family. I'm talking. (113)

Hence the clash prevalent in the society is due to the multicultural situation. Chanu the immigrant from the eastern values stays in the western society wherever every thing stands opposite to his culture. In fact immigrants feel alienated in other's country especially where racism is too much dominant. The new generation suffers

the identity crisis. They are in-between situation whether to follow parents' culture or the new one they are grown in. No doubt there are a number of terrific struggles that frequently tortures immigrants. England as a European country is highly advanced economically and technically. People from the developing countries are very much fond of going over there prospering their future by engaging in type of job that is available at hand. In fact laborers should not have any national boundaries. Rather they should be free in selling their labor living with prestige and dignity across the world which in reality does not happen.

To arouse laughter in readers Ali often brings about cultural practices from the Islamic culture in negative manner. Her sole intention has been to show the readers that Islamic and Bangladeshi community is the worst one, for male members of that community exploit women and curtail their fundamental rights in the name of religion and cultural norms and values. Chanu a leading character in *Brick Lane* expresses the deliberate wants of the author in this way: "Some of these uneducated ones, they say that if the wife is working it is only because the husband can not feed them. Lucky for you I am an educated man" (184). Ali hence tries to attack on two things: at the educated from the non western countries and the Islamic and the Bangladeshi culture. Thus she enjoys through this kind of presentation.

A very contextual issue is raised in *The Guardian* again: "The campaign has echoed complaints made when the paper was published in 2003, that it promulgates stereotypes of Sylhetis, who form 95% of Britain's Bangladeshi community" (10). Claiming that Ali has been influenced by her father, non-Sylheti from Dhaka, campaigners cite extracts from the book in which characters mock Sylhetis as "dirty little monkeys" who are Uneducated. Illiterate. Close-minded. But the tensions appear to have been stroked by rumors circulating the area's restaurants and market shops,

rather than direct extracts from the book. Campaigners claim, for example, that the film production company has offered young men in the community lucrative “bribes” to work as extras.

At a meeting on Monday night, community leaders expressed horror at a scene rumored to show a leech falling from the hair of a Bangladeshi woman into a curry pot in a Brick Lane restaurant.

Furthermore the depiction of the Sylheti community might have been too rude for a guest audience but to the Bangladeshis living there that closely resembles the state of Sylhetis living in Britain- like it or not! Monica Ali, a non-Sylheti Bangladeshi herself, ‘might have’ played typical Western cards in portraying an Eastern society but that doesn’t change the real picture. Of course there are exceptions but reality is not too comforting.

In the same way Germaine Greer defended the residents of Brick Lane saying: “Ali did not concern her with the possibility that her plot might seem outlandish to the people of Brick Lane,” she wrote in a signed article”(18). As British people know little about the Bangladeshi people in their midst, their first appearance as characters in an English novel had the force of defending caricature.

Salman Rushdie totally agrees with the above comment by Germaine Greer. As the British people do not have much idea about Bangladeshi community, they might get a false idea about Bangladeshis in general. In that case the Sylheti Bangladeshis have a valid point. But he guesses the Sylheti leaders are not fighting for Bangladesh, they are fighting for British Sylhetis only! If they cared about Bangladesh and Islam, they would have and should have done many things over the last fifty years or so. Hence Rushdie describes Greer’s defense of the Brick Lane activists as “philistine, sanctimonious and disgraceful, but it is not unexpected.

Thus Abdus Salique threatened to burn Ali's book at a rally on Sunday which is expected to be attended by hundreds of protesters. He said the rally would be peaceful, adding that he was trying to deter fringe elements- "who could become violent"- from attending. But he states: If she has the right to freedom of speech, we have the right to burn books. We will do it to show our anger. We don't like Monica Ali. We are protecting our community's dignity and respect. This why we need to get united to go against such writings"(17).

It has become clear over here that one should respect the right of others as well while practicing her/his own right. When there is no mutual respect of each other's right, there is the possibility of anarchy and disorder. Ali as an author has misused her individual right which indeed invites a number of objections and reactions from the Sylheti community. Here Abdus is just in making the above remark. He further asserts:

It is not just filming [in Brick Lane] which is the problem. We don't want a film which degrades our community. Monchab Ali, chairman of the Greater Sylhet council, who is helping to mobilize support for Sunday's rally, said he planned to bring a coach load of up to 100 protesters from Chester. "We are also in touch with people, who are coming from Cardiff, Manchester and Brimingham," he said. Gerge Galloway, MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, said: "It is dangerous to spread alarmist rumors about the protest. People have a right to peacefully express how they feel about how they might be portrayed."(7)

Everywhere Ali's attempt seems to make Islam and Bangladeshi community go down. To do so, she has brought about a term jihad which refers to the religious war oriented towards complete destruction. Through the character, Karim she conveys the

message that Islam's one of the prominent features is jihad which is declared in the name of Allah to fight against *Kaphirs*. Though all Muslims do not practice jihad, Ali to defame them and insult the Bangladeshi community has exaggeratedly presented the concept of jihad in this way:

In a place called Chechnya, there was at this time jihad. He read from his magazine. 'Allah willing- the Mujahideen will see you in the heart of your Mother Russia- not just Chechnya. Allah willing- we will inherit your land'. He held up the flimsy pages, offering her proof. 'It's a world-wide struggle, man. Everywhere they are trying to do us down. We have to fight back.'(243)

On the whole Ali as a writer from the non-Sylheti community has deliberately made efforts to provide chances to the readers to mock at the Sylheti community and Islam. Her partial stand invites bad reactions from the community and others as well. Without having the real knowledge about the Sylhetis she made effort to represent them through *Brick Lane* which ultimately misrepresents the people of the community.

IV. Conclusion

Ali's *Brick Lane* gives a transparent reflection of the Sylheti community and Islam and cultural practices of the people who belong to them. The cultural practices carried out in the Sylheti community are shown in such manner that they are groundless and the matter of avoidance. The so-called groundless and impractical practices are presented through the acts of characters. Chanu the central male character is created in order to attack on the Sylhetis and their cultural practices. Chanu an educated person from Bangladesh is staying in England to prosper his life and to keep up with the worldly educated living standard. His degrees are from the University of Dhaka which has also been made the matter of inferiority by the author in *Brick Lane*. Ali has inscribed that the degree from the third grade university which is intolerable on the intellectual ground as well. Whatever concept the common educated do not have, has even been promoted to please the white readers. Ali's sole intention is indeed to have ridiculed the immigrants who are making efforts in the foreign land to develop their lives. Furthermore she has made Chanu speak that the Sylhetis are similar to the animals since their living process is too disgusting and jobs are not well paid. Moreover they are not fit to the English culture. In the same way she has attacked on the Islam religion followed by the Sylhetis. Ali provokes the issue that women in Islam do not long for the free and open lifestyle. They enjoy communicating in *hijab* and *burkhas*. This issue is partially dealt with in the book as it orients towards the one aspect of the Islamic life. As a matter of fact every cultural practice carries up both aspects good and bad. Similarly the Islamic way of life is not free from her partial criticism. The character Nazneen is shown to have been a victim of the Bangladeshi culture and Islam that as she says imposes unwanted instructions on its followers to adopt and bring out in practice in the real life. Nazneen is shy and

mute. Her condition refers the fact that women from the Bangladeshi community keep mute and feel shy. As a typical Islamic woman she undergoes some prescribed ordinances. While she is pregnant she does *navaz* from her chair. But she feels lazy to do so during this critical time. Then she starts exercising her mind going beyond the present state. She critically questions to herself stating had the imams been pregnant, they would not have made *navaz* compulsory and obligatory. However, she is afraid of the fact that she has committed some sort of mistake that she has thought of the pregnant imams. This biased presentation of Nazneen shows the author's narrow-mindedness and unfair stand. The holy book of Islam that is to say Koran has nowhere created any compulsion and obligation to pregnant women for *navaz*. This is the personal view of the writer that women in Islam do not go under such hard formalities during critical conditions.

Furthermore AH has nicely presented the hypocritical nature of the Islamic people who go on fasting for a month. She opines that the harsh system of Islam compels people over ten to go fasting. Thus she insults the Bangladeshi community and the Islamic way of life. She is indeed polluting the Sylhetis with frequent attacks on the cultural practices of Islam and the Sylhetis. Thus Ali seems to be very much tricky in dealing with intended objectives while writing book and gets successful in drawing the false picture of the Bangladeshi and followers of Islam. However, she seems to have invited harsh criticisms from leaders of the Sylheti community. In this way she is getting notorious in the sense that she has badly misrepresented the Bangladeshi immigrants.

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