

The Raising of Nazneen's Independent Recognition in Bricklane

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Abstract:

The power structure is normally an overall system that tends to influence the relationship between an individual as well as every other person in selected group of individuals. Normally the description of a power structure is responsible for capture ways in which authority as well as power is distributed amongst people in groups such as governments, institutions, organizations, nations and also societies. The power structures tend to be in all areas of life, for example in the family, world of politics and work as well as education and welfare.

Diaspora refers to the sense of displacement, alienation and feeling of nostalgia. This paper is an endeavour to go beyond debates concerning Monicka Ali's *Brick Lane* as a 'Novel of Diaspora' and to understand how these diaspora people constitute their identity in other land through the Independent Recognition of the characters in the novel. The protagonist of this novel is Nazneen. London is the place where Nazneen feels lonely and passive in the beginning of the novel, but also the place where she feels confident and independent in the end. Thus, for Nazneen, *Brick Lane* stands for possibilities which she could not have obtained in Bangladesh. In the end, when she has the choice to leave, she therefore decides to stay on. It tells the story how the woman is having her own destiny in her own hands. Monicka Ali was born in Bangladesh and grew up and settled in Britain. *Bricklane* is her successful first novel. It was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. This novel is about a Bangladeshi woman Nazneen's growth in England.

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Constitution of identity for any group in an peculiar space is always a problematic undertaking if the space cannot accommodate, even partly, their cultural and behavioral approaches. Now, what if the immigrant group is from an Asian space that has been suffering racial separation, and also, what if they are follower of a religion that has threatening face in western world? So is the very case of Bangladeshi British community who, although have began their migration from sylhet and settlement in east areas of London city two centuries before for better employment and livelihood and have set up their own living structure there by being dissociated of their homeland culture, themselves have been confused on identifying their position on whether to accept to their ancestral Islamic cultural identity or should display a collaborative position to the British people by involving with many non-Islamic practices and cultures of the later.

This dilemma existed apparently from long before is described, if not plainly, in the 2003 published Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane*. Actually Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* came out in the summer of 2003 sparking heated debates among readers and critics around the issue of authenticity in its representation of the Bangladeshi community of London's East End. Some critics rapidly praised it "for pulling back the curtains of the residences of tower Hamlets, while others indignantly berated it for what they considered the novel's gross misrepresentation of Bengali's culture in London.

Monica Ali was born in Dhaka, East Pakistan to an English mother and Bengali father. She left with her mother and brother during the civil war of 1971 when she was just three years old, and moved to England to live with grandparents. Her father later joined them after escaping from East Pakistan over the border to India and gaining permission to join his family in England. After studying at Oxford she moved to London, where she now lives with her family. She decided to start writing *Brick Lane* after her two children were born. She showed the first two chapters to a friend who was working in the editorial department at Transworld - and by the following week, she had an offer from them to publish the book. Monica Ali's debut novel *Brick Lane* was one of the major success stories of 2003/04, and, as a result, she was named as one of *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists for 2003. This debut novel was also shortlisted for the 2003 Man Booker prize, and was adapted for a film of the same name. Her other works were *Alentejo Blue*(2006), *In the Kitchen*(2009), *Untold Story*(2011).

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In this novel "*Brick Lane*" the author deals with the diasporic power structure successfully. The power structure is normally an overall system that tends to influence the relationship between an individual as well as every other person in selected group of individuals. Normally the description of a power structure is responsible for capture ways in which authority as well as power is distributed amongst people in groups such as governments, institutions, organizations, nations and also societies. The power structures tend to be in all areas of life, for example in the family, world of politics and work as well as education and welfare.

In *Brick Lane* Monica Ali narrates the story of Nazneen a village girl from Bangladesh who has much more resemblance with Monica Ali in actual life, marries Chanu, who is living in London. Nazneen arrived in the world in an exceptional way. When the infant Nazneen was delivered, she at first made no sound and appeared to be stillborn. Finally, she began to cry, but for days refused to eat. Rather than take her to a hospital, the mother decided to leave her to her fate. Nazneen grew to be an obedient girl, unlike her sister, Hasina, who ran away from home with a "love match," defying her parents' wishes for an arranged marriage.

Nazneen accepts her father's marriage match. Nazneen, orphaned after her mother's suicide and sent to England at age 17 in an arranged marriage with older expatriate Chanu and Chanu takes her from Bangladesh to a Bangladeshi community in London. Chanu imagines himself as a embittered intellectual and continually illustrates upon the "tragedy of immigration" to his young wife while letters from downtrodden Hasina provide a contrast to his idealized memories of Bangladesh. Nazneen, for her part, leads a relatively circumscribed life as a housewife and mother, and she had her experience of London in the 1980s and '90s. Her firstborn dies in infancy, but her daughters Shahana and Bibi thrive. A power shift occurs when Shahana rebels against her father, an ineffectual Nazneen the peacemaker holds the family together.

When Chanu falls into the possessions of the moneylender Mrs. Islam, Nazneen becomes a breadwinner, doing piecework at home and thus meeting the middleman Karim, who is also an activist fighting racism. They become lovers and again Nazneen sees herself as surrender to fate. But when Chanu, increasingly annoyed for home going syndrome, he announces their imminent return to Bangladesh, Nazneen asserts herself. On one day of wrenching suspense, she deals forcefully with Mrs. Islam, Karim, and Chanu, and emerges as a strong, decisive, modern woman.

The novel deals with themes like migration, multiculturalism, religion, cultural aspects, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence. Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is a novel that has the elements of a true diasporic character, a group of people who go through the complex situation of adopting in multicultural society. The main features of diasporic narrative in *Brick Lane* are dislocation, nostalgia, discrimination, survival, cultural change and gender inequality.

Dislocation means to force a person suddenly out of his correct place. In *Brick Lane*, we can find that the women character's displacements are due to her marriage. Therefore, he moves from homeland to settled land cannot be considered as a voluntary one. Although the men characters in the novel come to the foreign land for education and career purposes. Dislocation causes severe problems to the diasporic people. When individuals or family move from their home country to a new land, the foreign atmosphere makes them sick. Situated on the reasons for dislocation, the suffering faced by the diasporic people too changes. In the case of forced displacement, the suffering will be severe when compared with those who move voluntarily. Chanu lives in London for more than twenty years. He comes there to find a job and settle there. Hath no more is mentioned about the reason for his displacement. Nazneen, the protagonist of the novel, as a result of her marriage is forced to live in London.

Yet another problem that rises among the dislocated and displaced people is the sense of nostalgia. Nostalgia means a feeling of pleasure and sometimes a slight sadness at the same time as you think about the things that happened in the past. In *Brick Lane*, we can find Nazneen, who leaves her home country after her marriage in order to settle in a new land with her unknown husband who is twice her age. When her husband goes for a job, she feels lonely and except words like 'sorry' and 'thank you' she doesn't know anything else to speak in English. This complication of communication heads her into forced imprisonment and she expresses her solitariness thus, in all her eighteen years. She could hardly remember a moment that she had spent alone."Until she married. And came to London to sit day after day in this large box with the furniture to dust, and the muffled sound of private lives sealed away above, below and around her"(17.)

Nazneen feels utterly lonely during her initial stage of settlement and she comes out of it due to her intimacy with her own community people. In her case, blending and interacting with the whites is difficult due to her poor English knowledge. She starts to live in an imagined space in order to escape from her loneliness and the feeling of alienation. She tries to follow her culture and tradition in order to feel at home.

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu mentions, racial discrimination as the reason for not getting promotion. Nazneen narrates her opinion to her friend Razia, "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 sin pink and white then there would be no problem"(20). If discrimination is done racially then it is also carried out on the basis of religion. The settled society does not encourage other religious practices of the diasporic community. In *Brick Lane* the police viewed the mosque with suspicion and as revealed in the narrative, Police had been to the mosque and questioned the Imam for two hours. No one had any idea why, although many predicted trouble and everyone doubted that a church had ever been treated with such flagrant disrespect. Due to the problem of discrimination, identity crisis occurs especially in the life of the second generation. Some of

them prefer to retain their homeland identity, some the settled land's and others wish to intergrate. Karim, Shefali, Shahana and Bibi are the second generation characters, in which Karim prefers to retain his homeland identity while others wish to mingle with western culture.

Survival in the settled society for the diasporic community is yet another major problem. When the plants plucked from a soil and planted in a new one have survival problem similarly the diasporic community too faces problem of survival. During the period of settlement in the new country, almost everyone in the diasporic community would undergo psychological trauma. It includes the feeling of loss, sense of alienation from the society, loneliness and longing are a part of diasporic literature. There are various instances in the novel to reveal the economic problems of the Bangladeshis. When Razia's husband dies due to an accident in his work place, the family suffers due to economic needs but when Razia tries to work outside and support her family, the Bangladeshi community criticizes her. Later, when Chanu could not manage the house with his salary, Nazneen takes up tailoring to support the family and after Chanu's departure to Bangladesh Nazneen and their daughters are not ready to leave London. Nazneen considers London as a suitable place for her daughter's future than Bangladesh, due to political condition in the home county they decide to stay in the settled country.

Due to cultural changes , Chanu thinks that London is not a suitable place for his daughters to grow up. So he decides to leave the country for Bangladesh. In *Brick Lane*, most of the younger generations of the Bangladeshi's are presented as drug addicts. This terminates in severe cultural clash, because at home parents follow a different culture and tradition and outside a different one. It often affects them psychologically. The practice of cultural difference between parents and children of the diasporic community cannot be stopped by either of them because they both are born and brought up in different cultures and in societies.

The novel portrays the Gender Inequality how the women are dominated by the patriarchal attitudes from their birth till death and how women themselves accept it as norms of the society. Almost all the women characters that live in London except Mrs. Islam and Mrs. Azad, the doctor's wife face double discrimination in the new land by their husbands and elders by using Bangladeshi culture and looked in a mean way by the Londoners. Nazneen's sister Hasina's character portrays how free willed women are punished by the Bangladeshi society. Her wish and decision to select a life partner changes her to a life of prostitution and till the end of the novel her life undergoes negative changes due to the patriarchal nature of the Bangladeshi community.

Through the reading of this novel one can understand that the diasporic community gets both positive and negative images from the settled society. In the initial stages of their settlement almost everything seems to be problematic and diasporic individuals only get a negative view of the society. But later they derive enough experience to face the sufferings in a bold way and tend to look at the better economic oppurtunities for their children. From this, it is understandable that the diasporic community not only faces problems in the settled society but also enjoys the economical oppurtunity. So diasporic experiences are like a coin has two sides. In this novel *Brick Lane* Monica Ali satirise an older generation's profligate consumption, false ethics, superstitious, blind prejudices and obsession with honor and status. And the main six features of diasporic narrative are more applicable in Monica Ali's brick lane and so it is easy to understand it as a novel of diaspora.

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