



The Complexities of Transnational Identity and Nazneen's Concept of Agency in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*

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Abstract

While Monica Ali's remarkable novel *Brick Lane* narrates the experience of a Bangladeshi community living in the Towering Hamlets of London, it also focuses on the protagonist, Nazneen's struggle both as a woman and as an individual in a foreign country. Be it a process of assimilation or getting entrapped into cultural hybridization, while continuously encountering identity crisis, dislocation, and rotating in an 'un-homed' space, Nazneen was necessarily dealing with the complexities of transnational identity. Deriving from Bhaba's concept of cultural hybridization and the 'unhome,' this paper attempts to analyze the challenges Nazneen faced as an immigrant woman in London. Being married to a man with a patriarchal mindset, and living in a society bound with extreme cultural and religious values, this paper also explores Nazneen's struggle to find an agency in her process of emancipation. Superseding the binary construct of the West and Islamic feminist ideas, and arguing that it was Nazneen's newly gained knowledge that gave her a true agency, this paper also offers an alternative understanding of Nazneen's emancipation process by discussing theorists like Talal Asad, Asma Barlas and Saba Mahmood.

Keywords: Agency, Feminism, Identity, Transnational, Bhaba.