

BRICK LANE: MIRRORING NAZNEEN'S METAMORPHOSIS

Dr. Hossain Al Mamun

Associate Professor, Department of English,
Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh

Abstract

Brick Lane (2003) unfolds a story of an immigrant woman—Nazneen, and her journey to Britain from Bangladesh and her all out struggle for getting freedom. Heraclitus comments in the beginning of the novel—“A man’s character is his fate”, but the story presents man’s supremacy over his fate. Nazneen falls in bad condition so many times, but her inner strength fights against her fate which gradually develops and this study compares that change with butterfly’s metamorphosis. Like a moth of a butterfly Nazneen comes out from an exoskeleton of social barriers and gets true color of her wings. This study intends to present what are the social barriers in these two countries, how and by whom Nazneen was influenced to fight against those obstacles, which way she reflects as a new one and what is the outcome of that reflection.

Keywords: Brick Lane, Nazneen`s metamorphosis

Monika Ali’s *Brick Lane* is considered to be “mirroring the lives of Bangladeshi community in Britain” (Tongur 561) with a focus on Nazneen “as central character,... the novel provides the life styles, work patterns, family structure, and cultural, social, economic and religious dynamics of the Bangladeshi immigrants in the Tower Hamlets of Brick Lane in London from 1987 to 2003.” (561) Bedjaoui emphasizes—“Monika Ali explores the themes of hybridity and metamorphosis in *Brick Lane*.” (Trying to Belong) She argues:

Brick Lane is an example of the answer to the perennial question of how the individual can both remain constant and change. As a woman, Nazneen’s metamorphosis supposes possibilities of new cultural affiliations and therefore new opportunities, which takes place in cross-breeding of cultures in terms of *hybridity* involving the rejection of past and assimilation of new values. In *Brick Lane*, Ali shapes a female character who transgresses boundaries fixed on her by her gender, culture, caste and economic status. Nazneen is determined by strategies of resistance, escaping from traditional space, using sexuality in order to move beyond restrictions imposed on her and thus renegotiating the space in which she actually resides. The gendered space underlines the idea of home which remains problematic. The conflation of home, as both security and prison, evokes therefore ones limited identity. (Trying to Belong)

The main focus in *Brick Lane* is on Nazneen and her personal change as a result of her marriage, her move to Britain, her relationship with her husband and her lover, her discontent and her emancipation. (Tongur 561) Hasan considers Nazneen’s status as “her supposed freedom.” (Book Review) Because Nazneen “often accepts new culture wholly.” (Whipple 8) Considering these reviews, this study intends to focus on mirroring Nazneen’s metamorphosis in *Brick Lane*.

In *Brick Lane*, Monika Ali often uses contrasting images of village life from her home country in confrontation with London streets. The contrasts influence the destiny of the

novel's characters. Ali also focuses on the life and career prospects of immigrants from Bangladesh. The novel *Brick Lane* — named after Brick Lane, a street at the heart of London's Bangladeshi community. It follows the life of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who moves to Tower Hamlets in London at the age of 18 to marry an older man, Chanu, described as "one of the novel's foremost miracles: twice her age, with a face like a frog, a tendency to quote Hume and the boundless doomed optimism of the self-improvement junkie, he is both exasperating and, to the reader at least, enormously loveable." (Harriet 1) Geraldine Bedell commented about Chanu, " [Her husband] is pompous and kindly, full of plans, none of which ever come to fruition, and then of resentment at Ignorant Types who don't promote him or understand his quotations from Shakespeare or his Open University race, ethnicity and class module." (Bedell 1)

Nazneen was a moth surrounded by a shell of fate, religious hypocrisy, racial discriminations and male dominant society. Here, the study presents the metamorphosis of Nazneen from a naive housewife to a new woman.

Metamorphosis is a biological process by which an animal physically develops after birth or hatching through cell growth and differentiation. This is also found in Butterfly's life. A butterfly is a moth in its first stage and it collapse in a shell called chrysalis. Through a gradual evolution, it breaks the shell and turns into a butterfly. In this point of view, Nazneen goes through this kind of transformation in her life which turns her into a butterfly. In the beginning of the novel, we find her as a simple village girl, as a Muslim and as a postcolonial protagonist in a male dominant society. She has nothing to say about her life. She left her life to a hand of fate: "What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything has to be borne. This principle ruled her life. It is mantra, fettle and challenge." (Ali 12)

Brick Lane is on one level the story of the everyday life of a seemingly unremarkable immigrant woman, a housewife trying to keep her family afloat in a London housing project. But, in a larger sense, *Brick Lane* is a story about destiny and freedom, acceptance and resistance, and the hidden depths of strength that can be found in the most unlikely of places. Nazneen's regular struggles—with her self-deluding husband, her two modern daughters, and her own conflicted feelings about her desires—are woven into a deeply moving symphony of immigrant life.

When Nazneen was born in Bangladesh, she was barely living. The decision was made to 'eave her to Fate' ["How You Were Left To Your Fate" (Ali 10)] and that story defines her in her parents' eyes. They arrange her marriage to an older man living in London, a choice that Nazneen accepts as inevitable.

The society of Bangladesh and Britain is a male dominated society. Most of the cases, women do not have chance to choose something. Male do not care about female's opinion. Hamid, Nazneen's father ground his teeth and an axe besides when Hasina eloped with the nephew of saw mill owner. For sixteen hot days and cool nights he sat between the two lemon trees that marked the entrance of the compound and cursing his daughter. Aleya who makes money for her sons to get proper education, despite her angry husband: "Last month she best worker in factory and get bonus. They give a sari and for this sari she takes beating. The husband says he will beat twice each day until she tell name of the man." (Ali 128) We also find in Hasina's writing: "Day and night they playing religious message with loudspeaker. They say it sinful for men and women working together. But they the ones sinning take gods name give insult to us and tell lie...men and women keep separate here." (Ali 124)

There are three basic types of pragmatic marriages in the religiously bound Asian communities. The first is a forced marriage, where the parents choose their son or daughter's future spouse without any chance to doubt their decision. If the son or daughter does so, he or

she may be punished or even killed. Then there is a traditional arranged marriage, when the parents choose the spouse but there is a possibility for their son or daughter to refuse the choice. However, considerable pressure is put on the children to understand the parental good will and accept it. The third type is a modern arranged marriage. The parents choose several potential candidates, all highly perspective, and the couple is allowed to have a date or more dates to know each other better. (Arranged marriage)

Mansoor points out—marriage is generally termed as a “social institution” (Berger and Kellner 19) protecting an individual against “anomie”(19) it is a micro-social institution correlated with the macrocosmic social set up, hence, marriage provides insight into the kind of an order that enables an individual to make sense of life and all its complexities. (contrasting conventions) Traditionally, marriage is taken as an “economic and social transaction” (Coontz 6) and hence functions as a social apparatus in keeping with collective interests. While tracing the history of marriages across cultures, Jennifer Coontz writes:”... marriage was not fundamentally about love. It was too vital an economic and political institution to be entered into solely on the basis of something as irrational as love.” (7)

According to Mansoor, Nazneen and Chanu’s marriage was not about love either. It was an arranged marriage, a financially propitious opportunity for a poor village girl whose sister had disgraced the family name(contrasting conventions): “The man she would marry was old. At least forty years old. He had a face like a frog. They would marry and he would take her back to England with him.” (Ali 17)

Chanu and Nazneen’s marriage is fully traditional, arranged by Chanu himself and her (Nazneen) father. Nazneen accepts her father’s choice with expected obedience: ““Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma.”” (Ali 12) Nazneen does not ask question about her future husband nor wants to see his photograph. But she coincidentally spots it and she realizes that “the man she would marry was old. At least forty years old. He had a face like a frog. They would marry and he would take her back to England with him.” (Ali 12) This important fact is followed by images of loneliness and helplessness. Nazneen observes a hawk carrying its prey until it disappears. Another picture shows a lonely empty hut in the middle of the paddy, which was relocated there by a tornado. Both the visions give indirect evidence of Nazneen’s feelings. She can feel the power of tradition, which rules her life like the hawk its prey. But disobedience or resistance to her fate does not even touch her mind. The marriage is transformed into the symbol of a tornado taking her away and changing her life completely. Nazneen has no idea of her life in the future, she only see the uncertainty of her destiny as the loneliness of the hut. At this moment she feels the difference between men and women: “men, doing whatever they could in this world.” (Ali 12) Marriage is a traditional way of securing the daughter’s future. Women were raised in reliance and dependence upon fathers and husbands. Nevertheless, with the growing living costs during the last few decades another phenomenon have appeared working women.

In the novel, Chanu claims himself to be westernized but in a telephone conversation overheard by Nazneen shortly after their wedding he describes his young wife in the traditional manner as a commodity he has just purchased at a market, and not as a human being: “...not so ugly ... hips are a bit narrow but wide enough ... to carry children ... a blind uncle is better than no uncle ... she is a good worker ... a girl from the village: totally unspoilt.” (Ali 16-17)

Brick Lane traces the struggle of Nazneen to escape the condition of double invisibility to which the twin edifices of sexism and racism have consigned her. Nazneen begins her life under the sign of an implacable fate. She is born prematurely in a rural village. Her mother's decision to leave her child to destiny, both because of her own poverty and because of the child's gender, becomes an important symbol of women's self-abnegation and acquiescence throughout the rest of the novel. Nazneen accepts her mother's reading of

women's lot, and resigns herself as an adolescent to marriage to a much older suitor, the oafish Chanu, who takes her with him to Britain, where he intends to make his fortune.

Living in a public housing estate in London's impoverished East End, Nazneen suffers the extreme social isolation that tends to characterize women condemned to domestic servitude. Migrant women like Nazneen are the most likely to be trapped in informal labor since they lack the linguistic skills and social networks to enter the formal labour market. Able only to say 'sorry' and 'thank you' in English, Nazneen spends entire days completely by herself, cleaning the flat in which she and Chanu live, her only human contact being the sight of a mysterious tattooed lady who sits all day staring blankly out the window of one of the facing buildings. This transition is particularly jarring given the collective character of rural village life in Bangladesh. Nazneen says that in her whole eighteen years, she can never remember having spent a moment alone until arriving in Britain. She was drowning into isolation. Words in her mind: "You can spread your soul over a paddy field; you can whisper to a mango tree, you can feel the earth beneath your toes and know that this is the place, the place where it begins and ends. But what can you tell to pile of bricks? The bricks will not be moved." (Ali 70)

Nazneen's isolation is exacerbated by her husband Chanu's condescending attitude towards her. Chanu is not a violent brute, but he is a classic mimic man, a figure who would be tragic in his hyperbolic hopes and illusions about Britain but for his own insufferable pomposity. Chanu's pretentious didacticism not only alienates Nazneen; in addition, Chanu insists that she not socialize with other Bangladeshis on the estate since he believes that they are uneducated country locals. (Ali 21) He even judges his own people according to their place of birth: "...most of our people here are Sylhetis...But these people are peasants. Uneducated, Illiterate, Close-minded, without ambition." (Ali 21-22) These statements probably seem offensive to some members of the Sylheti Bangladeshi community. This hermetic sense of cultural superiority segregates Nazneen not only from the majority white English society, but, initially, from other immigrants as well. "While Nazneen may not be a stateless person in a technical sense, the state and traditional migration theory has typically seen women like her simply as dependents, since men were taken to be the primary breadwinners." (Clarence 19-30) "This perception elides the fact that two-thirds of all part-time and flexible workers in developed countries are women." (Anthias 25) The legal marginalization that follows from patriarchal assumptions concerning women's status is convenient, however, inasmuch as it constrains women to engage exclusively in the forms of flexible labor on which neo-liberalism depends. Indeed, as Francesca Scrinzi has remarked, "the subordination of immigrant women within the underground economy has given their labor a kind of laboratory of precariousness, where new evasions of employee rights are experimented with before being rolled out to the rest of society." (Scrinzi 77-79)

Although Chanu considers himself not to be bound by traditions or religion, he loves his native country, and follows the rules. He does not allow his wife to go alone along the streets: "She did not go out. 'Why should you go out?' 'And I will look like a fool.'" (Ali 35) He does the shopping: "Chanu would push the pram and she would walk a step behind ... at the shops, Chanu would buy vegetables." (Ali 73) He is an excellent cook but never helps her in the kitchen and he believes that Nazneen does not need to attend the English course because she will never speak with British people. Later her daughters, Shahana and Bibi, become her English teachers. He loves Nazneen and their children but he is not able to express his feelings in words. When Nazneen wishes to go to work with Razia, Chanu does not agree but buys a sewing machine for her to work at home.

The disparity between the strict religious rules and secular western society occurs in the relationship between Nazneen and Karim. Adultery is a mortal sin in Islamic society but Karim does not consider their love affair to be sinful or inappropriate. Karim tries to solve

this contradiction by reading religious dogmas. After having sex with Nazneen he cites her lines from the Koran found on an Islamic education Internet site: “A man’s share of adultery is destined by Allah... He will never escape such destiny”, (Ali 287) and he even calls her “sister.” (Ali 288) He does not connect the meaning of the words with his deeds.

Nazneen meets several Bangladeshi women, who begin to play less or more important roles in her life. Hasina, her sister is very influential in her self awareness. Though they are two sisters but they are different from their view of life. Nazneen leaves her life to her father’s choice but Hasina made her own decision. Hasina prefers her own choice rather than her fate. Nazneen’s daughters Bibi and Shahana also help her awakening and they help her to learn English. Because of Bibi and Shahana, she has to raise her voice to stay in England. Another is Mrs Azad, doctor’s wife. She is fully educated, does not wear the sari, speaks English fluently and goes to work. Her attitudes are striking and incomprehensible to Nazneen and Chanu, but highly acceptable for western reader. One day Chanu decides to pay doctor Azad an unexpected visit and they are perplexed by Mrs Azad words:

Some women spend ten, twenty years here and they sit in the kitchen grinding spices all day and learn only two words of English ... they go around covered from head to toe, in their little walking prisons, and when someone calls to them in the street they are upset. The society is racist. The society is all wrong. Everything should change for them. They don’t have to change one thing. (Ali 93)

But Nazneen does not consider herself to be bound or limited. She wears the traditional clothes, speaks her native language and does not wish to enter the English communities. Her family and identity remain stable values for her.

Nazneen’s close friend Razia positively influences the process of Nazneen’s self awakening. She quickly realizes the potential of her new home country and decides to live independently, which is partially caused by her husband’s death but mainly by Razia’s strong character. The first step is learning English, then she cuts her hair short and stops wearing sari: “She was wearing a garment she called a tracksuit. She could never, so she said, wear a sari again. She was tired of taking little bird steps.” (Ali 77) Yet there are also negative features in this shift of the traditional roles. Razia does not want to become an English woman, but she gradually adopts male status and loses her femininity. She wears men’s clothes, swears and her gestures are increasingly manlike.

The most powerful woman of the Bangladeshi community is Mrs Islam, a widow with two adult sons. She is rich, wears sari, and keeps traditions. She is always the best informed person that seems to be very helpful to people who need support. Even Chanu approves Mrs Islam as a ‘respectable type’. It is Razia that reveals the secrets of Mrs Islam’s business success. She has become a usurer, who exploits her own people and profits from high loan interests. Her sons play the submissive role of bodyguards and helpers.

After Raqib was born, Mrs. Islam visits Nazneen every week and inspects how she takes care of her newborn son: “Nazneen had begun to dread these visits. Raqib was five months old, and still Mrs. Islam had not expended all her advice.” (Ali 68) The invisible tension between Nazneen and Mrs. Islam becomes more evident when Mrs. Islam forces Nazneen to lend her Raqib for a few hours to entertain her niece: “‘Give him a feed now, and we’ll go.’ ... Her words were as sharp as an eyeful of sand. ... ‘No, he’s staying here. With me.’ ... Nazneen trembled, but the warmth of Raqib’s body against her chest fired her resolve.” (Ali 71)

This disobedience to Mrs Islam is punished a few years later when Chanu decides to borrow money from her. Mrs Islam enjoys the privilege of a creditor to visit Nazneen and Chanu whenever she likes and often threatens them: “Chanu was determined the woman should have no more. ... But after a persuasive visit from her sons, he had settled on fifty pounds per week.” (Ali 252) Mrs Islam soon learns about Chanu’s plan to return to

Bangladesh and quickly reacts: “‘You have it all?’ snapped Mrs Islam. Her black eyes glittered. ‘Give it to me. How much is there? A thousand pounds still owing, and you are going to run away? Give me the rest.’” (Ali 253) When Mrs Islam and her sons pay their last visit to Nazneen to ask for the last installment, she refuses to pay and openly designates Mrs Islam as a usurer: “‘Not interest? Not a usurer? Let’s see then. Swear it.’ She ran across to where the Book was kept. Glass crunched beneath her sandals. ‘Swear on the Qur’an. And I’ll give you the two hundred.’” (Ali 269) Despite the fact that Mrs Islam is greedy, she refuses to take the Book-oath. The confrontation between her unclean business and the Koran is unbearable for her and shortly after this confrontation she leaves the London Bangladeshi community as a psychically broken woman. Here Nazneen proves her quality as a strong, independent and proud woman defending her family.

When Nazneen suffers from a nervous breakdown, Chanu takes care of her night and day as a devoted husband. He does not go to work, cooks delicious meals and looks after their daughters. In the first day of her recovery her husband is unable to hide his feelings: “‘Chanu came in and saw Nazneen sitting up. He became wreathed in smiles, bright and gay as the garlands that cover a groom’s face.’” (Ali 272) Overflow with unmanageable emotions Chanu even changes the way he usually speaks to her. He begins to address Nazneen indirectly, in an old-fashioned polite way, as ‘she’: “‘She is disobeying the doctor. What a lot of trouble she will be in.’ Chanu smiled so hard that his cheeks were in danger of popping. Nazneen wondered why her husband spoke of her as ‘she’. If she had more energy, she decided, she would find this irritating.” (Ali 272)

Chanu’s new approach towards his wife quickens Nazneen’s process of self recognition. At the beginning of the novel she is hardly aware of her values and qualities. There is always the fate-god existing in her mind. “‘It was her place to sit and wait ... nothing else to be done. Nothing else that God wanted her to do.’” (Ali 40) She often disagrees with her husband but says nothing:

Nazneen kept quiet. Her guts prickled. Her forehead tightened. All he could do was talk.” (Ali 66) Gradually Nazneen begins to answer her husband in a uniform way: “‘If you say so, husband.’ ... She meant to say something else by it: sometimes that she disagreed, sometimes that she didn’t understand or that he was talking rubbish, sometimes that he was mad. (Ali 80-81)

After the nervous breakdown she is not the same wife as before, because she starts to express her feelings and opinions aloud. When she feels irritated by her husband’s indirect addressing her and treating like a small disobedient child, she finally manages to react: “‘Oh, she is,’ said Nazneen, ‘she’s listening. But she is not obeying.’ Chanu smiled expectantly, waiting for the joke to be explained.” (Ali 282) Her husband accepts her change, and before he leaves for Dhaka, he even reflects on his role as a husband and father: “‘I haven’t been what you could call a perfect-type husband,’ he told his knees. ‘Nor a perfect-type father.’” (Ali 384)

Both Chanu and Karim are fond of talking and sometimes Nazneen feels they often sound similar: “‘We’ll have to go out of the village,’ Karim had said. He sounded almost like her husband.” (Ali 376) He views Nazneen in a similar way as her husband did in the beginning of their marriage, as a thing, a real thing: “‘... a real thing?’ A conversation overheard in the early days of her marriage came to her mind. ... An unspoilt girl from the village. All things considered, I am satisfied”. (Ali 320) Karim plans to marry Nazneen after Chanu leaves for Bangladesh, but she refuses. She also refuses to depart with her husband and follow his plan of her life. Both Karim and Chanu solve their failures by leaving London and settling in Bangladesh.

Nazneen involuntarily compares Chanu and Karim, their habits, clothes, characters, figures and looks. Karim speaks to her about things she understands and brings her books:

“He left Bengali newsletters for her. One was called *The Light*; another was simply titled *Ummah*. Chanu had never given her anything to read”. (Ali 200) Karim answers her growing affection and they become lovers. But their first sex shows his dominance and her submission: “‘Get undressed,’ he said, ‘and get into bed.’ He left the room. ...She pulled the covers up to her neck and closed her eyes.” (Ali 238)

Their relationship develops to be a routine with settled signs, and Nazneen discovers a new power within herself, the power of passion: “how could such a weak woman unleash a force so strong? She gave in to fate and not to herself”. (Ali 248) She is not the woman who hides her face any more: “the times when she had lain naked beneath the sheets belonged to another, saintly era. She helped him undress. She felt it now: there was nothing she would not do”. (Ali 284) During the time of their dating she lives a double life of a passionate woman in the bedroom and a submissive partner out of the bedroom: “Nazneen danced attendance. It was a thrill, this playing house. But she knew she was playing, and she sensed for Karim it was a serious business”. (Ali 248) Under the influence of this relationship Nazneen changes her behavior and attitude towards her daughters and husband: “She spent more time talking to her daughters, and they surprised her with their intelligence, their wit, and their artless sensitivity. She served her husband and she found out that he was a caring husband, a man of integrity, educated, and equipped with a pleasing thirst for knowledge”. (Ali 249) As their relationship continues the style of conversations slowly changes into a husband-wife talking. Nazneen answers Karim as the same way as Chanu: “...if you say so”. (Ali 287) Nazneen thought that he might be great in bed, but he would almost certainly be as conventionally biased against feminine freedom as Chanu. She has grown tired of him in advance. In one of Ms Ali's most astute moves, Nazneen's epiphany occurs in the kitchen:

What if going home turned out to be just another one of Chanu's projects? A short while ago it seemed certain, but how could she be sure? She reminded herself: she had only to wait for everything to be revealed. Instead of appeasing her as usual, this thought rankled. Why should she wait? She felt as strongly as if someone, standing beside her in the kitchen, had taken a piece of paper, written down the answers and then set alight to the page while she watched. She stood at the kitchen worktop making onion bhajis for the children, who would eat them smothered in tomato ketchup. In her frustration, she forgot she was in the middle of chopping chillies and rubbed her eye. Immediately a sensational pain exploded her eyeball. It was enough to make her cry out. She turned on the tap and twisted her head beneath it. To the curative powers of cold running water, the chilli-burn was immune. Nazneen gasped as the water ran up her nose. She focused on the pain, rising up to meet it head on, boring into it, challenging it to do its worst. The burn was fierce and it unleashed in her an equal ferocity. Suddenly her entire being lit up with anger. I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one. A charge ran through her body and she cried out again, this time out of sheer exhilaration. (Ali 249)

Hasina, Razia and her daughters influence her to conscious about those matters which she can change and introduce herself as a new woman. Shahana did not want to go Bangladesh because she was born here. Bangladesh is an alien country to her. She was trying to escape from home. We find that Shanana's friend Nishi also did not go to Bangladesh because of her, who was sixteen years old, had gone for a holiday in Sylhet and returned six months later with a husband and a swelling belly. Shahana and Nishi go to Paighton because in Paighton, no one can find them, no Bangladeshis live there. Now Nazneen decides about what to do in her family. She is the one who can change the condition of her family and her life. It is the turning point of her life. A moth turns into a butterfly. She ran outside to find Shahana and got her after a huge ‘one night struggle’.

Ali suggests that immigration can catalyze successful self-transformation. Thus, near the novel's conclusion, Nazneen stands up to Mrs. Islam's attempts to extort endless interest

payments from her family. Braving not only Islam's bullying sons, who smash up her furniture, but also the possibility of social exposure and shame, Nazneen adamantly refuses to give more money. And gradually a thought began to form in Nazneen “God provided a way. Nazneen smiled. God provided a way, and I found it.” (Ali 372)

It is true that Karim challenges Nazneen in a way that causes her to redefine her personal priorities and unquestioning acceptance of fate's directives. For the first time, through his eyes, Nazneen views herself, not as mother and wife, but as a woman. Karim wanted to marry Nazneen but Nazneen think about her daughters first. “‘It would be too difficult,’ said Nazneen, ‘for us to be together. So I think we had better stop now.’ Karim began to say ‘right’ again, but caught himself. ‘Yes, I see what you mean. With the children and everything.’ ‘I have to think of them first.’” (Ali 378) She has already seen that marriage to Karim will be a trap. His response to 9/11 has been to assume Bengali attire and a matching religiosity. She touched Karim's hand for the last time and said, “oh, Karim, that we have already done. But always there is a problem between us. How can I explain? I wasn't me, and you weren't you. From the very beginning to the very end, we didn't see things. What we did- we made each other up.” (Ali 380)

Most significantly and finally, Nazneen defiantly informs Chanu that she will not accompany him back to Bangladesh. On a personal level, that is, Nazneen ultimately finds the strength to shape her own destiny. “Chanu said, ‘You are coming with me, then? You'll come?’ ‘No,’ she breathed. She lifted his head and looked into his face. It was dented and swollen, almost out of recognition. ‘I can't go with you’ she said.” (Ali 400)

Women lead their lives based on expectations from their family, society and community. (Mortada 53) Nazneen is surrounded by the different kinds of social barriers in her personal and public life. Tradition makes the women dependence on men. Both in Bangladesh and Britain, men rule the labour market. Immigrant Bangladeshi women like Nazneen and Razia have to depend on opposite gender. Men beat their wives. Women's opinions have no values. Sometimes they have to sit for marriage twice of their ages. Nazneen married forty years old Chanu when she was only eighteen and in case of Renu— “She was marry at fifteen to old man who die within three months”. (Ali 124) Here metamorphosis means gradual evolution that focuses on the awakening and awareness of diaspora of self-identification enthuses especially the woman writers of diasporas for the quest of “their own definition of femininity through the female protagonist and more specifically through the representation of the new woman.” (Hussain 52)

Women in every nation and every time want to be free. They need bravery and wisdom to change the tradition. Monica Ali gives this kind of message through the voice of different women in her novel. Nazneen's bedtime story about jinni is one of them. Nazneen's mother Mumtaz inherited a jinni in a bottle from her father. She freed her only in one condition to make her wish come true. She said “Oh jinni, I give you freedom and you will give me wisdom”. (Ali 329) Later we find she helps other women and families with her wisdom.

Nazneen, like “a woman in Bangladesh society takes on new roles in every relationship she is bound into.” (Mortada 53) But at the end, Nazneen completes her transformation. She finally finds her voice to say that she is not a puppet of fate. She is the one who can change her own destiny. She faces Mrs. Salam and her arrogant sons and refuses to pay enough interest. She says ‘No’ to Karim about marrying him and her husband to go to Bangladesh. She stays with her daughters and starts working with Razia as joint forces. They collect order from the boutique of England directly without the help of any man. At the end of the novel, Nazneen is preparing for skating which symbolizes the ultimate freedom—a butterfly is ready to fly. The novel ends with an image: a sari-wearing ice-skating woman—

Nazneen, firmly on her feet but preparing to launch out onto the precarious ice of experience. She discovers her choice and her new world.

Works Cited:

- Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*,. New York: Doubleday, 2003. Print.
- Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. Great Britain: Black Swan, 2004. Print.
- Anthias, Floya, and Lazaridis, Gabriella. eds. *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe*, New York: Berg, 2000. Print.
- "Arranged marriage", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arranged_marriage . Web. 10 January 2012.
- Bedell, Geraldine. "Full of East End promise", *The Observer*, June 15, 2003, 10 January 2012.
- Bedjaoui, Fewzia. "Trying to Belong: Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*". Web. 23 February 2014.
- Clarence, Emma. "Ignored and Isolated: Women and Asylum Policy in the United Kingdom." Freedman, Web. 10 January,2012.
- Coontz, Jennifer. *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.
- Hasan, Mahmudul. "Book Reviewes *Brick Lane* by Monika Ali". Web. 23 September 2013.
- Hussain, Yasmin. *Writing Diaspora: South Asian Women, Culture, and Ethnicity*, Burlington,VT: Ashgate, 2005. Print.
- Lane, Harriet. "Ali's in Wonderland", *The Observer*, June 1, 2003, Web. 10 January 2012.
- Mansoor, Asma. "Contrasting Conventions of Marriage in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*". Web. 23 February 2014.
- Mortada, Sayeda Samara. "The Notion of Women as Bearers of Culture in Monika Ali's *Brick Lane*". BRAC University Journal. Vol. vii. No. 1&2. 2010. 53-59. Print.
- Peter Berger & Hansfried Kellner. 'Marriage and the Construction of Reality: An Exercise in the Microsociology of Knowledge'. *The Psychosocial Interior of the Family* 4th ed. Edsited by Gerald Handel & Gail G. Witchurch. New York: Aldine D. Gruyter, 1994. Print.
- Scrinzi, Francesca, "The Globalization of Domestic Work: Women Migrants and Neo-Domesticity", Freedman, Web. 10 January, 2012.
- Tang, Maria. "Of Fate and Feet: Dis-memberment, Re-membering, piecing together in Monika Ali's *Brick Lane*". Web. 23 September 2013.
- Tongur, A. Nejat. "Rebellion: Second Generation Bangladeshi Immigrants in Brick Lane by Monika Ali". *The Journal of International Social Research*. Vol-6. Issue-26.561-567. Web. 12 December 2013.
- Whipple, Mary. "Brick Lane". Web. 30 November 2012.