IDENTITY ISSUES IN SAMUEL SELVON'S THE LONELY LONDONERS AND MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE. (FROM DIFFICULTY OF ADJUSTMENT TO HYBRIDITY)

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by
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For my beloved sons; Taha Melih and Berkay…

APPROVAL PAGE

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

i)   Integration problems

ii) Analysis of integration and hybridization problems in *Lonely Londoners* and *Brick Lane*.

Sönmez GÜLER

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ABSTRACT

Sönmez GÜLER   **July 2010**

IDENTITY ISSUES IN SAMUEL SELVON'S THE LONELY LONDONERS AND MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE.
(FROM DIFFICULTY OF ADJUSTMENT TO HYBRIDITY)

This thesis aims to explore the hybridization process in Samuel Selvon's *Lonely Londoners* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. This thesis consists of three chapters and a result and conclusion part. Introduction part gives some background information about the immigration to London which started in the 1950s and the problems they faced there. Introduction part also examines the source of the problems of integration in the Western countries through the theories of social scientists. The first chapter explains identity and hybridity. The first chapter mainly focuses on the hybridization in the western societies and benefits from the opinions of social scientists from different point of views about hybridization. This chapter also gives detailed information about the factors of hybridization. The second chapter examines the characters of *Brick Lane* in terms of hybridization. This chapter depicts how each character of *Brick Lane* adjusts himself/herself to the host country's social environment and the difficulties they experience during the course of hybridization. The third chapter examines the characters of *Lonely Londoners* in terms of hybridization. This chapter also shows how each character of *Lonely Londoners* adjusts himself/herself to the host country's social environment. The fourth chapter explains the differences between two immigrant groups. Thus, this chapter illustrates the conditions of Trinidadian and Bangladeshi immigrants. The conclusion and result part summarizes the process of hybridization and results of hybridization in the both novels.

   Key words: Multiculturalism, ethnic identity, hybridity, rural and urban.

KISA ÖZET

Sönmez GÜLER   **Temmuz 2010**

SEMUAL SELVON'UN LONELY LONDONERS VE MONİCA ALİ'NİN BRICK LANE ESERLERİNDE KİMLİK MESELELERİ (ENTEGRASYONUN ZORLUKLARINDAN MELEZLEŞMEYE)

Bu tez Semual Selvon'un *Lonely Londoners* ve Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane* eserlerindeki melezleşme sürecini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez dört bölüm ve sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölüm batı toplumlarındaki göçmenlerin bulundukları ülkelere entegrasyon meselesini açıklar. Giriş bölümü entegrasyon probleminin kaynağını sosyal bilimcilerin teorileriyle inceler. Birinci bölüm kimlik ve melezleşmeyi ele alır. Bu bölüm genel olarak batı kentlerindeki melezleşme süreçlerine yoğunlaşır ve burada değişik bilim adamlarının görüşlerini aktarır. Bu ayrıca melezleşmeye etki eden faktörlerle ilgili detaylı bilgi aktarır. İkinci bölüm *Brick Lane* deki karakterleri melezleşme bağlamında inceler. Bu bölüm *Brick Lane* deki her bir karakterin nasıl kendini yeni sosyal ortama adapte ettiğini açıklar. Üçüncü bölümde *Lonely Londoners* daki karakterleri melezleşme açısından inceler. Bu bölüm aynı zamanda karakterlerin nasıl yeni sosyal ortama nasıl uyum sağladıklarını açıklar. Dördüncü bölümde ise *The Lonely Londoners* ve *Brick Lane* deki Bangladeşli ve Trinidadlı göçmenler arasındaki farkları ele alır. Sonuç bölümü bütün gelişmeleri analiz ederek sonuçlarını açıklar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çok kültürlülük, etnik kimlik, melez, kırsal ve şehir.

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CHAPTER 3:   AN ANALYSIS OF HYBRID IDENTITIES IN THE LONELY LONDONERS

CHAPTER 4: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRINIDIAN AND BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS

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And for my family, I owe my excuses for I may have neglected or forgotten them.

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will cover the hybridization process of the characters in the novels *The Lonely Londoners* by Sam Selvon and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali with references to various social scientists Stuart Hall, Pnina Werbner,especially to Homi Bahabha. An analysis of how Sam Selvon and Monica Ali depict the process of adjustment and hybridization in their novels will be revealed in a deatiled way. Comparison of the two novels will enlighten us how different immigrant groups, Bangladeshi and West Indian immigrants, adopt themselves to a new cultural environment. To analyse these novels, I will try to elucidate the general concepts such as multiculturalism, identity, and hybridity in depth benefiting from the ideas of social scientists with different views. This study will aim to explore different implications of this thesis through the methodological framework of urban mentality vs. rural mentality, as such that we believe defines the developmental essence of word's post-industrial realities.

There have already been some studies done on the immigration and integration problems of West Indians and Bangladeshis. These dissertations are related to either the Caribbean or Asian immigrants. Gayle Dyer's *London Via The Caribbean: Migration Narratives* and *The City in Postwar British Fiction,* Fatma Kaplan's *Selvon* and *Multicultural London* and Kathelen Anne Vickers' *This blessed Plot: Negotiating Britishness in Sam Selvon's Lonely Londoners, Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia, And Zaide Smith's White Teeth.* However, neither of these studies are comparative analysis of these two immigrant groups in terms of mentality differences, rural mind versus urban mind in the integration process.

The mentality of the immigrants has had an integral role to mingle with the native people in their host country. The way the immigrants handle the issue of integration depends on their psychological traits. A lot of authors have tackled the issue of the integration from different points of views successfully. Sam Selvon, the author of *The Lonely Londoners* and Monica Ali, the author of *Brick Lane* are two prominent writers, who wrote about the issue of immigration, integration and multiculturalism.

These two writers have been chosen for this study for several reasons. First of all, these writers themselves are ethnic immigrants so they successfully reflect the immigrant psychology in their works. Monica Ali was born in Bangladesh and moved to London at the age of three. She is biologically and culturally hybrid because her father is British and mother is Bangladeshi. Therefore, she knows both British and Bengali cultures well. Thus, she depicts the process of integration and the social problems of immigrants well. Monica Ali handles the issues of immigrants with a realistic approach. She describes the situation of the Bangladeshi immigrants in London as it is. Monica Ali can be associated with her main character Nazneen, who came to London after marrying to Chanu, and has shown a constant metamorphosis to gain hybrid identity.

Sam Selvon was among the first immigrants from Trinidad to Britain. Thus, he himself experienced the problems of the immigrants with racism, discrimination, and lack of basic needs. As a West Indian immigrant in Britain, Sam Selvon affirms the validity of immigrant creolized English that he uses throughout *The Lonely Londoners.*

These two novels focus on important realities of the ethnic immigrants in London. Monica Ali focuses on difficulties of adjusting to the urban life, clashes between the

generations, and racial issues. These issues are depicted through the eyes of Nazneen and Chanu, two protagonists of the novel. Difficulties of adjustment, discrimination, disappointments, and inner conflicts of the immigrants to protect their traditions are illustrated by Sam Selvon.

These two books were written in different eras; *Lonely Londoners* was written in 1957 and *Brick Lane* was written in 2003. Thus, this time difference helps us to draw a conclusion about the progress London has made since the first immigrants came there. Comparative analyses of these books facilitate us to measure the changes of the conditions in London.

Religion is another useful tool to make comparison between Ali's *Brick lane* and Selvon's *Lonely Londoners* because the main characters of Monica Ali have a strong sense of religion whereas Selvon's characters have less affiliation with religion. Thus, comparing these novels, we can come up with an idea about the roles of religion and traditional values in gaining hybridization.

The purpose of this study is to define whether the characters in Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* and Samuel Selvon's novel *Lonely Londoners* have been acquiring hybrid identities, during the course of their interaction with the realities of Western living, as we believe that thoughtful examination of a subject matter will provide readers with a better understanding of what constitutes the foremost problem, within the context of Western societies becoming increasingly globalized, in political and economic sense of this world. As it has been suggested earlier, it is specifically a multitude of purely psychological factors, which define the subtleties of ethnic immigrants' varying ability to integrate into Western post-industrial culture. Therefore, it represents the matter of foremost importance to identify actual

motivations, behind both novels characters' decisions to choose in favor of a particular existential stance, while dealing with life's challenges.

Thus, another purpose of this study can be defined as encouraging readers to utilize their own rationale, while assessing issues over which the enforcers of political correctness claim interpretational monopoly. As it is the case with just about anybody, many characters in Ali and Selvon's novels are being shown endowed with a variety of psychological strengths and weaknesses, and it is namely the domination of their weaknesses or strengths, which influence individuals' ability to adopt himself/herself to new environment.

The analysis of conceptual premises, upon which post-colonial theories of identity are based: By researching these premises, this thesis will be able to define the extent of corresponding theories' actuality/fallaciousness. In its turn, this will provide us with better understanding of how the strength of characters' ethnic/hybrid identity affected their behavior.

Migration has been one of the most important realities in human history. Human beings have always been moving from one place to another for various reasons. Some of these reasons can be identified as socio-political, economical, and geographical, but in every case the main motive is to find something better than the situation at hand. Thus, the direction of the migrations are mainly from poorer places to more prosperous places. During the last century, movement of mankind has increased rapidly due to technological developments in transportation.

After WWII, Western countries with their socio-economic development have become glamoures centers for immigrants. Immigrants mostly from the colonized

countries migrate to the colonial countries. In the 1950s, Britain, with her large number of commonwealth countries, was the centre of attraction for the immigrants from the colonized countries. Immigrants from India, the Caribbean, Pakistan and Africa and many other parts of the world came to Britain after the colonial period. Britain needed all these immigrants because she wanted cheap labour power after World War II to advance its industry. Most of the newcomers settled in London and in the Midlands, which were the industrial parts. Thus, London, which was defined as "pure" Anglo-Saxon before the immigration started, became a place where many people from different races, nationalities or ethnic backgrounds came together with the hope of finding better jobs, better educational facilities and life-styles. Consequently, London has become a multiethnic and multicultural city in Europe. London has became the intersections of many ethnicities, religions and cultures.

Thus, multiculturalism was put on the agenda to be discussed among social scientists. Alastair Bonnet describes multiculturalism as: "the eradication of racism and the recognition of cultural diversity" (90) E.B. Hosbawn suggests that cultural freedom and pluralism are certainly better safeguarded in large states which describes themselves to be plurinational and pluricultural than in small ones pursuing the ideal of ethnic linguisticand cultural homogeneity (255) London, starting from 1950s until now has transformed itself a lot in terms of multiculturalim. Thus, London has tried to establish a harmonious and peaceful environment for the immigrants to encourage them to maintain their language, culture and history. Therefore, annual carnivals are held to celebrate the cultural diversity in Britain. Notting Hill, the center of the Caribbien community in London, has been celebrating

a multicultural carnival since 1966. Immigrants from different countries and culture contribute a lot to create a new multicultural environment in London.

Although London has tried hard to avoid having etnicity problems, it has experienced several problems to melt all these diverse cultures in the same pot to become a multicultural city. Most of the ethnic immigrants are not pleased with their conditions in the host country. There is a huge gap between their expectations about London and actual London, which disappoints them.

During the course of recent decades, the fact that ethnic immigrants often experience a hard time, while trying to integrate into Western societies, has gained a status of particularly troubling social issue. Integration problem is not only a case in Great Britain but also in other Western countries. Nowadays, in such large Western capitals as London, Paris, and Berlin, hardly a single day goes by without recently immigrated representatives of ethnic minorities showing civil disobedience in different forms such as setting cars on fire, participating in gangster shootouts and demonstrations. These irregularities show that Western capitals, especially London hasn't been able to melt the newcomers in the pot of multiculturalism yet.

Thus, the troubling issue of integration of immigrants in European countries has created an objective precondition for social scientists to strive to come up with a variety of different theories as to what accounts for conceptual inconsistencies of post-colonial multiculturalism in its present form. These theories can be formally classified as neo-conservative, post-colonial and psychological.

One of the most prominent proponents of neo-conservative sociology is Samuel Huntington. In his now famous article, "*The Clash of Civilizations*?", Huntington has

attempted to explain the inability of Muslim immigrants to integrate into Western societies, by historically predetermined animosity between West and East:

> The fault lines between civilizations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed. The kin-country syndrome groups or states belonging to one civilization that become involved in war with people from a different civilization naturally try to rally support from other members of their own civilization. (45)

He comes to a conclusion that metaphysical incompatibility between Western and Eastern mentalities dates back to the time of Crusades, which is why the outbreaks of politically motivated violence on world's map may as well be discussed within the context of an ongoing confrontation between Christianity and Islam. Thus, these two enemies can not come together to create a harmonious multicultural environment.

The post-colonial approach to dealing with the issue of ethnic immigrants' difficulty to act as a member of Western societies is being primarily concerned with its proponents' continuing to blame the euro-centrism and racism. According to post-colonial social scientists and authors, the main reason why newly arrived immigrants from all over the world often experience a particularly hard time, while trying to gain social prominence, is that they are being confronted by racism and segregation, on the part of native-born White Westerners. In his article *Yuppie Racism: Race Relations in the 1980s*, Richard Lowy states:

> A variety of beliefs about race relations are upheld by various segments of White population that, when analyzed and compared to factual data, turn out to be ideological smokescreens for the perpetration of racism. Racism does

not vanish when Whites are able to convince themselves that they are no longer villains, consciously promoting negative attitude about minorities. (453)

Richard Tarnas provides us with another example on how adherents of post-colonial multiculturalism go about substantiating their view of euro-centrism as the fundamental cause of racial tensions within Western societies:

The Western mind's overriding compulsion to impose some form of totalizing reason - theological, scientific, and economic - on every aspect of life is accused of being not only self-deceptive but destructive. Disenchanted eyes are now cast onto its destruction of indigenous societies throughout the world, its arrogant insensitivity to other cultural traditions and values, its cruel abuse of other forms of life, its blind ravaging of virtually the entire planet. (400)

The proponents of psychological methodology of addressing multi-racial inconsistencies suggest that the main reason why representatives of racial minorities often find themselves socially disadvantaged, while living in Western countries, is that their essentially rural mentality does not quite correlate with urban mentality of those people who were born and raised in Western large cities. This is because of the cultural and mentality differences; people who immigrated to Europe were mainly from the rural parts of their countries and they were generally illiterate. They would experience the same hardships if they moved to the big cities in their own countries. Most of the immigrants had been unemployed before they moved to Western countries. The gap between the native people and the immigrants who came from rural parts of their countries was huge. Urbanites celebrate the values of intellectual open-mindedness, tolerance, and existential individualism, and people endowed with

rurally based collectivist mentality; profess essentially the opposite values of highly ritualistic spirituality, psychological authoritarianism, and tribal rituals.

Pnina Werbner provides us with the insight onto metaphysical irreconcilability between the concepts of urban and rural living:

> In small-scale, face-to-face societies, the nature of authority is very often not in doubt, even if the incumbency of specific rulers is; whereas in our (Western) societies, with their large complex structures, the very constitution of authority is a matter of intense struggle. (137)

Nevertheless, after having lived in Western countries for some time, ethnic immigrants slowly learn to assess surrounding reality in terms of rationale. This process is being absolutely irrespective of these immigrants' racial affiliation. For example, just as it is the case with today's Asian immigrants to Western countries, rurally minded Irish immigrants to America, in early twentieth century, often had to deal with hostility simply because they were not quite adapted to cosmopolitan realities of living in America's big cities. Throughout the course of 20th century, the same problem was experienced by rural-dwellers from southern Italy, who were coming to Italy's northern cities in search for jobs. Nowadays, people from Ukraine's rural areas, who come to Moscow in increasingly larger numbers, are also being held by native-born people is very low regard – there is nothing unnatural about the fact that rurally minded individuals often experience an emotional discomfort, while trying to win their place under the sun in urban societies, just as there is nothing unnatural about the fact that, as time goes by, these people grow more and more adapted to the realities of urban living. And, while becoming adapted to these realities, immigrants get to be gradually endowed with a "hybrid identity",

which is being reflected in their increased ability to utilize their initial "otherness" within the context of trying to attain social prominence. However, as today's post-industrial realities indicate, there are still some Westerners who think of ethnic immigrants' behavioral hybridism as such that poses some danger to Western civilization. As Werbner has pointed out in her study:

> In a globalizing society, I argue hybridity and transgression, while being potential tools of resistance, which upturn taken-for-granted hierarchies, play dangerously on the boundary, and can thus become a source of offence. In post-colonial Diasporas, minorities often draw on culture strategically to fight for recognition and against discrimination and oppression. But this raises the question, what are the creative limits of cultural hybridity? (138)

The fact that the realities of post-industrial living imply that it is impossible for an individual to go about trying to gain social prominence, while actively exploring its ethnic uniqueness, has also been recognized by prominent theoretician of ethno-cultural hybridity – Homi Bhabha. In her article "The Interstitial Perspective: A Review Essay on Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*", Gillian Rose explained Bhabha book's foremost thesis in rather straightforward manner:

> Narratives of origin, journey, and destination can no longer be heroic myths of conquest; traditions can no longer be understood as articulating the essence of pure identity; cultural difference can no longer be seen as a panorama of multicultural diversity; class and gender can no longer be used as singular categories. Origin, authenticity, and essence are for Bhabha all dead tropes. (367)

Thus, it is namely Werbner and Bhabha's perspectives on what accounts for ethnic immigrants' existential identity, which will be developed as this study's theoretical basis.

The condensate of both perspectives can be formulated as follows: just as any infantile individuals, most newly arrived ethnic immigrants are being especially sensitive to different emanations of naked force. And, what is it that is being associated with such force in today's world? Modernity/technology. During the course of European colonial expansion, the ancestors of these immigrants have learnt that one British soldier with a machinegun was worthy of thousands and thousands of horsemen with spears and bow-arrows in their hands. Therefore, the concept of hybrid identity, on the part of ethnic immigrants, appears to have clearly defined subtleties of spatial/timely relativism, which explains why it is quite impossible to come up with a comprehensive definition as to the essence of this concept. However, we can still describe such identity is being concerned with ethnic immigrants' struggle towards modernity.

CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF IDENTITY AND HYBRIDTY

1.1 Theories of Identity

Nowadays, the term 'identity' has achieved rather celebratory status, mainly due to the fact that the vagueness of this term's possible interpretations social scientists to expound on the subject matter in variety of different ways.

In addition to having their own personal identity, every human identifies himself/herself to the larger community, the nation. Every individual has different identities such as national identity, ethnic identity, and cultural identity.

Stuart Hall, a well known scholar in the field of cultural studies, defines the cultural identity as: "Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but positioning." (395) The central question for every individual is to define one's identity, especially in unfamiliar or unfavorable situations. Since cultural identity does not only consist of nationality or ethnicity, but also of gender, religion and history, the immigrants from the Caribbean an Asia faced a variety of culture-shock when they arrived in Britain and a severe culture- conflict when they sustained their life in their traditional way instead of quickly adopting the new environment.

Thus, the ethnic immigrants struggled to protect and convey their culture to new generations, who were taught to live according to two mainly different cultural and social sets of traditions and expectations. This culture- clash resulted in confusion of cultural identity.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is a good example of confusion of cultural identity, which may be transformed from culture-clash. Second generation of the ethnic immigrants in *Brick Lane* had to live according to two contrasting social values.

Some social scientists suggest that cultural identity is necessary for an individual to put himself/herself in a place to identify his/her position and this ethnic and cultural identification should be recognized and respected by the majority. In his book *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity: European Monographs in Social Psychology*, Maykel Verkuyten states:

> Identity is used in normative sense. 'Having identity' is considered good and desirable, whereas the situation of 'no identity' is evaluated negatively… Ethnic minority groups claim the right to be different and to define who and what they are, or want to be themselves…Ethnic and cultural identities are assumed the subject of recognition and respect. (41)

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that contemporary implications of term 'identity' are essentially temporal, simply because the degree of their actuality cannot be discussed outside of currently predominant political discourses. Throughout the course of late 20th century, Western sociologists tended to discuss the notion of social identity through the lenses of geopolitics. In its turn, such their tendency was based upon recognition of Western countries as essentially nation-states, because at that time, the process of globalization was still thought to be concerned strictly with the matters of economy. For example, one of the most prominent theoreticians of 'social identity', Henri Tajfel stresses out the fact that one's personal ability to rationalize surrounding reality has very little to do with construction of his or her identity. According to Tajfel, given the fact that Homo

Sapiens is essentially a social being, it is namely individual's affiliation with a particular ethnic group or with particular social strata, which defines the qualitative subtleties of his or her existential mode. In his book *Political Identity and Social Change: The Remaking of the South African Social Order*, Jamie Frueh outlines the conceptual core of Tajfel's theory:

> The theory deals with what Tajfel calls '*social identity*' that part of a person's identity associated with group membership and the value attached to that membership, and thus adds a social component to the field… In Tajfel's theory there seems to be very little role for the individual as agent of identity's creation. (24)

According to Tajfel's social identity theory, individual's realization of its place within a society derives out of his affiliation with a particular social/ethnic group. And, to the lesser extent this group exerts political and economic influence within a society; the lesser is going to be group members' sense of self-respect. Within the context of Tajfel's theory, the members of underprivileged social groups in Western society, such as ethnic immigrants, are being assumed suffering from a variety of psychological anxieties, related to particulars of these people's ethno-social affiliation. Therefore, the discussion of how ethnic immigrants may go about establishing themselves socially simply cannot take place outside of objectively existing preconditions that define the overall well-being of ethno-cultural communities, to which these immigrants belong. And, it is specifically immigrants' ability to emphasize the separateness of their ethnic communities from the rest of society, which contributes to the process of these communities gaining socio-political

power – thus, endowing its members with an acute sense of self-respect. In his book *Human Groups and Social Categories*, Tajfel states:

> The new claims of the minorities are based on their right to decide to be different (to preserve their separateness) as defined in their own terms and not in terms implicitly adopted or explicitly dictated by the majorities…the wish to preserve their right to take their own decisions and to keep their own identity. (317)

According to Tajfel the more a particular member of ethnic minority feels itself being different from the rest of society, the better.

In their study *Social Identity Theory and the Organization*, Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael point out to the fact that one's identity cannot be solely discussed within the context of a particular individual seeking 'empowerment through affiliation' but also within the context of 'self-actualization through adaptation':

> Whereas identification with a group is argued to be predicated on the desire for self-definition, identification with an individual-referred to as 'classical identification' – is argued to be predicated on the desire to appease, imitate, or vicariously gain the qualities of the other. (22)

It is clear that an individual endowed with a strong sense of collectivist belonging would be very unlikely to progress in life, simply because such sense is being utterly counter-productive within the context of one's strive to expand its intellectual horizons.

In their article *The Evolution of Ethnocentrism*, Ross Hammond and Robert Axelrod came up with a suggestion, while pointing out to the fact that realities of

post-industrial living imply the incompatibility of ethnocentric values with the concept of post-industrial living: "Ethnocentrism can be an effective mechanism for supporting cooperation in the absence of such conditions as continuing interactions, well-developed institutions, and strong social norms." (933) In order for an individual to feel comfortable, while living as a part of highly technological and intellectually advanced society, he or she must be capable of addressing life's challenges with the mean of reason, rather than with the mean of solidarity.

In his article *Determining Economic Activity in a Post-Capitalist System*, Laszlo Garai has pointed that, in post-industrial society, the process of one's identity formation is being concerned with an individual being continuously rid of variety of rurally based prejudices, because it is only people who profess the values of individualism, who may benefit from being the residents of Western cosmopolitan megalopolises: "The main tendency of post-capitalist (post-industrial) system is considered to be the production of personal (and not only material) conditions." (77) According to Garai, living in technologically advanced post-industrial society provide its members with an opportunity to indulge in activities that are not concerned with satisfaction of their immediate physiological needs, as it is the case in rural societies of Third World. Thus, people who immigrate to Western countries from Third World have simply no choice but to explore their individuality by becoming adapted to new environment – regardless of whether they want it or not. As this study will show in the next part of this study, the most intellectually advanced ethnic immigrants have proven themselves more than capable of doing it – they were able to step over the rural mindedness, while opening themselves up to

new ideas – thus, becoming automatically more competitive, as compared to their less intellectually advanced brethrens.

1.2 Theories of Hybridity

In post-colonial discourse, ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity are key concepts to indicate the metamorphosis in the multicultural societies.

Homi Bhabha describes colonial mimicry as an achievement of the hybridity of culture, if hybridity is seen as a triumph. Colonial mimicry is a desire for a reformed other. For Bhabha, mimicry is not a change but a camouflage. In *Location of Culture* Bhabha explains colonial mimicry as follows:

> Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. In order to be effective mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its escess, its difference. Mimicry emerges as the presentation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies survelliance, and poses an immanent threat to both normalized knowledges and disciplinary powers (86)

Another colonial discourse is ambivalence. The term ambivalence was first used by Freud, he came up with an idea that the ambivalence is the co-existence of two instincts such as love and hate. Homi Bahabha applied this concept to colonial discourse indicating that the colonizer has a fear of the difference of the other and

desire for the other. Thus, while denying the colonized, the colonizer recognizes them because it needs the colonized to exist.

The concept of 'hybridity' has been used in a number of schools of thought. In postcolonial studies, for example, hybridity has been defined as the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation. It takes many forms, including cultural, political and linguistic.

Hybridity has become a key term in postcolonial discourse, especially the social scientist Homi Bahabha, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy have an important role to make this term very popular in postcolonial discourse. But, these theorists have different definitions for the concept of hybridity. According to Homi Bhabha "hybridity is camouflage" (193) and it is " process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences" (252). According to Homi Bhabha hybridity is third space in between. But some scientists like Stuart Hall define hybridity in different way. Stuart Hall suggests that hybridity is not an in between state, but the interaction and combinaiton between cultures, a third entity, a new joint of identity (52) He also suggests that hybridity is "the contaminated, yet connective tissue between cultures" (54)

Paul Gilroy comes up with a more far-reaching deifnition and suggests that the use of hybridity opposed to "purity", the latter being irrelevant in today's multicultural world. (55) According to Paul Gilroy, cultural and racial hybridity are becoming acknowledged and ordinary.

In Sociology and Anthropology more generally, hybridity refers to the creation of dynamic mixed cultures. The specialist term 'syncretism' is used for attempts at reconcilion of disparate, even opposing, beliefs and schools of thought. (Kripke 74)

In Post-Modernist Political Studies, hybridity represents a counter-concept to that of 'stable national identity.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha defines hybridity as signifier of a social change, associated with the process of de-colonization and consequentially, reverse-colonization:

> Hybridity is the sign of productivity, its shifting forces and fixieties; it is the name for strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects.(159)

According to Bhabha, the end of colonial era had left formerly oppressed people in Third World with an 'identity void', which in its turn, prompted them to seek self-actualization through adaptation of specifically those psychological traits, on the part of former colonizers, which they associate with pure and naked power.

The socio-political realities in contemporary Western societies point out to overall soundness of such Bhabha's thesis. However, it is important to understand that it is only the representatives of first and second generations of ethnic immigrants, which can be referred to as hybrids, in full sense of this word, simply because their affiliation with their parents' traditional values in many cases appears being artificial.

Thus, through the lenses of Bhabha's theory, the concept of multiculturalism, as such that it based upon the assumption that particulars of people's ethnic affiliation

define the workings of their mentality, and which calls for atomization of Western societies by suggesting that it is absolutely natural for ethnic immigrants to go about creating their own societies within the host-society, however, the children of ethnic immigrants, who were born and raised in Western countries, cannot be referred to as 'ethnically unique', but rather as 'hybrid- minded'.

On one hand, they cannot distance themselves from their cultural roots, due to the color of their skin; but on another, they feel themselves being affiliated with the values of Western living even to significantly higher extent, as compared to what it is the case with native-born whites, because unlike whites, they are being endowed with plenty of existential vitality. In its turn, this creates a paradox – by exhibiting their hybridic 'otherness', often through the mean of indulging in socially 'inappropriate' behavior, the young representatives of ethnic minorities in Western countries strive for nothing less than proving their eligibility to carry on the light of civilization.

This maybe the reason why some Western people often experience an irrational animosity towards newcomers – one of the most striking psychological characteristic of an individual endowed with hybrid mentality, is that she or he does not genuinely share rurally based values of ethno-communal solidarity. As Bhabha put it in his article *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*:

> A gaze of otherness (hybridity), now producing that shares the acuity of the genealogical gaze which, as Foucault describes it, liberates marginal elements and shatters the unity of man's being through which he extends his sovereignty. (129)

In *The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha*, Bhabha articulated an idea that in near future, the concept of post-colonial hybridity will not only transform the demographic fabric of Western societies, but will deem the very notion of homogeneous culture utterly outdated: "The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation." (211)

Nevertheless, even though Bhabha's outlook on hybridity does raise many interesting points, this outlook appears largely static. That is, while discussing the emergence of behavioral hybritity, as having been objectively predetermined by the laws of history, author does not consider the possible effects of such an emergence upon itself. Moreover, even though in his works Bhabha tried to dispel the 'myth' of linear course of history, the very fact that he insisted upon the usage of term 'post-colonial' as often as possible, which have strengthened our understanding of concept of historical progress as being of essentially linear nature. As Anne McClintock noted in her article "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term Post-Colonialism*":*

> The term (post-colonialism) confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper; colonialism is determining marker of history. Other cultures share only a chronological, predispositional relation to a Euro-centered epoch that is over (post-), or not yet begun (pre-). In other words, the world's multitudinous cultures are marked, not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time (86).

Therefore, while analyzing the relation of Ali and Selvon's characters to the notion of hybridity in consequential parts of this study, I will refrain from addressing the subject matter within the context of colonialism vs. post-colonialism, but within the

context of rural mentality vs. urban mentality instead, as there is plenty of evidence as to the fact that neither the color of one's skin, nor his or her cultural roots, which define individual's chances to attain social prominence in technologically advanced post-industrial society, but solely the rate of individual's ability.

1.3 The Process of Change to Become a Hybrid Identity

The process of an individual acquiring hybrid identity is being primarily concerned with sociological and educational factors. As it has been mentioned earlier, socio-political attitudes, on the part of second and third generations of non-whites, differ considerably from that of their parents. The reason for this is simple – while being brought up in Western societies, children of these people study in Western schools and learn the culture of the host country, which is opposite of their own culture taught by their parents at home. Thus, they experience the confusion of cultural identity that leads them to hybridity. This process of metamorphosis separates them from their own culture but does not make them accept the host country's culture as their own culture. Therefore, they create a third space between the two cultures as Bhabha suggested in the *Location of Culture.* Kerim, Shanana and Bibi from *Brick Lane* are in this third space between the Bengali culture and the British culture. They do not want to live according to the Bengali culture that is imposed by their parents, which generates a generation gap between the first and the second generations. Thus, the representatives of generation of ethnic immigrants in Western countries often experience a particularly hard time, while trying to instill their children with respect to their native culture, simply because it can be difficult to give logical explanations as to how one's affiliation with their native culture might have any advantages.

The same process of change among the first generation may happen in different levels. After having stayed in the host country, they learn to adjust themselves to the new cultural environment obtaining some knowledge about the realities of host country. Nazneen from *Brick Lane* and Harris from *The Lonely Londoners* are good examples of how the first generations experience the metamorphosis. Most of the characters in the two novels go through this process; especially Nazneen in *Brick Lane* shows a constant change from beginning to the end of the story. Being in the third space is a constant feeling of dislocation and identity confusion, a mood that describes first generation immigrants the most. But the second generations, with less strong ties with the home country, accept the new world around them, which tends to result in another condition of cultural existence: hybridity

1.4 The Factors That Have an Influence on Hybriditization

Given the earlier suggestions as to the essence of behavioral hybridity, it does not represent much of a challenge to define factors that affect the process of such hybridity's formation:

Biological factors: People's endowment with hybrid identity often reflects their biological hybridism. For example, the essence of relations between characters in Selvon's novel is being affected by how these characters positioned themselves, in racial sense of this word – the ones with lighter skin had never ceased treating their darker brethrens as inferior. It is a well-known fact that the so-called 'mongrels' often experience strongly defined animosity, on the part of both: 'pure' Blacks and

'pure' Whites. In its turn, this leaves these people with only the option to adopt hybrid identity as something utterly natural.

The factors of generational affiliation: The children of first generation ethnic immigrants are much more likely to adopt hybrid identity, as compared to their parents, simply because they were born and raised in socio-cultural environment that stimulates one's individualistic drives.

Educational factors: The immigrants from Third World that have higher education degrees are significantly more open-minded, as compared to those whose field of professional expertise is being solely concerned with participation in agricultural activities. What it means is that an ethnic immigrant with education will be more likely to yield to existential hybridism.

Demographical factors: Non-White immigrants who reside in ethnic ghettos usually experience much harder time, while adopting hybrid identity, as compared to those who reside among Whites. The reason for this is simple – ghetto-living implies highly collectivist mode of existence, on the part of residents, quite inconsistent with Western values of individualism and freedom.

Religious factors: Immigrants with extreme sense of religiosity are being less capable of adopting hybrid mentality; as opposed to what it is the case with those immigrants who consider themselves moderately-religious or non-religious.

CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS OF HYBRID IDENTITIES IN *BRICK LANE*

2.1 The Struggles of the Main Characters to Protect their Ethnic Identities.

Bangladeshi immigrants have been present in Britain since the 19th century. However, the mass immigrants moved to London in the 1950s and 1960s and these immigrants lived and worked in bad conditions, in cramped basements and attics in Tower Hamlets area. The immigrants settled and established themselves in the Brick Lane area. Brick Lane became a center for the Bangladeshi immigrants, and thus by the end of the 1970s Brick Lane became predominantly Bengali. The immigrants were often illiterate and spoke little English so they could not interact with the other residents of London. *Brick Lane*, which got its name from the district where Bangladeshis live, was written in 2003. Terefore, it illustrated the lives of Bangladeshi community in the 2000s.

A reading of Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* provides us with a rather detailed account of how representatives of racial minorities go about trying to protect their ethnic identity, even though the process of immigrating to another country implies potential immigrants' willingness to adopt the national identity of a country where they intend to settle. The character of Chanu comes in particularly handy, within the context of a substantiating this study's earlier thesis as to the sheer counter-productiveness of celebration of rural values on the urban turf of Western society.

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Despite the fact that, having lived in Britain for long time, Chanu should have adopted Western values of civility and gender equality, he originally proceeded to treat his wife as nothing but some piece of soulless commodity, whose only value was concerned with her ability to act as a baby-making machine: "Not so ugly… hips are a bit narrow but wide enough to carry children" (14). Apparently, the fact that he was able to immigrate to Britain, never affected the workings of Chanu's mind. It is namely in rural areas of Bangladesh, with an absence of modern medicine, where people think of making babies as their foremost priority, simply because the more they have children, the better are the chances for at least one of these children to survive. However, Britain is technologically advanced post-industrial country, where government makes sure that even babies born with physical defects never have to die, and that even unemployed people are being provided with a place to live and with food. Therefore, Chanu's intention to proceed with addressing life's challenges in a manner natural to his native Bangladesh simply reflected the fact that this person's very presence in Britain might not have been altogether natural. What appears especially ironic is that Chanu considered himself an educated individual, fully capable of adapting to the life in Britain. However, as it appears out of *Brick Lane* context, one's ability to cite Shakespeare does not automatically imply such individual's intellectual affiliation with the Western values.

Brick Lane, in a variety of ways, stages debates about the nature of immigrant subjectivity. The novel is particularly of interest as an examination of the double bind that female migrants face, treated as alien by their host nation and as commodities by the men in their own communities. The paradoxes of migration are dramatized in the various characters, but especially through the central character Nazneen's relationships with her husband Chanu and her lover Karim. The novel begins with the story of "How You Were Left to Your Fate"—the tale of Nazneen's birth in Bangladesh in 1967. Despite her child's illness, Nazneen's mother decides against taking the baby to a hospital in a city, arguing: "We must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger". (14)

As Nazneen grew she heard many times this story. It was because of her mother's wise decision that Nazneen lived to become the wide-faced, watchful girl that she was. Fighting against one's Fate can weaken the blood. Sometimes, or perhaps most times, it can be fatal. Not once did Nazneen question the logic of the story. What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. This principle ruled her life.

Nazneen had originally never doubted that fact that her purpose in life was being limited to giving birth to as many children as possible, in time free from slaving for her husband in the kitchen. She did not raise objections against arranged marriage to Chanu, even though she never even knew how her future husband looked like: "Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma" (7). Apparently, Nazneen never doubted the fact that prearranged marriages are just as common in Britain as it is the case in Bangladesh, which explains why,

after having been brought to Britain, Nazneen remained ignorant for a while as to the fact that women are being just as equal as men. It is specifically by adopting perceptional ignorance, in regards to surrounding reality, that Nazneen strived to preserve her national identity, even though it is very unlikely that at this point of her life, Nazneen was even aware of what the concept of identity stood for, as rurally-patriarchal societies, such as the one in which Nazneen was born, deny women any identity whatsoever. This is not because of Islam but lack of education to understand the true Islam.

In the eyes of first generation Bengali immigrants to Britain, the extent of woman's worth is being geometrically proportionate of how many children she was able to give birth, because these rurally minded people view children through quantitative rather than through qualitative lenses.

Some readers might think that Nazneen mother's reluctance to try saving her daughter from death had to do with the strength of her beliefs in god. It is a commonplace practice for the parents even in such comparatively civilized countries as China and India to simply dispose of their newly born children, especially if a child happened to be girl – after all, there can be only so much natural resources, but 'human resources' are fully renewable.

Therefore, if Nazneen was truly committed to celebrating of ethno-cultural uniqueness, she would not even move a finger to try saving the life of her son Raqib – why bother, if an average Bengali woman is expected to be getting pregnant on annual basis anyways? Nevertheless, by the time Raqib was taken to the hospital, Nazneen's mentality was already becoming increasingly hybridized. In the next sub-

chapter of this study, it will be shown how mental hybridization of Ali's main characters was beginning to have an effect on their act.

2.2 The Process of Metamorphosis in *Brick Lane*

Despite the fact that in patriarchical societies women are not considered fully equal as men, which explains the phenomenon of arranged marriages, it was namely Nazneen who began questioning the validity of Bengali traditional rules, prior to her husband. The beginning of Nazneen's mental metamorphosis can be attributed to the time when, for the first time in her life, she was exposed to the sight of ice-skating on TV: "What is this called?' said Nazneen. Chanu glanced at the screen. 'Ice skating', he said, in English. 'Ice e-skating', said Nazneen… 'I would like to learn some English', said Nazneen" (30). The sight of ice-skating had triggered in Nazneen's mind a set of psychological chain-reactions, which would eventually lead her to transform.

This is exactly the reason why Nazneen decided to take an active stance, while trying to save Raqib's life. Apparently, it had dawned upon her that there is no fate – it is up to every particular individual to decide how he or she will go about tackling life's challenges. And, the more technology is being involved in the process of an individual trying to tackle these challenges, the more effective the whole process is going to be.

This explains why, besides relying on God's graces, in time when Raqib became ill, Nazneen insisted on taking her son to the hospital. Moreover, while undergoing an ordeal, Nazneen had also assumed the role of an authority figure in her relations

with Chanu: "Raqib,' said Nazneen. Chanu startled. He seemed about to run. 'What?' 'Go and check on him,' said Nazneen gently." (131)

The reading of *Brick Lane* points out to the fact that Nazneen was not only the character whose worldview had undergone a drastic transformation, throughout the course of the novel. Just as it was the case with Nazneen, throughout novel's entirety Chanu also continued to broaden his intellectual horizons, even though he was trying to hold fast to utterly outdated opinion, associated with his former life in Bangladesh. Whereas, at the beginning of the novel, Chanu never skips an opportunity to complain about moral corruption, on the part of second generation of Bengali immigrants, by the time novel ends, Chanu is being shown to readers as being much less enthusiastic about trying to instill his children with Bengali true identity.

It appears that the transformation of Chanu's mentality was brought about by his conversations with Mrs. Azad, who never ceased trying to encourage Chanu to adopt more positive outlook on his children's Britishness:

> Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes! (93)

Apparently, it is not only native-born Westerners who are being capable of relying on their sense of rationale, while assessing surrounding reality and their place in it, but representatives of just about any ethnic minority, for as long as they have spent some time socializing with oppressors.

Another character in *Brick Lane*, whose mentality appears having undergone a certain cognitive metamorphosis, during her time in Britain, is Nazeen's friend Razia. Even though that, upon her settling in Albion, Razia never doubted the soundness of Bengali traditional morality, which prescribes women with only the role of housewives, this character's continuous interaction with surrounding socio-political realities had effectively changed the way she would address these realities. Razia had cut her hair short, she refused wearing traditional Bengali dress 'sari', and her worldviews began to increasingly remind that of Western feminists: "She (Razia) 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." (95) Just as it was the case with Nazeen, during her stay in Britain, Razia had come to realization of the fact that there was not even a single rationale-substantiated reason for her to think of men as some superior beings. Slowly but surely, Razia's attitudes were becoming increasingly sarcastic. And, as it has been pointed out earlier - one's strong sense of sarcasm and self-irony is an indication of such individual's being able to adjust to urban living. Unfortunately, Razia could not take a practical advantage of her newly acquired psychological qualities on the way of pursuing a professional career, because she ended up being only the provider to her kids.

2.3 The key factors that bring changes in the lives of main characters.

The major factor that had brought a change in the lives of those novel's characters who emigrated from Bangladesh to Britain is their eventual realization of Bengali traditional values' out datedness. In its turn, such their realization resulted in the weakening of spatial subtleties of characters' collectivist mentality. As Irene Fernandez has pointed out on her article *Representing Third Spaces, Fluid Identities and Contested Spaces in Contemporary British Literature*:

> Ali's depiction of a part of the Bangladeshi population inhabiting Brick Lane proves the inadequacy of homogenizing communities according to their race or their ethnicity… Nowadays space can no longer be equated with a single and homogenized community, at the same time that the idea of community cannot be associated with a single or homogenous identity. (151)

The ultimate reason why most ethnic immigrants prefer to proceed with a communal form of existence is that, upon coming to Western cities, they continue to assess surrounding reality through the lenses of agriculture.

In rural areas, it makes absolutely logical sense for people to profess collectivist values, simply because while living as integral elements of rural community, they are being provided with additional opportunities when facing challenges of weather and when tending crops. In countries with underdeveloped social infrastructure, the only effective way for individuals to ensure their physical survival, is relying upon each in just about every aspect of their existence.

However, the essentials of urban living render collectivist mentality socially counter-productive, because the comparative well-being of rural community's

members is being purchased at the expense of depriving them of prospects of intellectual development. And yet, in post-industrial cities, the social value of a particular resident is being exponentially proportionate to the strength of his or her intellectual powers.

In post-industrial Western countries, the less a particular individual is being affiliated with its own ethnic identity, the better are his or her chances of gaining social prominence. In 'brave borderless world', race and ethnic cultures have no social significance – nowadays, all that it matters is money and education. At the end of the novel, Chanu comes to essentially the same conclusion, which explains his following remark: "You see, all my life I have struggled. What good has it done? I have finished with all that. Now I just take the money. I say thank you. I count it" (154). In post-industrial Western society, an individual does not need to struggle or even to apply a strong effort towards gaining social prominence. For as long as the resident of metropolis is willing to live in accordance with secular law and to continuously work on improving its educational excellence – he or she would be able to enjoy every single moment of its existence, without looking forward to reuniting with traditions and customs as simple-minded uneducated people do.

2.4 Positions of the new generations who were born in England.

Whereas, such novel's characters as Chanu, Nazneen and even Dr. Azad and Mrs. Azad are best referred to as being only partially hybridized, there can be no doubt as to the fact that Nazeen's daughters Shahana and Bibi and the character of Karim, are "100% hybrid", in full Bhabha's sense of this word. The reason for this is simple - all three of them were born and raised in Britain, which resulted in their ability to rationalize life's challenges being significantly heightened. The most obvious proof as to validity of this statement is the fact that neither of these characters doubted that living in UK is so much better then living in Bangladesh, with Shahana going as far being outright ashamed of her cultural heritage:

> Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali classical music. Her written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her Kazmeez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them (180).

This quotation from Ali's novel shows once again that the inborn particulars of one's ethnic affiliation do not define the essence of his or her social attitudes.

Irene Fernandez provides us with comprehensible explanation as to why Shahana and Bibi never thought of 'exploring their cultural uniqueness' as such that represented their foremost priority:

> Shahana and Bibi are quite well integrated in British society. Their identity is constructed according to British cultural norms; they have no sense of belonging to Bangladesh. Chanu forces his daughters to maintain a link with his native culture. Yet, this link seems meaningless to the girls, who are unable to relate to a place and a culture they have never known. (152)

Given the essence of both girls' socio-political attitudes, it appears that had they even been exposed to the first-hand accounts of their parents' native culture, it would have caused them to become alienated from this culture even more.

The same applies to Karim, even though this character never doubted his strong affiliation with Bengali 'traditional values'. Nevertheless, the close reading of *Brick Lane* points out to the fact that it was far from being the case. Just like Shahana and Bibi, Karim considered Britain being his homeland – not some distant Bangladesh. Moreover, Karim's attitudes towards representatives of first generation of Bengali immigrants suggest that this character's preoccupation with exploring its ethnic identity was essentially artificial, because deep inside, he despised the actual values, upon which such British identity was supposed to be built. Ever since Ali incorporated the character of Karim into novel's plot, she never ceased portraying him as some who was becoming utterly irritated by his parents' intentions to give him lessons in morality. Karim does not understand why his father would be willing to call him so often – after all, there was nothing useful he could tell his son: "And what's he ringing up for anyway? Hasn't got anything to say to me" (246) From the time when he was a kid, Karim had learned that nothing prevents native-born Whites from expressing their racist attitudes against Bengali immigrants more then facing the prospect of being confronted with a naked force: "When I was at school, we used to be chased home every day. People getting beaten up the whole time. Then we got together, turned the tables. One of us got touched, they all pay for it" (279). In other words, while growing up in Britain, Karim had learnt to treat Whites in exactly the same manner as these people's ancestors used to treat Karim's ancestors in British Pakistan, during the course of colonial era. Apparently, Karim had come to

realization of the fact that, in order to be respected, one does not necessarily need to be understood, but simply feared. Thus, willingly or unwillingly, Karim was slowly becoming associated with essentially colonial values of oppression, even though reversed 180 degrees.

In its turn, this can serve as an additional proof as to validity of Bhabha's theory of post-colonial hybridity – even though Karim's existential identity appears being composed out seemingly opposite psychological traits (his outwardly respect of tradition and his fascination with modernity), it nevertheless does not undermine this identity's wholesomeness. While indulging in behavioral mimicry, Karim was being turned into a person capable of taking yet additional advantages of urban living by understanding what constituted such living's weaknesses. While appearing extra 'traditional' on the outside, Karim's true existential psyche was even more modern than that of Whites, because this character used to utilize the collectivist drives of other members of London's Bengali community to proceed with his own highly individualized agenda. In his article *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*, from which has already been quoted, Bhabha comes up with another idea, within the context of a discussion as to what constituted Karim's actual identity:

> Mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask… The menace of mimicry is its double the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double-vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object" (129).

Thus, the ultimate conclusion of the analysis of themes and motifs, contained in Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* can be formulated as follows: the process of ethnic

immigrants' attaining hybrid mentality is being primarily concerned with the process of these people expanding their intellectual horizons, which in its turn results on both: ethnic immigrants' eventual adaptation to socio-political realities of an urbanized society and their eventual transformation from 'foreigners', through 'others', into 'hybridity'. I believe that such my conclusion is being consistent with the foremost thesis of Bhabha's writings on the subject matter.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF HYBRID IDENTITIES IN *THE LONELY LONDONERS*

3.1 The struggles of the main characters to protect their national identities.

During the colonial time, people in the British West Indies were taught to believe themselves British. They used English and learned British history and literature and listened to English radios. When first West Indians migrated to England most of the migrants were single men with no family ties. Many immigrants were expected to put their skills to use in Britain's post war rebuilding, since the 'mother country' was in shortage of labor. Although Britain needed labor, not every newcomer was welcomed to work in their host country. After the post war nationalist sentiment remained high and the situation was exacerbated by the fact that migrants' skin color instantly delineated them as "alien." Because of this racial discrimination many immigrants had difficulties to find work, especially skilled. Moreover, Britains's shortage of housing was another problem which became a source of problem between natives and immigrants. San Selvon was among those early migrants of the mass movement from the West Indies to Britain that started in 1948. As Nick Bently pointed out in *Form and Language in Sam Selvon's The Lonely Londoners.* "Selvon's fiction is important as one of the very first dramatizations and articulations of the anxieties and daily challenges faced by marginalized black immigrant population in 1950s and 60s Britain"(18*)*

Another issue was the identity of the immigrants since they had their cultural identity with which they had to survive in their host country. Just as it was the case with most of characters in Ali's *Brick Lane,* many characters in Samuel Selvon's

novel *Lonely Londoners* also strived to preserve their national identity, while in Britain. However, given the fact that the plot of Selvon's novel unravels in Britain where the policy of multiculturalism had not been given an official status yet, it comes as no surprise that these people's strive to 'celebrate their uniqueness' was considerably weaker, as compared to that of Ali's characters.

The validity of this statement can be best exemplified in regards to the main character of Moses Aloetta, who would often forget about preserving his identity, for as long as he had money and White women to socialize with. In fact, it is namely in times when Moses was reminded of his ethnic identity by London's socio-political realities, that he experienced a psychological discomfort:

> In America you see a sign telling you to keep off, but over here hotel or restaurant they you don't see any, but when you go in the hotel or restaurant they will politely tell you to haul – or else give you the cold treatment (24).

In its turn, this explains why Moses' longing to explore its identity derived primarily out of this character's sense of homesickness:

> You know what I want to do? I want to go back to Trinidad and lay down in the sun and dig my toes, and eat a fish broth and go Maracas Bay and talk to them fishermen, and all day long I sleeping under a tree, with just the old sun for company (130).

The same can be said about Selvon novel's another important character Galahad, who felt that there was absolutely no difference between himself and the rest of White Londoners, in psychological sense of this word. This was exactly the reason

why Galahad kept on insisting that the color of his skin did not have any affect whatsoever onto the workings of his mind.

Repeatedly, throughout the course of the novel, Galahad expresses his discontent with ignorant Whites, who believed that the color of one's skin does define the subtleties of individual's mentality: "Colour, is you that causing all this, you know. Why the hell you can't be blue or red or green, if you can't be white?" (88). There is a memorable scene in the novel when Galahad becomes enraged by ignorant attitudes, on the part of Polish restaurant-owner, while exposing his sense of self-identity as being solely concerned with the concept of British Commonwealth: "The Pole who have that restaurant, he ain't have no more right in this country than we. In fact we is British subjects, and he is a foreigner" (90). Thus, despite the color of Galahad's skin, he had proven himself much more open-minded as compared to East European immigrants, whose endowment with clearly defined rural mentality prompted them to proceed with communal form of existence, even though they could not be distinguished from native-born White Londoners externally.

By the time Galahad arrives to London, he is being represented to readers as someone who would be able to succeed in Britain rather marvelously, due to his urbanely idealistic attitudes. When Moses inquires about Galahad's luggage, the latter answers that he does not have any: "Where your luggage', 'What luggage? I'aint have any. I figure is no sense to load up myself with a set of things. When I start a work I will buy some things" (33). Such Galahad's answer appears highly allegorical – before coming to Britain, he rid himself of rurally based preconceptions of living, in order to be able to adjust to urban existence more quickly. The irony lays in the fact that, after having lived in London for sometimes, Galahad had realized many

native-born Londoners being more prejudicious than he himself could have possibly been, because of their subtle racism.

Novel's another prominent character Harris also did not hold his ethnic identity in any high regard, as he was well aware of the fact that the extent of one's social worth has very little to do with his or her color of skin, and religious affiliation to say the least. Despite what many today's critics imply, Harris was not forced into accepting Britishness by social pressures, but he had consciously chosen in favor of becoming an integral element of British society – just as it was the case with Galahad, Harris was well aware of the fact that the concept of civilized living in urban society should have no racial implications:

> And when he dress, you think is some Englishman going to work in the city, bowler and umbrella, and briefcase tuck under the arm, with The Times fold up in the pocket so the name would show, and he walking upright like if is he alone who alive in the world. Only thing, Harris face black (111).

It is clearly understandable that, throughout their stay in London, novel's characters had been continuously confronted by various emanations of racism, on the part of city's Whites.

It can be said that a strong sense of humor, self-irony and sarcasm is a foremost psychological trait of a true urbanite. The only reason why ethnic immigrants often get to be offended by what they perceive as racism is that they allow themselves being offended. However, most of Selvon's characters have proven themselves being intellectually advanced enough not to turn their psychological insecurities, in regards to the color of their skin, into some sort of existential fetish. In her article

Immigration, Postwar London, and the Politics of Everyday Life in Sam Selvon's Fiction, Rebecca Dyer had made a good point while stating: "Without adequate housing, food, or respectful treatment within their adopted city, Selvon's migrants would find partial solace in what de Certeau calls the 'increased deviousness, fantasy, or laughter" (111). It is important to understand that, during the course of fifties, there were no objectively existing preconditions in Britain for ethnic immigrants to be preoccupied with preservation of their national identity, while relying on welfare payments as the only source of their income, as it is often the case nowadays.

Back then, in order for recently arrived immigrant to be able to stay in the country, he or she would have to prove its willingness to work hard. This is why in one of novel's scenes, Moses advices Galahad to grab just about any job he would be offered by employment agency: "When you come back to report tell them you will take anything for the time being" (47). Thus, it was specifically by trying to prove its social usefulness and also by enjoying life's simple pleasures, in times when they could afford it, that most characters in Selvon's novel had gone about exploring/preserving their identity. Therefore, we can say that the foremost feature of these characters' identity had very little to do with their ethno-cultural roots – despite the fact that all of them spoke creolized English, neither of these people believed that that their linguistic uniqueness or the particulars of their racial affiliation was setting them apart from the rest of society.

On the contrary – as Moses pointed out, given the fact that the presence of West Indian immigrants in London contributed rather significantly to city's overall well-

being, these immigrants should have taken pride in their urban usefulness as the foremost aspect of their actual identity:

> Instead of moaning and groaning about his sorrows, he (immigrant worker) should stop and think and count these blessings reserved solely for him. He should realize that if it wasn't up for him, the city would go on sleeping forever. He should look upon himself as a pioneer what preparing the way for the city's day, polishing the brass and chrome, washing the pots and pans. As he banishes the filth and litter, he could thunder out decrees in the Houses of Parliament and his voice would ring through the corridors and change the Immigration Act (5).

Apparently, Moses knew perfectly well that the key to one's happiness is his or her ability to think positive. Life is not a fairy tale but constant struggle – the multicultural realities of today's London did not change this simple fact. And, it is namely those ethnic immigrants who can take life's challenges as men, who might have a chance of rising from society's bottom to its top.

3.2 The Process of Metamorphosis in *Lonely Londoners*

The ability to adjust to urban life, on the part of ethnic immigrants from Third World, varies significantly. Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate to suggest that; whereas, some immigrants have innate psychological qualities that allow undergoing the process of adaptation painlessly, some do not. There is a plenty of proof as to the fact that the extent of immigrants' successfulness, in adjusting to the ways of a big city, is being defined by primarily societal factors and also by their willingness to proceed with essentially autonomous form of existence. The essence of such their hypothetical willingness/unwillingness appears to be of voluntarist nature – the more a particular individual is being endowed with the sense of will-power, the more likely he will be able to control its irrationally-communal urges. In its turn, the strength of person's will-power is being reflected in his or her ability to assess surrounding reality through the lenses of rationale.

The reason why characters in Selvon's novel had come to Britain, in the first place, is that they rightly associated immigration to this country with the prospects of improving their financial stance. As novel's most prominent female character Tanty put it: "They say that it have more work in England, and better pay. And to tell you the truth, when I hear that Tolroy getting five pound a week, I had to agree" (31). Therefore, it was only natural for these characters to begin experiencing an emotional discomfort on the account of their realization of the fact that their increased ability to make more money had reduced their ability to celebrate the values of rural/communal life.

However; whereas, Moses, Galahad, Harris and novel's other less important male characters were able to largely overcome their psychological weaknesses, related to the life in their newly acquired urban homeland, Tanty could not. Just as it was the case with Mrs. Islam from Ali's novel, Tanty subconsciously strived for nothing else but turning the city of London into Trinidad. In her article "*Sam Selvon's The Lonely Londoners and the Structure of Black Metropolitan Life*", Msiska Mpalive-Hangson says: "Tanty is not in a hurry to leave Britain, if anything she tries to transform Britain into a bit of Trinidad" (22). In the same article, author refers to the character Tanty as predecessor of today's enforcers of multiculturalism:

> Tanty is one of the most powerful characters in the novel in that she imposes on the metropolis the symbolic order of the Caribbean, suggesting that perhaps most of the other characters have difficulties with city life because of their uncritical veneration of everything metropolitan… She thus initiates a process of multiculturalism which in later years will transform significantly the cultural geography of London (23).

Yet if anything, it is specifically lowered adaptability to urban existence, on the part of most novel's characters, which prevented them from being able to feel comfortable with the realities of a big city.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these characters are being represented to readers as rather one-dimensional, in behavioral sense of this word, it would be wrong to suggest that throughout their stay in London, these characters' mentality did not undergone a certain change. In the same article, Mpalive-Hangson implies that the characters of Moses, Harris, Big City, Captain and Galahad can be referred as

nothing less but *flaneurs* (French word for city-dwellers), who eventually had grown to derive an aesthetic pleasure out being able to intermingle with urban crowds:

In a big city, even people who come from little rural villages can feel quite comfortable, once they have a steady job. As Galahad had found out, once he would put on his best clothes on a day off, he would indeed feel himself belonging to London as much as its native-born residents were:

> So, cool as a lord, the old Galahad walking out to the road, with plastic raincoat hanging on the arm, and the eyes not missing one sharp craft that pass, bowing his head in a polite 'Good evening' and not giving a blast if they answer or not. This is London, this is life oh lord, to walk like a king with money in your pocket, not a worry in the world (87).

Even though it has taken them some time, novel's characters were slowly beginning to realize that, while being plunged into urban existence, they could take practical advantage of even the external signifiers of their underprivileged status, such as the color of their skin. For example, the character of Captain realized that, in order for him to be able to stay in London, he would not even have to work – the fact that he appeared rather 'exotic' in the eyes of White women, allowed him to make money out pursuing romantic affairs with these women and also out of conning newly arrived immigrants to London into giving him money:

> The old Cap have the sort of voice that would melt butter in the winter, and he does speak like a gentleman. So after he sponge on all the fellars he know for meals, he used to look around for newcomers, and put on a soft tone and the hard luck story (48).

As it appears out of Selvon novel's context, it was only the matter time, before West Indian immigrants would begin realizing this simple fact. On numerous occasions, Moses expresses his discontent with some of his compatriots' lesser ability to indulge in communal socialization: "When it come to making money, it ain't have anything like 'ease me up' or 'both of we is countrymen together' in the old London" (11). However, as the storyline progressed, Moses was becoming less and less tended to come up with the remarks like this, as he had leant that the extent of West Indian immigrants' successfulness in Britain was exponentially proportionate to the extent of their behavioral individualism. In the next sub-chapter of this paper, we will discuss the factors that had brought about a change, in how novel's characters were beginning to assess surrounding reality and their place in it.

3.3 The Key Factors that Bring Changes in the Lives of the Main Characters

In the novel's initial parts, many characters used to take an offense in the fact that White Londoners would usually refer to them as 'Jamaicans', simply because of the color of their skin. For example, while being confronted by what he perceived as these people's ignorant attitudes, Moses never skips an opportunity to complain about it: "Moses come from Trinidad, which is a thousand miles from Jamaica, but the English people believe that everybody who come from the West Indies from Jamaica" (12). Nevertheless, just as it was the case with Moses, in novel's subsequent parts characters appear to have become less emotionally vulnerable in their dealing with emanations of White people's ignorance.

Slowly, it was beginning to dawn upon novel's characters that White people's generalizations, in regards to ethnic immigrants, were actually concerned with the workings of immigrants' mentality, as opposed to being concerned solely with the color of their skin. And, as it has been pointed out earlier, the foremost psychological trait of this mentality is perceptional collectivism – at the beginning of the novel, some characters appeared as such who simply could not think of themselves outside of their ethnic communities. The character of Tanty exemplifies the validity of this suggestion perfectly well, as she would even refuse having her photo taken, unless all the members of her extended family would be included in the picture. In the article from which has already been quoted, Rebecca Dyer says: "Agreeing to have her photograph taken, Tanty illustrates that hers is a communal identity when she insists 'You can't take me alone. You have to have that whole family' (123). Yet, the strength of people's collectivist rural-mindedness is not something that it being genetically predetermined. What causes ethnic immigrants, which had been

originally endowed with rural mentality, to reconsider the way they address life's challenges? There are two key-factors that bring about such a change: a continuous interaction with native-born urbanites and the continuous process of these people's material enrichment.

There is memorable scene in the second part of Selvon's trilogy *Moses Ascending*, which points out to the fact that, after having purchased a house, Moses automatically ceased being communally-minded:

> I was Master of the house. I insert my key in the front door lock, I enter, I
> ascend the stairs, and when the tenants hear my heavy tread they cower and
> shrink in their rooms, in case I snap my fingers and say OUT to any of them.
> (4)

Regardless of what the color of his or her skin might be, an individual who has acquired the taste of money and power becomes alienated from 'traditional values', which points out at objective subtleties of such a process.

In her article, Mpalive-Hangson implies counter-productive essence of one's preoccupation with making money:

> The erosion of the sense of kinship, community and fellowship in the city is
> attributed to the adoption of a relentless and ruthless materialism, as money
> becomes the dominant measure of value and worth, and even of friendship, in
> some cases. (15)

It appears that, in the second part of Selvon's trilogy, Moses had come to essentially the same conclusion, which is why he preferred maintaining rather neutral stance, in time when Black Panthers were trying to undermine police's authority, by

suggesting that their very Blackness gave them the right to disrupt law and order. Apparently, by that time, the process of Moses being instilled with urban values was largely completed:

> Black power militants may try to misconstrue my Memories for their own purposes, and put the following moral to defame me, to wit: that after the ballad and the episode, it is the White man who ends up Upstairs and the Black man who ends up Downstairs. (140)

Yet, after having acquired wisdom, during the course of his stay in London, Moses became aware of a simple fact that Big City does not divide its residents on Black, White, or even Stripped, but on winners and losers. As Moses had put it: "I don't need no black power, nor white power, nor any fucking power but my own… I just want to live in peace" (141)   Alternatively, those ethnic immigrants who, despite being confronted by White people's often-racist attitudes, never lose the sight of their actual agenda as such that it being solely concerned with making money and providing to their families, will prosper. As one of the greatest African-American writers, Booker T. Washington had put it in his book *Up from Slavery:* "The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race." (10) Thus, we can say that the foremost ideological thesis of Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, in regards to the issue of hybrid identity, is being similar to that of Monica Ali's novel: it is namely immigrants' continuous interaction with the realities of living in a big city, which instills these people's mentality with perceptional ambivalence.

3.4 Positions of the New Generations Who Were Born in England

Just as it has been mentioned earlier, the process of first and especially second generation ethnic immigrants' attaining hybrid identity often involves their realization of the fact that, by simultaneously being 'others' externally and 'natives' internally, they can exploit society to their own advantage. As it has been noted in Swift Dickinson's article *Sam Selvon's 'Harlequin Costume': Moses Ascending, Masquerade, and the Bacchanal of Self-Creolization*:

> Moses remains an ambivalent figure in that, though he serves as a voice with which Selvon can carnivalize imperial discourse, he also demonstrates a desire to attain a position of advantage according to the values implicit in such discourse (71).

Despite the fact that newly realized 'powers', on the part of British-born West Indians seem to have prompted these young people to seek their cultural roots, it was far from being the actual case, in literary sense of this word, simply because, just as it was being pointed out by Dickinson, these people's exploration of their identity was essentially a part of urban carnival.

After the abolition of slavery in America, it was particularly popular among former slave-owners to perform a so-called 'cake dance' with black tar on their faces (dance, originally performed by Black slaves to win favors from Whites), simply because that by doing it, these people were manifesting their ability to adopt just about any identity they wanted, which in their eyes was the ultimate proof of their existential superiority. In a similar manner, in Selvon's *Moses Ascending*, the characters representing second generation of West Indian immigrants would go about

celebrating their blackness, despite the fact that, during the course of such their celebration, they never ceased professing essentially Western/urban values. And, the reason they have been instilled with these values, is that they were born and raised in Britain. While referring to the character of Brenda, Moses states:

> If I did shut my eyes, I would have thought it was a Nordic talking, the accent was so high. She didn't sound like some of them women what try to put on English and it don't fit them properly. She sound like the real thing. (32)

Yet, it was Brenda who seemed being even more enthusiastic about taking pride in her blackness, as compared to what it was the case with first generation West Indian immigrants.

The same can be said about the character of Galahad, whose formative years had been spent in Britain and who in *Moses Ascending* had adopted a clearly defined hybrid identity, despite the fact that in the first part of Selvon's trilogy, Galahad was trying hard to associate himself with the spirit of Britishness. By the time we meet Galahad in *Moses Ascending*, he no longer appears being endowed with inferiority complex – such his initial complex had yielded the way to his newly acquired and rather hypertrophied sense of racial pride: *"When I opened the door Galahad raise his right hand up in the air making a fist of his fingers as if he going to bust a cuff in my arse, and say, paradoxically, 'Peace, brother. Black is beautiful."*(11) Nevertheless, the fact that Moses refers to Galahad and Brenda's newly acquired fascination with their cultural roots rather sarcastically, suggests that both characters' intention to celebrate their ethnic uniqueness was essentially of urban nature – whatever the improbable this might sound.

In the article from which has already been quoted, Dickinson had made a good point while stating:

Selvon tries on Moses Aloetta as a Harlequin costume," using him to creolized re-presentation of the metro pole from the liminal space of a character-becoming-writer. The disguise allows the author an interstitial position from which to narrate the postcolonial City; like a masker in Trinidad Carnival, Selvon wears Moses as mask and man, as a threshold embodiment of his ambivalence. (70)

While pursuing with a communal mode of existence in rural society, its members have very little time to afford being concerned with anything but struggling with nature on essentially permanent basis. However, the fact that the workings of urban society are being defined by continuous technological progress more than by any other socio-political factor, it creates preconditions for such society's members to be increasingly concerned with indulgence in need-free activities, such as carnivalesque exploration of their ethno-hybrid identity.

It is well worthy noticing that the way representatives of second generation ethnic immigrants go about exploring their identity cannot be referred to as positivist – by wearing their ethnic clothes, which often appear aesthetically offensive in the Western eye, and by insisting on their right to practice 'otherness', these people strive for nothing else but breaking social taboos. Within the context of what has been said earlier – such strive appears being of essentially urban nature, because it derives out these people's urban-based bellyful idleness.

In her article, Pnina Werbner points out at non-confirmative essence of cultural hybridity:

> Ritual clowns and monsters are very much like avant-garde works of art or novels: they are meant to shock, to inseminate, to impregnate, to bring otherness from beyond the boundaries into established routines of daily life. They are intentional hybridities: they work to transform, to revitalize, and to create new ordeals to be transcended. (141)

Therefore, the essence of cultural hybridity appears highly paradoxical – despite the fact that people endowed with hybrid identity often seem to be professing retrograde/communal values, they are not being concerned with exploring these values as 'thing in itself' but rather as the instrument of undermining different emanations of urban society's authoritative oppression – thus, increasing the levels of tolerance within a society.

CHAPTER 4
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRINADIAN AND BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS

Both Monica Ali and Sam Selvon, who are immigrant writers in London, examine the problems of ethnic immigrants from their respective countries in London. *The Lonely Londoners* and *Brick Lane* reveal the difficulties of these immigrants, such as discrimination, poverty, and integration. But they depict the issues in different ways because these two books were written in different eras. Thus, the ethnic immigrants from West Indies experienced different problems from the Bangladeshi immigrants.

The time gap is a useful measurement between the two novels. *The Lonely Londoners* was written in 1940s, the time when the "pure" Anglo Saxon residents first were faced with black immigrants in London. Actually, at that time, all commonwealth countries' citizens were legally British citizens. Thus, many West Indians sought refuge in the "mother country" but, despite holding legal citizenship, not every West Indian immigrant was welcomed by some of the white citizen of London. The migrants' skin color was the main cause for them to become an "alien." As a result of this alienation immigrants became isolated from the main stream of the society. Galahad, who suffered a lot from this segregation, complained about the color of his skin, which caused the discrimination in society;

> So Galahad talking to the color black, as if is a person, telling it that is not he who causing botheration in the place, but Black, who is worthless thing for making trouble all about. 'Black, you see what you cause to happen to yesterday? I went to look at that room that Ram tell me about in the Gate, and as soon as the landlady see you she say the room already let. She ain't even

give me a chance to say good morning. Why the hell you can't change

colour? (77)

This alienation made their lives very difficult to bear because they couldn't find proper and permanent jobs. Another troubling issue was shortage of housing; the immigrants from West Indies had to live in the houses with poor conditions. This shortage of housing was the cause of conflict with native people often blaming the immigrants of having unjust rivalry for housing. Thus, the first immigrants faced a lot of difficulties, which prevented them from adjusting to the host country.

On the other hand, *Brick Lane* was written in the new millennium when London became a multicultural city. As a result, the characters of *Brick Lane* did not suffer from the racial discrimination as those of *Lonely Londoners*. The living standards of the Bengali immigrants are better than the Trinidadian immigrants, Thus, Monica Ali depicted the conditions of Bangladeshi immigrants who lived in the isolated ghetto, Tower Hamlets. *Brick Lane* mainly focused on the integration problem, which was mainly caused by their rural mentality. In this novel, readers cannot read much about the British-Bangladeshi interactions. The characters of *Brick Lane* had their houses to manage, jobs to do, and lives to lead, which was not the case in *The Lonely Londoners*. Asian migrants had conflicts among themselves. The educated Bangladeshi immigrants, like Dr Azad and Chanu, often questioned the integration problems of their countrymen blaming them for being rural minded. In this case, Chanu's statement can be handy to understand the conflict among the immigrants:

Most of our people here are Slythetis. 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. (28)

Another difference between *The Lonely Londoners* and *Brick Lane* is family life.

The first immigrants from the West Indies were mainly single men without family

ties. Therefore, when they came to London they rented houses to live together in

groups of three or four people. Except for Tolroy, most of the characters had left

their families back in Trinidad. Thus, they spent their time socializing with white

girls or chatting about their memories with girls.

However, the characters of *Brick Lane* had families and the story was built around

family life. Thus, the main characters like Chanu and Dr. Azad had some

responsibilities to look after their families, which was not the case in *The Lonely*

Londoners. Therefore, we can read about the second generations and the generation-

clash in *Brick Lane*. Monica Ali illustrated thoroughly how Bangladeshi immigrants

strived to preserve their culture and transmit it to new generations. Protecting

traditional values was the main issue for most immigrants. As Chanu said to Dr.

Azad: "I don't plan to risk these things happening to my children. We'll go back

before they get spoiled" (32) Thus, Chanu always struggled to impose his cultural

values to his children, which didn't make any sense to them.

Religion is an important tool to examine the integration issue of the immigrants.

The main characters of *The Lonely Londoners* didn't have any affiliation with

religion. Sam Selvon didn't portray any of his characters with religious sense.

However, the main characters of *Brick Lane* had strong sense of religion and

traditional values. Nazneen sets a good example about the importance of religion in

the character's daily life. She prayed five times a day and she always recited some

verses from the holy Quran. Although Chanu was not a practicing Muslim, he claimed that he was a good Muslim by heart.

Nazneen's life was based on fate, which shaped her life from her babyhood to the marriage to Chanu. Since everything was programmed by God there was no need to fight against her fate. When she recited from the holy Quran, she felt calmed. "The words calmed her stomach and she was pleased. Even Dr. Azad was nothing as to God." But, during her stay she steadily moved away from religion.

The social status of the immigrants in the two novels is different from each other. The characters of *The Lonely Londoners* do not have permanent jobs and their jobs were generally menial work. Even the skilled migrants couldn't find a job according to their skills. Although Moses had been in London for about fifteen years when Galahad arrived to London, he did not have a proper and permanent job. Thus, Moses suggested to Galahad that he should do whatever job is offered to him, otherwise he would become unemployed.

On the other hand, some of the characters of *Brick Lane* gained some social status in society. Dr. Azad is a good example to see the progress had made during their stay in London because he was an educated man and a well-known doctor among White Londoners and the immigrants. When Chanu needed help to get promotion in his company, he asked to Dr. Azad to help him because Chanu's boss was his patient. Even though Chanu couldn't gain social status as he wanted, he was an educated man. Other characters of *Brick Lane* had better jobs than *The Lonely Londoners*.

Integration occurred at a different pace for the two immigrant groups, Trinidadians and Bangladeshi. The characters of *The Lonely Londoners* had difficulties integrating into their host country. Except for their rural mindedness, they were not the people to

blame for their inability to integrate to the main stream of the society. They tried hard to mingle with the white people; white residents of London humiliate them and reject the black immigrants from their society. For instance, Galahad, who was eager to mingle with the white Londoners, was always faced with humiliating discrimination. Again Galahad's situation provides a good example to understand this alienation; "But Galahad skin like rubber at this stage, he bend down and pat the child cheek and the child cower and shrink and begin to cry." (76) Actually, the immigrants from Trinidad did not have strong traditional values therefore they could have been assimilated easily in London, but white residents were not ready to accept them.

In terms of integration, the characters of *Brick Lane* were luckier than those of *The Lonely Londoners*. First of all, their skins were not as black as those of West Indian immigrants and the white residents of white Londoners were used to living with the immigrants. However, Asian immigrants had a hard time intermingling with the rest of British society. The main obstacle was their way of living did not correlate with western culture. They were afraid of losing their traditional values so they tried to isolate themselves from the other groups. Women's situation is useful to understand the problem because they just stayed at home and looked after their children for ages without learning a word of English. Mrs. Islam's remarks to Razia are a valuable example to understand why Bangladeshi immigrants were afraid of losing their traditional values; "But if you mix with all these people, even if they are good people, you have to give up your culture to accept theirs. That's how it is." (29) Thus, even they had better facilities than those of The Lonely Londoners, they

couldn't benefit from this because of their strong sense of religion and traditional values, which did not correlate with the western culture.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the issues of the integration of immigrants as they move from difficulties of adjustment to hybridization, as well as the immigrant mentality in *The Lonely Londoners* and *Brick Lane*, which has an important role in the integration process, have been examined thoroughly with reference to social scientists. Examining the two novels, which were written in different eras, this thesis shows us how London had become a multicultural city in the post-colonial period. We have seen how the characters of *Brick Lane* and *The Lonely Londoners* steadily made their mark on Britain's land getting rid of their rural mindedness and negotiating with the White residents of the host country to be recognized as "British." The characters like Nazneen, Dr Aziz, and Harris in *The Lonely Londoners* and *Brick Lane* gained some level of hybridity and integrated into their society well. Moreover, the second generation immigrants like Bibi, Shahana and Kerim, who gained hybridity in full sense of this word, integrated into their host country well. This process of integration and hybridization in *Brick Lane* refutes the thesis of neo-conservatives who claim that Muslims and Christians (East and West, respectively) can not live in harmony because of the animosity between West and East, which was historically pre-determined by the Crusades.

This study also shows us that racial discrimination is not the only issue that prevents immigrants from integrating into their host country because in the two novels we see that the characters ability to gain social prominence depends on their mentality; the more they get rid of their rural mindedness the more they integrate into the host country. For instance, Dr Aziz, an educated immigrant, mingles with white

people and he has a lot of friends who are white Londoners, so he does not complain about racial discrimination, which is the major complaint among the immigrants, and this proves that gaining social prominence depends on the individual.

The emergence of the concept of hybrid identity, substantiates the validity of this thesis, simply the reflections of such identity are being clearly of carnivalesque essence. Whereas, the representatives of first generation ethnic immigrants in Ali and Selvon's novels appear being instilled with inferiority complex, due to particulars of their religious beliefs and their physical appearance, their children did not only experience a psychological discomfort as to their ethno-cultural affiliation, but they would often go as far as indulging in public celebration of traditional values. However, this was not because they deeply believed in these values, but because by exploring their ethnic uniqueness, these people have been emphasizing 'othernesses' as the foremost aspect of their existential identity. And, the reason they would do this is simple – in highly urbanized Western societies, the very notion of identity derives out of the notion of 'otherness' as something that is being concerned with one's ability to act as a supreme individualist.

It is namely realization of this fact which will allow us to get a better understanding as to what accounts for ethnic immigrants and their children's hybrid identity – by openly proclaiming their affiliation with traditional values and by striving to look 'exotic', while in public, these people are being able to prove themselves as even more individualistically-minded, as compared native-born Whites. Therefore, the external manifestations of these people's affiliation with collectivist/rural mentality can often be taken as the ultimate proof of their perceptional individualism .

After having settled in Western countries, ethnic immigrants slowly learn both: how to modernize traditional values, in regards to their own lives, and to how utilize these values as the instrument of attaining 'otherness', in regards to the lives of others. By doing this, they prove themselves perfect urbanites, because one's ability to adjust to urban life, implies his/her ability to take practical advantages of living in a 'big city', regardless of whether taking such an advantage is being moral or not.

Most immigrants endowed with hybrid identity, which can not be explained without these people's continuous interaction with surrounding socio-political realities. By interacting with these realities, 'hybrids' acquire a three-dimensional insight onto what their parents used to think solely within the simplistic context of good vs. evil. In his study *Television and the Reflexive Project of the Self: Soaps, Teenage Talk and Hybrid Identities*, Chris Barker has come to conclusion that:

> Identities are no longer simply 'givens' but are constructed by us from the multiplying resources provided by Globalization… Identity is not an already existent 'fixed thing', rather, we can talk of 'identities-in-process (627).

Therefore, it seems to be inappropriate to discuss the concept of hybrid identity as phenomenological but static category, because of an objectivity of a linear course of history. Whereas; today such identity is being referred to as one of sociological consequences of post-colonialism, it might not necessarily be the case tomorrow.

What it means is that a new critical theory of hybrid identity must be formulated as the consistent process of globalization, urbanization and secularization that changes the qualitative essence of many classical social and political notions, or renders them

outdated altogether. As Robert Cox pointed out in his article *Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations*:

> Critical theory, unlike problem-solving theory, does not take institutions and social power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing" (129).

In his article *Diaspora and Double Consciousness*, Samir Dayal came up with a question, which exposes the fallacy of cultural relativism, as multiculturalism's ideological basis: "What does another, non-Western modernity look if it is not just a response to a Western paradigm." (51) Nevertheless, the objectiveness of Western urban modernity does not imply its racialism.

Therefore, the process of representatives of ethnic minorities attaining hybrid identity is being essentially concerned with these people consciously choosing in favor of existential urbanism as the ultimate mean of making themselves emotionally comfortable with modernity. I believe that the validity of this thesis is being illustrated in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Samuel Selvon's *Lonely Londoners* perfectly well.

As the analysis of both novels suggests that the foremost challenge experienced by representatives of ethnic minorities, of the way of integrating into Western societies, is being concerned with their often clearly defined perceptional infantilism, which in its turn is being reflected in these people's adherence to the values of communal existence. Nevertheless, given the fact that most characters in Ali and Selvon's novels are being shown in the process of expanding their intellectual

horizons, it would be wrong to suggest that these characters' original endowment with traditional values had been genetically predetermined. After having immigrated to Britain, Chanu, Nazneen, Dr. Azad, Moses, Galahad, Harris and others began to experience the hybridization in different levels. Slowly but surely, it was beginning to dawn upon them that the actual worth of their communal-based sense of self-identity should have been measured practically, as opposed to being measured solely theoretically. In its turn, this prompted these characters to come to realization of a simple fact that, within the context of one trying to gain social prominence in urban metropolis, his or her willingness to profess the values of rural communalism should be regarded as essentially a futile.

Despite the fact that modern interpretations of both novels often imply that, while being confronted by explicit and implicit emanations of white racism, Ali and Selvon's characters had been mainly preoccupied with trying to preserve their ethnic identity; novels' close reading reveals that this was far from being the case. The reason for this is simple – even though these characters usually sought socialization with their compatriots, the continuous interaction with urban realities on their part, had affected the way these individuals would go about addressing life's challenges. After having lived in London for some time, they have ceased referring to themselves as simply West Indians and Bengali, while growing to recognize their newly acquired Britishness as their only the asset. In its turn, this illustrates the validity of Bhabha's ideas, in regards to what constitutes one's hybrid identity – namely, individual's existential ambivalence. The most intellectually advanced representatives of ethnic minorities in Western countries had long ago learnt to refer to themselves as citizens, in full sense of this word, which can be taken as the

foremost proof as to their possession of hybrid identity. Apparently, these individuals are being perfectly aware of sheer artificialness of racial profiling, when utilized by politicians, within the context of designing socio-political policies.

Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to refer to Ali and Selvon's novels as being concerned with promotion of humanist agenda of urban tolerance. As Bhabha has put it in his article *The White Stuff*;

> What we need is a way of looking that restores a third dimension to hear-set profiles; a way of writing that makes black and white come alive in a shared context; a way of talking, of moving back and forth along the tongue, to bring language to a space of community and conversation that is never simply white and never singly black (23).

The realities of urban globalization point out to the fact that in the "brave borderless world", an individual's identity cannot be solely reflective of his or her biological makeup or ethnic affiliation. On the contrary – the less a particular resident of a metropolis is being instilled with race-based or tradition-based prejudices, the more will be likely to take a full advantage of its intellectual powers. And, the more urban-dweller is being open minded, the more he/she will be likely to realize a simple fact that in the 'big city', it is only the extent of his or her financial prosperity, which reflects the actual subtleties of one's identity.

Both, Monica Ali and Sam Selvon have succeeded in representing the true nature of challenges, faced by ethnic immigrants. Monica Ali and Samuel Selvon explore the themes of hybridity and metamorphosis in *Brick Lane* and the *Lonely Londoners*. Both writers argue that the obsession with boundary crossing and otherness was an

effort to delineate human natures regularities and to establish a strong sense of personal identity. Especially Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is an answer to the perennial question of how the individual can both remain constant and change. As a woman, Nazneens' metamorphosis supposes possibilities of new cultural affiliations and therefore new opportunities, which take place in cross-breeding of cultures in terms of hybridity involving the rejection of her past and assimilation of new values.In Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Samuel Selvon's the *Lonely Londoners*. Samuel Selvon and Monica Ali depict the pros and cons of living in London where the intersections of many races, ethnicities and religions can be seen. Moreover, problems faced by the non-Anglo-Saxon people and the obstacles which do not allow them to integrate with the Anglo-Saxon culture and how these obstacles in the way of a multicultural society can be removed are depicted in detail and some questions are raised in the mind of the readers. Thus, the issue of hybridity; harmony-in-diversity /chaos-in-diversity is put on the agenda in the both novels.

This study has also shown us how, despite their country's unwilling attitude to be co-operative, the immigrants like the main characters in Selvon and Ali's books, step by step made their mark on Britain's scene and began to put the fundamentals of a new reality for the next generations. By ignoring the subtle racism they had confronted, they managed to adopt themselves into the new society. After they had lived in Britain for a while, they gained a new identity, which was neither British nor their own ethnicity. Beginning from Britain's nationalistic unease of hybridity in the 1950s, the novels in this study show the course of how ethnic immigrants found ways of being accepted as British. Britain has reached a point to understand hybridity as

being full of potential, and to see the big importance that the black and Asian communities have as an integral part of Britain.

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