

Ali Yiğit

**THE CONCEPT OF IMMIGRANT, AND IMMIGRANT PSYCHOLOGY
IN MONICA ALİ'S *BRICK LANE* AND SAMUEL SELVON'S
*THE LONELY LONDONERS***

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Ali YİĞİT**

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For my dear parents...

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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) General background information about postcolonial immigrant and immigration.

ii) Examination of two novels *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and *The Lonely Londoners* by Samuel Selvon.

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ABSTRACT

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THE CONCEPT OF IMMIGRANT, AND IMMIGRANT PSYCHOLOGY IN MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE* AND SAMUEL SELVON'S *THE LONELY LONDONERS*

The objective of this study is to examine immigration and immigration psychology as portrayed in two immigration novels by two immigrant novelists; *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and *The Lonely Londoners* by Sam Selvon. This study covers the immigrant mentality, the reasons for immigration, the immigration process, the adaptation process of immigrants, including the terms of integration and assimilation, and finally what happens at the end of these immigrations; do the immigrants return to their home countries or stay abroad?

This is a psychological analysis of characters that penetrates into the minds of the immigrant characters and sheds light on their personal and social problems, as well as their relations and interactions with the host society. It is aimed to address possible solutions to the problems of integration, thus to constitute a multicultural British society free of immigrant or alien phobias.

In Great Britain not all of the immigrants are seen as equal by the host society; some of them are preferred over the other immigrant groups depending on their race, colour and culture. Among these immigrants, Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants are not treated equally either. This study explores which of these immigrant groups is more privileged and has easier access into England. All of these

are analyzed in the postwar and contemporary English settings of the two novels, with a particular focus on the 1950s and after.

The introductory chapter of the thesis will cover the history of postcolonial immigration and its results as portrayed in the two novels.

In the first chapter, the concept of postcolonial Bangladeshi immigrant and immigrant mentality in the novel by Monica Ali is analyzed. The immigrant ideals, expectations, aims and immigrant problems such as racism and segregation stemming from the host country, family disorders and lack of mutual understanding between family members originating partially from England and partially from immigrants themselves are debated.

In the second chapter, we discuss Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and focus on Trinidadian black immigrants' psychology with reference to other West Indian immigrants. The process of migration adventure from Trinidad to England and the developments after arrival into England are tackled. Particular attention is given to the dreams of the immigrants before coming to England and the situations they encounter after arriving. The racial discrimination problems the characters are subjected to, such as problems of not finding work and housing, and how these impact the characters are also explored.

The concluding chapter is a comparative evaluation of the novels, and examines what Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrant psychologies or mentalities are like and which group is more advantageous. Additionally, by looking at the immigrants' problems, some possible solutions for a better and more integrated multi-racial society are recommended.

Key Words: Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants, immigrant psychology and mentality, immigrant problems, adaptation, integration, some possible solutions.

KISA ÖZET

Ali YİĞİT

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MONICA ALI'NİN *BRICK LANE* AND SAMUEL SELVON'IN *YALNIZ LONDRALILAR* ADLI ESERLERİNDE GÖÇMEN KAVRAMI VE GÖÇMEN PSİKOLOJİSİ

Bu çalışmanın amacı iki göçmen romanda; Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane* ve Samuel Selvon'un *Yalnız Londralılar*'ında göç ve göçmen psikolojisini incelemektir. Ayrıca çalışma göçmen zihniyetini, göç nedenlerini, göç sürecini, göçmenlerin uyum sürecini, entegrasyonunu ve asimilasyonunu ve son olarak bu göçlerin sonunda göçmenlerin Britanya'da mı kaldığı ya da memleketlerine geri mi döndüğünü ele almaktadır.

Çalışmamız göçmen karakterlerin zihinlerine giren ve onların kişisel ve toplumsal sorunlarını ve ayrıca ev sahibi toplumla olan ilişkilerini ve etkileşimlerini gün yüzüne çıkaran psikolojik bir analizdir. Bu analizdeki amaç çalışma özellikle onların bütünleşme sorunlarına muhtemel çözümler sunmak ve böylece yabancı korkusu olmayan çok kültürlü bir İngiliz topluluğu oluşturmaktır.

Büyük Britanya'da ev sahibi toplum bütün göçmenlere aynı şekilde muamele etmemektedir; bazıları ev sahibi toplum tarafından ırk, renk ve kültürlerine bağlı olarak diğerlerine üstün tutulmaktadır. Bu farklı göçmen grupları içerisinde Bangladeş'li ve Trinidad'lı (Karayipli) göçmenler de birbirleriyle eşit muamele görmemektedir. Bu çalışmada hangi göçmen grubun ayrıcalıklı olduğu ve hangi grubun İngiltere'ye daha kolay girdiği ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bütün bunlar

savaş sonrası ve romanın geçtiği çağdaş İngiltere’de özellikle de 1950ler ve sonrasına odaklanarak analiz edilmektedir.

Tezin giriş bölümü sömürgecilik sonrası göçmen tarihini ve sonra bu dönemdeki göçlerin her iki romanda resmedildiği gibi ne gibi sonuçlar doğurduğunu ele alacaktır.

Birinci bölümde, Monica Ali’nin romanında sömürgecilik sonrası Bangladeş’li göçmen ve göçmen zihniyeti analiz edilmektedir. Bu göçmenlerin idealleri, beklentileri, amaçları ve ev sahibi ülkeden kaynaklanan ırkçılık ve ayrımcılık gibi sorunları ve kısmen İngiltere’den kısmen de göçmenlerin kendilerinden kaynaklanan aile karmaşası ve aile bireyleri arasındaki karşılıklı anlayış yoksunluğu tartışılmaktadır.

İkinci bölümde, Samuel Selvon’un *Yalnız Londralılar* adlı romanını münazara ediyoruz ve Karayipli göçmenlere de atıfta bulunarak Trinidadlı siyahi göçmenlerin psikolojisine odaklanıyoruz. Trinidad’dan İngiltere’ye olan göç süreci ve İngiltere’ye varıştan sonraki gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır. Bu göçmenlerin İngiltere’ye gelmeden önceki hayallerine ve geldikten sonra karşılaştıkları durumlara özel önem verilmektedir. Karakterlerin maruz kaldığı iş ve ev bulamama gibi sorunlar, ve bu meselelerin karakterlere nasıl etki ettiği de aynı zamanda araştırılmaktadır.

Sonuç bölümü bu romanların karşılıklı değerlendirilmesidir ve Bangladeş’li ve Trinidad’lı (Karayip’li) göçmen psikolojileri veya mentalitelerinin nasıl olduğu ve hangi grubun daha avantajlı olduğunu incelemektedir. Bunun yanısıra göçmen sorunlarına bakarak daha iyi ve daha bütünleşmiş çok etnik yapıları bir toplum için edebi olarak mümkün muhtemel çözümler önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Bangladeř'li ve Trinidad'lı (Karayip'li) göçmenler, göçmen psikolojisi ve zihniyeti, göçmen sorunları, uyum, bütünleşme, yüzleşme, muhtemel bazı çözüm önerileri.

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INTRODUCTION

Looking at the world history, it can be seen that migration is as old as humanity itself. Since the very beginning of the human existence on Earth, an innumerable mass of people have moved from one place to another for a variety of reasons. However, the general reasons for this movement stem from search for food, better places to live in terms of climate and land, inner and outer pressures, socio-economic conditions, looking for adventure and sometimes religious pressures, shortly from seeking for a better life in all aspects.

During the early times of the humanity people migrated generally for gathering and hunting that is to say for food, as the time progressed some reasons for migration changed but some remained the same. During the Roman times a lot of people were forced to migrate for political and imperial reasons. After this period, the Ottomans implemented different migration policies throughout the centuries beginning from 13th century. After 15th and 16th centuries with the geographical discoveries the concept of colonialism and colonial immigrants (slaves) emerged and this continued until 19th century. However during the 19th century with the raising of nationality movements and after the two World Wars in the 20th century, colonizer countries began to lose power and consequently their colonies. Thus many colonial countries such as, India, African countries and West Indian countries gained their independence. Thus the postcolonial process started, during this process, the place of a lot of people changed because of various reasons such as economic problems and social unrest in their countries.

Throughout the postcolonial period, in multifarious parts of the world a huge amount of migration realized especially towards the colonizer countries. Particularly

from the African, West Indian and Asian countries, there was a gross mass immigration to the European countries, and Great Britain that had a wide range of colonies began to lose its power and thus colonies in the period after the Second World War, but this does not mean that the colonial subjects totally cut the ties with England. Because they were poor and could not sustain themselves in their own countries they began to immigrate towards Britain. The next reason for their immigration to Britain was that there had been an interaction between them and the British, and this interaction played as a significant role in these colonized people's immigrations. Next, the colonized subjects were deeply in need of food and works and thirdly the British taught them that Britain is a country where everything (employment, government and life standards) is present in its perfect form. The coming of the Bangladeshis corresponds to the period after the Second World War when India gained its independence from Britain and there were political upheavals in Pakistan and Bangladesh. So as to avoid these troubles many Bangladeshis immigrated to England.

The immigration process of the Trinidadians (West Indians) has also much to do with the WWII. In the Second World War England used soldiers from all parts of the World. (McDowall 167) During the war they were employed in the British Army and after the war ended some of them turned back to their countries but many others chose to stay and live in Britain. Rebecca Gayle Dyer clearly expresses this situation in her dissertation:

In August 1942 Britain rescinded the military color bar in order to recruit West Indian young men into the British armed services. According to historian Peter Hennessey, 8,000 of this number were based in Britain during

war, and these soldiers were among the first colonial subjects to resettle there once the war ended. (11)

When the war ended, many of these soldiers chose to stay in England because of the bad economic conditions in their countries. The situation for the West Indian soldiers was the same. Today it is possible to see lots of black West Indians in England especially in London.

After these immigrations Britain became a nation rich in various ethnic groups, cultures, traditions, colors, languages and religions. In result of these multiplicities, the concept of multiculturalism began to be enumerated. Britain has been re-defined by some writers. For Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu, Britain is:

A union of regions, which differ in traditions, lifestyles, population density, economic prosperity and accent, classes differing in inherited privilege, wealth, education attainment, district of residence and accent, too. Britain is also a union of different cultures, religions and ethnicities. (146)

As a result of immigrations, a large number of new settlements emerged as well and the residents were coming from different countries and races. But they were especially coming from the South Asian and African-Caribbean and other formerly colonial districts as Steven Vertovic suggested. (1024) They are the new hosts of these regions. New towns consisting of only one ethnic group of people occurred like Banglatown. There are also districts where mostly Jewish people live and where blacks mostly live. Thus the British districts changed their hosts. Peter Bromhead strikingly explains this re-settlement:

Many districts, even near the centers, have a small-town life of their own, and some are dominated by people of particular national origin though not

necessarily for more than a generation. The son of an East-European Jewish immigrant of fifty years ago, leaving his comfortable suburb to visit his East End childhood home, found the old Yiddish notices gone, replaced by signs in Bengali. (11)

Existence of people from so many different origins and countries added a new taste in food, clothing style, language lifestyle and everything to British life. Especially the migrations after 1945 have provided fresh themes, new characters and subjects into British literature. The British lifestyle and culture have also been enriched. For instance, the Bangladeshis opened their own restaurants and introduced their cuisine. The black people from West Indies and Africa introduced their lifestyle and culture. All of these positive developments were realized by many British writers. According to an article named *Immigration: This Island's Story* these immigrants transformed Britain from a tight-lipped, proud society into a more tolerant and embracing country. Besides, Britain benefitted from immigrant intellectuals such as Harold Pinter, Timothy Mo and Benjamin Zephaniah. (McCarthy and Henderson) Monica Ali and Sam Selvon and many other immigrant writers can be added as well.

In brief, these immigrations changed the face of British streets, towns and the lifestyle here because the immigrants did not leave their cultural, traditional, religious social and moral values at home. They merged their past with the present conditions and place. From now on (after the postwar term) the history of these regions settled mostly by solely one ethnic group is being re-written. Some critics support this multiculturalism but some others strictly oppose this term. James

Trotman states this contradiction in his famous book, *Multiculturalism Roots and Realities*:

To some it is an idea about diversity. If we see the world from the perspective of many cultures and histories, we are in a better position to understand the past and the world today. To others the term represents the end of European dominance, a balkanization of heritage and legacy at the expense of time-honored western traditions. (9)

Another important intellectual supporting the diversity is Hanif Kureishi. He strongly emphasizes the importance of appreciating difference and adds in his article, *The Carnival of Culture*:

This is what an effective multiculturalism is: not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas – a conflict that is worth enduring, rather than a war. (Kureishi)

However, it should be stated that not all sides support this multicultural society. Fear of getting lost and losing one's own identity and national values and conceding their personal rights are among the primary causes why the native British are criticizing multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

In the two novels on issue, it is clearly seen that both Monica Ali and Sam Selvon support the concept of multiculturalism. After mutual interactions, the characters may well integrate into the dominant society. In Ali's novel, at the end of the book, her female character prefers to stay in London not to turn back to Bangladesh though throughout the book she misses and wants to go there. By staying there she both liberates herself from her husband with whom she married involuntarily and constitutes a cultural richness in London. Similarly in *The Lonely Londoners*, most of

the characters prefer to stay in London though they are subjected to many problems. Briefly it is seen that in spite of all of negativities and problems both stemming from immigrants and native British, co-existence is possible and so multiculturalism and full integration of the immigrants is appreciated by many intellectuals and writers and both British and non-British citizens.

There are some studies that have been achieved on immigration of West Indians and Bangladeshis. These dissertations are just on Caribbean or Asian immigrants such as Rebecca Gayle Dyer's *London Via The Caribbean: Migration Narratives and The City in Postwar British Fiction* and Ayşe Mutlu's *A Study of The Saint of Incipient Insanities By Elif Şafak and Brick Lane by Monica By Focusing on The Loss of Identity*. But none of these studies makes a comparative analysis of these two different immigrant communities in Britain under the light of post colonialism and postwar development. In this study, the under-emphasized or rarely referred aspects of the postcolonial immigrants coming from Trinidad (West Indies) and Bangladesh and their mentality and problems in two novels of two immigrant authors are going to be analyzed both with respect to postcolonial literature and postcolonial history.

The life and psychology of the immigrants migrating to Britain and how they are perceived by the British residents have gained importance since the Second World War, and these issues have also become a topic for literary works. Many writers from men of letters tackled this issue successfully. Monica Ali, the author of *Brick Lane* and Sam Selvon, the author of *The Lonely Londoners* are of two of them.

These two authors have been chosen for this study for many reasons. Firstly though the styles of Monica Ali and Sam Selvon are different, they touch on

common issues. While Monica Ali is tackling the issues above in a natural realist way, Sam Selvon achieves to reflect the immigrant mentality through a humorous way. As Curdella Forbes says:

Lonely Londoners is as funny as it is painful, invoking the comic aspect of the carnival, the ritual of transformation whereby tragedy is disguised, diffracted and diffused. (89)

Secondly, because these two authors are immigrants themselves, they are expected to reflect the immigrants' ideals, dreams, experiences, adventures in a new environment, problems and what is passing through an immigrant's mind better than a non-immigrant author.

Monica Ali is a Bangladeshi-born writer but she grew up in Britain. However she is still not totally departed from her home-country. That is why she depicts the Bangladeshi geography, its people, religion and customs and the cuisine well. She is living in Bangladeshi in her mind in a way. This is mostly understood from her protagonist, Nazneen who is associated with Monica Ali herself. Her main character though many years pass after her coming to London and living here, cannot forget about her past experiences and dreams which she lived with her sister. This for Monica Ali means wherever you are, you cannot totally alienate yourself from your own national identity and culture and traditional values.

The Lonely Londoners generally passes in the years after 1950s and this is the time when Selvon migrated from Trinidad to Britain. For this reason, Selvon is personally involved in immigration process and he knows the immigrant psychology (their expectations, preparations for leaving and arrival into Britain, dreams and thoughts about England after arrival). Through an immigrant writer's eye one can see

London and “*The Lonely Londoners*”. Selvon uncovers the similar immigrant problems such as racism, segregation, housing, poverty and inferiority complex and etc. through male characters with a humorous style.

In these two books, important realities of the immigrants can be found. Monica Ali puts emphasis on the Bangladeshi immigrants’ problems such as housing problem, unemployment, degradation of the immigrants, colour and racial issues and generation gap generally through the eye of Chanu and Nazneen, two protagonists of the book. Similarly in *The Lonely Londoners*, the immigrants’ bad experiences and dissappointments are illustrated. The dissappointments of the characters especially in the *The Lonely Londoners*, which is one of the inevitable ends of the immigrants are demonstrated. Likewise in *The Lonely Londoners*, though many characters aim at finding a job to work and a place to stay in, this usually results in failure. Their previous desires are also attractive because many of them have dreamed to find a land full of with golden or opportunities. This makes the reader wonder the psychologically preparation period of the immigrants before setting foot on England. How the characters motivate themselves to go to a new country, how they dream about England and the English, most importantly after coming to England how they are treated and the issuing period of struggle in an alien environment are what make these works notable to study.

The next factor for choosing these two authors is that postcolonial literature is mostly composed by the works of the authors from newly-become independent countries and these two authors are among those who are trying to make their sound laudable in the world literature. Especially in recent decades the increasing number

of these postcolonial intellectuals cannot be ignored. In this thesis two novels; one from a Bangladeshi writer the other from a Trinidadian one are studied.

The revelation of the real identity and face of the colonizer English is illustrated in them as well. The immigrants' view of ideal English is destroyed and a new perception of the English is structured. This provides comparing the English images before and after coming to England, which helps one to comprehend the first mimic behaviours in the colonies and the real treatment in home-country better.

These novels enable one to have a look at the life conditions of the immigrants in their own countries. For instance, in *Brick Lane*, the reader often goes to Bangladesh, home-country of the many characters in the book. The changes the characters from these two countries experience in England in terms of culture, identity, religion and in short lifestyle can be observed. Similarly the poor life conditions in Trinidad, Jamaica and other West Indian countries are presented especially between the lines. So it is exciting to be involved in this mental process of immigration of the Bangladeshi and West Indians.

Along with their themes, the style of the books make them worth studying as well. In both of them there is a fluent plot so the reader doesn't get bored while reading them. Soon after starting reading them one can find himself or herself in the adventures of the characters. When someone starts reading *Brick Lane* he/she does not want to leave it as he/she wonders what will happen next. This is what makes it exciting for the reader to read, this characteristics is also valid for *The Lonely Londoners*.

In *Brick Lane*, the speeches among Bangladeshis and the letters between Nazneen and her sister Hasina provide a Bangladeshi accent English, and this brings you face to face with a Bangladeshi person. The reader gets the chance of learning the experiences of Nazneen and Hasina and their psychological situation from their own mouth. It is even possible to read their minds without looking at their words after a period of time. One can expect what Nazneen is going to write next after an event in the book. Similarly the accent of the characters in *The Lonely Londoners* makes the reader believe what is happening in the book is a part of life itself. One can see the interesting dialogues of Trinidadian characters in their own dialect. This makes the book reliable and enjoyable for the reader. In addition, Selvon's humorous style is the next important characteristic that makes the novel interesting to read and worth to study. Selvon expresses the most dramatic events or situations of his characters in a funny way. For instance, Galahad who is starving begins to hunt seagulls in the city parks. For this dramatic condition, the narrator says that Galahad causes an important decrease in the population of seagulls. Therefore on the one hand, the reader faces a very serious immigrant reality and on the other hand he/she is dispatched to laugh at the comic situations of these poor characters.

There is a critical approach in both of these books, in other words the chosen authors do not elevate one side and degrade the other one. They objectively handle the postcolonial immigrant issues and problems. For instance in *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali both criticizes the Bangladeshi traditions and the British society in terms of racial segregations. She sees the freedom of her main character, Nazneen not in Bangladesh but in Britain. In *The Lonely Londoners* Selvon both tells the problems of the immigrant and the unrealistic aims they have with an objective perspective because

in some parts of the novel he both criticizes the host society and the immigrants for the problems the Trinidadian immigrants are living.

The titles of these novels catch reader's attention since that they totally fit their content. *Brick Lane* tells the story of a Bangladeshi family living in the district of Brick Lane in London and here is the setting which represents Nazneen's loneliness, happiness and other Bangladeshi people. *The Lonely Londoners* also reflects the whole book. Without reading the book itself it is possible to guess what kind of Londoners the reader is going to meet. In a way the poverty, misery and problems of the immigrants living in London are implied.

Through this study, one can assume what the Bangladeshi and Trinidadian and West Indian immigrant psychologies and logics are and what elements are included in these mentalities according to Monica Ali and Sam Selvon. After detecting the immigrant problems in these two novels, some possible solutions for these problems are suggested to compose a very well integrated British society.

Furthermore this study explores how the Bangladesh and Trinidad immigrants catch on life in a foreign environment and what they try to do in order to maintain their national culture and identity. The emphasis is on who achieves to integrate well into the majority and how he or she does this, and who is assimilated and how he is done so. The answer to the question of whether to stay in England or turning back to home country is replied with examples from the books. There are ideal characters both in *Brick Lane* such as Nazneen and Chanu and in *The Lonely Londoners* like Moses two of whom can be modelled by the immigrants in waiting or the immigrants already living in England. By looking at the mistakes and situations of the characters

in two novels, important messages can be derived and future possible difficulties or problems may be shunned.

Except from these, which immigrant group, the Bangladeshi or Trinidadian (West Indians) are preferred over the other one is clarified. Compared to the black Trinidadians, brown Bangladeshis are more privileged and they have an easier way to be accepted as a member of the society. Behind this, the education background, the colour and national culture of them lie. The more you are educated the more you are privileged. Similarly, the whiter you are the more chance you get for job and housing opportunities. For instance, in *Brick Lane*, there are such middle career characters like Chanu, an English literature graduate and Dr Azad, a doctor; however in *The Lonely Londoners*, the only characters who are comparably well off are Harris, Moses and Tolroy who are ordinary low paid workers.

CHAPTER 1
THE BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANT PSYCHOLOGY IN
BRICK LANE

1.1 The Immigration Process of Bangladeshis to Britain in *Brick Lane*

In this chapter, the beginning, development, continuation and end of immigration processes of Bangladeshi immigrants in England are elaborated in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali with reference to postcolonial theory.

The history of immigrations from East Asian country to Britain particularly to Tower Hamlets dates back to the 19th century. It continued during the 20th century. Before that, there were migrations resulting from the imperialist policies of Western nations starting from the 15th century. However, the first encounter of the Bangladeshis with the British was in 1765 when the British rule reached Sylhet. (Gardner 88) They displaced the natives of the countries where they went for the purpose of employing them in different fields such as plantations and mines. In addition, the main migration wave started in the 19th century for industrial reasons (Bauböck 44). The direction of this immigration was usually from Sylhet in Bangladesh to London's boroughs. A great number of them jumped ship after arriving at London's docks and found a residence around Spitalfields. At first, they were employed at restaurants, small cafes then in garment factories and other industrial institutions. (Eade and Garbin 138)

These immigrations are put in the category of postcolonial immigration. There were great political upheavals experienced in Bangladesh nearly in 1947s after the independence of India. The decolonization brought both freedom and trouble for the East Asian countries. Over the 19th and early 20th centuries a small number of

Bangladeshi moved to Britain. After the World War II, the immigration waves increased. (Gardner 90) The geography where the immigrants come from is usually the Sylhet region of Bangladeshi. This is the place which is one of the poorest parts of Bangladesh. People living in poor conditions seek their good fate in London, and Brick Lane is the name of the district where these immigrants generally decide to settle, thus displacement process is realized. As many postcolonial writers put forward, one of the key parts of post-colonialism is displacement. Brick Lane has been a settlement for multifarious groups of immigrants from different parts of the World. So its face has been changing with its new residents. Sukhdev Sandhu brings a good definition to this place and a good description to its residents saying:

Brick Lane has always been a holding area, a temporary interzone for immigrants who have not yet settled; whose lives are defined by the past – their own or that of their parents-but who wish to seize the future. (Preston 14)

In this quotation, the characterization of the immigrants living there is roughly drawn. In the novel, most of the characters excepting the new generation somehow little or much touches on their own past. For instance Nazneen always dreams about her sister and her home. Chanu mentions his country's past and Dr Azad also tells how difficulties he had in the past.

When it comes to why they choose Britain to move, the principal reason is that since India was a British colony, the Indians and Bangladeshis turned their face to Britain. Next, as Katy Gardner urges push and pull factors have become effective. Certainly the open door policy of Britain became determinative in their choosing Britain; furthermore the British authorities actively supported labour immigration

into their country by “having the work permits issued in Sylhet Town in 1962.” (Gardner 93) The reason for this encouragement is that there was a deep need of labor force in Britain during the period after the World War II. Because the white workers were mostly promoted to white color jobs there were few ones to do the menial labour, the British government turned its face to the Indian subcontinent, Caribbean and its other colonies in search for cheap labour force for menial jobs. (Herbert 14) Therefore all of these push and pull factors induced the migration process. Aside with these, the British education in East Asia imposed that the British culture, civilization and literature and religion are superior to those of East. For instance Chanu knows much about English literature as to quote from English authors. For these reasons the superiority of British civilization is generally approved by the Bangladeshi and other East Asian countries. So they were motivated to choose the ideal country, Britain to go. As Joanna Herbert notes there is a common view among the East Asian that the British are more civilized as they have rules, principles and laws. (66)

1.2 The Bangladeshi Immigrant Mentality in *Brick Lane*

The immigrant mentality may show changes depending on the geography, the immigrant expectations, desires, dreams and aims. In Britain there are many different immigrant groups whose aspirations and mentalities are similar to each others. The Bangladeshis are generally living around Brick Lane which was a settlement used by many other immigrant groups such as the French Protestants in the 17th century and one century later the Jewish and then the Chinese. The Bangladeshi immigrants most often have the idea of getting by and sustaining themselves like many other immigrants in a country. As because this is not so much possible in Bangladesh

because of poverty, unemployment, high birth-rate, domestic problems, they prefer to live in a better place to earn their life.

One critical point in the settlement of the immigrants is that though in their early times many immigrants had difficulties in adapting themselves to England and English working conditions, they could generally find work and so earn their living thus they began to get used to living there. After finding a work, to invite or encourage other members of the family or countrymen is a common custom among these immigrants. Most of the immigrants had the intention of earning money and sending it to their hometowns and after they have made enough wealth, they want to turn back to their country. Many of the immigrants achieved this aim but many others were disappointed. They often met racial discrimination and racial attacks so they gave up living in London and went back to Bangladesh.

However as the years pass the immigrant mentality is changing as well. “In 1960s while 85% of the Bangladeshis were remitting their savings, in 1995 20 % of this immigrant community was sending money to their home-country.” (Garbin 2) More and more immigrants began to prefer invest in England rather than their home country. Today it is predicted that this rate is lower than 20% although they still value Bangladesh as the “ancestral home” where their roots are. (Garbin 2)

But the new generation Bangladeshis don't seem to leave England. Here it must be emphasized that those male immigrants who brought their wives to England are generally unwilling to return. As they get used to the lifestyle and working conditions in England and Bangladesh is still poor, they prefer to stay.

In order to understand the immigration mentality of the characters in Brick Lane, it is needed to know the immigration reasons of them. The reasons for immigration

of Bangladeshis are variable; the protagonist, Nazneen is obliged to go to England because of her arranged marriage. Therefore, the case of Nazneen can't be put in the same category with the case of many other Bangladeshi immigrants. She did not have dreams of living in England as she was dreaming to lead a life in Bangladesh with her sister and her family especially she was keen on spending time with her sister Hazina. Her dreams were broken by the traditions in Bangladesh. Towards the end of the novel, she has been in London for a long time and her aim is to lead her life not in Bangladesh like her husband but in London though from time to time her mind goes to her sister in Bangladesh and her past experiences there. She tries to send money to her sister as many other immigrants do as a requirement of being an immigrant in England.

Her husband Chanu, an early immigrant who settled in London, has a job to make his life. But, before coming to England he had great expectations and aims. Most of the male immigrants like Chanu envisaged England as a place where they can realize their dreams and catch the success as J. Herbert put forward. (141) He wanted to be a British civil servant and he was going to be a “High Flyer, Top Earner, Head of the Department so and so.” (406) Elisabeth Marino decisively assures us on this mentality in one of her articles claiming:

Chanu nurtures together with many Bangladeshi immigrants the dream of making enough money “to go back home”, build a big house and live comfortably, and of being regarded by his fellow countrymen as one of the “Londhoni”, those wealthy men who ‘had made it’ in the mythical land of riches. (53)

He was disappointed by what he found in England because he could not realize his dreams and be a man as he had dreamt.

After making enough money, turning back home is called as “going home syndrome” by Chanu. But this syndrome usually encapsulates those first or previous generations who were born in Bangladesh. Chanu can’t get rid of this syndrome either. There are many other Bangladeshi characters such as Razia, Mrs. Islam and Karim and many others who have already been living in England. They came to there before Nazneen and as because they are living together in a certain region called Brick Lane and Spitalfields, it is obvious that they have come there in search of work and bread.

The common mentality is that earning enough to live there and sending money back to home. After a course of time returning to home is what many Bangladeshi immigrants plan to do. Johanna Herbert obviously demonstrates this adding that “The majority of South Asians migrated with economic and family ties in the homeland and subscribed to the ‘myth of return’.” (18)

In the novel, Razia complains about her husband’s always sending money to back home, which is a good example to typical immigrant mentality. Her husband may be psychologically under a pressure. He believes that he is performing his duty towards his family as he sends it to his brother. Nazneen always dreams turning back to Bangladesh. Almost in every letter of her that she writes to her sister she mentions how much she misses to see her sister and her hometown. Like Nazneen, her husband also dreams to turn back to Bangladesh after he makes enough wealth and at the end of the book he returns to Bangladesh but his wife doesn’t want to follow her husband’s way.

In other characters it is seen that they are getting used to living in England and they are contented with what they have and with their life there. The ones who are unwilling to turn back to home are usually those second generation immigrants. As they grow up in England nothing seems unacceptable or abnormal for them. But the racial problems and discrimination in labor and pay sometimes cause them to change their mind as in the case of Chanu who has got used to living in London but since he can't stand the cold treatment they are subjected to after Sept. 11 towards the Muslim minorities in many Western countries he decides to leave England.

Many of the immigrants come unconsciously. Ali summarizes the coming process of them as "Most of them have jumped ship. That's how they come. They have menial jobs on the ship and doing donkey work."(20) On the other hand, there are some characters that are not illiterate or unskillful like Chanu and Dr. Azad. Similar to other many other immigrant characters Chanu plans to work and get a status and then turn back home. He tells his intention in the following lines. "And I made two promises to myself. I will be a success, come what may. That is number one. And number two, I will go back home."(27)

It is clear from these words that for most of the immigrants, the principal aim is to earn money, gain a status and turn back. Such a mentality can make it difficult to adapt oneself to an alien environment and integrate into the majority because such kind of a person always thinks to go back home and he or she looks for the nice and happy days in his or her hometown. In a way the temporary staying in England may not require one to learn the language of that country and to learn the customs and lifestyle of it and then to apply what seems positive in appearance to his or her own life.

The next significant issue is that the immigrants coming from various parts of the world believe that England is full of money to earn and send back home. Monica Ali tackles on this issue thorough the eye of Chanu. Chanu makes a comment on the view of his countrymen in Bangladesh saying “all they can think of is money.They think there is gold lying about in the streets here and I am just hoarding in my palace.” (27)

Like many immigrants Dr Azad has an ideal of getting education, earning and turning back many problems on his first arrival. His family dined on rice and dal. Because they he did not have various kinds of foods to eat. He says that they used to give each other little gifts like rice and dal as money was scarce when they first arrived. (470) They lived on “rice and dal.” But in spite of all of these negativities he achieved to finish medical faculty. Thus after these struggles he and his family achieve to lead a life in London. Though his wife’s mentality has changed much, Dr Azad has still thoughts or ideals of going back to Bangladesh. In brief, although the stories of the characters may change, the principal goal in coming to Britain is usually the same: To make a wealth and good living in abroad and then turn back. However, the experiences they live in England reshape this goal and new targets are determined.

1.3 The Native English and Immigrant Relations

The encounter of the British citizens and the Bangladeshi immigrants in *Brick Lane* is very uncommon. Monica Ali doesn't make the Bangladeshi characters and British characters come face to face and speak so often, which makes it hard for someone to see and understand the immigrant-native host relations well. Throughout the novel there are not so many obvious meetings of the Bangladeshis and English. According to Elisabeth Marino, this is one of the criticized points of the novel. The world of Brick Lane is thoroughly 'mono-cultural'; the English originated people are very little mentioned. (Marino 52) The conceptions of the immigrants are usually opaque. They just observe from outside as there is a distance between them. But it is understood from the words of Mrs. Islam that the English are discrete people. "They do what they want. It is a private matter. Everything is a private matter. That is how the white people live." (95)

Only once or twice some characters come face to face but they do not speak much. On her first arrival Nazneen waves to a tattooed lady and the next meeting of her is with a police when she is trying to follow her daughter. Peter Preston at the same time draws attention to this issue adding that "White people exist at a distance: seen, commented on, but never encountered." (16) However notable information on this issue is given between the lines in a few encounters.

In the novel Nazneen's first meeting with an English person realizes when she sees her while coming into her new home. "Nazneen waved at the tattoo lady." (8) She wants to found a sincere friendship with a British citizen. This means that she is willing to meet English people. The social communication is generally realized between Bangladeshi groups. As Gardner indicates the Bangladeshis are generally

confined to their houses and district; very rarely they wander outside the Banglatowns as they fear to do so. (135) The Bangladeshi immigrants are recitent to go outside the boundaries of Banglatowns. According to Bettina von Staden:

Their neighborhood gives a strong sense of identity and belonging to immigrants and their offspring, it is worrying that immigrants often do not feel safe, accepted, or at ease outside their neighborhoods. (8)

In this discreteness, the treatment of the British becomes influential because in two of her encounters, Nazneen can't get a hospitable or welcoming behaviour from both the tattooed lady and the policeman since she is ethnically different and she is a Muslim. As Francis Fukuyama quotes from Roy the reason for this cold shoulder the immigrants get results from the identity of the immigrants. It becomes a problem if they are Muslim as the Muslim identity is not supported by the hosts. (10)

On the other hand attending social organizations held by the English makes it easy to found friendships with the English. For instance, Razia goes to a college to learn English thus both her knowledge of English which is necessary for her and all immigrants living in England improves and she finds a chance to make English friends and learn about British culture and life. Her children know English well and each of them is in fact a culture attaché that provides the connection their parents and the English as they are studying at the same classes with English students. At home, they from time to time do the same things they have learnt at school from the English students. For instance Razia's son has got used to drinking and he even doesn't start a day without drinking. Nazneen's daughters know English as well and sometimes they speak it at home, thus Nazneen's wonder in English increases and she wants to learn it. To sum up thanks to the young generation, the old one learns about the

country's language and culture where they are living, so the role of the young generation in providing the connection between the native English and immigrant Bangladeshis can't be ignored.

Relevant to this issue, it is also significant that this young generation takes a good and proper treatment from their English teachers and friends. They may break the prejudices both sides have, since they have the possibility of belonging both sides; the English and the Bangladeshis. If they met the same problems such as racial ones their parents face, their view of England would not be different from their parents' and elders'. The way of a healthy immigrants-host relationship passes through the well education of the young generation and the immigrants' efforts to integrate into the majority. Unfortunately there are some immigrants who have been living in England for a long time but do not know English. Nazneen even doesn't know English though later she tries to learn it. She is afraid of wandering in the places where the English are. Once she goes to follow her daughter and she gets lost and she can't ask address or direction which deprives her of getting help from the people around her. Gardner decisively claims that lack of English prevents many immigrant women from wandering outside Banglatown and using public transport and also going into British shops. (141) Nazneen meets an English lady in the street. The English woman looks at her with a ready kindness but in her eyes it seems as if she were looking at a person who is inferior to herself. Nazneen waved at her.

Some immigrants feel nervous about their acts, clothing style and in the practice of other national, religious and traditional activities. In a way as Nazli Kibria states "They feel distant from and unaccepted by the dominant society." (246) For instance, Chanu drinks alcohol and he supposes that if he doesn't drink like English he will be

isolated. Except from this some immigrant women feel themselves under outer pressure coming from English society as they wear long traditional clothes covering their whole body. The protagonist of the novel, Nazneen feeling this pressure on her, thinks what kind of things would happen if she wore like the English. Monica Ali illuminates what is passing in her mind as:

If she changed her clothes her entire life would change as well. If she wore a skirt and a jacket and a pair of high heels, then what else would she do but walk around the glass palaces on Bishopsgate and talk into a slim phone? If she wore trousers and underwear, then she would roam the streets fearless and proud. (297)

She dreams that her fears would be abolished on the condition that she gave up her long dresses. It is not seen a direct insult made to her because of her clothes but this is an indirectly imposed pressure on her. She even thinks to take off her sari.

Similarly their staying only in Banglatowns like Brick Lane increases this fear of British and they remain more and more alien to the host culture and life. According to Bettina von Staden, it is this self-segregation, seeing someone's himself or herself isolated from the majority or supposing the hosts always as racists and hostile, which causes great impedance for the immigrants to integrate into the mainstream. (16) The immigrants should feel comfortable about practicing their original values as long as they do not include any threat factor towards the other people in England and open their eyes to the world outside themselves so that they can found a sincere friendship with British and understand them and their culture.

The misrepresentation of the East and Easterners at British schools can lead conflicts between the Bangladeshi generations. The young Bangladeshi generation is

educated in English schools and the things they learn about Bangladesh are not so positive according to the Monica Ali. Chanu claims that all they learn about Bangladesh is famine and flood and other negative things as the Orientalists writers misrepresented the East, Easterners and the entities in the East as Edward W. Said put forward. (273) Therefore, the beautiful sides of it are not mentioned to the English or the orientalist writers reflect what passes through their mind while gazing at the orient. According to Chanu Bangladesh was once a Paradise land. It was the home of textile. For this reason, Chanu almost always praises it but his daughter Shahana hates it and anything peculiar to Bangladesh.

The colonialist policies of Britain in the past deteriorate the immigrant-native relations especially if the immigrant is aware of the realities and the problems his ancestors had because of the British rule. Chanu is the most educated character in the book. He knows about the British colonialism in India and Bangladesh and he is also conscious of the contribution Bangladesh did to the economy of Britain. According to Said:

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest colonies'. Not only was this place colonized it also became a part of the material civilization of Europe: 'The Orient is an integral part [our emphasis] of the European material civilization'. (2)

He gives striking examples from the British history in Bangladesh claiming "While the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British our rulers exported grain from the country."(402) At the same time he blames the British for the starvation his ancestors were subjected to and for the Bangladeshis' underdevelopment. Keeping all these in his mind, Chanu promotes hatred towards the English and he tells these

things realities to his family thus justifies himself for leaving England. Chanu claims that he could not find respect in English society; according to him the English despise them and he is naturally discontented with this situation. It is surprising that there are not many other characters complaining about the immigrant problems as much as Chanu. This mostly results from Chanu's being an educated man. He also criticizes England for her colonial past. For instance for him the British brought railway into India not for the good of those people but for their use for exploitation. He makes this inference as because when he was young they were taught that for their benefit the British built railways and gave them trains. But he claims that in fact they were in need of irrigation systems. (265) Such kinds of negative deeds and policies in the past can hinder better relations flourish in present day British society between the immigrants and the British.

The British education system should guarantee that all of the students at their schools get the objective and true information about the world history and culture. No country should be excluded. Like many English who despise Bangladeshi culture and traditions, there are some immigrants who do not like the English culture like Chanu. For him the English culture only consists of TV, throwing darts and kicking a ball. (271) In this case Chanu behaves in a discriminative way. To suggest that the Bangladeshi culture is strong and British one is not means that he is not mature enough to emphasize the other side's values. It is impossible for each side to accept every part of each other's culture. But, it is possible to respect each other's cultures and behave emphatically. Since there are many people on both sides lacking of these characteristics, hostile feelings and thoughts grow and therefore riots and troubles between immigrants and native English become inevitable. The Bengal Tigers group

is another striking example for this situation. Karim and his followers say that they are against everybody who opposes them. Furthermore they can't even tolerate another Bangladeshi group, Lion Hearts. How can they be expected to respect the British?

Though there are not clear statements about the attitude of the English citizens towards Bangladeshis' religion, "Islam is feared by the English government more than heroin." (336) Not tolerating religious practices and only teaching and imposing Christianity is felt in the words of some characters such as Chanu and Nazneen. However this problem stems from not English citizens but government. So it can't be definitely stated that the English segregate the immigrants because of their religion.

In the novel, the relations between the Bangladeshis and the English are deteriorated by the September 11 Attacks in USA that caused Muslims living in western countries to feel worried about their life. Chanu and Karim are two of them. This event affects Chanu so much that he even considers returning his home country. Similarly Karim expresses his discomfort with this issue and adds that they, the Muslims are going to be the ones to suffer most. According to Peter Preston, President Bush's declaration of a war on terrorism after the September 11 Attacks has brought Muslim and western values into direct confrontation. (20)

The last significant factor in shaping the British-Bangladeshi immigrants is the British press. It is believed among the immigrants that the Britishish relations are harmed by the vilifying words used for the Bangladeshis. After the riots lived between two radical Bangladeshi groups, British press spared a large place for these events, which led immigrants accuse British press for defaming them. When the two opposite Bangladeshi groups came face to face to fight, the English police were just

watching them. (520) This attitude of the English police proves that they do not like seeing such immigrant groups in London.

1.4 The Constantly Made Comparisons of Bangladesh and England by the Bangladeshi Immigrants

Making comparison between home-country and England is one of the usual habits of the Bangladeshi immigrants. They compare everything that comes into their mind; from lifestyle in home-country to household staffs from culture, traditions to clothing and eating style. In these comparisons generally England seems more advantageous. Although they meet lots of problems, it is still worth living in England especially for women who are deprived of many rights in Bangladesh and obliged to take lots of responsibilities. The women in the Third World compose the most suffered and poor group in the society as Sissel Marie Lone claimed in her dissertation. (73) In terms of the difficulties the immigrants have to face, Edward Hower urges that:

Though the immigrants must deal with culture shock, and racial prejudice, they rarely encounter the desperate conditions experienced by people in the lands they have left. (Mutlu 50)

The unfavorable lifestyle of women in Bangladesh is another striking comparison made by Shahana. To warn her sister, Shahana says that her sister will soon be married when they arrive in Bangladesh and her husband in future will lock her at home and she will have to weave and do housework. To be a Bangladeshi means this in the eye of a new generation Bangladeshi in England. On the other hand if they stay in London they can do whatever they like and do not have to marry at an early age and do housework. Hence Shahana criticizes Bangladesh and its culture and traditions about the women. She also criticizes the Bangladeshis because they do not

use toothbrush and toilet papers. (434) She evaluates everything to degrade her own culture and make her sister feel disgusted with Bangladesh and its culture.

Besides this, the narratives of the immigrants also support this view. Khanum mentions an immigrant who compares the life conditions in Bangladesh and in UK. That immigrant says that if she had been in Bangladesh her house would have been lit only by an “earthen kerosene lamp” (490) but in England her cakes are cooked in microwave and her house is fully lit by modern lamps.

Nazneen compares the amount of house staff in her new home with the one at their home in Bangladesh and she adds: “Even if you took all the furniture in compound, from every auntie and uncle’s ghar, it would not match up to this one room.” (11) These are the things that bewitch the immigrants’ eyes. Additionally, when she thinks about the sinks which are not present in Bangladesh and cooker which is lit only through a knob turning, she feels happy to be in England. Maybe such things would make their migration worth. Later on when they get used to these comfortable staffs they don’t want to turn back to Bangladesh. Besides, this house has the things that the house in Bangladesh does not have like wallpaper. And for this reason from furniture to wallpaper and from pavement to home shape everything affects the choice of immigrants; their choice of whether to turn back or stay.

The next comparison of Nazneen is about her situation in England and Bangladesh. If she were in Bangladesh she would not go out whenever she likes because there would be a gossip about her. But in England nobody cares whether she goes out or not. In this respect, being in England broadens and liberates her mind. Gardner urges that the women immigrants in Tower Hamlets move far more freely into the public spaces than they would do in rural Sylhet. (139) For instance, they can

go shopping as Nazneen does or go to course as Razia does. Besides she compares the physical appearances of the people in England and Bangladesh. A fat body though represents wealth in Bangladesh; it may mean poverty in England. While she was talking about the tattoo lady she says that “The tattoo lady was both poor and fat”. (48) Such a situation is not likely in Bangladesh according to Nazneen.

At the same time Nazneen compares the condition of the workers in Gouripur and England. The workers in Bangladesh do not expect a promotion while the ones in England do so. For instance a carpenter in Gouripur does not expect to be promoted but her husband who lives in England hopes to be promoted. The last comparison she made was between the situation of women in Bangladesh and in England. She had to bear lots of hardships and problems both economic, health and inner. She clearly expresses her situation in Bangladesh as “What could I do? I am only a woman and everyone was against me.” (472) In this interior monologue it is seen that she is questioning why she was left to her destiny when she was a baby. This is the key question in the book; she is a woman and everything about her is determined by her elders and by her destiny, she doesn't have the right to question or take decisions about herself

One of the important comparative matters is the attitude of Bangladeshi men towards Bangladeshi women. Razia expresses her complaint to Nazneen about the treatment of their countrymen's behavior. She suggests going shopping in Sainsbury's where English people live by adding: “English people don't look at you twice. But if you go our shops, the Bengali men will make things up about you.” (55) As it is seen in this example Bangladeshis have lots of things to learn from British and British have much as well. Such kinds of comparisons provide a good criterion

on how to evaluate the mutual relationship between the immigrants and native British.

The Bangladeshi immigrants compare the facilities their children can get in England with those of Bangladesh. Nazneen says that “A child was lucky to have a football. To have both a football and a bike and a heap of toys were unheard of in Bangladesh” whereas these are ordinary things in England. (96) The quality of their children is also notable. If they were in Bangladesh they might not send their children to school. The culture of their children is developing but at the same time if the parents don’t care much with their children their morality can be corrupted.

Chanu is another character who makes frequent comparisons; his comparisons are mainly between Muslims and the English. For instance, he compares the drinking habit of the English and Arabs. He also compares the happiness rate of Bangladeshis and other countries especially England. He puts forward that the Bangladeshis are happier than the English.

One of the most notable comparisons is Dr Azad’s wife’s comparison. She compares the clothing style of her when she was in Bangladesh and the clothing style in England. For her the second style is more suitable and she sees the Bangladeshi clothes covering the whole body as a prison. She also compares the free wandering of herself in England though she had to stay indoor in Bangladesh. As a result of these comparisons, she finds England more livable and modern.

One can make more comparisons by looking at the characters’ situation to the ones in Bangladesh and in England. In terms of women’s case England seems more advantageous. When it is looked at the letters Hasina has written to her elder sister many examples clarifying the poor life conditions of women living in Bangladesh

can be found. In one of her letters she writes about the situation of a woman who was obliged to marry with an old man and then in three months her husband dies and she remains on her own. That woman perfectly describes her awful condition as “Anyone says anything to they like because I am a woman alone. I was put here on earth to suffer.” (158) Such kinds of words demonstrate that the situations and conditions in Bangladesh are not favorable for women as much as in Britain because no woman character mentions similar problems in Britain.

1.5 What Do The Bangladeshi Immigrants Do to Preserve Their Tradition, Culture, Identity and Religion?

In each part of the world, immigrants take their cultural baggage wherever they immigrate although after a course of time some of them begin to leave their traditions and try to adapt themselves to the current movements of the host country. Bikhu Parekh more puts forward that “The idea of loyalty to a culture makes sense. And our culture gives coherence to our lives, gives us the resource to make sense of the world, and stabilizes our personality.” (159) The early immigrants kept their ties through regular visits to their ancestral towns and villages. (Eade & Garbin 140)

In *Brick Lane*, there are many characters that are willing to maintain their own culture. As Mustafa S. Khanum mentions, after the Bangladeshis migrate to England, they continue to maintain strong financial, cultural and political relationships with their relatives. (94) He also claims that the immigrants in England and their relatives in Bangladesh are mutually dependent on each other. Those living in Bangladesh are expecting money from England and the immigrants are dependent on the ones in Bangladesh to expand their lands and manage their own deeds there. (Khanum 495) This makes it possible for them to preserve their cultural values in England.

Additionally, living in the same or close districts facilitates the immigrants's communication with each other. As the Bangladeshis generally live in Bengal Towns, they do not have difficulty very much in practicing their traditions and other cultural activities. Many of the Bangladeshi women wear their traditional clothes such as sari and burkha. But many Bangladeshi men prefer to wear western-style clothes. The Bangladeshis generally can also cook their traditional foods, which contributes to the maintenance of their national cuisine in England Hence they are not shy about showing their own traditions and traditional salutations. It is easy to say Salaam Aleikum and Aleikum Salaam to each other because they are generally coming from the same district in Bangladesh. Monica Ali adds "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. A research made by Jeremy Kempton shows that "Immigrants are much more concentrated than the UK population as whole –more than 40 per cent of immigrants live in London, making up 26 per cent of London's population and the Bangladeshi immigrants are included in this group." (3)

Religion is another factor that provides the maintenance of traditional and cultural heritage. Some of the Bangladeshis especially the previous generations are strictly connected to their religion while some others especially the new generation Bangladeshis are ignorant of it. In addition to these two groups Rainer Bauböck adds the third group; the one in between them. (159) They are both prone to forget about it and preserve it in their hearts and mind. A considerable number of the immigrants stick to their religion so that they can preserve their national and cultural values. But the biggest hindrance before them is the misrepresentation of Islam by its followers

and misinterpretation of it by the British. Most often Islam is associated with terror and terrorists. This is valid just for Islam religion. One doesn't see any expressions such as Christian terrorists or Buddhist or Jewish ones. With their religion, they also seek solace and relief. Nazneen sets a proper example for this. Whenever she is in difficulty she turns her face to her religion and she performs religious practices. To get rid of the problems in her mind she begins her prayers; "she turned to her prayers and tried to empty her mind and accept each new thing with grace or indifference." (124) Thus she does not forget Islamic rules and the Islamic prayers and surahs. There are many Bangladeshi characters fitting appropriate into Bauböck's third group such as Razia and Dr Azad and his wife who do not take their religion into consideration. For instance, Dr Azad says that he doesn't know what the religion's principle on drinking but in terms of health it is harmful. There are some characters often quoting from Islamic sources such as Qur'an and sunnah. For instance many times Nazneen recite surahs and when she has inner problems while on the other hand she commits adultery. Karim also refers to Islamic rules. Once he quotes from Qur'an that committing sin is inevitable. But when it comes to the practice of these religious rules and practices, they quite often do not lead an Islamic life.

Saluting among each other in original language is one of the most common traditional values the Bangladeshis protect. Both elders and new generation use the expression of "Salaam Aleikhum" when they meet each other. Nazneen uses this salutation when she goes to the Bengal Tigers Club. Even Razia's son who is living just like a typical British boy, says Salaam Aleikhum while he is leaving the home. Karim, the leader of a Bangladeshi group is another character who salutes his friends

with the same salutation as well. All of these prove that the importance of Islamic salutation cannot be underestimated although it is sometimes a symbolic habit as in the case of Razia's son. So the use of Salaam serves to the preservation of traditional value to some extent but it does not entirely reflect a strong connection of the immigrants to their religious values.

While trying to maintain national values, some kinds of conflicts are lived too. For instance, Chanu who insistently wants to maintain their cultural values tries to teach Bangladeshi poem to his daughters. He wants his daughters to recite the poem "My Golden Bengal". (186) Other than this he asks his daughters to speak Bangladeshi language at home and behave like a typical Bangladeshi. This act of him is very similar to that of Samad in *White Teeth*, who wants to bring up his children in Bangladeshi style. (Arikan 61) This behavior of these immigrants shows that it is common worry for the immigrants to bring up their children by taking their original values and traditions into consideration, which is a part of keeping these values vivid. The function of such activities is respectable but they are not enough. An immigrant should know his or her own religion and teach it to his or her children as well but Chanu doesn't do this. So, he doesn't represent the Bangladeshi culture and tradition properly that is why he fails to teach his children Bangladeshi language. He even forbade her daughters to go to mosque school. He doesn't go to mosque or pray at home either. Francis Fukuyama brings a new definition to the situation of such kinds of Muslims as Protestantization of a religion. In other words, on the one hand a Muslim can violate the Islamic rules and principles and on the other hand he can mention Islamic values. (Fukuyama 10) As Chanu mentions the moderate form of Islam he is a good example for this. Another character who fits well into this

definition is Karim who on the one hand prays and talks about Islam, unity and brotherhood and on the other hand commits an adultery with Nazneen and is also involved in riot and protest acts.

To protect their identities some Bangladeshis found groups such as Bengal Tigers and Lion Hearts. They have aims such as protecting Muslim rights and culture, local and global ummah. But in fact they are political and religious organizations. Therefore instead of sticking together they fight against each other for political and religious reasons. These two groups are always in a riot which demonstrates that they do not serve a beneficial aim. Besides they attend some radical acts under the name of Islam. Their so doing worsens both their and Islam's image. They are expected to organize social activities and enable Bangladeshis to meet other Bangladeshis and English and thus planting friendship seeds among the members of different societies.

On the other hand it can't be denied that these organizations have benefits for the immigrants and hence they serve a useful aim. The most significant function of Bengal Tigers is that some of the immigrants learn about the other Muslims in different parts of the world and this group endeavors to organize the immigrants and then gather them under one roof against the racial attacks thus enables immigrants to feel in secure. For instance Nazneen hears about the Muslims in Chechnya and Bosnia. (259) Thus this group awakens a common Muslim consciousness. Irene Visser and her colleagues claim that:

The Bengal Tigers challenge racial discrimination and unite the community in protecting the local Ummah, the meetings they hold provide Nazneen with an alternative public milieu to the domestic one. (113)

After getting advices from her friends like Karim in the group, Nazneen decides to stay in England.

To feel like a real Bangladeshi Muslim Karim changes his clothing style. While he was wearing jeans, shirts and trainers at the beginning chapters of the book, towards the end of it after founding their group and making their propaganda stronger, he begins to wear Panjabi pajama and a skullcap, a sleeveless fleece and big boots. It should not be forgotten as he is the head of the Bengal Tigers Group he wants to truly represent the Bangladesh clothing style. From now on he thinks that clothing is a serious thing. Therefore he in a way helps keeping Bangladeshi men way of clothing.

1.6 The Immigrant Problems in *Brick Lane*:

1.6.1. Unemployment

One of the most serious problems the Bangladeshi immigrants face is unemployment. It is not easy for them to find a work and if they achieved to get it, most probably it would be a dead-end heavy job that is not preferred by the native working class. According to Seda Arkan, in London, on the hand hand there is an extravagant wealthy group that is usually composed by the native British and on the other hand there are those (migrants) who are disturbed by poverty. (7) Especially the Bangladeshis living in London around Tower Hamlets are troubled by unemployment, poverty, racism and high rate of crime. (Gardner 49) Although the young generation can find a job more easily than the old one, it can't be said that all of them can find a work. In a conference made in University of Surrey, it is mentioned that "the third generation of Tower Hamlets' Bangladeshi population who were born and bred in England experience high rates of unemployment." (Garbin 1)

This rate is reported as “The unemployment for young Bangladeshi-origin men (ages 16-24) is as high as 25 per cent, almost double the rate (13 per cent) experienced by their white counterparts.” (Kibria 249)

In *Brick Lane*, some of the immigrants are uneducated, illiterate and not skillful or semi-skilled. So it is not easy for them to find a job. For this reason for a long time Bangladeshi immigrants have remained among the “poorest, least-educated and poorly housed minorities in Britain.” (Peach & Gale 474) The book confirms that the Bangladeshis in the boroughs of London are struggling with poverty and unemployment as Bettina emphasized. (14) The ones who have a job usually work in garment factories and heavy works. The most educated characters in the book are Chanu and Dr. Azad. The other first generation ones are not well educated. At the same time many of them are lack of English fluency and UK qualifications, which makes it difficult to be employed and participate in the majority. (Kempton 6) Besides, their skin color has also a part in their not being preferred by the employers. In the novel, Chanu can’t get what he expects and so he resigns. Then he looks for another job and not long after he becomes a taxi driver. His skin color and origin also become effective in his not being promoted and employed in a better position. Concerning this issue, Jeremy Kempton argues that the immigrants from white ethnic background are more likely to be employed than the ethnicity groups such as and brunette Bangladeshis or East Asians and black Africans. (5) Kempton also gives place to Christian Dustman and his colleagues’ view that white immigrants earn same or more than the UK-born whites but non-whites earn less than the existing white British and the white immigrants. (5)

1.6.2 Racial Discrimination

Before passing to the analysis of racism in the novel it is better to understand what racism really means. Racism is something produced out of the sense of superiority complex and thus founding domination on other –racially below- people. That means racial claims are very good excuses to exploit and rule other people. At this point it is necessary to remember Paul Gilroy's definition of racism. For him,

Racism involves a mode of exploitation and domination that is not merely compatible with the phenomena of racialized differences but has amplified and projected them in order to remain intelligible, habitable, and productive.”

(31)

When it is looked at the history of this superiority complex of the British, the modern form of it was practiced in the Victorian Age when the Victorians built a hierarchy of human-beings by placing the blacks at the bottom, Asians a little higher and the Mediterranean still higher and at the highest stage themselves. (Parekh 226)

Problems stemming from racial issues are one of the most fearful dreams of the immigrants. It usually stems from the problem of intolerance to the immigrants, their culture, religion, ethnicity, fear of losing their job and etc. Derek McGhee gives enlightening information on this adding:

The origin of racism is the result of strong emotions, defensive impulses and thick patterns of solidarity. As a result of this, identity, culture and tradition are seen as conducive to prejudice, antagonism, polarization, mistrust, hatred and overt loyalty associated with preservationist or past-oriented orientations.

(172)

Supporting this idea, McGhee claims that the racist attacks and xenophobia are the results of the exaggeration of difference. (79) This is especially seen in European countries. In England the Muslims have become stigmatized racial group according to Kibria. (245) In an article published by Anthony Browne, it is stated that mass immigration like that of Bangladeshis leads severe problems of coexistence between the host society and the immigrant community. According to him the host societies (western) seem to be unwilling to welcome immigrants. (3) Therefore the immigrants feel uneasy and suppose that the attitude of the hosts will never change towards them. A survey made by ICM shows that most of the residents of Britain believe that they live in a racist society. In this survey, among the whites, the rate of those who believe that Britain is a racist society is higher than those among the Asians.

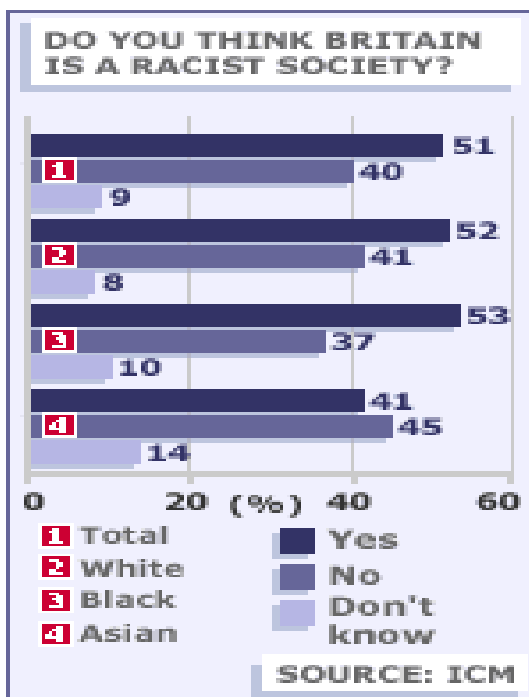


Table 1. Survey on the racial issues in Britain

It is this fear of being subjected to racial discrimination that causes the immigrants feel uneasy and stranger in Britain. Hence the integration of the Bangladeshi and other immigrants into the majority is negatively influenced.

The reason why the results of survey are not so positive in terms of both the immigrants and the native British originates from the worry of the white population's conceding national values and remaining under the effect of the immigrant culture and their traditional values. They have the fear of losing their cultural hegemony as Rainer Bauböck emphasized. (13) But this doesn't seem possible as long as the immigrants' rights are certain and the rule of the country is in the hands of native British citizens. On the contrary to this, if the immigrants introduce their culture to the British life, it is the British culture that will be enriched and accordingly the process of immigrants' integration will be easier and the British will boast of its cultural diversity and richness.

The next factor that causes British feel uneasy with the immigrants is the fear of losing their job to the immigrants. Their worry of losing jobs and getting low wages are not right excuses for their opposition to the immigrants as the probability of this is not high. Kempton supports this idea urging that "The international evidence on this issue shows that immigrants do not have large negative effects on wages and employment of the domestic workforce." (7) The labour areas they are employed are certain, and these fields are those which are not usually preferred by the British workers.

Aside from these, the British are afraid of being minority at their home since the number of Muslim immigrants is increasing both by new migrations and the high birth rate among the immigrant families. Similarly, K. Gardner claims that the

growth of Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets is associated with the Islamicization of British space after 1970s and 1980s. (109) And the core cause of racial attacks and racism comes from the fear of being a minority or extincted in one's own country in the hands of Muslims. In other words, it is the struggle of those who are feeling themselves in danger of being minor.

Religion Islam is one of the sources of racial discrimination as it is expanding at a high speed. Supporting this idea, in one of his articles Anthony Browny claims that today in Birmingham Islam is more worshipped than Christianity and it is the fastest growing religion in Britain. (4) Yet in many cases of their opposition to immigrants, the British are not justified. For instance many of them perceive the immigrants as a public burden and the carriers of disease, the potential criminals and etc. Since the Aliens Act in 1905 the immigrants taking place in one of these categories are rejected to enter the country. They had to prove that they could make economic contribution to the country so that they could not be a heavy burden on the shoulders of British. (Cohen and et al. 34) For these reasons, the immigrants shouldn't be seen as unbearable strangers but should be seen as acceptable friends or citizens.

In *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali chooses Chanu as a spokesman for the Bangladeshis. He often mentions the problems of Bangladeshi immigrants and the negative treatment of the whites. The most mentioned racist problem in the book is the case of Chanu's promotion. Monica Ali often handles on racial issues through the character of Chanu. Nazneen learns about this racial discrimination from her husband and thus it becomes wider and wider among the immigrants. Nazneen tells this problem to her friend quoting from her husband:

My husband says they are racist, particularly Mr. Dalloway. He thinks he will get the promotion, but it will take him longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem.” “He had warned her about making friends with “them”, as though there were a possibility. (69)

Regarding the same issue Chanu expresses his discontentment about working hard but no promotion. He urges that they have to work like a donkey there but never make a go. (147) This is also one of the immigrant tragedies. Chanu is the most prominent example for this tragedy. Though he tried hard he could not get what he expected. This negative image of English in the mind of immigrants makes them feel isolated and outcast. Thus it becomes hard to make them integrate into the majority and compose a multicultural and multiracial country free of immigrant problems.

Chanu at the same time refers to historical past of the black immigrants in England particularly the slavery process of them. He informs the reader about the black exploitation. For instance, when they get on the bus they see a black conductor. Chanu explains why he is so strong and fit. It is because that man was brought to England through slavery and the fittest ones were used to be chosen for trade. In accordance with this, the strongest ones in England deserve the best things in life. These are the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant English citizens. Chanu goes on his comments on the English society:

All the time they are polite. They smile. They say “please” this and “thank you” that. Make no mistake about it, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in the back. (69-70)

In these lines, it is obvious that Chanu was hurt by the English and he expresses his perception of English. He also does not want his children grow up in England as he fears of their being corrupted. He is very strict on his words towards English adding:

I don't want him to rot here with all the skinheads and drunks. I don't want him to grow up in this racist society. I don't want him to talk back to his mother. I want him to respect his father. (113)

The next character mentioning the racism and racist attacks they are subjected to is Karim. He explains that "The racists- they cleared out of here ages ago. What about Shibli Rahman?" (256) He was the man who was stabbed. He also mentions the old days when they were chased by racists and beaten by them. Now it is their turn to resist them. Therefore these racist attacks on Muslims arouses a spirit of collaboration, sticking together and struggling against the British all together, which can be seen in the acts of their group. These are what deepen the problem, and make it more and more unsolvable

Except from Chanu and Karim, Razia reveals how she suffers from racial discrimination too. She is disturbed with the English's despising her. She says that "The English are even happy to spit on their own flag as long as I am inside it." (430) Though Monica Ali does not give place to the words of English from their own mouths, it is clear that the immigrants are deeply hurt by racial issues as they express.

These discriminations in different fields of life cause trouble between the immigrants and English so both sides lose. England loses her qualified foreign

workers and also becomes deprived of an empathy towards multi-racial and multicultural societies, which will make their integration into the mainstream harder.

Such kinds of interpretations may also awake hatred and enmity among other immigrants, for this reason, it is a very serious problem. To preclude such words being said, the English government should take strides in reconstructing her image in the eye of immigrants. Is Chanu revealing the realities or is he slandering to England? The answer of this question is not so simple. He may be right on his claims about the discrimination they face. Many other immigrants coming from various countries also suffer from the same problem. For instance Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* are good example for this mistreated group.

On the other hand, Chanu's generalization makes the problem bigger than what it is. It is wrong to generalize that all of the English are polite but they stab you in the back. Except for this, it is wrong to say that all of the English are racists. Of course there are some racists in the society but not all of them. As mentioned above many of them are politer than Bangladeshi grocers and they don't disturb the Bangladeshi women as their countrymen do.

Furthermore, if the English were so hostile how would they catch on life there and get by? There are mutual benefits; the immigrants can earn money in England and send it to Bangladesh and the English make use of their labour power. The Bangladeshis may be cheaply employed compared to the native British. Nazneen's evaluations on this issue are more notable. She believes that there are both racist and non-racist English men and she generally views them as good people because at school English teachers help her son, and Chanu's English friend gives them clothes for their children and radio and some other stuffs. In addition, she appreciates their

not intervening into their life. But she can't pass accusing the ones in her husband's workplace. As mentioned earlier immigrants are affected by each other's words about the native English.

1.6.3 New Generation Problem

The new generation Bangladeshi boys and girls most often have conflicts and troubles with their elders and their original traditions and identity. Since they are born in England they do not see anything abnormal which are seen as immoral or unacceptable by the old Bangladeshis in England. They like to be a full member of the society in which they live even though they are not totally accepted by the host citizens as they come from different backgrounds and cultures. For this reason, the new generation has problems both with their own parents and the natives of the country where they are. Their problem with their elders is mainly because the new generation views their elders' culture and traditional practices contemptuously as they are brought up according to British way of life that is contrary to Islamic principles or tradition and Muslim morality. Furthermore many of the new generation immigrants utter insulting words for their homeland which has never been in the dreams of them. A good example of this can be found in Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* as well. In this book "Second generation daughters refer their parents' home as Bangleditch." (Cormack 707) On the other hand, their elders are psychologically connected to their home-country. (Fukuyama 11) However their parents are in the struggle of endearing their own values and traditions to their children often being lack of national consciousness and original values. This is the point where the conflict between the first and second or the following generations

begin. As Fukuyama claims; “The new generation Muslims are caught between the identity of their parents and the identity of the country in which they live.” (12)

In *Brick Lane* Razia is having problems with her children. For instance her son, Tariq is hanging out with white girls and he doesn't mind going to a pub and drinking alcohol unlike his parents. He is taking drug as well, and his mother doesn't mediate him saying “If the boy does not want to give up the drugs, that is his choice.” (395) This reaction of her shows how relieved but also helpless Razia is. She doesn't believe that she can persuade her son to stop using it. Another character grumbling a similar problem is Jorina whose boy is an alcoholic. She says that the life they make for their children do not comply with the expectations and needs and dreams. Jorina's boy can't be persuaded by his mother to quit drinking. The new generation often models the host society's lifestyle. As a result of this a cultural conflict between different them and their elders becomes inevitable. Through a good domestic or family education this can be solved. If Tariq had been thought about the Islamic rules and Bangladeshi customs he might not have gone to a pub with a girl and drunk. Here it is incumbent upon both to family and Bangladeshi organizations to teach this new generation about their culture, religion, customs, lifestyle, language and etc.

The next significant problem with the new generation is dealt with the established society. As most of them grow up in England and adopt the English values, they tend to expect to benefit from the same rights with the native English citizens. Unfortunately, no matter how much they know and adopt Britain and Britishness, they can meet racial and colour problems. In his book Derek McGhee demonstrates this reality. According to the views of the writers mentioned in this book, the new

generation South Asian children have hybrid identities so they have both Asian and British aspects. They want to enjoy the facilities and the rights that the British born whites can benefit from. But as they face both cultural exclusion because of racism and prejudices, the discontentment among them is very high. (58)

Generally, the second generation children are prone to be assimilated. They behave like typical English people. Many of the immigrant boys smoke cigarette before their elders and they walk with their girlfriends and they even kiss their girlfriends in the streets without feeling shy or considering their religious and moral values and principles. Dr Azad's daughter is a good example for this situation. She takes money from her mother and says "Salaam Aleikhum" and then she goes to a pub to drink, which is a characteristic of the dominant white culture. (114)The only tie of her with her national culture is through simple words. Chanu evaluates this situation as clash of cultures and generations and immigrant tragedy. And this tragedy will cause assimilation of the Bangladeshi children. It is possible to see a typical example of this situation in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* too. Just like Chanu, in Smith's book, Alsana opposes her son claiming that "the British are englishifying him completely." (Smith 345) On the other hand, for Dr Azad's wife it is very normal for her children to come and go home like the English since they live in England. In her opinion if they don't change themselves and adapt to England then it becomes a tragedy. To some extent she may be right because without learning about the English culture, lifestyle and tradition and practicing it whenever it is necessary, how can it be possible to create a multiculturally integrated society free of problems? But when the degree of change is not adjusted properly then assimilation becomes inevitable. This is not the sole example. Nazneen grumbles about the attitude of the

children towards her. She sees them fighting and when she warns them they utter abusing words to her. And she says that a few years ago they were not so. She believes that the more they stay in England the more they may be corrupted. The new generation may not respect to their elders like the Bangladeshi children in Bangladesh. Similar to English children they listen to loud music, which is not approved by the Bangladeshi elders.

This tragedy mainly comes from the disagreements between the generations. The new generation does not pay attention to what their elders advise them. For instance, Razia advises her son to go to mosque and make friends there but her son does not accept it. A more serious problem with the young is that they almost begin to forget their mother tongue. Karim exhibits a good example for this as he stammers while speaking Bangladeshi language and similarly there is a Bangladeshi boy in the Bengal Tigers who seems to forget his mother tongue as well. (491) Many of the new generation boys take drugs. For instance, Razia's son is taking it and her mother can't do much to prevent it. The other immigrants complaining about this problem are Nazma and Sorupa. They reveal the fact that the Bangladeshi families can't control their children and the children bring shame on the families.

Chanu and his daughter Shahana can't get on well with each other because of generation gap. Shahana behaves like a typical English person. She wants lip piercing like the English and she wants to listen to English music and wear jeans and other clothes belonging to English culture. (313) She doesn't want to hear anything about Bangladesh. When her father wants her to memorize a poem in Bangladeshi she unwillingly does it. On the other hand, her father who grew up in Bangladesh and is familiar with his national culture wants to bring up his daughters by abiding to

their national culture. But every time he endeavors, he fails because his daughters especially Shahana has already adopted English values as she has gone to a British school. She doesn't like to wear Bangladeshi clothes and speak Bangladeshi language though her father insists on. The role of school education on her such behaviours can't be ignored; she is taught and preached British values and customs namely those of "self" and her own culture, Asian is shown as inferior or "other". Accordingly, discontented with his daughter's this situation, Chanu from time to time refers his daughter as "memsahib". (390) J. Herbert indirectly justifies Chanu or immigrants like him saying that the symbolic violence makes the new generation concede their values. Through this violence, dominant culture is imposed and the minorities are obliged to accept it, otherwise they are isolated, thus the dominant one is seen as legitimate and right or superior, the other one is illegitimate and wrong or inferior. (142) The cure of this trouble is hidden behind a very well organized domestic education for the young; their parents should be more careful about their children as well as the national cultural values should be vaccinated at early ages.

1.6.4 Unhealthy Housing Conditions

In Britain, a great number of the immigrants, both Bangladeshi and other groups, are living in bad, poorly decorated houses. These are the homes which are not preferred by the British now as they are not enough to meet the needs of a person appropriately and so left to to the immigrants' use. So they have to live in worse living conditions than the British. In *Brick Lane*, Ali describes their situation as:

All crammed together. They can't stop having children, or they bring over all their relatives and pack them in like fish in a tin. It is a Tower Hamlet official statistic: three point five Bangladeshis to one room. (44)

In addition, their houses are not heated well and the wallpaper is torn and the toilets overflow. For instance, Razia complains about their heating system's breakdown. Though they call the council for help, no one comes to mend it.

The house rents are expensive too; though the immigrants stay in old and worn council or boarding houses they have to pay high rents. For instance Mr Iqbal stays in a small house and he pays one hundred and sixty pounds. Furthermore, there are a lot of crowded families who have to live in small houses. As Katy Gardner notes that the accommodation especially in Spitalfields is both overcrowded and damp. (52) They have to sleep side by side and without comfort. Chanu setting from official sources, touches on this issue expressing that four or five Bangladeshis to one room. (357)

Except from these, the houses where the immigrants have to stay are often composed of old and worn out semi-detached ones. They cause many many problems for immigrants. For instance the water plumbing is not good in Nazneen's house so she has to call a plumber. Again her house cannot be ventilated well thus the house has bad smells coming out of toilet and kitchen. A more concrete image of this is drawn in the film version of the novel. John E. and David G. relate these bad housing conditions to discriminatory housing policies of the 1980s and persistent hostility of a white working class in some parts of Tower Hamlets, which forced many large families to seek accommodation in specific parts of the borough that are generally old and bad. (139) As a result of these negativities experienced with housing, the integration process of the Bangladeshi immigrants is slowed down and the relations with the host society are deteriorated.

1.7 Adaptation Process

All of the immigrants no matter where they are coming from undergo the process of adaptation to the present life and life conditions, people, weather and everything in England. Some achieve these easily and quickly but some others can't adaptate themselves and then at last they prefer to give up living in England and choose to turn back. The reason for this is that when they first arrive they have the problem of adjusting to the new rules, cultural and traditional practices; on the one hand they want to stay fidel to their origin due to the effect of "blood, belonging and ethnicity" and on the other hand they are attracted by the modern world around them as Jonathan Spencer argued. (6) But usually they get used to living there after a time passes. The words of an immigrant in Gardner's book clearly illustrate this process. That woman says:

When I first came to London I didn't like it. Bangladesh is poor but it is still lovely because it's my own country and everyone is there. All my family are there but I came here alone. All the doors are closed here, so I don't like it. Then slowly I began to like it more. (130)

In *Brick Lane*, there are characters who can easily adaptate themselves to England and English lifestyle and there are some who can't do this easily and therefore may experience identity crisis. For the first group, Chanu is a good example. As has gained many skills and lived in England for a long time and learnt English, he has already got used to living there in the beginning of the book. He knows English, the British culture and history as because he studied English Language and Literature. Compared to his wife and other Bangladeshis, he is more advantageous and he is not

feeling himself strange in England. But with some undesirable events like September 11 Attacks, this adaptation of him can't prevent him from leaving the country.

Razia is the other character who has adapted herself to the British culture and lifestyle. She is living like a typical British wearing a Union Jack t-shirt and she is quite contented with her life in England. Preston claims that she is more adaptable to her new circumstances, which is symbolized by her clothing style. (16)

For the second group, Nazneen sets a fine example. In the novel it is stated that she has never been in England mentally but she does not want to go back. She is a good example for in-between character. Visser and her colleagues obviously illustrate this process of Nazneen as "She experiences the process of adjustment to the demands of British society through developing in-between identities, complex subjectivities and multiple reference points (110). Although she has been shy at first, Nazneen starts to learn about the British culture and language. She explains her intention of learning English to her husband but Chanu ignores it. (30) Adapting to the traffic of the England has not become easy for Nazneen. Once, during her early days she tried to cross but terrified by car hooter she gave up. Again she disgusts British breakfast since she isn't used to eating cornflakes. But later she wants to try cigarette, learn English and try to skate. (358) Her identity is reconstituted by British style. Here she totally fits into the definition of identity made by Stuart Hall: "Identity is a production, which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within not outside, representation." (Visser and et al. 112) And it seems that her identity is going to be reshaped as the time passes. Towards the end of the novel, she succeeds adaptating to the England and English style by getting rid of her osciliating between Bangladesh and England. In her study, Ayşe Mutlu confirmingly

this states that Nazneen achieves to make use of the cultural diversity in England and reconstitutes her new identity by combining the already present and the new one (60). It is not easy for Nazneen and her daughters who have adapted themselves living in London to return to Bangladesh. Nazneen compares her situation with the one in Bangladesh. She asks “Would we sit like this in Dhakha and would it feel just the same and would everything be the same but just in a different place?” (404) These questions prove that Nazneen is unwilling to return. She has got used to leaving in England in such houses and now it seems very difficult to change place again.

Dr Azad and his wife are included in the first group of adaptation though Dr Azad has still ideas of returning back to Bangladesh. Yet his wife is totally adapted to England and the English culture and lifestyle. She even condemns those immigrants who have not learnt English though for a long time they have stayed in England. She describes this situation of them as “immigrant tragedy.” She almost never mentions negative things about England and the English. To sum up, all of the Bangladehi immigrants excepting the 2nd generation or the new generation, experience an adaptation process through which some can successfully do it and some others can hardly do. This adaptation process is what may affect the immigrants’ future plannings such as staying in England or leaving it.

1.8 Lost Identities

As the migration process continues on, the changes in the immigrant characters and in the identity of them become inevitable. Roman writers as quoted by Homi Bhabha expressed different ideas on this issue. While Lucretius, crossing over the borders of one's own country permits a change happen in the essence of the self, Ovid suggests that migration only causes changes on the surface of a immigrant's soul but preserves his or her original identity. (Bhabha 321) Bhabha himself expresses a more comprehensive view adding that the two conditions are possible and are experienced by the immigrants for their survival in an alien environment. (321) As the change is inevitable in a different place, to catch on life and get by the immigrants have no choice but to learn about the new culture, place and lifestyle otherwise they will stay away from the majority and on this condition they may not earn their life. However it must be kept in mind that the extent of change should not exceed a certain limit. This limit is the point where an immigrant gives up his or her culture and totally transforms into a new identity in essence and appearance. Some immigrants still keep their own identity by sticking to their traditions, religion and language. Some others want to both keep their identity and integrate into the majority. Aside from these there is a group of immigrants who are consciously or unconsciously being assimilated. Here it becomes essential to remember the words of Woodward. "Migration produces plural identities, but also contested identities." (16) The other side of identity is that it is changeable with time and place. As Homi Bhabha urges it is never a priori, nor a finished product; it is in a constant state of change. (Gay and Evans 99)

Though Bangladeshis are generally keen on their traditions and culture compared to other immigrant groups in England like Trinidadians, many of them lose their core values and become assimilated. It is useful to answer this question; when does identity crisis begin? To tell an exact time for the first one is impossible but generally after staying for a period of time, the immigrants either prefer to be like a British or protect his identity or both to adapt to British and British way of life and keep his or her own identity. As Mercer notes "Identity becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty." (Woodward 15)

In the novel for each of these groups there are examples. For those who have partially achieved to keep their national values and identity, Karim, Chanu, Dr Azad and Nazneen can be shown as good examples. However it can't be said that these characters fully reflect the Bangladeshi culture, religion and other values. Compared to the ones who have been assimilated they are in better situation.

For those who have lost their identity and core values, Mrs Islam, Jorina's husband, Shahana, Razia and her son and Mrs Islam's sons are very concrete examples. Mrs Islam says "I am not old-fashioned, I don't wear burka." (21) She claims that she keeps her burka in her mind. But she confesses the immigrant reality by adding "If you mix with all these people, even if they are good people, you have to give up your culture to accept theirs" (21) Many other immigrants believe this. They suppose that if they want to come together and work with whites, they will have to concede their own values.

Jorina's husband is another good example for the assimilated identities. He is hanging out with other women. He has forgotten about the Islamic values and rules

and he ignores the Bangladeshi traditions. The next assimilated character is Dr Azad's wife. As a response for Chanu's comments on the corruption of the children and immigrant tragedy, she strictly opposes him by claiming that if they do not change themselves this is the tragedy. She claims that they must obey the English rules. Although this expression is innocent; she adds that they must lead a life like the English. For instance, their child can go to a pub and drink there and this is not something wrong for her. Additionally, she sees Bangladeshi women's clothes as prisons, which means that if any woman from Bangladesh wants to get her freedom she has to get rid of her traditional clothes and get dressed in Western style. By looking at these expressions one can infer that she degrades Bangladeshi culture and clothes and etc, which is an important sign of an assimilated identity.

Nazneen's daughter, Shahana is the following character for assimilated identities. She likes to wear like the English and wants to get lip ring and a tattoo. She is totally alien to Bangladeshi culture and she doesn't like to learn about it either; furthermore she despises it. Monica Ali tackles the assimilated situation of Shahana as:

Shahana did not want to listen to Bengali classical music. Her written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. If she could choose between baked beans and dal it was no contest. When Bangladesh was mentioned she pulled a face. She did not know and would not learn that Tagore was more than a poet and Nobel laureate, and no less than the true father of her nation.

Shahana did not care. Shahana did not want to go back home. (188)

It may be wondered whether Bangladesh and its culture be endeared to her or not. But now for Shahana to like her traditional values seems a little possibility. If she

had been educated well about her own original values in a kind style by both from her mother and father, she might not have liked her traditions. However, in no part of the novel there is such kind of an education. Only Chanu tries to teach her a Bengali poem few times. Unlike him Nazneen does not do anything to grow up her in accordance with Bangladeshi culture, or Monica Ali does not mention her attitude on this subject. She supports her husband many times and this is all what she does during the whole book. It is also ironical that Chanu preaches Dr Azad and his wife about their child's wrong attitude. But his daughters do not fit the child figure he desires to grow up in Bangladeshi style. As a result of these, a character who is Bangladeshi in blood but British in mind, opinions and morals in taste as H. Bhabha attributes to the Indians who are educated in British schools grows up. (125)

Razia is another example for those who have lost their identities. With her sweatshirt with Union Jack she looks like an Englishwoman more than a Bangladeshi. Her behaviours resemble those of English. She smokes like them. And it is definitely understood how assimilated she is from these words "Razia is so English. She is getting like the queen herself." (243) Her son Tariq is like a typical English boy always saying OK-Ma. He wants money to go to a pub from his mother and his mother finds it normal. Razia confesses that she has become a person not different from the English adding "I've like the English." (388) She calls a killed Bangladeshi as "Nonny", which proves her indifference to the death of her countrymen. (423)

The last examples of degenerated identities are Son Number One and Son Number Two, two sons of Mrs Islam. They are said to own a pub in London. Again there is a rumour about them that obeying English traditions, they let a woman take all of her

clothes on Saturdays in their pub and they enjoy their British guests. Son Number One is also believed to have a white girl friend and have illegal “buttermilk” children from her. (485) As a consequence, all of these examples for both of these groups demonstrate that it is inevitable that immigrants have changes in their characters and identities. As long as they preserve their core values, these changes do not make them alienated from their essence and national culture but if they can’t do this they are assimilated.

1.9 Staying in England or Turning Home

It is generally known that most of the immigrants in the postcolonial world firstly immigrate to reach a better life. Then after making money enough to live in hometown they may decide to turn back. Ali best explains this situation as “They even have not brought their minds and hearts. They are still at home in heart.” (24) This is what causes many of them to turn back. Katy Gardner explains that “Many of them today still do not identify themselves as settlers. Rather their movement between places is continual, both physically and emotionally.” (94) They aim to earn enough and then turn back to home. This is the typical immigrant mentality. It is valid for many other immigrant groups.

Chanu is a good example for this. He has never planned to settle in England permanently. He demands his family to follow him as well. Chanu acknowledges that many of his countrymen’s children get spoilt in the English culture. His solution to this problem is simple: Going back home before their children grow up much, like Samad in *White Teeth*. The difference is that in *White Teeth*, Samad wants to send his children to their homeland so that they can grow up in the Bangladeshi culture. (Arikan 61) But through this way he may prevent his children from getting educated

and thus finding a job and integrating into the majority. What's wrong with that if his daughters learn English, English culture and lifestyle as long as they protect their core values and original identity? In this respect it is useful to remember what Abdul Khaliq has suggested. According to him "becoming spoilt is nothing that can be put in a narrow pot." (Gardner 225) For him everyone has their own ideas about what's best for them. If your child grows up in England and does not want to go to Bangladesh by putting his or her dreams of working in England aside it is nothing condemnable. (Gardner 225)

Investing in home country also has a part in determining the state of immigrants whether to turn back or not. According to Khanum the majority of the immigrants buy land in Bangladesh which proves that the immigrants plan to go back in the future. (494) Dr Azad is a good example for this group of immigrants; he wants to buy land at home. Thus he is making his plans on his return in the future.

Racial issues play a significant role in the immigrants' deciding whether to stay or return. In the novel Chanu for instance decides to go back as he is feeling under pressure of racial attacks. There are many intellectuals touching on this issue one is M. S. Khanum who suggests that the existence of racism forces the majority of the Bangladeshi immigrants in England to plan their future not in England but in their home country. (489) Thus after staying for a period of time the final destination may become home country.

Political events have also a part in determining the immigrants place in Britain. The events about Muslims in one part of the world have an effect on other Muslims in England. After September 11 Attacks the Muslim population began to feel on tenterhooks. Some of them feel themselves very troubled by those events and decide

to leave there. Chanu for instance believes that to live in England is impossible for them and they need to turn back to Bangladesh. The air strikes to Afghanistan made by USA compel him to go to his own country.

Besides these, disappointment with England and the English may affect immigrants' staying or turning back home. For instance, Chanu was dreaming to be a top level man in both England and in Bangladesh but as he could not find what he had expected all of his dreams about career faded. Peter supporting this issue illustrates that in spite of the fact that Chanu got enough education and training as it is understood from his certificates, he can't get what he deserves. Thus he chooses to turn back. (15)

Living in London makes some of the characters feel themselves liberated from the family and community pressure. The protagonist of the book is the best example for this. At the beginning of the novel she believes that everything in her life is determined by fate so she can't do anything to change it but towards the end of the novel, she begins to determine her destiny. She says "I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one." (443) These words prove how a free identity did Nazneen get. Now she is free to choose whether to turn back or stay. But thousands of thoughts occupy her mind. She is not sure whether Dhakha will be a nice and livable place or not because the image she gets from her sister's letters is not so heart-warming. The return of her would never be something imaginary as she had never been in England mentally. As Gardner argues, most of the women she spoke to are feeling alone and yearning for close relatives left in Sylhet. (118) She always dreamed of her home-country, her relatives there especially her sister Hasina. However towards the end of the novel, she changes her mind and doesn't want to

turn back. She believes that if they turned back her daughters particularly Shahana would blame her and never forgive her mother. Save for this, the adventure she has experienced with Karim does not leave her. So the change or transformation into a new identity in her character makes it impossible for her to return. According to P. Preston, Nazneen begins to commit herself more to England than her hometown with her daughters. She will get better opportunities here and more independence, which suppresses her desire to go back. (15)

The unfavorable conditions in Bangladesh affect characters's choice of turning back or staying in England. For instance, setting foot again and living in Bangladesh is unbearable for Razia. She never thought and talked about going back home. She brings logical explanations into her statement claiming "Tell me this, if everything back home is so damn wonderful, what are all these crazy people doing queuing up for visa?" (468) The life conditions in Bangladesh are very poor so more and more people want to come to England and the number of those who want to turn back is so small. On the contrary to this, England provides many advantages and opportunities to the immigrants in spite of some problems. The last words of Razia explain many of the immigrants' mentality; "This is England, you can do whatever you like." (541) This understanding may both help immigrants get some benefits in England yet it can cause some problems as well. That is to say in England they may evaluate the opportunities of job and earn well; but if they do not be careful, they may lose their identity and core values, which will make them assimilated or degenerated.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRINIDADIAN (WEST INDIAN) IMMIGRANT PSYCHOLOGY IN *THE LONELY LONDONERS*

2.1 Embarking on a Hopeful Voyage of West Indian Immigrants to England

In his *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon not only touches on the Trinidadian immigrants but also immigrant groups such as Jamaicans, so it has been chosen to use the term of West Indians so as to define all of the immigrants from West Indies. The arrival of West Indian groups in gross numbers in Britain has not a long history. Though it is known that there were migrations to UK from the West Indies before the Second World War, the main mass migration flows realized after the war. In this respect, to have a look at George Glmech's explanation becomes necessary. He argues that:

While the migration of West Indians to Britain began in early 1950s, the conditions for it were set during the war: the enormous loss of human life, the devastation of many British cities, and a backlog of neglected work all required additional labourers. A booming economy in the postwar years added to the need for additional manpower to assist in the reconstruction of the economy began to recruit workers from its former imperial territories, particularly from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. (42)

Since the birth rate was low in Britain and the necessity for labour force was high in those years, Britain encouraged the West Indians to immigrate and provided them with free entrance rights as well. For instance, "the 1948 Nationality Act extended the British citizenship to all of commonwealth people" who were ready to evaluate

this opportunity as they were in a bitter struggle of unemployment and hunger and poverty. (Vickers 11)

The history of the coming of Trinidadian and other West Indian immigrants can't be separated from the WW II because most of these immigrants were the soldiers of the Britain during the war. At the time of the war time lots of West Indians were taken into the British Army. Dilip Hiro maintains that at the time of World War II of the 7000 West Indians who were recruited in the army, 350 West Indians arrived in Britain to work. (Töngür 42) In the postwar period some of the blacks turned back to their home and a notable others who had widened their perspective in Britain by seeing lots of work possibilities and high life standards that were not present in their homeland chose to stay in Britain. According to Robin Cohen, the black soldiers who had served in the British army during the war could not find a work when they reached in their country. (274) For this reason, they preferred to come back to Britain, which needed a great labour force. These are the ones that played a crucial role in the acceleration of the immigration from West Indians to England. As they went on praising the high life and labour conditions in the country, the desire of their friends and relatives at their homeland increased more and more. Thus a great number of black people got on the ships and found themselves in UK. Cohen states that the first ship to bring mass of immigrants was Empire Windrush from Jamaica, which dropped anchor to Britain in 1948. (274) Then the number of immigrants increased year by year. Most often they filled the gap in the field of unskilled works which were not preferred by the native British citizens. Again, Cohen claims that as they couldn't have an access in every kind of work, "they began to be concentrated in certain labours or industries and regions." (275)

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the immigration date corresponds to the 1950s as the novel itself was written in 1956 when the West Indians were in pursuit of setting foot on Britain. Even the first page of the book opens with an immigrant's, Henry Oliver's arrival. Like most of the other immigrants he is unaware of what type of conditions and host reactions there may be in Britain. Almost all of the new immigrants have the belief that they are going to be special in Britain and get better treatment from the hosts. The only positive thing is that one of his friends has given him the name of an already settled black West Indian who makes preparations to meet Oliver after he has taken the letter.

The greatest expectation of the Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants is to find a work and earn money before they come to England. Other than this, the immigrants are harbouring unbelievably high feelings about England such as finding a job and becoming rich soon. In the development of such an understanding development certainly the British rule in West Indies became influential because Britain was always shown as the ideal and most civilized place on earth by the representatives of Britain there. As Dabydeen and Wilson maintain:

The British colonialism created a powerful dream in the West Indies which indoctrinated the colonized through colonial education that there was not history or romance or fable in the islands; that all history resided in England.
(Töngür 44)

Therefore Britain embellished the dreams of almost every West Indian and thus they sought the ways to reach Britain so as to see a dreamlike country and achieve great things. In fact Selvon himself says that "Only in London, did my life find its purpose." (Nasta 4) Accordingly it is very normal to expect Selvon to reflect this

thought of him into his characters. Selvon's black characters believe that only in London can they reach their aims and realize their dreams. According to British press these dreams of the black immigrants are embellished by the idea that the "Streets of London are paved with gold." (8) In this dream the tellings of the immigrants living in Britain become influential as the previous immigrants tell that they can earn well and save money, and furthermore they send money to their families or relatives in West Indies. Tolroy, a previously arrived Jamaican immigrant and his family set the best example for this situation. Though Tolroy invites only his mother, his aunt Tanty and sister, Agnes and husband Lewis and their children also attend the voyage to London. In their coming Tolroy's saying that he earns five pounds a week has become an influential factor because Lewis says "Oh, God, I going England tomorrow" as soon as he learns that "Tolroy earns 5 pounds a week." (13) This sentence clarifies how they decide to go to the imaginary country. On the other hand, Tolroy who is familiar with the life conditions and the attitude of the British towards them begins to worry about how he will provide place and work to his relatives. Similarly Bart sends money to his home-country, which invokes his relatives there to go to England.

The expectation of Henry Oliver is not different from that of other immigrants; to earn money and get by. So he brings nothing to London; he is naked, even he doesn't wear a thick cloth to protect himself from the cold weather of London. In London he is going to earn and buy clothes for himself. When Moses asks him where his luggage is, he says "What luggage?" (17) However everything in London is not alright for them and this is what he will learn later. Thus setting off from Trinidad is

not the entire cure for their problems, in fact the principal trouble and difficulty starts in England.

No matter the actors of the migration story change, the results of these courageous steps are almost every time the same or similar. They get on the ship with high aspirations and then they begin to face the British reality and then they come to see the difficulties waiting for them. Moses, one of the most previously arrived immigrants best touches on this issue. While he is making an evaluation of the past years of him in England, he urges that though for a long time he has been in London, he has not gone a further step from the point where he was on his first arrival. Still he is working in the same job and staying in the same undesirable home. Then he concludes that all of the things he lived in England are aimless and in vain and he wishes he had found a job in Trinidad and stayed there. (114) The experiences of the immigrant characters prove this reality. This situation of Moses is valid for most of the black characters but this does not mean that it is impossible to do well and prosper in England. For instance, Tolroy succeeds to save and then send money to his family unlike Moses. Similarly Harris earns relatively more than his countrymen but the number of those who can earn well and send home is quite low in the novel.

2.2 Confrontation

All of the West Indian immigrants come to Britain with great expectation but not long after they face the immigrant realities: the difficult conditions emerging from color discriminations such as housing, getting by, cold shouldering of the natives and homesickness. This cold treatment is clearly explained by Nasta who claims that the black immigrants face a bleak and unwelcoming mother country which is unlike from the one in their dreams and thoughts. (2) Roberts and Thakur are the other

intellectuals who give voice to this issue. According to them “The majority of the characters are on a blind journey as they don’t know where the hell they are going, they are always puzzled by what happens to them.” (Töngür 45) Actually most of these immigrants do not have any knowledge about England and even the weather conditions there like Henry Oliver who comes to London wearing a light cloth in a winter month. All they know is the things they have heard about it from their countrymen but this is not enough to see the British realities and understand the British as because their countrymen who inform them usually do not mention the negativities in England so as not to humiliate themselves in the eye of their fellows. Except from this, their main source of English knowledge comes from the English again who exported the concept of ideal Englishness to its colonies as Rebecca G. Dyer points out. (119) However, things are very different in England from what they had in their mind. Even the welcome of it is cold and offensive. Again as Rebecca Dyer makes it clear, Selvon’s characters are facing “inadequate housing, food and disrespectful treatment” in England. (111) In other words, the atmosphere in England doesn’t turn out to be an “open-armed mother” who embraces them and “matches up to all of the expectations” of the immigrants and thus makes them happy. (Vickers 8) The opening of the book foreshadows that there are many difficulties waiting for them. The book opens as “One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if it is not London at all...” (7) The season’s being winter is not accidental. The lights of the city are not bright and the fog covers the whole city. Almost everything belonging to the city gives a gloomy atmosphere to the immigrants and the reader. As Nejat Töngür notes:

The first impression Britain creates on the immigrants is usually cold, disappointing and gloomy due to the difference between climatic conditions. For the immigrants who are accustomed to weather, coldness and winter are detrimental to their survival and adaptation struggles. (28)

Immigrants' dreams and expectations are versus reality in England. They believed that they were called for a better life and better jobs by the British government in those years when the immigration was encouraged. But it doesn't take long for the immigrants to understand that "They are called for the continuation of colonization in another way: they are no longer slaves but they are made cheap labourers." (Kalpakli 246) The things they meet are the opposite of the ones in their dreams. They were dreaming a nice hospitable and welcoming Britain however it turns out that all of their ideals and utopic beliefs are wrong. At this point, M. P. Msiska's interpretation is notable. For him:

In *The Lonely Londoners*, although the metropolis is envisioned as utopia, it is fundamentally presented as diastopic, as a place where the hopes and dreams of the young immigrants are constrained, modified and even abandoned as a condition of surviving the harshness of city life. (12)

At the core of this dystopia, the imaginations the immigrants have while they were in the Trinidad ruled by the British lie. They were made accustomed to the British somehow through being taught English British culture and lifestyle. As a natural result of this, they expected to benefit from the same rights and opportunities the British make use of, but those rights and opportunities were for a certain privileged group who are the native settlers of the island, the white British. Dealing with this issue Kathleen Anne Vicker argues that:

They were raised to believe themselves British, they were taught English and they spoke it and learnt British history and listened to BBC. Yet when the West Indians migrated to the mother country they found that [t]here was an inextricable link between nationality, citizenship and race. To be British was to be a white Anglo Saxon and whatever it meant it was not us. (10)

They believed that they could find a job and a house very easily then earn more and more and thus lead a perfect life in Britain. Unfortunately this has never been so. Moses is the most convincing example of this. Through the end of the book he says that though has been in London for a long time, he could not go one step ahead, he always remained in the same “spot”. Though he works very much he earns so little that he could not save any money to send his home country. According to G. R. Coulthard, the atmosphere they get from the British is “unfriendly and even hostile” since there are lots of prejudices occupying the native British mind. (37) Marcus Collins advocates that the black immigrants were seen as “vicious, indolent, violent, licentious and antifamilial.” (391) So all of their positive thoughts and dreams are thus demolished. The most striking example is Henry Oliver who doesn’t seem worried when he first arrives even he doesn’t demand help from Moses, but later on he starts to see the reality which is not pleasing. He says that “I never thought my first morning in London would be like this.” (22) This is the beginning of his facing the England and English reality. Particularly when he gets lost in London his worry and awe are doubled and as a result, a sense of loneliness and fear take hold upon him. Then after realizing some things in London he says to himself “You getting on like a damn fool.” (27) Except from this, he doesn’t find a job as easily and quickly as he has anticipated, and the food he has expected to get is very little for him. Once

being very hungry and not finding anything to eat he hunts the pigeons in the city center. This situation of him directs him to think that the English prefer to see a man starving rather than a cat or a dog. (107) Thus he promotes hatred towards them and in this condition it becomes hard to mention the integration of poor black immigrants. He remains alone and miserable as he has no other acquaintance other than Moses as it is emphasized in the title of the book. As a consequence, he confronts the British realities. So this bitter confrontation deprives the immigrants from enjoying themselves and being happy to some extent, but not entirely because the black Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants generally do not take these things into serious so much.

Another good example that shows their loneliness is that when Tolroy's relatives come to London a reporter wants to take a photo of one of them. Though Tanty insists on taking it together, the reporter says "One of you alone will be quite enough." (15) Even in the photograph they are alone or wanted to be alone but they can't realize this until a period of time passes.

The following important disappointment is experienced in accommodation since many of the immigrants can't find a proper place to stay. The houses they stay are generally:

Very old, grey and weather-beaten, the walls cracking like the last days of Pompeii, it has no water, and none of these houses have bath. Some of these houses had still gas light. They were built as one house walls separating them in parts. The streets are always dirty except from rain fall. (57)

Quite often they have to stay with their relatives or countrymen and the places they stay are not so healthy, clean and comfortable. The room Moses stays stinks and

it's not clean but in spite of this the newcomers have no other choice but to stay there. Sometimes three or four persons have to stay in the same room. Furthermore Moses once says to Oliver to sleep on the chair by putting them side by side as there are not enough beds for them.

The immigrants have to face with the reality of poverty and loneliness as the title implies. It is no matter for British whether they are earning enough to get by or not and “the wealthy people would not spare any time for the poor ones if they were asked.” (58) Most of the immigrant characters in the book such as Bart, Cap and Galahad suffer from poverty to a great extent. For instance, Bart can't afford to buy a coat to wear in winter and Galahad, suffering from a deep hunger, goes to parks in city center to hunt pigeons and seagulls to eat as he has no money in his pocket. Just like Galahad, Cap also hunts seagulls by trapping them on the roof of a house. It can't be said that the other characters are earning well. Moses an experienced immigrant can't save any money and he surprises at meeting Tolroy from Jamaica who has sent money to his home. Therefore, as Kalpaklı points out attention they come to understand the reality that England is not a place whose streets are paved with gold as they dreamed. The immigrants feel themselves strangers in spite of the long years they spent in England since they have never been adopted properly. (250) In brief the expectations and dreams of immigrants to make a new start and lead a better life in England generally results in disappointments and failure.

2.3 Settlement

After the confrontation with the realities of life in England, the Trinidadian immigrants have to face with the problem of settlement or adaptation. Although they may speak the same language, the cultures and races of Trinidadians and the English are quite different from each other and these are what make it hard for the immigrants to adapt themselves to the present life conditions and lifestyle in England. From time to time, Ma tells how difficult it is to come home through the heavy traffic of car and human. “Life is very busy and if you don’t watch out a car it can knock you down and kill you.” (64)

The following adaptation difficulty is concerned with technology because of the fact that the Trinidadians are not used to using technological machines though it is overcome in a short time. For example, Tanty complains about the long buses with which she is not familiar. She says “They too tall, I feel as if they would capsize.” (66) She was also afraid of looking outside while travelling on the bus and tube. However, she is one of the most powerful characters who achieved to adapt herself to London. She is not a shy and quiet character, she can easily socialize with the English people and enjoy their friendships. So she endears herself to both the blacks and the whites. Even the native whites call her “Aunt Tanty” In a way she gives the pattern of how to integrate into the majority.

Language is the next hindrance before adaptation though it is not so serious as in *Brick Lane* because most of the immigrants know English. But it may not be enough to communicate well with the native English since they have an accent of speaking that sometimes can’t be understood by the English. Throughout the book this accent of them is clearly seen. For instance, Big City always says “fusic” instead of music

and he does not want to be corrected either. Similarly while Galahad is talking to her girlfriend, not understanding his question, she says that it takes time to understand the way of West Indians' speech. (77) Only can Harris speak English well as he wants to be like a typical British.

In spite of all of these difficulties, there are still hopes in the immigrants' minds as Viney Kirpal argues:

The rejection they experience in the white man's land hurts no doubt, and there are failures and setbacks too, but there is also hope and a fierce, inexplicable will to go on, to succeed. For instance, Tolroy keeps on postponing his return, on one pretext or the other, in the belief that everything would work out fine one day. (88)

It is this belief that connects them to London and strengthens their ties with England.

So after a period of adaptation, the immigrants get used to living in England and later it becomes very hard for them to return though at the beginning of their immigration "they had seen themselves as visitors, always on the verge of returning to the place still they considered home" as Innes put forward. (Töngür 43) In this settlement, the role of staying near to each other or together can't be ignored considering the increasing number of immigrants in those years in 1950s and 1960s, in result of which the concept of countryman grows.

Additionally, the psychology of being despised by the fellows in their homeland directs the immigrants' not to turn back home but stay in London. If the high life standards in England from which the black immigrants benefit more or less and the civilization that is incomparably higher than theirs' are all added, it can't be expected that these immigrants leave England so quickly and easily.

In fact, the Trinidadian and other West Indian black immigrants are among those immigrants who think to return the least. In *The Lonely Londoners*, the number of those characters dreaming to turn back and live in Trinidad is so low that it is possible to number them as one or two. Only Moses, who can't save money even though he works hard, thinks to turn back in spite of the fact that he has been staying in England for a long time. On the other hand most of the characters prefer to stay in London even Galahad who is advised to return by Moses. The next example for the immigrants willing to stay in London is Big City who has never cared a jot about his country. He is strictly opposing to his countrymen when they suggest him to return if he earns big. Another good example is Harris who seems very similar to an English rather than a Trinidadian in all of his treatments and thoughts, and thus fits appropriate to the definition of mimicry made by Jaques Lacan:

Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage....It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare. (Bhabha 121)

These are the points that make him more integrated and adapted to the British society. He has so adapted to the Britain that it would be impossible to distinguish him from the native the English if his color weren't black. The following characters who do not plan to return are Daniel, Five Past Twelve and other immigrants do not plan to turn back. "They say that if they have money they would go all about on the continent, and live big and they would never leave Britain." (114) In such a mentality of immigrants, their opening eyes in England as a big country has a significant part.

In other words, England is their first love; they learnt how to live big, how to earn and get by in difficulties, how to flirt and etc. in Britain, so they can't attempt to leave it.

Wandering every part of London is also an important factor in the Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants' settlement in the country. Particularly in summer months they are wandering on the streets of London as much as possible with the hope of finding a white match. Unlike Monica Ali's Bangladeshi characters who are afraid of spreading among the British public, Selvon's lonely immigrants take the advantage of seeing almost every part of London without being introverted and closing the eyes to the outside world. When they arrive, they experience a process of adaptation to the environment and then thus they get to know most of the British place names in London. For instance, when it is looked at Big City, since his arrival he has been almost every part of London and he claims that even the British do not know London as well as him. Becoming familiar with the British names and the British encourage them to get into the country and may give them a chance to have a closer look at the British way of life and then make British friends thus integrate into the mainstream.

2.3.1 Understanding of Being a Countryman

The concept of countryman has a respectable place in the process of immigrating and settling in England. The immigrants can survive through a progressed understanding of countrymen or its natural result; sense of fraternity. Although they work in white employed places, their meeting with them and communication is not revealed. Thus they almost always get in touch only with each other and other coloured people except for female relations as G. R. Coulthard put forward. (37) As a natural result of these relations the previously settled immigrants who know England

and English well help their newly arrived countrymen with both finding a job and a place to stay though it is a hard task. Through this way, they prove how much they are connected to each other. Hiro notes that “the tendency to stick together is common to immigrants throughout the world, and is the result of the unfamiliarity and the insecurity they feel on arrival in a new country.” (Töngür 31) The role of the city these immigrants arrive has also a considerable part in the development and strengthening of the concept of companion or countryman. In a city like London where the immigrants generally get cold treatment and are often despised and given the worst jobs and sometimes being made redundant “the kinship and friendship networks are necessary for new arrivals’ survival.” (Dyer 118) These interactions also give them the chance of “gossiping and imaginative storytelling which serve as inexpensive forms of entertainment and as a way of keeping homesickness and loneliness at bay” as R. Dyer clarified. (118) As a result of this sense of sticking together, they mostly choose to stay in the same or nearby places but they cannot constitute their own towns like the Bangladeshis in *Brick Lane*. In these places it is easy for them to preserve their own culture and values as because the other settlers of the place are the immigrants from the same or nearby countries. As V. Kirpal points out by settling in the same or nearby streets “they are actually able to maintain their cultural boundaries and identities and overcome any crisis of rootlessness they may be experiencing while living in the new land.” (49)

This concept of countryman has an utmost importance in *The Lonely Londoners* as the novel is about the surviving struggles of the newly arrived immigrants through the support of their countrymen in the country. According to Dickinson, this is the story of Moses that “reflects collectivity” (72) as most of the immigrants come

together in Moses' basement home. The protagonist of the novel perfectly emphasizes the importance of this concept in his talk to his countrymen. He tells them that:

This is a lonely miserable city, if it was that we didn't get together now and then to talk about things back home, we would suffer like hell. Here is not like home where you have friends all about. In the beginning you would think that is a good thing, that nobody minding your business, but after a while you want to get in company, you want somebody house and eat a meal, you want to go on excursion to the sea, you want to go and play football and cricket (114).

In these lines it is obviously seen that Moses acts as a mentor for all of his countrymen who are "caught between the interstices of several different and often competing cultural worlds" as Nasta emphasized. (3) These worlds are the one they come from and the one in England to which they are newly introduced. There are numerous examples of this in the book. Moses, the previously settled immigrant from Trinidad is helping the other black immigrants coming from Trinidad who land on the island only with their luggage and little money if possible. He expresses his desire of helping Henry Oliver by saying "Both of we is Trinidadians and we must help out one another." (21) It doesn't matter for him whether the newly arrived immigrant is the acquaintance of him or not. If he is an immigrant from Trinidad coming with the salute of an acquainted, it is ok. In the first page of the book, Moses goes to meet one of his countrymen whom he doesn't know from "Adam" (7) But though countrymen understanding has developed among them, Moses sometimes complains about this situation since he is sick and tired of being helpful to his

countryman adding “I don’t know these people at all yet they coming to me as if I am liaison officer, and I catching my arse as it is, how could I help them out?” (8) He isn’t so much willing to go to meet Oliver but he can’t help without welcoming the newly arriving black immigrant. Helping the newly arrived immigrants with finding a job and a place is of course not an easy thing as the attitude of the host society is generally negative and cold towards them. Moses is especially in fear of getting fierce reaction from the British as the number of them is rising continuously. (8)

Besides Moses, there are some other old immigrants who would like to “watch their countrymen get out of the train,” (10) which makes them remember the days they spent in their country, which increases the nostalgia or homesickness of them and in a way gives them pleasure and suffering. It gives pleasure because they meet more and more of their countrymen, talk about the events and things in Trinidad and suffering as they miss their country and these newcomers remind them of their homeland whose influence of them never fades away totally. However, the feeling of homesickness is not so dominant on West Indians as much as it is on South Asian immigrants. As Curdella Forbes claims “their desire for home most often appears subsumed beneath its own absence.” (80)

The sense of countrymen shows itself almost everywhere in England among the immigrants. Since many of the black immigrants work in the same or similar works they can see each other while working. Tolroy introduces Lewis to Moses so that Moses can “keep an eye on him” during the work and protect him any potential danger or threat. (51) That means a black immigrant will provide support and help to another one through which both of them can survive in this alien environment. Psychologically they are relieved to see and meet each other in a factory or in a street

where they are exposed to the white majority. For this reason Tolroy introduces his brother in law to Moses.

Similarly to keep the connection, the immigrant characters usually prefer the same shops and places to do business. For instance, most of them go to the same tailor to have their deeds done. (61) Another example is that many female black immigrants go shopping in the same place under the leadership of aunt Tanty, which makes them feel at home. (62) However, the concentration of the immigrants in the same or nearby districts as it happens in Brick Lane may also badly affect the adaptation of them to Britain and the British culture and life since it may prevent them from having interaction with the native public.

In addition to these, from time to time they come together for different purposes. These meetings make them feel more confident and in safety in an alien hostile (for them) environment. Ma and Tanty often come together and talk about their past life in their homeland. The next example is Moses and his newly arrived countryman, Galahad. Moses is very excited to see a man from Trinidad, and he and Galahad mention Trinidad for a time. Again many of the black immigrants come to Moses's home so as to remember the days and things in homeland. These meetings and talks increase the feeling of homesickness and nostalgia in the immigrants. However they also learn how to stick together through these meetings and talks. According to Msiska, thanks to these meetings, the binds among them are strenghtened and thus their "social and physical survival" is made easier. (22) The following gathering is made by Harris who holds a fete which helps all of the immigrants in the book come together and chat. Even the most miserable characters like Five Past Twelve is coming to this organization. Moses explains the function of this fete saying that

when he first came to London he and his countrymen had no many places to go and enjoy themselves but now they are in Harris's fete and can meet many of his countrymen and enjoy themselves then for he appreciates Harris. The role of these kinds of activities is of utmost care as their sense of unity improves and thus they learn how to live and bear the unfavorable conditions in England. Kenneth Ramchand emphasizes this point by claiming that most of the immigrants in *Lonely Loners* live in very poor conditions but "they managed to endure and survive by belonging to a comforting fraternity" (102) which results from the developed sense of the concept of countrymen. By meeting with the native white English since they are also joining this dance show, the immigrants learn more things about the British, and the native hosts of the island get to know better the black culture, music and lifestyle. In result of these occurrences, the mutual understanding can be improved more and more and thus the prejudices between them can be overcome.

2.3.2 Intimate Relations as a Binding Factor

The white girls in England are attracting and binding factors for the black male West Indians who are burning with a desire to sleep with them. The more they date with white women the more they would like to stay in London. Marcus Collins who has made a notable study on the pride and prejudice of the West Indian Men explains the words of a Jamaican immigrant as: "If it weren't for the sympathy and generosity of English women in their relations with black men, black men would find it virtually impossible to survive in England." (408) Therefore though the British generally despise and isolate the black West Indian immigrants in different ways, many of the female native English give a chance or expectation to the these immigrants to stay more. The connection of the male immigrants is strengthened by the female

attraction. Ashley Dawson explains this connection suggesting that “accounts of their sexual adventures with white women were an important vehicle for male bonding” (48). It is a bit vague in *The Lonely Londoners* whether all of the male immigrants have fancied about hanging out with a white girls and sleeping with them before they come to England and settle there. The only character known to have dreamt such a relation is Galahad who began to dream such a thing after his friend Frank mentioned the white girls in London. (74) But it is doubtless that after they stay for a short time in London, they promote a desire for the white girls who seem more attractive and beautiful from the black ones for them.

In the novel, almost all of the male characters sleep with a white girl which invokes them to stay more and more in England and furthermore sometimes they are paid as they have sexual fair with the girls. They see themselves as successful if they sleep with white girls. For instance after he sleeps with a white girl Galahad tells about it to Moses but Moses doesn't give the reaction he has expected as he has already got used to having and seeing such things. He says “take it easy” which means it is not important because it has become an ordinary thing among them to hang out white girls and sleep with them. (77) Though there are black girls as well, the black immigrants always try to pursue white girls, which is one proof that demonstrates how much they are keen on white girls. Aunt Tanty grumbles about this situation adding that “White girl is that what sweeten up so many of you to come to London. Your kind of girls not enough now.” (57) Particularly in summer months when the frequency of hanging out with white girls increases, some of the immigrants thinking to return their home give back their words as they are enchanted

by the magic of sexuality of the English girls. It is quite possible to see this in many characters such as Galahad and Cap.

By having sexual relations, these black immigrants in a way try to show that they are also a part of the society. If they could have sex with the white girls as the white men do, why would not they benefit from other sources and possibilities of the country? Fatma Kalpaklı argues that this attitude of them is a step of the blacks to become like a native British (249). Similarly these sexual relations of the male immigrants with the white woman represent their “anti-colonial struggle” as Dawson notes. They show their struggle against white supremacy which has been present for a long time. As they cannot achieve this deed against the white males they try to do it through the female whites. According to Ashley Dawson:

Many of the male characters such as Moses, Cap and Galahad see white women as symbolic embodiments of dominant European culture. By gaining mastery over white women, Selvon’s characters strive to overcome the forms of racist denigration they experience in everyday life in the metropolis. (48)

However, in reality this is not so because this relation is the result of the female whites’ desires for intimate relations with black male immigrants. In no way it means that a black immigrant can have the equal rights with the native English. The most concrete example of this can be seen in the case of Bart who he tries to marry a white girl but meets a fierce reaction from the girl’s father. Thus Bart’s desire and dreams of marriage and making use of the same rights with the English results in failure. The psychological situation of those black immigrants like Bart who are endeavoring to have sexual affairs and then marry with the white girls is explained by Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin White Masks* as such:

By loving me (the white woman) proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization. I marry white culture, white beauty, and white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine. (63)

In spite of the fact that the male immigrants feel more proud after their affairs with the white females, as N. Töngür demonstrates that “the white women do not provide them with free-passes into the British society and they are compelled to live as outsiders and foreigners as they are deprived of the means and qualifications to adapt.” (70)

In brief, the intimate relations between the white women and black men play a significant role in binding the Trinidadian and other West Indian immigrants to England but they do not mean that these immigrants can be treated like the whites in the established society though these relations give psychological relief to them.

2.4 Disappointing Experiences:

2.4.1 The Trouble of Colour

In England, the colour of black people has never left them free of troubles; they have faced many serious problems such as unemployment, housing problem and most importantly inferiority complex. The color problem has a long history. But in the postcolonial immigrant sense in *The Lonely Londoners*, this concept dates back to 1950s when the immigration wave to Britain was considerably high. Kalpaklı quotes from Hiro as “In the 1960s at every corner, one may get across signs written on them ‘only Europeans’ or ‘keep the water clean’ ” (246). In response to this slogan, in the novel a character named Big City develops an opposite slogan adding that if he had

money he would buy a street and hang a notice on all of the boards writing “Keep The Water Coloured, No Rooms For Whites” (81) Thus he deconstructs the white racial discrimination slogan.

Sam Selvon from time to time juxtaposes the terms of white and black intentionally. Even at the very beginning of the book, Moses, who is the protagonist of the book, “Takes out a white handkerchief and blow his nose.” (7) It is obvious from this statement that Selvon is not in favor of his countrymen’ immigrating towards England so much. Supporting this, Coulthard urges that though Selvon perfectly depicts the immigrants’ problems and mentality, he doesn’t approve of their migrating to Britain in large numbers because they are not a part of the society, they only want to “live off the country” (38). Likewise the British press is not contented with seeing so many blacks in their country so they try to evaluate every opportunity to claim that Britain is being invaded and worsened by the black migrations.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the color issue is what makes the immigrants most fearful about Britain and the British. Moses reveals this worry to one of his newly arrived countryman telling that in such an environment where you can meet a spade all over the country it is dangerous to wander in the public area so freely as “The English people don’t like black people.” (23) Even their small children are afraid and surprised to see a black man. For example while he is walking, Galahad encounters a white mother and her child. The child points Galahad to her mother by saying “Mummy look at that black man!” (71) When Galahad tries to rub the child’s face and endear himself, that child begins to cry. The reaction of the mother is more interesting. Though she likes to express her thanks she abstains from such a behavior as there are other white citizens passing nearby them and therefore she just gives a

cold, insincere smile. Therefore this attitude of a native British citizen can quite possibly lead the immigrants promote hatred and prejudice against the British society and feel isolated from the mainstream, which sets a barrier before full integration of these immigrants into the British society.

In the following pages of the book it is touched on the result of such a cold treatment. Resented for having being isolated, Galahad pours out his troubles saying that they are the ones who “have to suffer in this world though they just demand little work, little food and little place to stay and these are the things that the white people do not want to give.” (72) Then he associates all of these troubles to their colour. Because of their color they have to work in the least attracting jobs, stay in the worst places and sleep with the most fallen women as K. Ramchand indicates. (102) This is the obstacle before a fully integrated British society in terms of race and colour. Such cold shoulderings given to the blacks and other immigrants do nothing good for the British but they deepen the already existing cliff between the immigrants and the British.

Big City is the next character who is tired of color trouble since he can't find a proper place to stay though he wanders in various places. He has a dream of buying a whole street if he wins lottery and he plans to give it only to blacks not whites. (81) Even though he cannot realize his dream in the book, it is worrying that an immigrant has flourished so strict feelings towards the native British. From such an aim, it is obvious that the prejudices and the ill-treatment of the white population find a reflection in the black citizens just in the opposite direction.

The next serious trouble with color is that the immigrants can get cold treatment because of it. Though there is no warning or rule that bans the blacks concede their

right if there is a white for instance in a bus or in a restaurant, secretly the color segregation is domineering the society. Moses best explains this situation as:

In America you see a sign telling you to keep off, but over here 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).

Therefore an experienced immigrant very well knows that if he doesn't give place to a white in a restaurant, he will get cold shoulder from them, because the English widely believe that the black immigrants deserve being looked down and isolated as they are not the native habitants of the isle, but Selvon justifies the presence of the black immigrants between the lines. Selvon's spokesman, Moses like Chanu in *Brick Lane* says that they deserve more right than anybody on earth as they are the ones who have made the country "prosperous". (24)

The trouble of color shows itself in the black male immigrant and white female relations. Almost all of the black characters in the novel have sexual relations with white girls. But when it comes to a serious relation like marriage, the families of the girls do not let their girls marry with a black man. Bart's case sets a good example for this. He and his girlfriend decide to marry but when the girl takes Bart to their home to introduce him to her family, a disappointment is experienced as the girl's father expels him as soon as he sees him because "he doesn't want to see curly-hair children in the family." (49) Even in marriages this problem still continues. For example, Joseph has achieved to marry a white girl and he has four children. He is not accepted by the dominant majority because of his color. His children even are having the similar problems their father has faced. They are called "darkie" at school and on the streets (115). This rejection may cause the disintegration of the black

immigrants from the British society and sets a barrier for the intermarriages that may have a crucial role in the mutual interaction of the white and black people and thus the integration of the coloured people into the British society may be damaged.

When it comes to the reason why the British don't enjoy seeing them in Britain, the first significant factor is the color of them and the second issue is that the British are afraid of losing their jobs to these blacks though the possibility of the second reason is very low as the blacks are employed in those menial works that are not chosen by the native white workers. Similarly, as Vickers notes in her master thesis, the British were having housing problems in the postwar period and this orientated them to isolate the immigrants who were posing a threat for their accommodation.

(12)

More important of all, the image the black immigrants leave in the mind of the British is of utmost importance because most of the prejudices, though they have been present since early times, are constituted by the acts and behaviours and lifestyle of the black immigrants and the cannon of writings about them most of which portray them negative. Nick Bentley points this issue by claiming that "Selvon's characters engage in criminal activity and many of them are sexually promiscuous often supporting the stereotypical image created by dominant white culture." (42) In the novel there are many examples for this situation. For instance Cap, a Nigerian immigrant has no place to stay and he hangs around the whole London in the pursuit of white girls. Since he doesn't work he disturbs other blacks and the white girls by asking for debt. Moses demonstrates this fact as "One worthless fellar go around making bad, and give the wrong impression for all the rest." (35) Besides, he is the one from whom every kind of thing can be expected.

Moses again describes him as the person who can go every part of the country and do every type of deed. For instance, he goes out with both the British, Australian and French girls and he abuses them by living on their money. Once he deceives a French girl promising her to get marry and go to Nigeria, but this never happens Cap finds a lie whenever the girl asks about going to Nigeria. (40-44) Save for these, Moses is the one who is vexed most by Cap because he often uses his home and eats his food. Since it is hard to make distinction between the black immigrants, the British people generalize a mistake made by a black to all blacks. For this reason, the least wrongdoing of a black may cause the whole blacks in Britain qualified as the “other”.

The following reason that makes the British dislike seeing the black Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants is that the British were their colonial boss in their own countries. Now they are in Britain and want to have the same rights with the British citizens. As Kalpaklı notes “The English people are not used to the idea that these black people who are once their slaves can be treated on equal terms with themselves.” (248) The black immigrants are not on the same level in terms of many respects according to the British society. In this respect, these black immigrants are mistaken on the idea that they will have the same or similar opportunities with the British.

2.4.2 Unemployment

Unemployment is the most common problem of immigrants whether it is West Indian, Asian or African. It is an undeniable fact that the main reason of Trinidadian (West Indian) migrations is to find a job in England because in their home lands they are poor and struggling in the hands of hunger and poverty. However it can't be said that they can easily find a job and a place to stay as soon as they come to Britain. In this, the image they have on the British mind is very influential. They are less possibly employed than the white natives because they are believed to be lazy at work, incapable of working hard as Marcus Collins has touched on (397). They have to face the English reality which privileges those white workers to employ. When the prejudices of the British are added to them, the possibility of these immigrants' to be employed seems quite low. Concerned with this issue Collins urges that the "White stereotypes of West Indian men were used to justify denying them jobs" (394). As Moses touches on in the book, they can get only the worst jobs to work and places to stay in. (12) For instance, Galahad who is an electrician wants to work as an electrician but Moses advises him to accept any kind of work given to him because they are not given well-paid and white color job. Moses's words turn out to be true and Galahad is never given a work that of electricians. Hiro obviously explains this situation adding that:

In the beginning while both their enthusiasm and hopes were high, the newcomers attempted to find a job they considered commensurate with their skills and experiences. But application after application ended in failure, they became desperately anxious and willing to take whatever was offered. (Karaca 11)

Worse than this, if they achieve to get a job in the lowest position, they can become a cause of strike and disorder because of their color. Moses mentions one of his experiences about it saying that “While he was working in a railway yard the workers there threatened the boss with strike if he did not fire Moses” (13). In their so doing, the fear of losing their own jobs to the blacks is effective as well. Even at the Welfare State where all unemployed people can apply, the blacks are seen as secondary. Selvon explains this attitude of the English saying that the authorities at a vocation application office do not directly express that “They don’t want the coloured workers but just say the vacancy get filled.” (30) In addition, the jobs blacks can get are heavy jobs as stated by Moses “The soft clerical jobs are kept for white fellars.” (36) For instance, Tolroy was able to find a job with great difficulty for his brother in law, Lewis but he gets the lowest pay though he does the heaviest work. (51) Moses also works very hard during the night but he is paid little. At the beginning of the novel, he complains about this situation to Tolroy who achieved to save some and sent it to his family in Jamaica. At the end of the book, the voice of Moses still is the same; he tells that though he is one of the oldest immigrants in London, he still works in a night work and he couldn’t get a better place or position. In result of all of these racial and colour discrimination problems, the adaptation process is slowed down since the immigrants’ belief in England and the English is shattered.

2.4.3 Inferiority Complex

One of the other major problems the Trinidadians and all other black immigrants face is the inferiority complex that is mainly originating from black color. It is the feeling of one's inferior to the dominant country and the ruling powerful white people. The history of it dates back to the history of colonialism started by the western societies in the colonies they invaded. The Africans, Asians and Caribbeans were always imposed that the white European identity is superior to theirs. Particularly the British Empire vaccinated this inferiority complex on its colonial subjects through its schools there and missioneries and other ways. Nejat Töngür emphasizes the role of these schools as:

The English-centred education, English books and teachers led the immigrants to believe that Britain was the mother country, the source of human civilization and moral virtue. London was seen as the cultural centre of the great British Empire, of which they were taught they were a part. As an outcome of the education system and cultural monopoly of Britain, the colonized regarded British culture as superior to their own and were convinced of the inferior quality of their culture. (13)

Therefore it becomes inevitable that many immigrants feel inferior their culture, identity, tradition, language and themselves to the dominant British culture and identity.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the inferiority complex reveals itself in different forms such as keeping away from other black immigrants or hiding himself, using exact English names, accusing himself and degrading one's origin because of black skin colour. Many of the immigrant characters consciously or unconsciously behave and

talk in an inferior manner to the white population. The black characters suppose that because they are black, they are essentially under the white race and origin as this was imposed upon them by the colonial masters for long years. In the engrainment of this complex into the immigrants' minds, their desire for becoming a part of the dominant and powerful culture and country has a crucial part. They believe that their own values are not civilized enough to catch the dominant culture. While doing this they also concede their language besides their cultural and traditional values. Fanon illustrates this point in his *Black Skin White Masks*. He urges that all of the colonized people on whose character inferiority complex is imposed try to position themselves with correlation to the civilized culture, language and metropolitan life. (2)

One of the most typical examples for those who are feeling inferior is Bart who on every opportunity tells that he is not one of those black Trinidadians but a South American man. He avoids from being with those too black people as he feels himself embarrassed when he is accompanying with them. From his behaviours when he is with his black countrymen it is understood that he seems as if saying "I here with these boys, but I not one of them, look at the colour of my skin." (47)

Using the exact names of the places in England in their dialogues is another exposure of this complex. Especially among the newly arrived immigrants, it is quite possible to meet such characters who enjoy using the British names in order to show themselves prestigious or important to their friends while chatting. Galahad sets the best example for this type of inferiority. Almost every time he tries to mention the British place names. He doesn't say "I was up the road" but says "I was in Oxford Street" and again he says Charring Cross instead of saying an ordinary place though the things he tells has little or nothing to do with these names. (68) Thus he believes

that he proved how a civilized and charismatic man he is. In fact this proves how he feels himself psychologically under the British public. Of course people both British and immigrants can use the place names such as Oxford Street and Charring Cross to describe the place but in his usage of these names, Galahad has a different intention. Unlike the British and previously arrived immigrants he uses this term just to prove how an intellectual identity he has and how much he knows about the British places and familiar with these places. If he had been a prestigious, intellectual Trinidadian who is keen on his identity and culture he would have proudly talked about the things about his home country or mentioned these places names as normal places as Chanu in *Brick Lane* does. His not mentioning his homecountry as much as the adventures he lives in these places and his being unwilling to visit his home strenghtens this idea.

The following character who embodies inferiority is Big City who says he can't stay in small cities as he deserves to be in big cities such as New York, London and Paris. Feeling inferior to the European and Americans he thinks his own city in Trinidad is not a place where he can live. He both despises his country and demonstrates that he is under the influence of inferiority complex. For Msiska, Big City plays lottery as in order to show that he is one member of the metropolitan life and culture thus he proves that he is connected more to this wide community than the Caribbean culture and community. (24)

Harris is the next character on whose character inferiority is carved. Though he is one of the most well adapted characters to the British lifestyle, still he is afraid of showing his real identity and even he is ashamed of talking and dancing with his country woman, Tanty in front of his white guests in his fete. At this point, fitting

appropriate to the Homi Bhabha's definition of *mimic man*, he behaves like a typical English person and wants to be a member of the dominant society (Bhabha 125). Similarly, he warns his countrymen to stand up when the band plays "God Save The Queen" (106) and behave properly during the fete before it starts. Though he is right on his view to prevent any kind of disgracing act or negativity which will vilify the black image in the minds of the British at the time of his fete, he is too worried if his white guest may be disturbed. Therefore during his fete again he gives the highest respect to his white guests; he is even on tenterhooks because he fears that something unwanted by the whites can happen. In short, he cannot behave as he is or like a real black man but he tries to be a kind of person that the British want, on the other hand his countrymen like to behave and enjoy themselves as they do in their home country. This is the point where disagreements appear between those who feel inferior to the British like Harris who is in favor of being a man in the type of the British format and those immigrants like Tanty and Moses who don't want to change their identity and character. After his fete ends he expresses his discontent with his countrymen by adding "You boys always make a disgrace of yourselves, and make me ashamed of myself." (102) Then he decides to hold his fetes only by invitations so that he can prevent the Trinidadians whom he doesn't like from attending his organizations.

Since they are made aware of their skin color in many places such as in a street or in a workplace and then despised for this reason, they begin to feel ashamed of their origin and skin color and hence are caught in the inferiority complex. In the novel, Galahad, ashamed of himself accuses his skin color of causing them trouble and he questions the color of his skin by complaining about it as:

Why the hell you can't you be blue, or red or green, if you can't be white?
You know is you that cause a lot of misery in the world. Is not me, you know
is you! I don't do anything to infuriate the people and them, is you! Look at
you, you so black and innocent, and this time so you causing misery all over
the world! (72)

Despite the fact that the color issue has troubled the black immigrants by causing them to have various problems like segregation and related ones, it has a good side for them too. Through this discrimination some of them can get to be more conscious and turn their face to their origin and core. In the beginning, most of the black characters in the book live in an adventure-like way. They pursue white girls and hang out with them but they do not think about turning back. However staying in England for a long time may make the characters more self-conscious. Moses is the most concrete example for this. Though nearly a decade he has spent in London, he is looking forward to living his happy days in Trinidad. He knows that no matter how hard he tries he will not get the equal rights and positions with the whites, and from time to time he advises this to his countryman Galahad. In his so doing, the experiences he had in London doubtlessly play an important role. He exposed to racial and colour discrimination and many other problems in his early years in London and now he is more experienced and he is more self aware than the other black characters. Salick Roydon claims that Moses is the character who has become aware of the English reality, the reality of their voyage to London and the end of their adventure. (157) Moses is the one of those rare characters who understands "great aimlessness" of their immigration and adventure. (158) In essence, the

characters as Stefano Harney suggests “explore their identity, community and roots”
as they continue to stay in England. (100)

CHAPTER 3

COMPARATIVE DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the issues of immigration in the postcolonial period, the immigrant mentality in both *Brick Lane* and *The Lonely Londoners*, the immigrant problems and their possible solutions implied in these novels have been examined with reference to literary, historical and sociological authorities. These solutions are suggested by setting from these two novels which take place in England. But any nation harbouring people from different ethnicities and colour can take our suggestions. In addition, the mentality of both Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants and their perception by the native English have been comparatively evaluated.

The first significant immigrant mentality examined is concerned with the expectations of Bangladeshi and West Indian immigrants. The expectations of these immigrant groups versus reality in England. In both of these two novels it has been found that it is a common belief among the immigrants that they will reach a better country and will lead a better life than the one in their home-country. They cherish great dreams and ideals but unfortunately most of them are disappointed by what they find in Britain and only a small number of them can reach their ideals. In *Brick Lane*, Chanu who is well-educated and skilled hopes to find a country full of opportunities for him. He was a young man when he first set foot on England and he expresses his situation as such:

I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got off the aeroplane, I had my certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a red carpet

laid out for me. I was going to join the civil service and become Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. (26)

However he could not achieve his dream. He could not get promotion, and feeling himself isolated from the mainstream, he decides to turn back. Thus his dream results in failure like many other immigrants' dreams. So despite long years staying in London, they still feel isolated and alone as in the *The Lonely Londoners*.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, Moses, living in London for a nearly decade still complains about the difficulties and problems he faces in his workplace and he plans to turn back as he could not find what he wanted. He is dreaming of living in Trinidad not in London as he is sick and tired of the pressures and the poor conditions he is in London, furthermore he advises Galahad to turn back to Trinidad so that he can be happy and lead a better life free of discrimination and other immigrant problems there.

It has been found out that what causes immigrants feel isolated and lonely is the cold attitude of the British towards the Bangladeshi and the Trinidadian immigrants. In *Brick Lane* there are not so many native English-Bangladeshi meetings. But it is implied that they give cold shoulder to the Bangladeshi immigrants. Nazneen once faces a tattooed lady and she tries to get in touch with her but it results in failure. The tattooed lady stays very proud and cold to her although she makes a small gesture in return for Nazneen's salutation. Similarly in *The Lonely Londoners*, when Galahad meets an English woman and her child, he wants to be sincere with little girl but she cries and her mother also gives him a cold look and treatment.

However in these two novels it is implied that the treatment of the English towards these postcolonial immigrant groups is different. Compared to the black

Trinidadians, the Bangladeshis get better treatment and they can have more jobs and other facilities in spite of the fact that these two immigrants groups share a common immigration history, the history of postcolonial immigration. The Bangladeshis are more superior in finding a job and on the issues of discrimination since the skin color of them is closer to white. In *Brick Lane*, there is a very striking example of this superiority. After an event when a Bangladeshi was stabbed, a Bangladeshi makes this comment: “Our boys were getting as bad as the blacks.” (423) In this sentence, it is demonstrated that the blacks in the country were already seen as bad and villain, and the Bangladeshis are aware of the fact that they have a better and more positive image in the eye of English than the Trinidadians and other West Indians.

Though they may have some common aspects with the English such as language and religion, the black Trinidadian immigrants are still seen as more inferior than the other immigrant groups. In *Brick Lane* while the most serious problem is with Chanu’s not getting the promotion he desires as he has different origin and skin colour, in *The Lonely Londoners*, the most serious problem is dealt with unemployment and poverty. Many of the black immigrant characters are nearly starving like Galahad and Cap who begin to eat the seagulls and pigeons at the parks of London. So skin colour causes problems both in *Brick Lane* and *The Lonely Londoners* but it is more serious in *The Lonely Londoners*. They can’t even find a job and a proper place to stay since they are more subjected to racial and colour discrimination than the Bangladeshis.

In the same way it has been revealed that the black immigrants are less advantageous than the Bangladeshis because the English prefer a brown to a black. Kalpaklı explicitly demonstrates that “In Britain, your chance of survival is strictly

linked to your skin colour. The whiter it is, the luckier you are.” (Kalpaklı 249)
Therefore Bangladeshi culture and colour are more equal than the Trinidadian (West Indians) and the Europeans and British are the most equal ones as George Orwell expressed “Some are more equal than the others.” (23)

The following factor that makes the Bangladeshi immigrants superior to the Trinidadians (West Indians) is that they achieve to preserve their cultural heritage. They do not forget their cultural roots and they still practice them in London, which makes it difficult for them to be assimilated. However the Trinidadians generally lack such a crucial element. They do not look back and remember the history they have before the British came there. So they are easier to be assimilated by the dominant White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) and its culture. According to Kathleen Anne Vickers:

The West Indian characters in *Lonely Londoners* do not look back to their ancestral roots in the building of identity frameworks. They take pleasure from similarities between Britain and their birth islands. (20)

But in spite of this, compared to the Bangladeshi immigrants the Trinidadian (West Indian) black immigrants have been found to be more indifferent to the negativities in London and they seem more relaxed. Most of the black immigrants are composed of those indifferent characters that don't care whether they can earn or not whether they can get by or not. Cap and Bart are typical examples. Selvon describes their situation as:

Fellars like Bart and Cap, you can't insult them, no matter how you try. If you tell Bart to get out he would look at you and laugh. If you tell Cap he is a

nasty, low-minded son of a bitch, he would ask you why you don't put the kettle on the fire to make tea? (48)

This situation of these black immigrants is evaluated by Kathie Birat as "West Indian characters live from day to day, with ups and downs; encounters and chance occurrences are just as important as social rituals." (5) Moses and Tolroy are the only characters who care most about their family and life and the problems they have in London. On the other hand Bangladeshi characters live a more regular life. They generally work in somewhere and they most often have a family and in a way their life is not shaped by chances or unexpected events as seen in the Trinidadian characters.

Besides this, the Trinidadian (West Indian) characters do not feel homesick as much as the Bangladeshis do. They do not talk about Trinidad or Jamaica so much and it is rare to see so many characters who are seeking ways to turn back to their hometowns. Only Moses is in pursuit of turning back to Trinidad though this never happens in the novel. However in *Brick Lane*, the number of those who would like to turn back is much higher. Throughout the most part of the novel Nazneen wishes to return and she is dreaming the beauties there but at the end of the book she refuses to go back. Her husband Chanu is the character who desires to go back most and he reaches his goal. His friend Doctor Azad also wants to return to his hometown in Bangladesh.

In this thesis, by considering the characters' difficulties and problems, some possible solutions are tried to be recommended as well. The trouble of race and color are two serious problems in both of these novels. It is seen that many characters complain about racial and colour segregations such as Chanu and Moses. Since it is

impossible to give these people a new skin colour, what is needed to be is to abolish the negative image of colour and race through an efficient education system. In *Brick Lane* Chanu is non-comformed with the British education system as it does not give true information about Bangladesh to his children. Bangladesh is vilified in the eye of the students including Chanu's daughters at British schools. This causes a conflict between generations and deepens the problem of integration. At this point Monica Ali suggests that everything true about Bangladesh should be taught to both the Bangladeshi and British children. Besides that, Monica Ali makes another recommendation for the same issue. Behind Chanu's not getting promotion, his being a brown man lies. Ali recommends that people should be given what they deserve without depending on their race and colour. If this is not done, both sides lose as in the case of Chanu who stops working in his workplace where he could not get promotion. So his ability is not used very properly for the benefit of the host nation. Thus both Chanu and his workplace lose something.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, this problem is especially making Trinidadian characters disturbed and they sometimes feel the life in London is unbearable. Tolroy says "You are the source of all problems. Can't you be Brown or red if you can't be white?" Moses mentions how the workers on railways construction protested so as to make him fired. So if fundamental precautions and steps are not taken it seems that Britain will be troubled by the same issues more and more. The possible solution presented by Selvon is that the immigrants should be given enough job and housing opportunities without depending on their colour and origin. This is understood from the examples he has given. For instance one of the most-mentioned issues is that the black immigrant characters are not able to find a job and so they get hungry and they

are helpless. The most obvious example character for this is Galahad who begins to eat seagulls as he can't find food. The next recommendation is dealt with education to break the prejudices about the black Trinidadian and other West Indian immigrants. Once Galahad meets a woman and her little child on the way but the child begins to cry as soon as she sees Galahad. However the mother does not do anything to abolish this unnecessary fear. Selvon suggests that little children should be taught that no harm comes from the black people. He also suggests that the education of this starts in family. Parents firstly should be free of prejudices against these black immigrants and then they should advise their children about this matter.

The next suggestion is dealt with both the English citizens and government for a more emphatic and integrated society. With the immigrations both the immigrants and the English benefit from each other. The English government and employers make use of the labour force of the immigrants which is not at a despicable extent. The immigrants also make the life in England more colourful and more cosmopolitan and they enrich the existing British culture and way of life. For example in *The Lonely Londoners*, the system of shopping by credit is started by aunt Tanty, thus the shopping and paying is made easier for both immigrants and the English. In *Brick Lane*, there are Bengal towns where you can see real Bangladeshi culture with all its beauty. The English are introduced Bangladeshi cuisine, clothing style, religion and lifestyle, each of which has a critical importance in terms of constituting a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual society in which different people from very different societies can coexist and live peacefully. Therefore what is suggested by Monica Ali and Sam Selvon is that the British should appreciate its cultural diversity and density through which a more integrated country is to be built.

To achieve full integration, the next significant step implied by Monica Ali and Samuel Selvon and that needs to be taken by the Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) immigrants is to learn English and British culture and lifestyle. This does not mean they should leave their own language and other cultural values but it means that they should not stay away from British and its culture so as to fully integrate into the British society. In *Brick Lane* Mrs Azad, Dr. Azad's wife mentions the presence of some immigrants who spent many years in London but did not make any attempt to learn English. Learning English is not synonymous to assimilation but it will make it easier to communicate with the native British and they will also enjoy more opportunities in Britain such as employment, housing, cultural and social activities. If they cannot do this the life there will be very difficult for them as in the case of Nazneen. She doesn't know English and while she runs after her daughter she gets lost and she can't even ask where she is and how she can go to their street. In *The Lonely Londoners*, the case is different. Language does not pose a serious problem since the Trinidadian (West Indian) characters know English little. Yet, Selvon's protagonist, Moses teaches his countrymen how to behave and earn their life and how life is going; shortly he introduces them into the British culture and lifestyle. If they do not attempt to learn it, it may cause them have trouble as seen in the case of Galahad who is degraded and condemned while catching pigeons in the park. Selvon suggests that they should get to know how things are like in Britain, and that is why he has chosen as a mentor and advisor for other black immigrants from West Indies.

According to Monica Ali and Sam Selvon, turning home mentality is one of the biggest impedences before full adaptation and integration as thinking home makes the things in England seem worse than they really are. This is obviously seen in the

case of Chanu, Nazneen and Dr. Azad in *Brick Lane* and Moses in *The Lonely Londoners*. Chanu always praises his hometown and mentions its superiorities to his daughters. For instance he mentions how paradise land Bangladesh was once and the importance of it in terms of textile and etc. Particularly after the September 11 Attacks, Chanu' desire for Bangladesh is doubled and he decides to turn back to Bangladesh as everything there seems sweet to him though the opportunities there are fewer than the ones in England. Similarly Dr Azad also thinks about his homeland and he invests there as he believes that one day he will turn back there. But Nazneen's situation changes after a time she stays in London, slowly she gets rid of her sweet home psychology which is a very typical characteristic of the immigrants. In *The Lonely Londoners*, though the number of these characters planning to turn back is smaller than the one in *Brick Lane*, the protagonist of the novel, Moses dreams to return as Trinidad is the place which suits best for him and he advises this to his countryman Galahad. In result of these dreams of turning back, the happiness of these immigrants is lessened and their full integration is damaged.

To make the immigrants fully integrate into the British society again requires mutual respect in every field such as at work, in social places and activities and etc. In two of these novels it has been drawn attention to the idea that the government should adopt more embracing policies towards the Bangladeshi and Trinidadian and all other immigrant groups. In both *Brick Lane* and *The Lonely Londoners*, it is suggested that immigrants should not be humiliated and degraded because of their origin, race, colour and culture. At this point it is necessary to give ear to Blair's words:

Let's build a new and young country that can lay aside the old prejudices that dominated our land for a generation. A nation for all the people, built by the people, where old divisions are cast out. A new spirit in the nation based on working together, unity, solidarity, partnership. One Britain. This is the patriotism of the future. (McGhee 163)

Therefore it is necessary to destruct the walls of prejudices, hatred and racism, and to build mutual respect and love. Only in such a London and in general Britain, can the Bangladeshi and Trinidadian (West Indian) and other immigrants live peacefully and without fear together with the native British.

Finally, Monica Ali and Sam Selvon suggest that the British should leave the belief that Britain was white and it will remain white. The British itself went to different parts of the world for colonization and they brought many people from Bangladesh and Trinidad (West Indies) and other colonies so as to strenghten its economy as mentioned in the novels on issue. Many other immigrants found themselves in Britain as a result of the postcolonial movement. Here it is useful to remember the famous anti-racism slogan: "We are here because you were there." (Rodriguez) This sentence not only explains the postcolonial immigration mentality but also justifies the presence of immigrants and thus presents a solution for their staying in Britain.

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