**Character of Nazeen in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane***

Though Monika Ali’s Brick Lane is widely considered to be “mirroring the lives of Bangladeshi community in Britain” (Tongur 561), it is about Nazneen and her struggle to escape the condition of double invisibility to which the twin edifices of sexism and racism have consigned her. Nazneen begins her life under the sign of an implacable fate. She is born prematurely in a rural village. Her mother's decision to leave her child to destiny, both because of her own poverty and because of the child's gender, becomes an important symbol of women's self-abnegation and acquiescence throughout the rest of the novel. Nazneen accepts her mother's reading of women's lot, and resigns herself as an adolescent to marriage to a much older suitor, the oafish Chanu, who takes her with him to Britain, where he intends to make his fortune. In the novel, Nazeen transgresses boundaries fixed on her by her gender, culture, caste and economic status. She is determined by strategies of resistance, escaping from traditional space, using sexuality in order to move beyond restrictions imposed on her and thus renegotiating the space in which she actually resides. The gendered space underlines the idea of home which remains problematic. The conflation of home, as both security and prison, evokes therefore ones limited identity.

Living in a public housing estate in London's impoverished East End, Nazneen suffers the extreme social isolation that tends to characterize women condemned to domestic servitude. Migrant women like Nazneen are the most likely to be trapped in informal labor since they lack the linguistic skills and social networks to enter the formal labour market. Able only to say 'sorry' and 'thank you' in English, Nazneen spends entire days completely by herself, cleaning the flat in which she and Chanu live, her only human contact being the sight of a mysterious tattooed lady who sits all day staring blankly out the window of one of the facing buildings . This transition is particularly jarring given the collective character of rural village life in Bangladesh. Nazneen says that in her whole eighteen years, she can never remember having spent a moment alone until arriving in Britain. She was drowning into isolation.

Shortly after their marriage, Nazneen gives birth to a son called Raqib, but he does not live long. Some years later, Nazneen gives birth to two daughters, Shahana and Bibi. Nazneen has been keeping in touch with her sister Hasina who is back in Bangladesh. Hasina, a beautiful and willful girl, has eloped with her lover because she is determined to lead the life she wants. Even when things do not turn out as she expects, she accepts it and moves on. After fleeing from her husband who turns violent, Hasina gets a job in a garment factory but ends up being raped and sacked. To survive, she becomes a prostitute until she gets a job working as a maid in a rich family. Hasina‟s letters written in broken language are Nazneen‟s only connection with her home country. Nazneen started to feel that she is expected only to fulfill her gender role as a subservient, dutiful, wife and a mother and nothing more than that. As the years go by, Nazneen adapts to life in England and befriends some Bangladeshi women in the Tower Hamlets neighborhood. Because of Chanu‟s unemployment, Nazneen starts doing some sewing jobs at home.Her other daily job is to mediate between Chanu and their two daughters, especially Shahana, the elder daughter, who has adopted many English practices and resents everything related to Bangladesh. This is the turning point where the protagonist is seen with new confidence and that this serves as the new interpretation of life in a immigrant‟s life who suffered a lot.

As Chanu‟s dream of succeeding in England gradually fades, and seeing the „threat‟ of assimilation in his daughters, he declares that the family is going back to Bangladesh. Because of her sewing jobs, Nazneen meets Karim, a young Bangladeshi born and bred in England. He has ill father. Karim is interested in political activities. He is elected as the leader of Bengal Tigers. He speaks in English better than in Bengali language and he is attracted to Nazneen. Being the middleman between the factory and Nazneen, Karim often comes to their flat. Karim is an important character as he helps Nazneen to discover herself and to help her become integrated into society in England and to finally stand up for herself, especially to her husband Chanu. Gradually Nazneen gets to know that he and a group of young Bangladeshi people are activists under the group the Bengal Tigers, who seek racial equality and rights for Bangladeshi people in the community. They strive to fight for their people who are allegedly oppressed by white British people. Meanwhile Nazneen falls in love with Karim and they begin an affair forbidden by Islamic rules, a religion they share. While feeling guilty about the affair and afraid of being discovered by people in the community, Nazneen realizes at the same time the emotional attachment she has developed towards her husband and her two daughters, and that she cannot simply forsake them. She also becomes disillusioned with Karim after some time, seeing that he is no better that Chanu, and breaks up with him after hehas proposed marriage. The time for her to decide what life she wants to lead comes when Shahana escapes from home on the eve of their schedule trip back toBangladesh. It is exactly the time Karim‟s group holds a full-scale march against white persecution in the neighborhood, and the streets are extremely chaotic. Nazneen rushes out to find Shahana and brings her back home. Shahana has never been to Bangladesh because she does not like there nor does she like the Bengali culture. She does not want to turn back to Bangladesh as her father Chanu wishes and as a result there is a clash between her and her father Chanu.

Nazneen finally decides that she and the girls are not going back to Bangladesh with Chanu, though she remains close with him after their parting. Chanu decides go to Bangladesh to lead a more traditional, cultural life style. Nazneen makes a living by starting a sewing business with the other Bangladeshi wives in the neighborhood. The novel ends with an image: a sari-wearing ice-skating woman— Nazneen, firmly on her feet but preparing to launch out onto the precarious ice of experience. She discovers her choice and her new world.