
NOTIONS OF HYBRID IDENTITIES: A POSTCOLONIAL INSIGHT INTO DIASPORIC FEATURES IN “BRICK LANE” AND “AN AMERICAN BRAT”

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ABSTRACT

The two novels, An American Brat by Bapsi Sidhwa and Brick Lane by Monica Ali explore the subject of hybrid identities through the theme of migration and the consequences of the diasporic experiences which is the most notable topic in the contemporary postcolonial, postmodern and diasporic literature. Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition as the writers develop their characters through different phases of struggle which are helpful in their identity development which is affected by the culture of the settled lands and results in hybridity. To explore the notions of hybrid identities, the focus of the paper will be on the diasporic features presented in the novels through the experiences of diaspora characters. These diasporic features would be analyzed in the light of postcolonial concepts given by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha such as the concepts of Dislocation, Otherness, Unhomeliness, Ambivalence, Mimicry and Third Space which ultimately leads to the hybrid identities of diasporas.

Key Words: Hybrid Identity, Diaspora, Postcolonialism, Brick Lane, An American Brat, Monica Ali, Bapsi Sidhwa.

Type of Paper: Original research study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary era is the era of globalization as a vast majority of immigrants, from all over the world, migrate to reside in another country or any other territory for economic and academic purposes. This study is an attempt to investigate the notions of hybrid identities of Diasporas which is closely linked with the concepts of postcolonial theorists Homi Bhabha and Edward

Said whose concepts formulate the fundamental and essential basis of postcolonial critical literary theory. The novels “*An American Brat*” by Bapsi Sidhwa and “*Brick Lane*” by Monica Ali are the two postcolonial novels with the diaspora characters and the novels highlight the diasporic elements which are responsible for the creation of hybrid identity which is studied with a literary lens of postcolonial literary theory.

1.2 Background of Study

The famous metropolitan cities like London and the countries like America have diaspora minorities from the South Asian origins who have migrated from these eastern and formerly colonized areas to the western cities in order to adopt a better lifestyle. The colonized subjects are taught a specific way of seeing in which the value-system of the colonizer is perceived as the only true one. The colonized people’s culture and values, on the other hand, are identified as ‘barbaric’ and ‘uncivilized’ and in need of rescue. Cultural identification is a problematic concept whereas the generation of writers that precedes them has a rooted imagination of the notion of home and belonging, even after many years of dwelling in Britain or in other western metropolitan cities the diaspora characters’ attempt to construct their cultural identities which is, in their case, much more troubled and problematic. So, they do not embrace the essentialist view of cultural affiliation but demonstrate a flexible relationship to concepts such as ‘home’, ‘nation’ or ‘culture and develop their identity as hybrid identity.

1.3 Introduction of Selected Novels

These novels cannot be read without the postcolonial framework for it deals with the same issues postcolonial writers discuss in their works, such as racial prejudice, discrimination, displacement, and issues of exclusion and (un)belonging. Both these novels, “*Brick Lane*” by Monica Ali and “*An American Brat*” by Bapsi Sidhwa, examine the emotional effect of the experience of immigration in terms of the shock of arrival and the cultural consequences along with the problems resulting from the movement from one place to another, all of which are important to the construction of one’s identity. In the face of racial prejudice and the failure to merge and integrate into the new society, the immigrant characters in these novels will definitely question their position in that society and their sense of belonging. When the characters feel dislocated and they are not welcomed in the new society they will definitely develop a sense of unbelonging that results in identity crisis. As a result of leaving home, a rupture in the immigrants’ identity might happen, which leads them to search for a solid foundation and meaning to reassure themselves. Accordingly, they will try to redefine their

identity through attaching to and preserving their traditions and as a result their identity is reshaped as hybrid identity.

1.4 Main Research Problem

Our main research problem is the following: -

Notions of Hybrid identities: A Postcolonial Insight into Diasporic Features in “Brick Lane” and “An American Brat”.

1.5 Problem Statement

Postcolonial insight into immigrant’s lives will examine the diasporic features and issues of their ethnicity, race, language, gender, discriminations, marginalization, culture, locations and belonging among others, and analyze that how these notions influence the characters’ perceptions of their cultural, national and personal identities which appear as unstable, hybrid and in state of transformation.

1.6 Research Questions

In this study, the analysis has been done in the light of following research questions

1. How diaspora characters are portrayed in the selected novels and what are the notions of their hybrid identities?
2. How the postcolonial concepts are relevant in analyzing the diasporic features in the selected novels?
3. What type of circumstances and diasporic experiences are responsible in developing the sense of otherness and unhomeliness in diasporas?
4. How diasporas are in ambivalent state towards the host land, how they feel towards their ethnicity and how they mimic the cultural practices of the host countries?
5. How the postcolonial notions of Unhomeliness, Dislocation, Otherness, Ambivalence, Mimicry, In-between Culture, Third Space are participants in resulting a hybrid identity of diasporas?

1.7 Objectives of this Study

The basic objective of my study is to explore the notions of hybrid identities of diaspora with postcolonial insight into the diasporic features in connection with the experiences of immigrants in America (in “An American Brat”) and in England (in the “Brick Lane”).

By taking into account the postcolonial concepts given by Bhabha and Said which are connected with migration such as sense of Otherness, Unhomeliness, clash between roots and new culture, ethnicity, Ambivalence, Mimicry, creation of Third Space, in-between positioning

of diasporas etc. The concise objective of this study is to analyze the situation that leads to hybrid existence of migrant people and the paper will throw light that how these difficulties instigate the creation of cultural identities that are unstable, unfixed, continuously transforming and never complete.

1.8 Scope of Study

This study is very beneficial for the reason that, in contemporary era, the migration from one place to another for multiple reasons is so frequent that it has become a widespread phenomenon and this study explores the migratory experiences of the diasporas in the new societies. Through the analysis of these two selected novels, this study is an attempt to explore the struggles and hardships of the migrants in the settled society. Their migratory experiences lead the foundation of their self-realization and self-development, moreover the struggle for assimilation in the settled society despite of the discrepancies cause them to suffer through the crisis of identity as their identity is tormented and results in a hybrid identity. So, this study is very important as it is an account of these migratory experiences and the diasporic features which are frequently faced by the migrants in the settled society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

Alistair Cormack (2006) claims that the most noticeable aspect of *Brick Lane* is that how it looks into the lives of migrant women and brought into light their social, religious and cultural ties. He says that *Brick Lane* is not only a fiction but it is an account of postcolonial aspects and historical context of immigration in modern-day multicultural Britain. (Cormack 2006)

Chakrabarti (2003), compares *Brick Lane*'s solitude and isolation to the limited world of the novels by Jane Austen, literary parallels can be drawn by their comparison to the *Brick Lane*. Chakrabarti has made the observations, he describes Nazneen's closed and isolated world as a secluded domestic drama, untroubled by the external world. By this description he means that much of the novel's episodes take place within the Tower Hamlets and almost always in the living room or kitchen of the flat shared by Chanu, Nazneen and their two daughters Shahana and Bibi. All the global issues and life beyond *Brick Lane* are just beyond their approach and nothing more than just images on the television.

Germaine Greer (2006) an Australian feminist begins her article on Ali's *Brick Lane* and its filming with a sharp and bitter satire: "Writers are treacherous; they will sneak upon you and write about you in terms that you don't recognize". She believes that Ali only values western

culture and had written this story to support western point of view and the characters are created and developed not for eastern readers but only for western readers. According to Greer, Ali has mocked Bangladeshi naive people who do not have much possibility and enough sources to publically defend themselves against her attacks. (Greer 2006)

Rushdie (2006), in a letter published by the guardian, has reacted to Greer's critique in similarly very bitter and sharp manner. He denounced and condemned her support for the campaigners of the protest against the filming of the *Brick Lane*. He analyzes the situation that how Greer's critical reaction on the novel *Brick Lane* is similar to her bitter response on his writing of satanic verses. He says that she portrayed me as 'a megalomaniac, an Englishman with dark skin', similarly now it's Monica Ali's turn to be deracinated and criticized by Germaine. (Rushdie 2006)

Perfect (2008) claims that Ali purposefully creates conventional or stereotypical characters to play an important role in the life of her protagonist Nazneen to substantiate and justify her absolute cultural integration in modern day multicultural Britain. He argues that through the stereotypical characters, the foremost concern of the novel is to show the probabilities and potential for assimilation and adaptation at individual and social level. (Perfect 2008).

According to Sandhu (2003), the novel basically deals with the characters therefore the setting in the area of *Brick Lane* is not much important. It is not the only narrative which explores the lives of Bengali immigrant community in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. However, it is the most important narrative to reveal the lives of Bengali migrant woman inhabiting in Tower Hamlets. The Main context of the novel is the recounting of the subject matter of diaspora which is concerned with the issues of otherness, belonging and being at home. So logically, it can be argued that *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali belongs to the category of the narrative discourse which explores the struggle between rejection and assimilation. (Sandhu 2003)

According to Sharrad (2007), the ending of the novel is unclear and ambiguous, he says that Chanu's going back to Bangladesh was more or less predictable and Nazneen's decision not to go back with Chanu seems to indicate the separation in their relationship on personal level. (Sharrad 2007)

Dodiya (2006) states that through the character of David and Feroza, Sidhwa shows that Judaism and Zoroastrianism are two ancient religions, having different cultures and traditions. America serves as a "melting pot" for the fusion of two religions but still the American identity

and Americanization cannot enforce their infusion as it is quite difficult because of their prolong history of hostility.

Bharucha, (1995) In “Reflections in Broken Mirrors” says that Sidhwa, in her novel *An American Brat*, examines the clash between Zoroastrian faith, the Pakistani identity and the magnetism of the liberal Western World” (34). *An American Brat* narrates a story of a sixteen years old Pakistani Parsee girl, strictly brought up following the Parsee culture, her immigration to America, and then her migratory experiences leading to her Americanization. (Bharucha 1995)

Novy Kapadia (1996) analyzes that Sidhwa does not appear as a defender or supporter of USA. She accounts both positive and negative sides of the first world as she values the competence of the western world along with the description of squalid and vicious aspects of that entrepreneurial and materialistic social order. (Kapadia 1996)

2.2 Distinction of this Study

This study is different from the previous studies in the analytical technique as this study is an attempt to explore the diasporic features in connection with postcolonial literary theory. Postcolonial theory is the literary lens use to investigate the notions of hybrid identities. The thematic analysis has its distinction in the aspect that the research will analyze the notions of hybrid identity with regard to combined aspects of postcolonial analysis and diaspora studies which play their role in characters’ perception, transformation and development of their identity which, in case of diaspora, ultimately ends up in the creation of hybrid identity.

Another distinction of this study lies in the selection of data which is under investigation. The two novels which are selected represent diasporic features through diaspora characters but in different settings. The novel, *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali presents the diasporic experiences in multicultural city of London while *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa highlights the migratory experiences in the metropolitans of America. The aspect which makes this study more comprehensive is that the diaspora characters presented in *Brick Lane* are in the scenario of ‘diaspora community’ while the focus of *An American Brat* is on ‘diaspora individual’ in America.

The distinction of this study is the finding of the research that whatever the situation is, diasporas are influenced by their surroundings and their experiences make their horizons broad enough that they develop and transform their identity and finally reshape their identity as hybrid identity.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Diaspora

Initially, the term was used to describe Greek's movement from one location to another for trade and business. In sixth century BC, the term was associated with the Jewish migration which caused a lot of anguish. In modern times, this term has acquired a much wide-ranging meaning as the term is frequently used in its connotative implication to connote the movement of the people from one place to another that is the migration of the individual or a group of individuals from the ancestral homeland to settle in a new land. The migration reminds us of colonial era when colonizers travelled from one area to another area to achieve power hence laying emphasis on the significance of migration in the eyes of the world. Finally, the term Diaspora is generally applied to any individual or the group of individuals that are practically geographically deterritorialized and dislocated to dwell in a land that is not their land of origin. A straightforward meaning of the term according to its recent use be that the modern day Diasporas are the migrant ethnic groups be located, working and proceeding in the settled lands although they still retain widespread material and emotional associations with their homelands.

3.2 Features of Diaspora for Literary Analysis

In most of the Diaspora literature the depiction of Diaspora life is somewhat realistic yet it is also fictionalized imagination of the writers particularly in novels narrating the story of the displacement and relocation and the consequences of migration on the lives of their immigrant characters.

The first essential element is displacement of an individual or a group of individuals from one location to another. It can be voluntary or involuntary migration depending upon the multiple factors behind the migration.

One of the most important problems regarding immigration is cultural clash which, in many ways, causes difficulty in the survival of Diaspora populace. Cultural conflict is the most significant theme of Diaspora literature.

The inhabitants of the settled country do not tolerate the practice of the immigrants' culture in their territories possibly for the reason that it may turn out as a threat to the local culture of the host country. This alarming state provokes, in the minds of the native inhabitants, the sentiment of hatred against the immigrants.

The government of the host country and the citizens both discriminate the Diaspora group in many ways. Travel from one country to reside in another country is usually featured by the

sufferings of immigration; dislocation, relocation, adjustment and rejection and finally the discriminatory conduct of the native residents compel the Diaspora individuals to feel themselves alien.

The experiences of first generation and second generation differ in certain aspects therefore their dilemmas are not the same. When the first generation of Diaspora populace migrates to reside in another country the individuals find it difficult to adjust themselves in the new environment. They are reluctant in adopting the new culture furthermore they are discriminated on cultural and racial basis. This situation give rise to the sense of seclusion but the first generations do not react against this alienation because from the very beginning they keep it in their mind that this is not their own homeland. But this situation is different in case of second generation, born and brought up in the host country the second generation assumes the host land as their own home land but the situation is complicated when they are rejected and discriminated by the native citizens. They start to question their origin, roots and background to seek their self-definition.

Identity crisis is the key theme of Diaspora literature. One of the most difficult jobs for the immigrants is to explore their self-identity and for this reason the immigrants question their position, status, past, present, origin, history, tradition, background, language, culture, religion, relationships and belongings.

Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition as the writers develop their characters through different phases of struggle which are helpful in their identity development which is affected by the culture of the settled lands and results in hybridity

3.3 Postcolonial Concepts

Considering the theoretical work of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, this research work is an intention to attempt an exploration of the diasporic features which are responsible for the creation of hybrid identity of diasporas, which in this study is limited to South Asian diaspora. Edward Said and Homi Bhabha are postcolonial theorists and gave the concepts of Otherness, Unhomeliness, Mimicry, Ambivalence, creation of Third Space and the hybrid identities which are most commonly observed in contemporary postcolonial and diaspora literature. The situation is more intense in case of diaspora and more specifically the South Asian diaspora because of their background of colonization. When the people from the South Asian countries such as Pakistan, India and Bangladesh migrate to the western countries they are usually not

welcomed there. There are several factors working behind this non-acceptance, the major factor is that the people who belong to the South Asian countries have colonial background. The white people consider the formerly colonized South Asian people as ignorant, poor, uneducated, uncivilized so they are not ready to welcome them in their countries. On the other hand these diaspora people believe in the superiority of the west and consider their culture and lifestyle as the standard for them. The diasporas from the colonial background when come in contact with the colonizers realize a fact that they are not welcomed so they feel a sense of unhomeliness and further struggle reveals to them that they are greatly “Othered” because of their race, nationality and colonial past.

The theoretical discourse of Edward Said gives the concept of Otherness in Orientalism, there is an unending debate on the topic of otherness which is more critical in the case of diasporas and specially the diasporas from the south Asia or from the colonial backdrop. The critical theories of Said and Bhabha help in understanding the factors behind the power relations and the causes of otherness and unhomeliness. In the sequence of the theoretical framework the next phase in the journey of diasporas is to struggle for assimilation in the new environment of the settled country which results in ambivalence, ambivalence results because of the mixed feelings of the diasporas for the settled country, there is a love-hate relationship which results because of their otherness and then the struggle of survival. This struggle to assimilate and survive in the new country leads to the mimicry of the inhabitants in their style of living and also in their socio-cultural values.

Ambivalence results from the contact between the former colonizers and the colonized, furthermore the binary relation between western and non-western populace leads to uncertain sense of self in the migrants and this sense is the outcome of the dilemma of otherness. Bhabha’s discourse gives the concept of ambivalence and describes it as an ambiguous sentiment of the relationship of the colonizers and colonized which is characterized by liking and disliking, attraction and revulsion, acceptance and rejection by the colonized towards the cultural and social norms and the living standards of the colonizers. The colonized oscillates between the refusal and acceptance and then to get assimilate in the society starts to mimic the natives of the settled land which is on the part of the colonized is “at once resemblance and menace” (The Location of Culture 123). According to Bhabha, “mimicry is constructed around ambivalence” (The Location of Culture 122). This mimicry is like mockery because the difference between the colonizers and the colonized or to say it as the east and the west can

never be wiped away so the mimicry results into the identities which are almost the same like colonizers or the western people but not quite like them.

Bhabha argues how the cultural, political and national identity of the migrants depends on their otherness by the host society hence they are caught geographically in-between two worlds, and culturally in-between two cultures. Bhabha describes that this is the point where the migrants start a new beginning by their 'culture-in-between'. The concept of 'culture-in-between' is actually the 'Third Space' in which one goes to the construction of a new cultural identity because Third Space is an in-between space where the socio-political and cultural elements are softened and sometimes merged into another different culture which work together to outline the hybridity of culture. Consequently, all these factors shape the diaspora identity as hybrid identity.

The mass migration starts after decolonization and a number of people migrate from the east to reside and settle in the west. some of the former colonial individuals, both in native land and as diaspora, try to follow the lifestyle of their colonizers by imitating their manner of speech and behavior, use of language, ways of dressing etc. Bhabha (1994) says that this is not the mimicry but it is actually mockery as these individuals try to adjust themselves in colonizing culture but their own cultural associations are so strong that they do not let them to adjust themselves in the new culture. Bhabha says that this "mimicry is constructed around ambivalence" (The Location of Culture 122) this ambivalence is the outcome of opposing sentiments of attraction and repulsion, attraction is because of the superiority of the colonizers and repulsion because of the colonial oppressions and sufferings. The colonizer and colonized are in such a relationship that the colonized individuals neither fully imitate the colonizers nor they can ignore them, hence, the individuals fluctuate between two lifestyles. In order to avoid fluctuation between two opposing cultures, it is a challenge for the individual to maintain the equilibrium between two cultural values without leaving one for the sake of adoption of the other. And when, if by some effort, the balance between two cultures is achieved, the colonizers then do not recognize them as one of them hence the colonizers do not admit the hybridization of the individual's identity and still consider them as 'Other'. This conflict between the Self and its Other, where self is represented by British society and other is the non-western diaspora, give rise to uncertain sense of the diaspora identities and consequently, Identity crisis occur when one is not welcomed in the host country but is treated as other on the basis of cultural conflicts and racial discriminations which consequently results in failure of integration.

The women writers discussed here, Monica Ali for *Brick Lane* and Bapsi Sidhwa for *An American Brat*, are aware of this truth and identify the cultural complexities of the immigrants which they confront while they move from one place to another. Between the processes of integration and exclusion, these novels reveal the fact that the immigrants and even their children are constantly oscillating between their complete assimilation and the extreme resistance to their integration.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology involves the organized and systematic method of theoretical analysis of the procedure, techniques and tools to carry out research in the given field of study.

4.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative research and involves close textual reading and analysis of two postcolonial novels namely “*An American Brat*” by Bapsi Sidhwa and “*Brick Lane*” by Monica Ali. The research will investigate and analyze diasporic features and immigrant’s experiences in new lands in the light of postcolonial theoretical concepts.

The research is designed on the concepts of postcolonial theory which provides the lenses for the critical discourse analysis of the text on thematic level which is carried out by the discussion and analysis of diasporic features which leads to the hybrid existence of the characters presented in the selected novels –*An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali. Diasporic features and postcolonial issues are very much related to each other, they are interlinked as they focus on same aspects, challenges and conflicts regarding identity crisis, cultural clashes, which will be analyzed by focusing the concept of unhomeliness, otherness, ambivalence, mimicry and the Third Space which ultimately results in hybrid identity of diasporas.

4.2 Data and Types

The secondary data for this dissertation is selected in the form of two South Asian diasporic postcolonial novels by the two South Asian novelists. These novels are ‘*Brick Lane*’ by Monica Ali and ‘*An American Brat*’ by Bapsi Sidhwa. Further data is collected for the review of literature by reading and analyzing relevant literature, articles and understanding the concepts given by postcolonial theorists which would be helpful in carrying out this research.

4.3 Sample

The novel ‘*An American Brat*’ by Bapsi Sidhwa and ‘*Brick Lane*’ by Monica Ali have been selected for this research as they truly represent diasporic features, postcolonial issues, and

immigrant's experiences through different characters which can be analyzed in the light of the postcolonial concepts of Homi K Bhabha, and Edward Said.

4.4 Analytical Technique

We used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as analytical technique to explore the notions of hybrid identities of diasporas. This CDA will focus on thematic aspects of discourse in specific context of migratory experiences of diasporas which is carried out under the postcolonial analytical tools for analysis with an insight of postcolonial concepts given by the theorists Homi K Bhabha and Edward Said. The concepts of postcolonial theorists will serve as supportive theoretical background for the discussion of the novels '*Brick Lane*' by Monica Ali' and '*An American Brat*' by Bapsi Sidhwa.

5. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED NOVELS

5.1 Introduction

Diaspora is an experience of dislocation and displacement from the motherland and it raises socio-cultural and psychosomatic identity questions which have led to a hybrid culture and a new process of cultural assimilation through the construction of hybrid identity. Both novels which are under discussion in this research, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat*, are a composed account of the immigrant's lives with special consideration on the characters of female protagonists who are transformed and develop their identity through diasporic experiences which turn their identity to become a hybrid identity. The notions of hybrid identity are presented in the course of diasporic elements through diasporic characters along with the diasporic features resulting from the migration of the characters from the third world or South Asian countries to the western metropolitan countries or the first world which influence their outlook and broaden their horizons.

The diasporas pass through certain phases of experiences which ultimately lead them towards their hybrid identity. This study is an attempt of exploration of these phases and the analysis is accomplished by encapsulating the diasporic features under three major courses which are carried out by considering the postcolonial theoretical discourse of Bhabha and Said.

5.2 Monica Ali's "Brick Lane"

The notion of hybrid identity is explored in this dissertation by the progression of certain postcolonial theoretical concepts into three major phases of diaspora experiences, by keeping in mind the colonial background of diasporas, the sequential order of these concepts in Monica

Ali's Brick Lane is carried out with the assumption that these concepts are chronological in the following order.

‘Dislocation’ and Sense of ‘Otherness’

‘Ambivalence’ and ‘Mimicry’

‘In-between’ Positioning and Resulting ‘Hybrid Identity’

In Brick Lane, Ali captures the diasporic features in the course of the novel through the diasporic experiences of the diaspora characters. The notion of hybrid identity is approached through multiple perspectives as the characters pass through different phases and develop a hybrid identity. Nazneen is the protagonist of the novel and through her diasporic experiences she passes from her conventional model of an alienated migrant to a liberated self-decisive migrant who seeks out her way in the hostland. She is migrated to reside with her husband after her marriage, she starts her journey with uncertainty and insecurity in a strange society with just two words of English, sorry and thank you, but ends in her self- self-assurance and self-security with her decision to stay in London even without her husband.

Ali portrays Nazneen as a typical migrant defined by an initial traumatic arrival from a lost homeland, an intense desire to return and a strong sense of alienation. She passes through the resistance to assimilate into the mainstream then the gradual assimilate in the new social scenario despite of the cultural conflicts, and through mimicry she negotiates a new space which is in-between positioning of her persona which is ultimately directing her way towards her hybrid identity. The relationship with Karim is the absolute proceeding towards her self-recognition and the decision to refuse the marriage proposal of Karim and the decision not to follow the plan of Chanu to go back to their homeland Bangladesh, she enters into her ultimate juncture in the way towards her self-awakening.

Nazneen's identity is shaped by the diasporic experiences but it is reshaped by the flexibility of her personality to cope with her eastern and western personality simultaneously rendering her identity as a hybrid identity. Her hybrid identity is noticeable in her denial to go to Bangladesh with Chanu and at the same time the refusal to Karim's proposal of marriage she has reshaped her identity as hybrid. The marriage with Chanu is the sign of her eastern identity and the affair with Karim is the influence of diaspora experiences on her personality, she discards both of them and constructs her own identity which is hybrid as she is ready to skate in her sari where sari is the symbol for her traditional personality and ice-skating is the icon of

her liberation from conventional, traditional cultural identity. The novel ends with Razia's comment, "This is England, you can do whatever you like." (Brick Lane 415)

Chanu develops hybrid identity and expresses his love for English literature, he mimics the cultural habits of the western people and wants to assimilate in western society for his better lifestyle. But, on the other hand, he is greatly "othered" by the host society which makes his assimilation a problematic issue. He is in ambivalent state as he wants to be westernized but hates the white people because of their prejudices and discriminations towards him, his hybridity is also detectable in his decision to go back to Bangladesh because he thinks the British society do not let him progress in his life and do not recognize his individuality for his degrees. At the start of his diaspora journey he was very optimistic about his future in England and considered England as a land of opportunities but his ultimate decision to go back to Bangladesh reveals that he fails in his plans to be a "Big Man" in England. He wants her daughters to learn the Bangladeshi traditions and adopt the Bangladeshi cultural norms but at the end he opens heartily allows his wife and daughters to stay in England because he knows living in England is living in the world of opportunities to make progress in life. So, the diasporic experience constantly shapes and reshapes his identity and results in a hybrid identity. The character of Karim is actually the representation of second generation of diasporas. Karim's identity is also hybrid as he involves in an illicit relationship with Nazneen but prohibits others from being on the immoral path. In the beginning, he is described as a westernized boy with jeans and t-shirts but ends up in having a beard and wearing Islamic cloths. Karim's hybridity is also evident in his love-hate relationship with Britain and the alteration from a modern westernized boy to a religious fundamentalist which is actually the result of his confusion about his identity as he is not accepted by the British society as a true British but at the same time he does not belong to Bangladesh or any other country for the reason that he has never been there. So as a diaspora he develops a hybrid personality, he lives in England and declares England as his own country but on the contrary he fights for Bengali traditions and for other co-ethnic groups in the world.

Razia is also a hybrid character when she is depicted as wearing western dresses to settle in the host country but at the same time forbidding her children from becoming modern and westernized. After the death of her husband she becomes an independent woman and works to make her source of revenue for herself and for her children. She warns her children and makes

efforts to prevent her children from having western influences but at the same time she comments to Nazneen, “This is England, you can do whatever you like.” (Brick Lane 415)

5.3 Sidhwa’s “An American Brat”

Sidhwa’s novel, *An American Brat* focuses on the diasporic features through the diasporic experiences of the Parsee Pakistani young girl Feroza in America. The development of her hybrid identity is mapped through her journey as a diaspora in which she gradually passes through some phases which are attempted to be put in a nutshell under the following courses

Dislocation and Unhomeliness

Mimicry and Ethnic Anxiety

Third Space and Resulting Hybrid Identity

In the course of the novel, Sidhwa accounts the diasporic experiences of the diasporas in the new society of America, Feroza is sent to America in order to make her outlook broader and to make her modern by sending her away from the fundamentalism of Zia’s regime. She starts her journey as a passive and shy girl and when she steps in the new society she is preoccupied with a sense of alienation and unhomeliness. The locations often demand contrasting codes of conduct resulting in often hybrid and conflicting tendencies among the individuals in Diaspora. Feroza begins her journey with a strong feeling of dislocation but soon she begins to assimilate in the new society with the help of her uncle Manek, she gains self-confidence and self-independence in the free environment of America, and she initiates her going beyond the cultural boundaries when she starts smoking and flirting with boys. She gains the independence of mind and spirit and sturdy self-confidence offered by the New World, which is alien to her Third World experience and sheltered upbringing. Feroza begins to assimilate in the settled society through mimicry of the native people and especially under the influence of her American roommate Jo, Feroza completely adapts an American life style. She acts, walks and dresses like American girl. The shy and conservative Feroza turns into a confident and self-assertive girl. Feroza begins to assimilate the independence of mind and spirit and sturdy self-confidence offered by the New World, which is alien to her Third World experience and sheltered upbringing.

Feroza’s ethnic identity is a hindrance in her way and it is because of her ethnic identity that she feels a sense of guilt whenever she commits any sin or whenever she breaks the chains of her cultural and ethnic boundaries. In her assimilation in the new society and a new culture she is too much absorbed in her own way of life that she goes too far to decide that she wants to

marry a non-Parsee boy David who is a Jewish. She knows that it is not acceptable in her religion and that is why when she informs her family about her decision, her mother Zareen flies to America to prevent Feroza from this marriage. David observes the cultural differences exhibited intentionally by Zareen and decides to leave Feroza. Feroza's heart was broken but through her diasporic experiences she was able to cope with this situation and decides that she is going to stay here in America because she has transformed so much that there is no going back home for her. Zareen leaves but Feroza stays in America. Zareen has well concluded her observation about Feroza when she says, "I should never have let you go so far away. Look what it's done to you—you've become an American brat!" Her hybrid identity is developed when she fails in her relation with David and seeks relief in her religion and the consolation in the religion along with other belongings of her homeland and consequently her dejection becomes her power and gives her strength to stay in America and not to go back to her homeland Pakistan. Her identity is transformed and reshaped, constructed by the diasporic experiences which finally leads her to her hybrid identity, the hybridity is a positive feature in this sense because it makes her strong enough to stay in America on her on and gives her courage to fly again and again even if her wings are broken but the hope is alive.

Zareen, mother of Feroza, also experience this dislocation from her homeland when she flies to America. Zareen believes her community to be modern and that is why she was against the fundamentalist attitude of Zia's government but when she comes to Americas he realizes the narrow-mindedness and conservative traditional cultural norms which are prohibiting the community members and specially women to be successful in the world. By opposing the marriage of Feroza she is actually acting like a religious fundamentalist like the mullahs in Pakistan whom she used to criticize as religious extremists but at the same time she wants a change in religious norms. Although Zareen's faces the diasporic experiences for a very short period of time but it has strongly influenced her mentality.

Another character who is transformed by his diasporic experiences is Manek whose identity also turns to be hybrid; his hybridity is perceptible in his decision to prefer marrying a Parsee girl from Pakistan despite of having an American girlfriend, at the same time he alters his name from Manek to Mike in order to prove himself an Americanized personality. His marriage with a Parsee girl is the sign of his care for his religion and the communal traditions of his Parsee community while on the other hand his changing of name from Manek to Mike is because of his devotion to western society. He considers himself as a man of understanding who can easily

assimilate in the western culture but in the course of this assimilation and rejection he develops a hybrid identity.

6.FINDINGS

Both of these narratives focus on the complexities of Diasporic features and the struggle in the assimilation with ambivalence and mimicry through perceptive characters of the protagonists Nazneen in *Brick Lane* and Feroza in *An American Brat*. This study focuses on the complexities of diasporic experiences and the diasporic features which are responsible for the creation of hybrid identities of diasporas. In the light of postcolonial theoretical concepts, the notions of hybridity are studied with special concentration on the influence of London [in *Brick Lane*] and America [in *An American Brat*] which, as a heterogeneous, diasporic, transnational metropolis with its web-like connections to other places give rise to mental conflicts and one's personality is torn and divided between the two worlds. This situation leads to hybrid existence of migrant people and instigates the creation of cultural identities that are unstable, unfixed, continuously transforming and never complete. Both of the novels focus on how physical dislocation and cultural displacement cause the development of new hybrid identities. Between the processes of integration and exclusion, these novels reveal that the immigrants and even their children are oscillating between complete imitation and extreme resistance to assimilation and define a new space for themselves which is the third space and this in-between positioning is directing them towards their hybrid identity. In "Brick Lane", the diasporic characters such as Nazneen, Chanu, Karim and Razia develop their identities as hybrid identities while in "An American Brat" the characters of Zareen, Feroza and Manek, are the manifestation of hybrid identities of diasporas.

7. CONCLUSION

Monica Ali's "Brick Lane" and Bapsi Sidhwa's "An American Brat" bring in a narrative that focuses on the diasporic features with special concentration on the diasporic experiences generally through the diasporic characters and specifically through the female protagonists. Ali and Sidhwa, despite of their individualities as writers, do share a unique perspective to uncover the struggle of the diasporas in the course of their migration and assimilation. During this struggle the diaspora characters, with colonial background, pass through the conflicting alternatives between the two disparate cultures, between East and West, between Self and Other hence between the two incongruent worlds which sooner or later shapes and reshapes their identity as hybrid identity.

Brick Lane is an account of advancement, development and self-recognition of a young Bangladeshi village girl, Nazneen, who is transformed because of the diasporic experiences from a subservient and submissive wife to a self-decisive courageous lady. She starts her journey with uncertainty and insecurity in a strange society with just two words of English, sorry and thank you, but ends in her self- self-assurance and self-security with her decision to stay in London even without her husband. Her identity is shaped by the diasporic experiences but it is reshaped by the flexibility of her personality to cope with her eastern and western personality simultaneously rendering her identity as a hybrid identity. Chanu develops hybrid identity and expresses his love for English literature and wants to assimilate in western society for his better lifestyle but hates the white people because of their prejudices and discriminations towards him, his hybridity is also detectable in his decision to go back to Bangladesh because he thinks the British society do not let him progress in his life and do not recognize his individuality for his degrees but at the same time he open heartily allows his wife and daughters to stay in England because he knows living in England is living in the world of opportunities of progress in life. Razia's hybridity is visible in her wearing western dresses but at the same time forbidding her children from becoming westernized. Karim involves in a prohibited relationship with Nazneen but prohibits others from being on the immoral path, Karim's hybridity is also evident in his love-hate relationship with Britain and the alteration from a modern westernized boy to a religious fundamentalist which is actually the result of his confusion about his identity as he is not accepted by the British society as a British but at the same time he does not belong to Bangladesh or any other country for the reason that he has never been there so as a diaspora he develops a hybrid personality, he lives in England and declares England as his own country but on contrary he fights for Bengali traditions and for other co-ethnic groups in the world.

An American Brat is actually a journey of a young Pakistani-Parsee girl, named Feroza, from a shy, conservative, submissive girl to an 'American brat'. The diaspora experiences shapes and reshapes her identity through several phases of development and transformation which causes her conversion from a conservative girl who once could not tolerate the sleeveless blouse of her mother to become a daring and westernized girl who consciously desires to marry a non-Parsee boy in America, the decision which is ultimately pointing her identity as *An American Brat*. Her hybrid identity is developed when she fails in her relation with David and seeks relief in her religion and the consolation in the religion along with other belongings of

her homeland and consequently her dejection becomes her power and gives her strength to stay in America and not to go back to her homeland Pakistan because she realizes that she has gone so far in her Americanization that, for her, there is no going back home. her Americanization was hiding her own ethnic identity which is brought into light after her breakup, she discards this borrowed identity of Americanization but at the same time she does not embrace her Parsee Pakistani identity absolutely. Manek's hybridity is his marriage with a Parsee girl which is the sign of his concerns for his religion and his communal traditions of his Parsee community while on the other hand his changing of name from Manek to Mike is because of his devotion to western society. Although Zareen faces the diasporic experiences for a very short period of time but it has strongly influenced her mentality and she starts to question her religious norms but still prohibits Feroza's marriage with David which points out towards her hybrid identity. Both novels deal with postcolonial issues of cultural conflicts, identity crisis and reveal the difficulties of immigrants in the settled lands. They reveal the problematic aspects of assimilation in the new society because there are still racial and national prejudices along with cultural differences which hinder the integration of the diasporas and that is why the first generation as well as the second generation of diasporas are caught in-between the traditions of their homeland and the customs of the hostland. The conflict of identity is one of the most important issues that these diasporas are preoccupied with as they are baffling in-between their past and present. These novels are an important advancement in the field of postcolonial and diaspora studies as they throw light on the development and transformation of the identity of the characters and through the diasporic features they show the difficulties that the diasporas have to face, as a result of all these dilemmas the diasporas develop a hybrid identity. In "Brick Lane", the diasporic characters such as Nazneen, Chanu, Karim and Razia develop their identities as hybrid identities while in "An American Brat" the characters of Feroza, Zareen and Manek are the manifestation of hybrid identities of diasporas.

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Contribution of Authors

This research paper is a part of the dissertation written by Ms.Tahniat Rehman under the supervision of Prof.Dr.Abdul Ghafoor Awan. In this way, it is an original research paper. She chose the title of her paper, collected relevant material and finalized the paper. Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Awan provided necessary guide in selection of title, relevant material, research methodology and analytical techniques. He also edited the paper, corrected its language, punctuations and formatting it as per research standards. He has given final shape to this paper as well. Thus, this paper is the joint efforts of both authors.