

# REFUGEE, MIGRATION, DIASPORA

**Prof. Sarbani Banerjee**

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, English**

**Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee**

## **Lecture 32**

### **Lecture 32: Historicizing Bangladeshi Diaspora: Reading Monica Ali's Brick Lane**

Thank you. Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Refugees, Migration, and Diaspora. So, we are doing a case study, and today we will historicize the Bangladeshi diaspora through our reading of Monica Ali's novel Brick Lane. So, Brick Lane is written by the Bangladeshi immigrant author Monica Ali. It is the first English novel written by this Bangladeshi immigrant writer.



The novel was first published in the year 2003. The title of the novel was suggested by the Doubleday publishers. So, Monica Ali's Brick Lane, which came out in 2003, was envisioned even prior to the novel's publication. This is because the author had already received a sizable advance for writing this novel. So, the concept of the novel had already been conceived in Monica Ali's mind before it was penned down.

The novel was on the bestseller lists for almost a year. The hardcover of Brick Lane sold 150,000 copies and was also nominated for all the major literary prizes. So, this is considered as a major work by Monica Ali, and Brick Lane is almost synonymous with her career as an author. So, the novel Brick Lane has vivid descriptions of the actual

Brick Lane in London, and these descriptions outraged many people who reside in that area.

So, one sees that as a result of this book coming out, the residents of Brick Lane were provoked in part by the success of this novel. A group of people presented themselves as residents of the neighborhoods around the real Brick Lane, which is a high street populated by a Bangladeshi population in the east end of London. These residents of Brick Lane staged protests and wrote letters condemning and criticizing the novel by Monica Ali. They declared anger at Ali's depiction of the area, the way Ali depicted the area, at her tenuous connection to this area, and later they were also apprehensive at the prospect that their ward This entire lane, you know, Brick Lane as it is called, might be used for shooting the 2007 book into a motion picture. So they did not want the kind of depiction that one finds of Brick Lane in Monica Ali's novel.


Monica Ali is the daughter of a Bangladeshi father and a British mother. So she has mixed roots. She has a hybrid identity as half British and half Bangladeshi. She was originally born in Dhaka and then later migrated to England at the age of three.

She was brought up in Bolton, which is in Greater Manchester, a middle-class neighborhood in London. And then she married a white management consultant. So, we see that she is of mixed heritage, part British and part Bangladeshi. And then she herself marries a white man.

So, one can consider her as an excellent example of a hybrid diasporic subject, given her biographical background. Further, she is also considered an outsider who depicts the Bangladeshi diaspora in London. Her depiction, her understanding of the Bangladeshi diaspora, is in the capacity of someone who is outside the social fold. This is because she is a second-generation Bangladeshi writer who does not know Bengali, which happens to be the language of her ancestors if we trace through her paternal lineage.

**Introducing the Author: Monica Ali**

- Monica Ali is the daughter of a Bangladeshi father and a British mother. She was born in Dhaka and migrated to England at the age of 3. She was brought up in Bolton in Greater Manchester, a middle-class neighbourhood of London, and married to a white management consultant.
- Given her biographical background, she can be considered as an excellent example of a hybrid diasporic subject. She is a second-generation Bangladeshi writer who does not know Bengali, the language of her ancestors. She has also never lived in Brick Lane, which is the novel's central location.



So, through her paternal lineage, Bangladeshi origin and identity can be traced. However, she doesn't know how to read or write Bengali, which essentially makes her someone outside the Bangladeshi diasporic fold. She has also never lived in Brick Lane, which is the novel's central location. So, many residents of Brick Lane would naturally claim that her depiction of the locality is somewhat diluted, somewhat removed from reality, and they consider the writer as someone

who does not truly belong to the core group of Bangladeshis, and her depiction might be fraught with biases. So, Monica Ali's class background and racial profile were quite distant from Bangladeshi immigrants. As I mentioned, she is depicting human subjects or a section of London society that she does not know too well. So, Sara Brouillette states that Monica Ali has relied on her own distant and somewhat displaced memory of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi immigrants.

in England that she accessed second hand through her books and her father's stories. So there is this question of romanticizing and even, you know, diluting the Bangladeshi culture through her writing because people would claim, the Bangladeshi population would claim that she is trying to work on a section of society that she does not know very well. Moreover, one sees that in the process of creation of the character of Nazneen, who is the female protagonist in her novel Brick Lane, Monica Ali acknowledges her indebtedness, her debt to one book titled *The Power to Choose* by Naila Kabir and this book *The Power to Choose* by Kabir came out in 2000. So, she greatly draws on Kabir's work in the shaping of her characters, especially her protagonist Nazneen.

Now, *The Power to Choose* by Kabir is an extensive ethnographic work on Bangladeshi women who have worked as garment workers in London and Dhaka. So, all these information explains to the reader that Monica Ali is accessing, you know, knowledge or

concept about the Bangladeshi diaspora, somewhat secondhand, somewhat, you know, displaced from their core culture. She is writing on the Bangladeshis in London through reading other books, through data that is available second hand and it proves that her cultural location is therefore different from the standard or typical Bangladeshi diasporic identity.

This is something that critic and scholar Himadri Lahiri also has to point out. So, *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali begins in a village called Gauripur. So, Gauripur is the small village in rural Bangladesh. We have the character named Roop Ban who gives birth to her eldest daughter Nazneen, who happens to be the central character and the female protagonist in *Brick Lane*. Nazneen is born a premature baby and so other characters including the village midwife Banesa, think that Nazneen is born a dead child until after some time she begins screaming in a weak voice, right.

So, as a baby, Nazneen is fragile and vulnerable because she is a premature baby. Now, the baby requires medical attention. However, her mother leaves the daughter to her fate. To the great surprise of her friends and family, including her father Hamid, Nazneen, however, does not die. She survives.

She continues to survive. Another central character in this novel is Nazneen's sister, Hasina, who is born as a fiery and beautiful woman. She is by nature a very rebellious character, and at the age of 16, Hasina elopes with a local boy, which disappoints her father a lot. So, her father Hamid was prepared even to chop his daughter's head off should she return, because her act of elopement—her act of running away from the family without her father's consent—seemed to have maligned the family's reputation.

#### Introduction to the Novel

- *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali begins in the village of Gouripur in rural Bangladesh. The character named Rupban gives birth to her eldest daughter, Nazneen, the central character of this novel. Born a premature baby, other characters, including the village midwife, Banesa, think Nazneen is born a dead child until she begins screaming in a weak voice.
- The baby requires medical attention, but her mother leaves the daughter to her fate. To the great surprise of friends and family, including her father, Hamid, Nazneen survives.
- Another central character in the novel is Nazneen's sister Hasina, born beautiful and rebellious, and at the age of sixteen, she elopes with a local boy, disappointing her father Hamid, who was prepared to chop his daughter's head off should she return.
- Hasina does not return, however, and Hamid, who becomes a widower following Rupban's apparently accidental fall onto a sharp spear, arranges for Nazneen to marry a forty-year-old man called Chanu, who lives in London. Thus, Nazneen's story begins in a different land distant from her home.







So, coming from an orthodox, rural Muslim family, she would be killed if her father found her. So, Hasina, we see, does not return. And Hamid, her father, becomes a widower after Rubban's apparently accidental fall onto a sharp spear. Right. So, the mother of Hasina and Nazneen accidentally dies, and Hamid becomes a widower.

And then what happens is that Hamid arranges for Nazneen to marry a 40-year-old man whose name is Chanu and who lives in London. This is how, you know, she gets married to a much older man that her father arranges for her. This is how Nazneen ultimately ends up in London. So, this is where, after getting married to Chanu, Nazneen's story begins, her narrative starts in a different land that is distant from her home. The novel Brick Lane was originally titled by Monica Ali as Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers.

### Introduction

- The novel *Brick Lane* was first titled by the author as '**Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers**'. The Bengali translation of which is *Saat Samudra tero nadir pare*, metaphorically reflecting the distance between home and host land
- The title might have been taken from one of the phrases that Nazneen's sister, Hasina, mentions in one of her letters
- Brick lane is a 'high street' in the East end of London populated with Bangladeshi immigrants
- Sukhdev Sandhu, in an article titled '**Come Hungry, Leave Edgy**' published by the London Review of Books, traces the historical reference to the place Brick lane, which acts as a point of reference to the reading of Monica Ali's novel



7

The Bengali translation of it would be Saat Samudra Tero Nadir Pare, which metaphorically reflects the distance between the homeland and the host land. It's not the literal, you know, seven seas and thirteen rivers lying between Bangladesh and London, but it is a way of saying, as it is commonly said, It's a common expression used in the Bengali language to reflect the distance from home. So, it's far, far away from Bangladesh. It's a way of saying that, you know, it's a land that is far, far away from the homeland.

There are seven seas and thirteen rivers in between. So, the title might have been taken from one of the phrases that Nazneen's sister Hasina mentions in one of her letters. So, these letters become very important documents that tell us about a female Bangladeshi's experience outside of her home, and it also shapes Nazneen's femininity, Nazneen's understanding of the world.


That is because her sister has taken a very adventurous step by leaving home without the knowledge or consent of her father. So, when she receives—when she reads letters from such a sister—Nazneen understands the world through the lens of Haseena. Now, Brick Lane is a high street in the East End of London, as I said, which is populated by Bangladeshi immigrants. Sukhdev Sandhu, in an article titled 'Come Hungry, Leave Edgy,' published by the London Review of Books, traces the historical reference to Brick Lane, which acts as a point of reference—which acts as a primary point of reference for the reading of Monica Ali's novel.



So, Sukhdev Sandhu is basically historicizing Brick Lane, reading the history of this place, this locality in London. Historically, we see that Brick Lane was part of a Roman burial ground. It was considered, you know, as an unclean extremity lying beyond the walls of the city of London. It's not even at the heart of London. It's not considered the core culture of London.

Before the Bangladeshi immigrants came to Brick Lane, many Irish workers, Huguenot refugees, silk workers, and East European Jews had settled in this area. All these ethnic groups shared a common experience: that of receiving hostility from the native population in London. They were marginalized social groups, marginalized human subjects who chose Brick Lane for their home—for making homes, you know, in this locality. They chose Brick Lane where they made their homes. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bengali Lascars—primarily sailors from the Sylhet area—began to settle in Brick Lane.

### Introduction

- Historically, Brick lane was a part of a Roman burial ground, an unclean extremity lying beyond the walls of the city of London
- Before Bangladeshi immigrants came to the Brick lane, many Irish workers, Huguenot refugees, silk workers and East European Jews settled in this area. All these ethnic groups had the common experience of receiving hostility from the natives
- In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bengali lascars, primarily sailors from the Sylhet area, began to settle in Brick lane. Their presence gradually transformed the area into a hub for London's Bengali population, with many residents finding work as cooks, waiters, and mechanics.
- Both Sandhu and Sara Brouillette observe that Brick lane was a place that was being gentrified (Gentrification is the process of change in the character of a neighbourhood through the influx of more affluent residents and investment)



 Singapore  8

Their presence gradually transformed this area into a hub, into a ghetto for London's Bengali population, with many residents finding work as cooks, waiters, and mechanics. So, both Sukhdev Sandhu and Sarah Brouillette observed that Brick Lane was a place

that was being gentrified. Gradually with time. So, when we talk of gentrification, we refer to the process of changing the character of a neighborhood through the influx of more affluent residents and the way they start investing in that locality, which kind of changes the nature, the basic characteristics, or the culture of that locality. According to Sarah Brouillette, I quote, in 1964, sociologist Ruth Glass used gentrification to describe what occurred when middle-class homebuyers, landlords, and professional developers moved into parts of London that had dilapidated houses, you know, that had dilapidated housing stock and blighted streets.

I quote, in 1964, sociologist Ruth Glass used gentrification, the term gentrification, to describe what occurred when middle-class homebuyers, landlords, and professional developers moved into parts of London that had dilapidated housing stock and blighted streets. Attracted to historic building features undervalued by existing residents, the newcomers' mere presence and marked refurbishment efforts were often co-extensive with the transformation of rented homes into owner-occupied ones. As well as with dramatic increases in housing costs and displacement of the working class, unquote. So, this is what gentrification comprises. Basically, a refurbishment effort where the residents change, and their social positions are different.

They have access to more resources. They have greater social mobility, sociocultural mobility, or socioeconomic mobility rather. And so, eventually, the old houses are renovated, the housing costs appreciate, and there is an eventual displacement of the working-class residents. Further, Sandhu observes that by the year 1970, Brooklyn and many of the streets around this locality had become predominantly Bengali in terms of culture, in terms of, you know, the common practices prevalent in this area. Jewish bakeries had been turned into curry houses, jewelry shops into saree stores, and synagogues were turned into dress factories.


In 1976, the synagogue on the corner of Fournier Street and Brick Lane, which was formerly a church and then a Methodist chapel, became a Jama Masjid, or a mosque. However, it was still a bleak, rundown area that was so blighted. Now, placed against this historical background of Brick Lane, Monica Ali has built a narrative of a Bangladeshi immigrant woman named Nazneen and her family. After her marriage to Chanu, Nazneen comes to London. Monica Ali vividly portrays the Bangladeshi diaspora community in the UK and their struggles in acculturating to an unfamiliar environment.





In the context of diasporas, it is commonly observed that once a person is removed from her homeland, the diaspora is forever burdened with a sense of displacement because their homeland becomes a place that is always longed for. It becomes a kind of utopia, that one can never arrive at or that one can never meet or see again. Because the homeland is that idyllic place, it haunts a displaced person, a person in diaspora, and it is a beckoning light of everything that is supposed to be ideal and perfect. The host land always seems to be an unfamiliar place to the diasporic population.

### Nazneen's Migration to Brick Lane

- Placed against the historical background of the street of Brick lane, Monica Ali has built a narrative of a Bangladeshi immigrant woman, Nazneen and her family. After marriage, Chanu brings Nazneen to London.
- Ali vividly portrays the Bangladeshi diaspora community in the U.K. and their struggles in acculturating in an unfamiliar environment. In the context of the diasporas, it is a common observation that once removed from their homeland, the diasporas are forever burdened with a sense of displacement, as their homelands become a place that is 'always longed for.'
- Moreover, through the novel, an attempt has been made to reflect that often the homelands can also become foreign places for which there is no longer a desire to visit or return. On the other hand, the host lands, which seem to be so hostile and alien in the beginning, gradually become a place of permanent existence for the immigrant.



10

Moreover, through the novel, there is an attempt to reflect that often the homelands can also become foreign places for which there is no longer a desire to visit or return. So, in contrast to this idyllic notion of homeland, there are also situations where the migrant population can no longer relate to their home. The so-called native land they have come from, the homeland or the native place, becomes a foreign place, and there is hardly a desire to visit or return. This is more pertinent in the case of subsequent generations who are born and brought up in a foreign land, in a foreign culture. They have only heard of Bangladesh from their parents or grandparents.

And there is no direct connection. There is no immediate connection or identification for these subsequent generations, You know, diaspora population, the host land, which seems to be so hostile and alien at the beginning, gradually goes on to become a place of permanent existence. So, this host land, which is initially supposed to be a hostile and alien place, gradually becomes a place of permanent existence. So, the second and third-generation immigrant population can actually identify with the

the host land. In her work, *New Heroines of the Diaspora: Reading Gendered Identity in South Asian Diasporic Fiction*, critic Lopa Banerjee notes that after coming to London and being estranged from her homeland in Bangladesh, Nazneen craves to return home




during the initial years of her stay in Brooklyn. She really cannot adjust to London's culture. She longs to go back. She yearns for her Bangladeshi life.




She always grapples and struggles with the hope of going back to Bangladesh. She somehow manages to live in the suburbs of London. However, the omnipresence of foreignness and the necessity of grappling with its influence keep haunting her in the host land. So, Nazneen is mostly confined to the domestic space, and she is shown doing household chores and attending to her husband's and her children's needs. Her first child, who is a son, dies despite her best efforts to save him, and it is later accepted as an act of fate.

Then two of her children, Sahana and Bibi are born and Nazneen takes up her new role as a mother. She faces the challenges that the role of a mother entails and she now needs to face the demands of the second generation members, her children. So, the epigraph of the novel is also very important for tracing the migration and development of Nazneen's character. So, we see that Brick Lane opens with two epigraphs, one from Ivan Turgenev, the other from Heraclitus. So, from Heraclitus, it is quoted, a man's character is his fate and from Turgenev, sternly

### Nazneen's Migration to Brick Lane

- Lopa Banerjee, "New Heroines of the Diaspora: Reading Gendered Identity in South Asian Diasporic Fiction"– After coming to London and being estranged from her homeland in Bangladesh, Nazneen craves to return home in the initial years of her stay in Brick lane. She always grapples with the hope of going back to Bangladesh. She somehow manages to live in the suburbs of London, but the 'omnipresence of foreignness and the necessity of grappling with its influence' keeps haunting her in the host land.
- She is mostly confined to the domestic space doing household chores and attending to her husband's and children's needs. Her first child, a son, dies despite her best efforts to save him. It is accepted as an act of fate. Then two children, Sahana and Bibi, are born.
- Nazneen takes up the new role of a mother, who needs to face the demands of the second-generation members.
- The epigraph of the novel is also important to trace the migration and development of Nazneen's character



11

remorselessly, fate guides each of us. So, Turgenev's extract emphasizes the role of fate in shaping a person's character. It is something, you know, fate is something which is considered as the guiding light of all characters. The trajectory of Nazneen's story almost traces a movement from absolute surrender to the fate which is implied in Turgenev's extract. During her stay in Brick Lane, Nazneen's character develops and slowly distances herself

from the clutches, from the exacting nature of a patriarchy. She becomes steadily aware that she needs to be self-reliant and therefore she starts working in a garment factory which is, which takes her away from the confines of home or domesticity. She also decides to learn the English language in order to connect to the outside world, make friends and build a new world for herself. So, her first step towards becoming independent is befriending this character called Razia. So, her friendship with Razia is a step forward towards her independent life.

She develops a female bond with Razia, which enables her to defy, question, and challenge patriarchal dominance that she has faced since childhood and later from her husband after marriage. Another turning point in Nazneen's life is her entry into a relationship with a man named Karim. Through Karim, Nazneen gets the opportunity to work as a garment worker. Karim is a second-generation Bangladeshi-British citizen who is also the leader of the Islamic group called Bengal Tigers. Although Nazneen ends up in an extramarital relationship

with Karim, it in a way gives her a sense of freedom from the patriarchal domination she had faced in the past, especially in her marriage with Chanu, which she had accepted as her fate. Then she met Karim, who is instrumental in enabling her to achieve her freedom and emancipation. Karim is instrumental in letting Nazneen experience her freedom. This also gives her opportunities to overcome the difficulties of a constricted sociocultural environment. She is able to move out of the naturally male-centric domain that her home represents.

Nazneen slowly comes into contact with members of her community and begins taking control of her children. She starts actively confronting her role in the family as a mother. Her character develops in the process. It evolves. Finally, she chooses to stay in London with her two daughters.

Whereas, we see that her husband Chanu accepts that he is a failed immigrant and that he must return to Bangladesh. The novel carries different ideas of home for different characters. So, Nazneen's idea of Bangladesh and Chanu's concept of home in Bangladesh are significantly different. Home for the male protagonist Chanu brings back memories of Bangladesh, which are associated with homely historical and cultural memories. These are, you know, a male's way of reminiscing or a male's way of remembering the homeland, which is something more standardized.

### The concept of Home in *Brick Lane*

- The novel carries different ideas of home for different characters. Nazneen's idea of Bangladesh and Chanu's sense of 'home' in Bangladesh are significantly different.
- Home for the male protagonist, Chanu, brings memories of Bangladesh, which is associated with homely historical and cultural memories. His idea of Bangladesh is rooted in the idea of a home country. Chanu's idea of home is similar to what Sudesh Mishra states as, "classically auto-centred, racially self-evident and ideologically homogenised"
- For Chanu's wife Nazneen, the word 'home' signifies memories of a pastoral background (presented spectacularly in the filmic version of the novel) and the culture thereof, but she is at the same time acutely aware of the gender discrimination embedded in the term 'home' when it is associated with Bangladesh.



His idea of Bangladesh is rooted in the idea of a home country, and that's the kind of memory which is, in a way, very close to collective memory or national memory. Because the man's memory, the man's way of remembering the country, is something that also, you know, in a way comes very close to formal historiography or formal documentation about a country's past. So, Chanu's idea of home is similar to what Sudesh Mishra states as classically auto-centered,

racially self-evident, and ideologically homogenized. So, this is very similar to the depiction of any country as we find in formal history. The masculine memory and formal history are not very far from one another. On the other hand, for Chanu's wife Nazneen, the word home signifies memories of a pastoral background presented spectacularly in the filmic version of the novel. So, when Nazneen remembers Bangladesh, it is through the pastoral background which we see very vividly portrayed in the filmic version of the novel, and she also remembers the pastoral culture from Bangladesh.

However, she is at the same time acutely aware of the gender discrimination that is embedded, that is at the heart of this term 'home,' when home is especially associated with Bangladesh. So, it is not a very standardized memory. This is a feminine version of memory, which the national memory may not subscribe to or which the national memory may not even recognize because a woman is always, you know, somewhere it is suggested and implied that she is a secondary citizen, and her memory does not matter to history as much as the memory of a male protagonist matters. So, we have an alternative mnemonic experience as far as Nazneen and her understanding of home is concerned. So, towards the end of the novel, she is really comfortable in defining her home space within

So, London is where she identifies her home towards the end of the novel when she finally decides to stay back in England with her daughters, and she no longer needs any

male support, any male member's support, either from the family or even anybody outside her family. So, she doesn't need any male support. To accompany or guide her, she finds herself sufficient to support herself and her two daughters in London, in England. She chooses to live in a space that ensures her agency, her agential position, rather than return to her place of origin.

Despite her difficulties during her initial migration to England, the place ultimately becomes her own. She makes it her own. She is a first-generation aspiring woman who does not discard her link with her ancestral family. Therefore, her association with her homeland is a strong sense of belonging. So, on the one hand, she connects with her ancestral family; on the other hand, she can

very strongly identify with London's culture and the opportunities that the new land has to give her. Another reason for Nazneen staying back in London comes from the tragic story of her sister Hasina. So, here as readers we get to know that Hasina had eloped with a man called Malik who is a neighbour from their village Gauripur. So, Hasina had left him after being a victim of domestic abuse and went on to marry another man called Mr. Chaudhary. So, Hasina worked in a garment company where she was fired for a rumoured affair with a co-worker.


and then afterwards, she was brutally raped by her husband after Mr. Chaudhary discovers her betrayal. So, after two marriages, elopement, being fired from work, being abused twice by two husbands, Hasina was broke and depressed and ultimately she resorts to prostitution and eventually marries another man called Ahmed. So, she has a series of experience in marriage with different men and ultimately this third man Ahmed also deserts her. So, through Hasina's letters and by trying to envision her experiences, Nazneen constantly sees the picture of Bangladesh and all its social realities. These letters project the scenario of an unhomely home for women.

And naturally, Nazneen is apprehensive of the future of her daughters in Bangladesh, what they would do. It is likely, according to her, that they would have a similar fate to Hasina if they went back to Bangladesh. Hasina's, you know, very quizzical, very checkered life with series of marriages all failed and then ultimately resorting to prostitution, being abandoned by society, violated multiple times. All these things build an apprehension in Nazneen that she should not take her daughters back to Bangladesh because in that kind of a social reality, her daughters are likely to face a similar fate as Hasina.

So, for her daughters Shahana and Bibi, the second-generation diasporic characters who are born and raised in London, the distinction between homeland and hostland is almost indiscernible. For them, the hostland is the homeland. They have only heard of Bangladesh and never been there, which indicates complete integration into the hostland. Their diasporic identities have transformed them greatly through the process of acculturation and assimilation. In fact, Nazneen's daughter Shahana declares that if there is any attempt to take her back to Bangladesh, she would run away from home—and this home she mentions happens to be London.

**The concept of Home in *Brick Lane***

- Through Hasina's letters and experiences, Nazneen could constantly see the picture of Bangladesh (and all its social realities). These letters project the scenario of an unhomely 'home' for women. Naturally, Nazneen is apprehensive of the future of her daughters in Bangladesh.
- For their daughters, Shahana and Bibi, the second-generation diasporic characters born and raised in London, the distinction between their homeland and the host land is no longer discernible, indicating their complete integration into the host land. Their diasporic identities have transformed themselves a lot through following the process of acculturation and assimilation. Shahana, in fact, declares that if there is any attempt made to take her back to Bangladesh, she would run away from 'home'.
- For another important character, Karim, Bangladesh is a **'mythic place of desire'**. He considers England his home, but towards the end of the novel, he remains confused about his 'home' due to the rampant racist treatment meted out to the Muslim migrant population post the 9/11 attacks.



16


That's the only place she knows as her home. In the case of Karim, another important character in the novel, Bangladesh is a mythical place of desire. He considers England his home, but towards the end of the novel, he remains confused about where his home truly is. This is especially due to the rampant racist treatment meted out to the Muslim migrant population post the 9/11 attacks. So, this sense of floating within the host population, never fully becoming part of it, haunts the Muslim community after facing attacks following the 9/11 episode.




To conclude, one sees that Nazneen emerges as a migrant who successfully reaches the stage of migration that mediates integration into the country of settlement after passing through phases of separation, anguish, and transition. She undergoes a series of experiences that mark the growth, evolution, and metamorphosis of her character. Through Nazneen's character, Monica Ali shows that in this new world, diasporas have not only changed but are perpetually refashioned, reconstructed, and deconstructed by new realities in changing circumstances. The diasporic population, instead of feeling permanently homeless and displaced—living with a sense of vacuum, as commonly understood—always uprooted, alienated, and longing to return to their homeland, could

also begin to accept a new culture. So, the feeling of alienation is not the only experience the diasporic population faces.

**Conclusion**

- So, Nazneen comes out as a migrant who successfully reaches that stage of migration, which mediates the “integration of migrants into the countries of settlement” after passing through the phase of separation and transition. She goes through a series of experiences that mark the growth of her character.
- Through the character of Nazneen, Monica Ali, too, has shown that in this new world, diasporas have not only changed but are perpetually reconstructed in changing circumstances.
- The diasporic population, instead of feeling homeless, uprooted, alienated, and longing for a desire to return to their ‘homeland’, often believe in accepting a new culture and new identities without discarding the values of the original culture they come from.



   17

It could also start, you know, accepting a new culture and new identities without necessarily discarding the values they have come with—the values of the original culture they come from. Right. So there is this integration. There is this imbibing of cultures, of values from different lands. And that's what constitutes the hybrid identity of the diasporic population.

So with this, we come to the end of our lecture today. Let's meet with a new topic in our next lecture. Thank you.

