HUMAN MIGRATION AND UPROOTED IDENTITIES: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF THE SELECTED WORKS OF ADIB KHAN AND MONICA ALI

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

English

By

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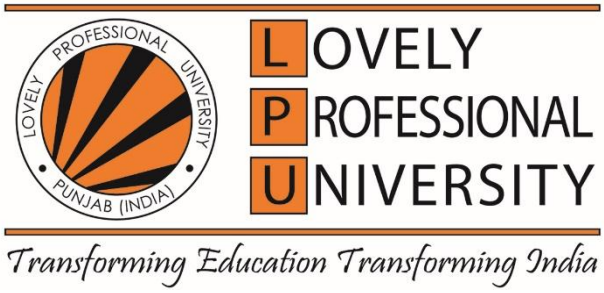

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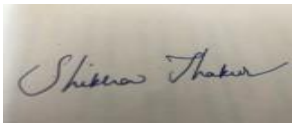

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Abstract

The present study entitled, "Human Migration and Uprooted Identities: A Postcolonial Reading of the Selected Works of Adib Khan and Monica Ali" is focused on issues related to displacements, emotional uprootedness and other socio-cultural issues, through the fictional world and characters of Adib Khan and Monica Ali in their select novels. Diasporic literature blurs and transcends boundaries and borders. This is the result of massive migration, travelling opportunities or compulsions. Whatever be the reasons of migration, uprooting or settlement, the migrants yearn to change their roles from 'outsiders' to that of the 'insiders'. Migrants experience various challenges and problems to make a place for themselves in the new environment. They yearn to be accepted socially, politically, economically, etc. The characters in the novels have been displaced, exiled, and alienated owing to immigration to other countries. They are unable to relate completely either to new culture of their adopted country or to their own cultural roots.

The present study will analyze select novels of Adib Khan Viz. *Seasonal Adjustments, Solitude of illusions, Spiral Road* and two novels of Monica Ali namely *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* by doing an intensive study. These novels will be examined from the postcolonial perspective. To analyze the fictional characters of the select novels, the theory of cultural hybridity by celebrated postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha is mainly taken into account.

The thesis starts with the "**Introduction**" which deals with the relevance and meaning of the research title. It also traces the origin of the postcolonial as well as diasporic literature.

The first chapter of this thesis entitled "**Brief Candle**" attempts to examine all the works penned down by the two writers of Bangladeshi-origin, in the light of postcolonialism, because the writings evince a strong binary of belongingness and un-belongingness, native and foreign, wanted and unwanted, accepted and unaccepted, etc. It also furnishes an account of Adib Khan and Monica Ali's expatriate consciousness while living in two different countries. The chapter brings to fore the struggle to discover and rediscover their personalities which keep changing with time

and place. All the experiences good and bad, oneness and otherness have been evaluated in the light of colonizer and colonized relationship.

The second chapter entitled, "**Postcolonialism and Migration: A Nexus**", aims to explore juxtaposing of postcolonialism and migration to study issues related to displacement from post-colonial countries. In this chapter postcolonial theory of cultural hybridity is studied deeply for the same. It further deliberates upon the issues related to diaspora consciousness, cultural identity and politics of racism. The characters in the novels have been displaced, exiled, and alienated owing to immigration to other countries. They are unable to relate completely either to the new culture of their adopted country or to their own cultural roots.

The third chapter is entitled "**Overlapping Perspectives: Examining Adib Khan's Works**." It deals with the various strategies of the characters to cope with dislocation. This can well be understood by examining the characters' response as they move away from home. These responses are associated with the way the two worlds collide. Consequently, there is an overlapping as well as resistance that widens the already dividing contours. It also interestingly discusses the ways the characters find to deal with dislocation and settlement beyond the periphery of the family, forging bonds of marriage, etc.

The fourth chapter entitled "**Theorizing Cultural Identity: An Enquiry of Works of Monica Ali**" discusses how migrants' perspective to go back home or to assimilate themselves in the new culture depends on the host communities as well as those who stay behind. It also brings to fore the fact that, in the process of cultural hybridity, how some migrants look for ways to assert their identity through acceptance, while some other migrants refuse to merge in the very fabric of the host culture, and remain nostalgic for their past, in terms of their origin. Lastly, it discusses the different ways of assimilation reflected in their dresses, food habits and life style.

The fifth chapter entitled "**Politics of Racism**: Investigating Adib Khan and Monica Ali's Works" attempts to bring to fore various discriminatory practices endured by migrants on the foreign lands, which jeopardizes their identity. The racial biases faced by migrants will be seen in the light of colonizer- colonized relationship

to expose the underlying racial politics. The growing racism is the major highlight of the chapter. The chapter elaborately deals with the indifferent attitude of the natives which results in the emergence of different cultures, races, religions and language. Migrants are shown being targeted, victimized and not accepted. The evil results of the economic limitations are also dealt with. The vulnerability of the migrants due to the dearth of resources resulting in trafficking and migrant smuggling are also described. Besides these issues, the most sensitive concerns of the migrants such as social inclusivity and acceptance remain at the core of discussion.

The "**Conclusion**", based on the analysis comes at the end of all the chapters. It takes up the major issues and aspects already discussed at length. It is concluded that, cultural hybridity ranging from slight to heavy mixing, differently shape the cultural identity of varied categories of migrant characters. Some characters acculturate almost fully by blending the acceptable features of both the cultures, while some characters assimilate only partially as per their need. There is also another category of characters who show overlap or double perspectives in their consciousness, depending on their circumstances. But one thing which remains common is that all these fictional characters go through the phase of identity crisis at some or the other point in their lives. Besides, the study has attempted to analyze dislocation of fictional characters from one country to another or from one place to another, to delve deep into the new interpretations of issues such as ethnic, racial and cultural identity. Racial inequality in relation to postcolonial migration stems from racial politics, which prevents all efforts of the migrants to become a class of people who are exactly like the natives, as it will erase the assumed cultural gap between the so called superior West and inferior East.

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First and foremost, praises and thanks to God, the Almighty, for his Grace, strength, sustenance and above all his blessings from the beginning of my academic life up to the doctoral level. His benevolence has made me excel and successful in all my academic pursuits.

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Chetna Negi

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Introduction

Post-colonialism denotes a period when many nations gained long-awaited independence from slave domination, but culturally, many challenges and crises arose. The people of these recently freed countries were still unsure of their cultural heritage and identities.

Furthermore, population movement and migration from former colonies to their former rulers' countries generated a new mixed, hybrid culture, resulting in frequent cultural confrontations among immigrants on the one hand and natives and immigrants on the other.

Because literature reflects the society of its period, postcolonial literature arose to address the issues of decolonization; the process by which numerous colonies acquired or were still fighting for independence. As a result, it is related to the colonizer-colonized experience. The newly liberated nations confronted numerous challenges in their search for a new sense of self-identity.

Thus, postcolonialism challenges western stereotypes of the East. In a nutshell, postcolonial literature is literature written by writers from formerly colonized countries. Furthermore, it is the literature of people attempting to restore their freedom and new identities after achieving independence. It frequently addresses the issues of formerly oppressed people, particularly those concerning their identity and culture. The literature of countries like Africa, Australia, the Caribbean, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc. can be termed as postcolonial literature.

Postcolonial theory is a means of evaluating, analysing, and critiquing colonial cultural practices. Many writers have contributed to the postcolonial theory. Edward Said is one such name who inaugurated the field of postcolonial studies with his book *Orientalism*. Frantz Fanon has been an another important figure who contributed to postcolonial theory. His groundbreaking book *Black Skin, White Masks* rates among the twentieth century's essential texts.

Migration, gender, and identity crisis are all prominent themes in postcolonial literature. The current study will focus on diaspora awareness, cultural identity crises, and prejudice in postcolonial migration.

Diaspora, traditionally referred to Jewish communities migrating to various regions of the world. It was a forced exile of Jews from their homeland, with the hope of returning someday. So migration is not a new occurrence. It has been occurring since time immemorial, as a result of numerous events such as wars, conquests, calamities, and so on. However, in current times, the term diaspora has been redefined to make it more open-ended, with hardly any resemblance to the Jewish pattern. The modern world is cosmopolitan, with migration implying to a lesser extent forced exile from home but being assisted more by socio-economic factors. Human migration from third-world nations can be viewed through the lens of postcolonialism, since it addresses the challenges of marginalised people, who are represented here by immigrants.

Geographical dislocations caused by immigration are sometimes accompanied by emotional uprooting and upheaval, since migrants find themselves in a completely alien environment and culture. With the influx of immigrants and first-world countries becoming more culturally diverse, the problems of alienation, emotional trauma, and identity related concerns have become even more pressing in modern times. It frequently leads to what is known as an identity crisis, which is the most contentious problem in postcolonial literature. In regard to postcolonial migrant literature, identity can be considered on two levels: personal and national. The latter encompasses a wide range of issues such as cultural, religious, and ethnic identity, among others. Despite their best efforts, the migrants are unable to fully identify with this new society. As a result, a person's cultural identity suffers, and he frequently questions his own existence.

Bangladesh, which shares a colonial past with India, is now a free country. Bengalis in Bangladesh have also joined the global trend of migration to other countries. As a result of being uprooted and excluded, they, like other migrants, suffer issues of cultural identification, alienation, and pressure to fit into the current cultural

context. Many Bangladeshi writers have tried to capture postcolonial concerns in their works. Adib Khan is a Bangladeshi born diasporic Australian writer. In 1973, he moved to Australia for further studies. Later, he accepted a teaching position at Ballart University in Victoria, where he teaches creative writing.

Adib Khan's writing career began late in life, when he was in his forties. He has published five novels to date: *Seasonal Adjustments, Solitude of Illusions, Homecoming, Spiral Road* and *Storyteller*. *Seasonal Adjustments*, Khan's first novel, drew enough public attention to win the coveted Christina Stead Prize for fiction, the book of the year award in the 1994 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and the prestigious Commonwealth Writers Prize for best book. The present study will analyze select novels of Adib Khan Viz. *Seasonal Adjustments, Solitude of illusions* and *Spiral Road.*

Seasonal Adjustments (1994), the first novel of Adib Khan marks a man's return to his ancestral village in Bangladesh after a long period of eighteen years. But this return is not marked by a sense of nostalgia on the part of the main character Iqbal Ahmad Chaudhary. He arrives at his village in Bangladesh with his young daughter, Nadine at the urging of a New Age Faddist.

Solitude of Illusions (1996), is another novel by Adib Khan. The main protagonist in the novel is Khalid Sharif. He is suffering from a fatal disease. The novel opens when Sharif leaves his home in Calcutta to visit his son, who lives in Australia.

Spiral Road (2007), deals with the personal and political allegiance of a migrant Bangladeshi man named Masud Khan, who had been living in Melbourne, Australia for the past 30 years. After living for so many years in Richmond, a suburban area of Melbourne, he decides to pay a visit to his home, back in Bangladesh, to reconnect with his family.

Monica Ali, a South Asian novelist of Bangladeshi heritage, is also residing in the United Kingdom. She was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh on October 20, 1967. Ali is a mixed-race child, the daughter of English and Bangladeshi parents. Ali was only

three years old when she arrived in England. She has written four novels in total namely *Brick Lane (2003), Alentejo Blue (2006), In the Kitchen (2009)* and her latest novel *Untold Story* (2009). Two novels of Monica Ali namely *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* have been studied deeply for the present study.

Monica Ali's debut novel is *Brick Lane* (2003). With its enormous success, she ascended to stardom. The novel was nominated for the Man Booker Prize. The happenings of *Brick Lane* take place in East London and occasionally travels to Bangladesh in the form of memories. The story depicts the hardships of displacement faced by a young Bangladeshi girl, Nazneen, as a result of her marriage to a man settled in London.

In the Kitchen (2009) is set in multicultural, post-colonial Britain. The plot centers around a bustling kitchen of the Imperial Hotel in Central London. Gabriel Lightfoot, a man from a mill town in Northern England, is an executive chef at this hotel.

The notion of cultural hybridity by noted postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha is used to evaluate the fictional characters of the selected works.

Research Objectives

1. To understand human migration in the selected novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali.
2. To apply racial bias on the grounds of skin colour, religion etc. and study its effects in the selected novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali.
3. To analyse cultural hegemony and its role in defining cultural identity in selected novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali.
4. To evaluate uprooted identities resulting from dislocations in the selected novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali.
5. To examine diaspora consciousness in the selected novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali.

Research Methodology

The current study falls in the category of qualitative research. To achieve the objectives of the research, content analysis would be the most appropriate methodology. The methods like textual analysis, examination, critical analysis and elucidation of the primary and secondary sources have been used for the successful completion of the research work. The texts under study have been analyzed with the help of the postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha. The theory of cultural hybridity is applied to explore human mobility, diaspora consciousness, cultural identity and racial bias on account of geographical displacements to foreign lands. Primary texts have been deeply analyzed and secondary texts have been consulted during the research. Research papers, e-books, articles, videos and audios have been regularly accessed. Moreover, various other important theorists related to postcolonial theory have been taken into account for an intense scrutiny of these works. Furthermore, the useful information has been collected from various data bases such as JSTOR, SJR, RESEARCH GATE, Shodhganga and various other e-sources. Besides this, the libraries of various national universities have been visited from time to time such as Himachal Pradesh University, Central University of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab University etc. The guidelines of the latest 8th edition of MLA style sheet have been strictly observed in formatting, citing and referencing of the thesis.

Review of Literature

Review of literature provides useful directions and helpful suggestions for proper investigation. It provides familiarity to the researcher with what is already known and what is still unknown. I have reviewed the following research papers, reviews and research thesis for my research:

Bhardwaj (2016) in her paper shows the struggle of two female characters namely Nazneen and Haseena as portrayed by Monica Ali in her novel *Brick Lane.* While Haseena remains like a stranger in her homeland, Bangladesh, Nazneen on the other hand evolves to become empowered and self-reliant even on a foreign soil.

Chtrath (2015) shows how Monica Ali has skillfully presented the clash of ideologies between east and west as well as between male and female in the novel *Brick Lane* penned down by Monica Ali. Here Ali can be studied as a champion of feminism, as the male characters in the novel fail to establish their cultural and social identity, while the female characters succeed in their attempts at asserting their identity.

Patricia (2011) reflects on exploitation of migrants in twentieth century Britain as portrayed in Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*. First thing worth mentioning is that the immigrant communities shown in the novel do not belong to ex-British colonies but rather from areas such as Eastern Europe or Africa. For instance, there are Caribbean, Ukrainian and even Russian staff working in the kitchen.

Chakrabarty (2013) provides a thought provoking reflection on how the narrative in the novel *Spiral road* written by Adib Khan handles issues like migration, violence and double nationality. Adib Khan has skillfully blended personal with the political in this novel.

Karim (2019) explores how the culturally displaced Muslims adapt themselves to the fast changing post-colonial world, through the portrayal of Masud's life, right from his childhood to maturity, as well his diasporic experience. Despite of the fact, that Masud was born into a typical Muslim family and having suffered linguistic and identity crisis, he disapproves of religious dogmatism. Thus, Khan challenges the stereotypical representation of Muslims in the novel. Khan shows five generations with their Bengali cultural background, and how these generations experience a great change with the advent of modernization.

Merritt (2019) reviews the novel *In the Kitchen* written by Monica Ali, who touches upon the issues of identity, belongingness and loyalty in describing the changing lives of some immigrants working in a London based hotel.

Sultana (2007) explores various issues like honour killing, alienation, dislocation of Masud Alam, a Bangladeshi man living in Australia, in the novel *Spiral Road* written by Adib Khan. Masud decides to visit his village in Dhaka to secure family ties. But here he discovers some dark family secrets. The novel on the whole deals with the

global problem of rising terrorism, especially after 9/11, and exposes its tight grip on Bangladesh itself. The story of the novel revolves around Alam family, and unfolds the secret of Omar, one of its young member, who was found to be involved in terrorist activities. The author's clear intention is to show the tragic effects of terrorism on a simple Muslim family, rather than its political aspect. At one point in the novel, Masud himself becomes a part of Omar's dark world, but he is also lucky enough to come out enlightened, despite being troubled.

Mercanti (2016) shows how Adib Khan through his novels *Homecoming* and *Spiral Road* challenges rigid boundaries of culture and reframes history and identities. These novels narrate the stories of the disturbed lives of their main characters, Martin and Masud, who struggle to reaffirm their identity in a world, judged by labels, colour of skin and religion. Their sense of dislocation and longing to belong, enable them to move beyond and fit into the alien culture around them, and adopt new ways to conquer violence and cultural representations, thus re–telling the past and re-imagining the future.

Mudditt (2010) reviews Adib Khan's novel *Seasonal Adjustments* which tracks an immigrant man's return to his home in Bangladesh from Australia, after a long gap of eighteen years. Iqbal Chaudhary, the protagonist of the novel, cannot be seen as a typical migrant, who returns to his motherland after years of longing for it. There are little signs of nostalgia to be found in him. In fact, he is not able to identify with his own country and culture. It is a simple novel with no dramatic happenings. Khan presents everyday experiences of the characters, along with their frustrations and struggles. Moreover, there are autobiographical elements in the novel, as Adib Khan himself, also went to Australia like Iqbal chaudhary in 1973.

Hossain (2013) studies Adib Khan's latest novel *Spiral road*, which mainly deals with issues of identity faced by Bangladeshi expat, Masud Alam, both at home and abroad. Besides this, the novelist also touches upon the controversial issue of terrorism and its ties with Islam and Islamic countries, in particular Bangladesh. Khan further shows how media has played its role in presenting Islam as a violent religion and equating it with terrorism. In this novel, Bangladesh is also seen as a congenial place for terrorist

activities and plotting. Khan, also throws light on the reasons why many young-educated Muslims get attracted to terrorism in the name of Jihad.

Research Gap

No extensive research has been conducted on works of Monica Ali and Adib Khan together from the postcolonial migrant perspective using theory of cultural hybridity given by Homi Bhabha. Hence, no full- length and comprehensive study is available in the research papers and critical books to explore diaspora consciousness, cultural identity and racial biases in the select works of the two writers. The review of literature vividly shows this research gap. The study will fill the literary gap as all the major novels of Adib Khan and Monica Ali have been examined, which fit perfectly in different registers of cultural hybridity.

Chapter Scheme

Introduction

Chapter Ⅰ. Brief Candle

Chapter Ⅱ. Postcolonialism and Migration: A nexus

Chapter Ⅲ. Overlapping Perspectives: Examining Adib Khan's Works

Chapter Ⅳ. Theorizing Cultural Identity: An Enquiry of Works of Monica Ali

Chapter Ⅴ. Politics of Racism: Investigating Adib Khan and Monica Ali's Works

Conclusion

Chapter- 1

Brief Candle

"…Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home, exiles are aware of at least two and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions" (Said 227).

In the recent years, literature has seen a growing tendency in expatriate consciousness as never before. This is the result of a major boost in literary activity by diasporic writers, whose writings chiefly center upon the cultural divergences, their disagreements and the diaspora experience in new territories.

Diasporic literature has emerged from the constant quest for identity, a sense of remorse of leaving the homeland and nostalgia for the roots. Consequently, these writers pour their hearts out in the form of their writings to somehow overcome this sense of guilt of leaving their homeland, and settlement on the foreign lands by perpetually searching for their originality by referring to the history of their roots, and the surroundings which have shaped them directly or indirectly. Such writings are re-energized by one's longing souls to relive the memories of the past. The constant ache of being away from their original land is somehow subdued by the emergence of new cultural synthesis, one acquires by living in the host land and the new environment. This blend of old and new gives them a new identity.

Despite a unique identity which has a reflection of the homeland and the host land, diasporic writers are primarily drenched in nostalgia. This feeling does not leave them as they seek to discover themselves in the new culture they have come to live in. James Clifford underscores, "Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be 'cured' by merging into a new national community" (251).

Diasporic writings draw attention to the constant efforts of diasporic writers to fit in the cultural space of new land, which is accompanied by the endeavor to enable the original cultural traits to play in the backdrop. By underscoring both the cultural traits belonging to homeland and the host land, these writings juxtapose various

cultures and practices, which results in better understanding between different cultural boundaries.

'Diaspora' is a broad term referring to the population which has dispersed from homeland to alien countries. The term 'diaspora' was first used for the Jews, especially when Jews were compelled to disperse from their homeland. They uprooted themselves from their motherland with an undeniable hope to return to the motherland one day. This practice of emigration of one group of people to another land can be traced back to the sixth century B.C, when the Israelites were expelled as a result of the conquest of the ancient Kingdom of Judah by Babylon.

Since then, it is used in reference to the dispersed national population of Israel. In the recent years, it has been observed that the word 'diaspora' has not only discarded its exclusive alliance with the Biblical sense of the term, but also is being used to analyze the process of migration and settlement of people beyond the contours of their homeland. The recent alterations have widened the meaning of the term diaspora which is now defined as a section of population which lives outside their homeland. Gabriel Sheffer states, "Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin" (3).

People decide to leave their country and settle in another due to economic and social implications. Robin Cohen in *In Global Diaspora: An Introduction* categorically speaks about the various categories of diaspora, which has been quoted by Lalhmangaihzuali. They are "i) Victim diaspora, e.g. Jews, Africans, Armenians. ii) Labour diaspora, e.g. indentured Indians. iii) Imperial diaspora, e.g. British. iv) Trade diaspora, e.g. Lebanese, Chinese. v) Deterritorialised diaspora, e.g. Caribbean peoples, Sindhis, Parsis" (6).

Since the end of the twentieth century, voluntary migration has also swiftly increased due to the decline of industrialization, end of colonization and better economic prospects in Western countries. With the healthy prospects of life, massive

migration has been witnessed from lesser developed countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America to the more developed countries in Europe and North America.

Their exile is not necessarily permanent. It may entail a constant movement between home and new land. Thus, there is a possibility of some exchange-social or cultural between the groups of people spatially separated from one another. The reasons for this exchange include, "…collective memory of the homeland, alienation in the new land prompting a desire to return coupled with a commitment to the maintenance or restoration of that household which suggests solidarity in a relationship with the homeland…" (Nicholas 5).

In the contemporary times, the term diaspora has a widened perspective. It is no longer confined to the nature of the exile or to the narrow concept of border-crossing. In fact, it underlines the action of migrating to the other land through cross border, includes the cultural transfiguration of borders and the re-establishment of national identities. Diaspora has a very close association with immigrants' recollection of their homeland. Thus, the rapport between the immigrants and their homeland becomes an essential element of discussion while migrants endeavor to shape the new dynamics of diaspora.

According to Khachig Tölölyan, "Diasporas are emblems of transnationalism because they embody the question of borders, which is at the heart of any adequate definition of the Others of the nation-state. The latter always imagines and represents itself as a land, a territory, place that functions as the site of homogeneity, equilibrium, integration…." (6).

The meaning of 'homeland' becomes volatile as it marks a prominent shift in one's perspective, particularly in the context of the diasporic communities. Consequently, the process of migration is accompanied by utter pain, trauma, alienation, loss and isolation. Displacement paves way for nostalgia which constantly reminds the migrants about the physical and emotional distance that detaches them from the homeland. According to Rayaprol, the feeling of nostalgia often results in a romanticized idea of it, he comments, "The 'homelands' people reconstruct tends to

be fictive communities, part real, part imagined" (2). Salman Rushdie concedes this viewpoint and says, "we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost…we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands…" (10).

Despite the sense of loss, immigrants tend to construct their homeland so as to constitute the base for a collective diasporic identity. In this effort, they are nagged by their collective memory and the remembrance of the past. Language, food and cultural practices are the redeemer of the pain on the host land. These three components also bridge the emotional distance between the homeland and the host country. After numerous struggles, the immigrants reconstitute the notion of homeland and also try to interpret the meaning.

In the case of first generation immigrants, the issue of identity is found to be steadfastly administered by the culture of their native land, which they leave behind. The feeling of newness and sense of alienation mark well-known distinction between the immigrants and the natives. The sense of alienation is the result of the inability of the migrants to identify with the values and traditions of the adopted land. Undoubtedly, the social and economic aspirations drive them to new countries, but their cultural identity tightly remains embedded in their personalities. The observance of the native traditions and customs, enable the immigrants to remain connected to the homeland, while the physical presence in the new land infuses in them the desire for assimilation. Yasmin Hussain in her book *Writing Diaspora: South Asian Women, Culture and Ethnicity*, affirms, "Diaspora as a sociological concept takes account of a 'homing desire'-that is a need for belonging to an identity rooted in a geographical origin- as opposed to simply a desire for a 'homeland' in the sense of returning to, possessing or reconquering a physical territory" (7). Thus, the migrants live between two settings; one makes them yearn for their homelands, and the other instills in them a strong desire to integrate in their adopted countries. This dichotomy further intensifies the search for identity which preferably blends the best of both the worlds.

Associated with expatriate consciousness are also issues related to 'ethnicity' and 'identity'. There is a continuous process of 'assimilation' and 'enculturation' of

the diaspora which implies movement from the usual and the familiar world to the new and the unfamiliar. The word ‘diaspora’ also implies a transnational community, which has not come into being as a result of dispersal in the true sense but because people have straddled just one border. In such situations, the sense of alienation is much less. Crossing just one border does not bring with it the same yearning that spatial remoteness does.

If diaspora is a group of people settled and dwelling on the alien land, away from their homeland, then ‘diasporic writings’ refer to the writings which are penned by the exiled communities. As such writings are the expressions of the experiences of this exiled population, so these are heavily laden with social and psychological concerns of the detached generations written with their creative genius. The common feature that dominates the diasporic writings is that, when these writers write about their homelands, their writings encompass even a minuscule detail of the homes they leave behind. As these writings recount their actions in their native lands, so they essentially write about the past, and of things that they have experienced. Jaydeep Chakrabarty states, “The diasporic tension is not only spatial (torn between nations/cultures) but also temporal (split between the past and the present)” (31).

For writing, the expatriate writers depend upon their memory which also becomes subjective, as with the passage of time, memory becomes muddled with the new life which further affects the re-telling of all those actions, which had once been lived and experienced. Yet, they write about their homelands and their past which is instrumental in keeping them grounded. In the case of intentional displacement, the writers still feel kinship and tie with the places of their origin. Writing becomes a means to not only reflect upon their land of origin, but also maintain this association. In the new environment, the writings of these writers not only speak about their experience in their native countries, but also examine and evaluate the new state of affairs of their lives in the new settings. They try to create, as in the words of Gabriel Sheffer, a “complex, triadic relationship between ethnic diasporas, their host countries and homelands” (1).

Hence, while writing about experiences in new-fangled situations, the sense of dislocation and hostility are even more conspicuous. In this attempt to write about their experience in the new country, the search for identity and the struggle to define their place in the world become other significant features of their writing. Each writer has his own unique dynamics and concerns related to displacement and experiences, that outline the consideration of their past and present aspirations and expectations. Many writers have used their pens to the hilt, to explore all those unusual conditions of their existence outside their countries. They write to give voice to the major apprehensions and conflicts that describe their exilic conditions.

The diasporic writings tend to oscillate between original locations and new settlements by reliving the memories of the two worlds. Being part of different cultures of two countries, they create various cultural theories. Hence, diasporic writers advocate their own culture while living under the insecurity of being virtually homeless. They seethe, because the distances they have covered from homeland to the new land jeopardize their identity. They have the constant fear of losing their identity. They are pained to be addressed as 'other' and so they are compelled to swing between the two worlds which are so different from each other. James Clifford augments on this notion and states:

> Diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future. Diasporas also connect multiple communities of a dispersed population. Systematic border crossing maybe a part of this interconnection, but multi-local diaspora cultures are not necessarily defined by a specific geopolitical boundary. It is worth holding on to the historical and geographical specificity of the two paradigms, while recognizing that the concrete predicaments denoted by the term 'border' and 'diaspora' bleed into each other. (246-247)

In the desire to be accepted, such community has been seen making endless adjustments for assimilating into the new world, while consciously keeping the grace of their country intact. Consequently, they adopt the mechanism of rediscovering the cultures which have shaped them, and reinventing the rituals, cultures, practices and

the human values which they have brought with themselves in the form of memories and which smell of nostalgia. Though they look at their native lands from a distance, yet their homeland remains alive in their demeanor and memories. Clifford asserts, "Resistance to assimilation can take the form of reclaiming another nation that has been lost, elsewhere in space and time…" (251).

This helps them to define and redefine their originality cautiously. The constant effort to be accepted and to shun off the tag name of being 'other' results in a never ending struggle, whether the displacement is forced or much preferred. Migrants constantly keep "producing and reproducing themselves anew by transforming" (Clifford 54). Though the issue of identity remains at the core of their consciousness, yet they try to learn new ways of living, new forms of dialogue, and new practices. The effort fails to relieve them of the feeling of having their identity held between the two worlds; the new land that they try to consider their home and the other they have left behind. The struggle between the two worlds leaves them with a devastating feeling of unbelonging and hostility.

Diasporic writings bring to surface the relationship of the diasporic population with their ancestral homeland and the people who belong to the same homeland. This work accentuates upon the experiences of the expatriates or migrants which may vary as per circumstances, and the reasons which govern their decision to migrate. So to say, they have histories of their own. This work also aims to focus upon the varied aspirations, pathos and orientation in diverse environment and the examination of these expressions.

Displacements can be examined from the postcolonial perspective. But it is pertinent to first understand what postcolonialism is. Broadly speaking, post-colonialism is a term used for an era when many colonies achieved freedom from European colonization. It is also concerned with the effects of colonialism on cultures and communities. Ashcroft states, "More than three quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism" (23). The post-colonial era witnessed the emergence of new problems owing to decolonization, which in simple terms means process of freedom of colonies from the

shackles of the erstwhile colonizers. The major issue that arose after the freedom of the colonized nations was that, they were still struggling to adjust in the new atmosphere. The newly freed nations faced many problems in their quest for new self-identity. Colonialism played havoc by exploiting the colonized countries for wealth and resources and controlled the indigenous population. Postcolonialism witnessed neo-colonialism and rise of new diasporic movements. Despite the end of the colonial rule, the colonial influences and impacts remained in picture. The colonial-colonized relationship saw the origin of new terminology like marginality, subaltern, hybridity, expatriate, multiculturalism, mimicry, etc. The impact of colonialism on the former colonized subjects was evident in their cultural perspectives and thoughts. In addition, the population movement and migration from former colonies to the countries of their former masters created a new mixed, hybrid society, which resulted in frequent cultural clashes among immigrants on one hand and between the natives and immigrants on the other hand. Robert Young defines postcolonial literature as a body of writing that tries to shift the dominant ways of looking at the relations between people of Western and Eastern countries (2). Thus, it challenges the stereotypical representation of the East, mainly from the Western point of view. Michel Foucault explores the ways, "in which discourse controls, silences or enables the expression of knowledge and sexuality included gendered identities, in relation to structure of power" (17).

Broadly speaking, postcolonial literature is the literature by writers from formerly colonized countries and consists of those works that have a relation to the dominating forces of imperialism and colonialism. Further, it is the literature of the people trying to reclaim their freedom and their new identities, after gaining independence. To trace the history of postcolonial literature, one has to look back on yesteryears, as it emerged since the end of World War II. The literature of countries like Africa, Australia, the Caribbean, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc. in the 20th and 21st century can rightly be regarded as postcolonial literature. It often addresses the problems of formerly subjugated people particularly in relation to their identity and culture. The study of the issue of subject formation, coupled with that of the colonial and postcolonial is also important part of the writings

of postcolonial writers. They write usually on selfhood, identity and issues that give them a space of their own.

According to Boehmer, "… postcolonial migrant literature can be described as literature written by élites, and defined and canonized by élites. It is the writing which foregrounds and celebrates a national or historical rootlessness" (233). There are numerous postcolonial expatriate writers across the world. However, existing empirical works in this renewed postcolonial migration scholarships have focused mainly on Western expatriates (Wang et al. 75-95), ethnic minority migrants (Sharpe 1-5), medical professionals (Raghuram 25-33) and international student migrants (Madge et al. 34-45) in selected geographical locations. Notably, these works have thus focused on the perspectives of receiving countries which are often former colonial states, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Japan. Consequently, discussions have tended to focus, first of all on the socio-cultural issues of assimilation, cultural hybridity and the changes experienced at home and in abroad; and secondly, normative issues of responsibility and care of the receiving countries towards immigrants. In contrast, there is a lack of studies from other parts and especially within Asia. Many countries in Asia were former colonies and continue to see substantial flows to and from their former empires. Postcolonial literature addresses all problems faced by migrants owing to displacements.

There are many people belonging to different nations who have contributed to the vast list of types of diaspora in the world. If we attempt to explore the concept of diaspora at length, we will come across various groups of dispersion such as Jews diaspora, Asian diaspora, African diaspora, European diaspora, Indian diaspora, American diaspora, Gulf diaspora, Australian diaspora, Bangladeshi diaspora and so on. Out of all, the largest diaspora is from Bangladesh. Because of the simple reason that Bangladesh is an overpopulated country and so for the better prospects of life the citizens of Bangladesh have moved abroad. Kibria writes:

> The enslavement of the Bangladeshi migrants, most of whom were labourers who were employed in the formal labour market often works just a few years or a week based at low wages. The primary destinations for Bangladeshi

> migrants have been the Arab Gulf states. However, one can include a wider range of countries like Japan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore and South Korea. For less-skilled Bangladeshi workers, the high costs of arranging employment abroad may encourage them to overstay their work visas; once they migrated. Under these conditions, less-skilled workers from Bangladesh is at an increased risk of forced labor, exploitation and abuse; even human trafficking in their destination countries. Some find themselves in situations of forced labor or debt bondage where they face restrictions on their movements, non-payment of wages, threats and physical or sexual abuse. (9)

Bangladesh which shares its colonial history with India is a free nation today. Bengalis living in Bangladesh joined the trend of migration to other countries across the globe, since early 20th century. The reasons of migration are varied, and so the experiences and narratives of these migrants are certainly different too. One thing usually remains at the core of migrants' heart which is the problem of cultural identity, alienation and pressure to adjust within the existing cultural milieu. Bangladeshi diasporic literature was in existence both pre and post 1971. Some of the most prominent Bangladeshi diasporic writers who need a serious critical understanding are Nirad Chandra Chaudhuri (1897-1999), Adib Khan (1949-), Syed Manzurual Islam (1953 -), Muhammad Abdul Bari (1953-), Dilruba Z. Ara (1957 -), Mahmud Rahman (1964-), Husna Parvin Ahmad (1964-), Monica Ali (1967-), Neamat Imam (1971-), Sanchita Islam (1973-), Rekha Waheed (1975-), Tahmina Anam (1975-), Kia Abdullah (1982-) and many more.The mentioned Bangladeshi postcolonial diasporic writers have attempted to capture postcolonial issues blended with expatriate dilemmas and consciousness.

This work mainly focuses on Bangladeshi diasporic literature, specifically the narratives of Bangladeshi migrants who have massively travelled to different parts of the world for varied reasons. To look back into yesteryears, when the process of migration began, it has been known that Bangladeshis have moved to the Middle East and different other countries from almost all over Bangladesh. It is pertinent to know that the British community of Bangladeshi origin belongs chiefly to one particular region of erstwhile East Pakistan, namely Sylhet, located in the North East of the

present Bangladesh. However, Sylhetis transmigrated to Britain as early as the 1920s and 1930s, when the country was a part of (East) Pakistan, this phenomenon continued even in the 1950s and 1960s.

Eminent Bangladeshi diasporic writers, Adib Khan and Monica Ali have knitted all those themes which work together in the postcolonial expatriate writings. Hence, the present study particularly will analyze select novels of Adib Khan Viz. *Seasonal Adjustments*, *Solitude of illusions, Spiral Road* and two novels of Monica Ali namely *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* by doing an intensive study. These novels will be examined using postcolonial theory. The two writers are originally of Bangladeshi origin.

To understand these two writers, it is essential to look back to trace the history of the Indian subcontinent with reference to the British colonial rule. The imperial intrusion changed the lives of the natives, socially, politically, economically, religiously etc. The post-colonial Indian subcontinent underwent a drastic change in terms of its customs and indigenous traditions. To trace the images of Bangladeshi postcolonial expatriate literature, it is necessary to glance at its colonial history. Bangladeshi Australian writer Adib Khan's novels attempt to reproduce the legacy of this colonial culture. Khan born in 1949 is a diasporic Australian writer of Bangladeshi roots. He was studying in Dhaka University before he left for Australia in 1973 and completed his Post Graduation from Monash University in 1976. After that he took up the job of teaching at Ballart University in Victoria where he teaches creative writing. In 2007, Adib decided to pursue a Ph.D. in creative writing and so returned to Monash University while continuing to teach at Ballart. Khan is fond of reading, philately, cooking, cricket etc.

Adib Khan's writing career started quite late and it was only in his 40's that he started writing. He has written five novels till date viz. *Seasonal Adjustments*, *Solitude of Illusions*, *Homecoming*, *Spiral Road* and *Storyteller*. With his first novel, *Seasonal Adjustments*, Khan grabbed enough public attention and it won him the famous Christina Stead Prize for fiction, the book of the year award in the 1994 NSW Premier's Literary Awards and the prestigious commonwealth writer's prize for best

book. His second novel, *Solitude of illusions* grabbed the 1997 Tilly Aston Braille Book of the year Award and also managed to get shortlisted for the Christina Stead Prize for fiction. *Spiral Road* is Khan's latest novel.

His sub continental cultural legacy and experience as a migrant could be seen in his depiction and representation of the postcolonial South Asian culture. Adib Khan was born in East Pakistan, due to which he automatically became a Bangladeshi national after the country's independence from West Pakistan in 1971. This has given him an opportunity to have the first-hand experience of the cultures of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the three post-independent South Asian countries. In 1973, Adib Khan moved to Australia to pursue higher education and later obtained Australian citizenship. Therefore, Khan's cultural and diasporic thoughts have emerged on the canvas.

Khan's creativity and skillfully handling of themes related to migration are the result of having crossed national boundaries, and also because he witnessed the intersection of cultures in a space identified as 'third space'. This crossroad experience resulted not only in dislocation but a complete cultural change. Adib Khan has recorded in his works, his experiences of the continuous process of revamping of his communal and personal selfhood. But very clearly he refuses to belong to a monocultural society, which remains the highlight of his oeuvre.

Seasonal Adjustments (1994), the first novel of Adib Khan marks first generation postcolonial migrant literature. It narrates underlying migration journey from the Indian subcontinent to Australia and investigates the experiences of migration, understanding of cultural identities and the idea of home. The novel presents an encounter between centre and margin. *Seasonal Adjustments* describes the story of Bangladeshi Australian, Iqbal Chaudhary. Due to some unpalatable reasons, his marriage was not working for him and his Anglo-Australian wife Michelle. So Iqbal decides to return to his country of origin, Bangladesh, after eighteen years. The novel recounts his search for his cultural roots and belonging. This novel deals with the protagonist's struggle to discover himself, and to know where he belongs after displacement. Besides all these issues, the character is divided between the two

worlds, the East and the West. He is confused because of the cultural negotiations he had made, when he came to live in Australia from Bangladesh. As a postcolonial migrant, Iqbal laments over his past and the losses he had incurred due to the displacement from Bangladesh and settlement in Australia. He is bombarded with the questions related to identity and to a search for belonging. His return to Bangladesh does not fetch him any solace, as he is pained to see the miserable condition of his country, owing to poverty. He finds it difficult to accept this reality and becomes upset. There is a striking similarity between the author and the main protagonist in the novel. Like the author Adib Khan, Iqbal also migrated from Bangladesh and went to Australia in 1973 as a confused young man. He is unambiguous about choosing Australia instead of Britain. It was in a way a rejection of Britain. However, Iqbal does not find peace even in Australia. In this way we can see triple alienation in this novel: first from his homeland, second from his adopted homeland and finally from what his homeland has become during his absence.

Adib Khan's second novel, *Solitude of Illusions* (1996) portrays the situation of communal abhorrence and pandemonium, only to look for a 'home' peaceful and calm. The novel represents the endeavors and struggles of an Indian Muslim protagonist of Bengali inheritance, who was brought up in colonial Bengal and later migrated to Australia during the post-colonial time. It discusses the efforts of Khalid who voluntarily makes adjustments on the host land. In the quest to find his new home, he happily makes alterations in his conservative personality. Amidst different races and cultures, the protagonist, who is believed to be an autobiographical depiction of Khan, marks his position against all odds related to culture and identity. In the quest to be close to the homeland, Khan portrays Indian Bengali Muslim identity breathing on the host land by keeping the original language, family, etiquette and ethnicity, as well as eating habits alive. Khan has underlined his understanding for multiculturalism which is the result of the association of two cultural ties. The protagonist in the novel Khalid Sharif is suffering from a fatal disease. The novel opens when Sharif leaves his home in Calcutta to visit his son Javed, who lives in Australia. Javed is perplexed by the odd and revolting ways in which his father behaves, much in contrast to his impression of his father as a man who devoted his

whole life to his business and family. Moreover, Javed is unaware of his father's secret from his past life, when as a young man he fell in love with Nazli, a young courtesan and proposed her to marry him. But he was forced to end this relationship with Nazli by the infuriated family.

Language and cultures keep changing from place to place and time to time, as the migrants try to bridge the gap between new cultures and the culture of their homeland. This exchange is the most common feature of diasporic literature which enables deeper understanding of various cultures, and also results in weakening the barriers between different countries. Homi Bhabha propounds that culture is not a static entity, as neither time nor space can fix it. It is a fluid concept and the disparate elements keep changing, adding and transforming cultural identities of the colonized, colonizers and the migrants. Hence, he negates the very idea of the purity of cultures. Culture is characterized by mixedness which is hybridity (159-65).

'Decentering' and 'pluralism' characterize much of the postcolonial writing. These writers give a fresh focus, reflect or merge different perspectives on the adopted cultures, and the roots of their writings are fixed in the history of several cultures. To quote Childs and Williams from *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory*, "The idea that post-colonial groups and their histories, far from being alien or other to carefully constructed and guarded western identities, are in fact an integral part of them" (18).

Adib Khan's third novel, *Spiral Road* (2007) is chiefly concerned with the crisis of identity and belonging from which an immigrant goes through, both at home and in a foreign country. Besides this, the writer also endeavors to underscore some controversial issues like terrorism and the rise of the Islamic fundamentalists in Bangladesh. Khan also tries to present Islam and its impact on Bangladeshi Muslims. He has highlighted the complexities of a postcolonial urban outcast. It is indeed a struggle of an individual to make friends, family and acquaintances in the host society, while experiencing a sense of alienation and exile.

After living for so many years in Richmond, a suburban area of Melbourne, Masud decides to pay a visit to his home, back in Bangladesh, to reconnect with his family. After arriving in Bangladesh, he realizes that things had changed a great deal, since he left his home. His father, called Abba, who had long been suffering from Alzheimer's disease is now yielding to it; his mother, now aged, is finding it difficult to face the whole situation; his brother, Zia, who had been the sole bread winner of the family in his absence, is now bending with the burden of the responsibilities on his shoulders; and finally his sister, who had been a victim of a violent marriage is now a divorcee. In short his whole family is in a miserable condition. Furthermore, the time setting is post 9/11.

Still single at 53, Masud immediately becomes a target of his mother's match-making who considers a local woman, Alya, a perfect match for him. Alya lives in a nearby village and runs a factory, which provides work for village women. Masud, having lived for so long in a foreign land realizes how little he knows about his family. His past experience of a soldier in Bangladeshi war of independence continuously haunts him. He wonders how the attitude of his old friends and neighbors has changed towards him. Masud also comes across some family secrets after going through some old family papers. But what disturbs him most is the secret of his young nephew Omar, who has recently returned from America. He is found to be involved in militant activities, with tragic aftermaths affecting the whole family.

Khan brings to surface the dilemmas of being torn between nation and nationality. He also discusses that such migrants try to continue in spite of the feeling of loneliness. As Homi Bhabha puts it:

> …migrant writing marks a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation. Expatriate writing often takes the form of counter narrative of the nation that continually evokes and erases the totalizing boundaries both actual and conceptual. These writers deconstruct the notions of 'nation' and show a dismissive or parodic attitude towards the project of national culture…The migrant writers' perpetual inhabitation on the shifting boundaries provides them with the right perspective to oppose all solutions of

> centrality whether it is the imperial centre or the newly evolved national centre. (227)

In the countries with colonial past, the quest for fulfillment and liberation is still going on, and this has been captured in the diasporic writings. What is commonly found in such writings is the interest in exploring family relationships, their roles in their families, and a search for identity in all the arenas of life such as race, religion, family and society. Postcolonial expatriate writings underscore the burden of race, class and identity, and also the past of colonialism which has silenced and subordinated them. To make their writing powerful, they have chosen such forms as self-expression and autobiography, to testify and to recognize themselves. When they attempt to express their experiences, the choice of words is often overly emotional. Writing can be understood as a means to gain power.

The expatriate writers emphasize the fact that their identity is initially formed through bonding and identifying with their families and nations, while sometimes identity comes through separation from the family. So, the issues of their writings, therefore, are centered around nation and family. Since these writers have sprung from a re-established tradition, so they generally speak out against the sufferings of their motherlands, and the economic conditions and difficulties of the present day existence. Their language expresses their identity and nationhood. Their interests also centre on identity and relationships, etc. This is because they leave their homeland and come to live in the host society, where they find themselves alien. Cut off from their family, they long to be with the people of their community. So, such writings narrate their hard conditions of life due to utter loneliness, owing to detachment from their roots, culture and traditions. The sense of dislocation and nostalgia may vary from person to person, as some may not be overpowered by emotions, because their migration is less out of force and more out of choice.

Elleke Boehemer observes in his book entitled *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, that though women were not absent from colonialist activity, either as travellers and settlers or as writers, diary-makers and log-keepers, they weren't canonized in the same way as their male counterparts. By contrast, native or subaltern

women were said to be doubly or triply marginalized. That's to mention, they were disadvantaged on the grounds not only of gender but also of race, social class, and in some cases, religion, caste, sexuality, and regional status (216).

Monica Ali, another South-Asian novelist of Bangladeshi descent is based in Britain. She was born on 20th October 1967 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Ali has a mixed parentage, as she is the daughter of English mother and Bangladeshi father. When Ali came to England with her parents, she was just three years old. She received her higher education at Oxford University. At present, Ali lives in London. Her genius can be well estimated from the fact that even one year before the publication of her first novel *Brick Lane*, she was selected as one of the twenty "Best of young British Novelists" by Granta magazine on the basis of her unpublished manuscript in 2003. She became a star overnight. Since this early success, she has surprised her readers from time to time, with the publication of her novels that have a vast canvas. She has written four novels in total, namely *Brick Lane* (2003), *Alentejo Blue* (2006), *In the Kitchen* (2009) and her latest novel *Untold Story* (2009).

Brick Lane (2003) is the first published novel of Monica Ali. She rose to prominence with its huge success. The novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. The setting of *Brick Lane* is East London and shifts occasionally to Bangladesh. It is a multidimensional work that encompasses the predicaments, struggles, dilemmas, dichotomies of diasporic community. It speaks about the cultural differences women face when they are displaced from their homelands after marriage. It also narrates that category of migrants, particularly woman, who prefer the foreign culture by asserting their identities as well as assimilation with the new culture. In new land, the flavour of freedom detaches them from the native land. They want to make the most of the freedom they have tasted for the first time. The assertion of new self and denial to return to the homeland are another ways of assimilation with the new culture. Dismantling of the cultural sieges and marital obligations exemplify the freedom of the colonized from the colonizer.

The story starts in a small rural village, Gouripur back in 1967, when this part of Bangladesh came under East Pakistan. A woman named Rupban is going through

labor pains, two months early. After struggling for some time, she gives birth to a baby girl. But the new born baby shows no movement at all, so Rupban's sister -in - law, Mumtaz, and the village midwife, Banesa, declares the child to be born dead. Then suddenly the baby screams, but in a weak and listless manner. Rupban decides to leave the infant to her fate, instead of rushing her to nearby hospital. But to everyone's surprise, the child survives. The child is named Nazneen. She grows up to become a simple and meditative girl. She inherits the same attitude from her mother that everything should be left to destiny or God. Nazneen's younger sister Hasina is a total contrast to her. She is pretty and of revolting nature, unlike her elder sister. She runs away with her lover and marries him, much against the wishes of his father, Hamid. Infuriated Hamid waits for sixteen days at the edge of the village to chop Hasina's head, if she returns, as she had disgraced the family's name. But she does not return. Widower Hamid starts arrangement of Nazneen's marriage to Chanu, a middle aged man living in London. This was a turning point in Nazneen's life, as she was made to marry a man in his forties, while she was merely eighteen. Not only this, she had to leave her village and go to London with a little knowledge of English, to live with her unattractive husband, Chanu. "The man she would marry was old. At least forty years old. He had a face like a frog. They would marry and he would take her back to England with him" (*BL* 12).

In the Kitchen (2009) is set amidst multicultural, post-colonial Britain. The theme of postcolonialism is also relevant in *In the Kitchen* as it discusses the widened cavity between Blacks and Whites. It speaks of the problems of black migrants who have to face the false superiority of Whites. The racial discrimination has been the major issue which justifies the binary of oppressor and oppressed. It also has a streak of feminism in the plot of the novel, which asserts the subjects like equality, liberty and strife for identity.

The story revolves around a busy kitchen of a hotel restaurant named Imperial Hotel in Central London. The protagonist, Gabriel Lightfoot, a man from Northern England mill town, is an executive chef working in this hotel. His kitchen is like immigrant's Kaleidoscope. He remarks, "Every corner of the earth was represented here. Hispanic, Asian, African, Baltic and most places in between" (*In the Kitchen*

101). At the very beginning of the novel, a Ukrainian kitchen worker is mysteriously found dead in kitchen basement. Another immigrant, Lena and his former lover, helps Gabriel to enter the world of underground economy, illegal immigration schemes, slave labour and forced prostitution. This is the picture of New Britain. Gabriel's father reflects at one point, "Great Britain, no one says that anymore…… We've lost the 'Great'. Know what else we've lost? Britishness. People keep talking about it. That's how you know it's gone" (*In the Kitchen* 190). Gabriel was going through a lot in life. To begin with he had a multinational staff to deal with. Then his father, back at Northern England Mill town was suffering from last stage cancer. Moreover, his girlfriend was very demanding and wanted more from their relationship. Besides this, the restaurant manager appeared to be secretly running an illegal business. Some racial comments are also directed towards these migrants belonging to different nationalities in the novel like, "This is England. If they want things exactly like home they can bloomin' well go there, can't they? There is no use trying to make it like home, is there, because they didn't like it at home and that's why they've left and come here" (*In the Kitchen* 173). This clearly shows the racial intolerance of the natives towards the immigrant communities.

Boehmer observes that:

> The status of 'migrants' like Rushdie, Walcott, Ondaatje, and Okri—and, latterly, those of a second generation of more strictly speaking diasporic writers (children of migrants) such as Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, or Monica Ali—has produced definitions of the postcolonial as almost invariably cosmopolitan. It is a literature that is necessarily transplanted, displaced, multilingual, and, simultaneously, conversant with the cultural codes of the West: it is within Europe/America though not fully of Europe/America. This has far-reaching implications for the way in which other kinds of—perhaps more specifically national or regional—postcolonial writing will be read in future. (230)

So, diaspora is also a multi-dimensional and heterogeneous phenomenon. It also covers variegated aspects and disciplines ranging from the history of slavery,

colonization and bonded labour, the financial compulsions and sources of livelihood of displaced persons, their narratives and different experiences of homelessness, their idea of home and nation, their struggle for identity, assimilation into different cultures and multiculturalism.

The postcolonial theory has been applied for textual analysis of selected works of Adib Khan and Monica Ali. Specifically, the concept of cultural hybridity given by renowned postcolonial theorist Homi.K Bhabha has been applied. Bhabha has written a number of works exploring postcolonial theory, cultural change and power, and cosmopolitanism. Homi. K Bhabha, born in the year 1949, in Bombay, was educated and taught in British universities, before moving to the University of Chicago. Bhabha is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities in the English and Comparative Literature Departments at Harvard University. His seminal works include *Nation and Narration* and *The Location of Culture*. The influential ideas and terms explored in his essays—hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry have been formative for developing postcolonial theory. His works remain a significant reference for anyone interested in the hybrid cultural perspectives associated with colonialism and globalization. Bhabha's essays in *The Location of Culture* show that colonialism does not remain locked in the past and is not over and done with. Instead, colonialism makes an uncanny return in the present.

Chapter-2

Postcolonialism and Migration: A Nexus

Postcolonialism has recently emerged as a useful approach which has escalated research on the issues related to migration. Samers remark, "Nearly a decade ago it was noted that although immigrants and ethnic minorities were quintessential 'postcolonial subjects', research on migration had yet to engage fully with postcolonial debates" (138). Postcolonial theory is a method of interpreting, reading and critiquing the cultural practices of colonialism. Many writers have contributed to the postcolonial theory. Edward Said is one such name who came to lime light with his book *Orientalism*. He was a Palestinian American. His book can be considered a foundation stone on which postcolonial theory developed. Said can rightly be called the father of postcolonialism. In his book, he studies the relationship between the West or the Occident on one hand and the East or the Orient on the other, often termed as 'other' in a derogatory sense. According to Said, orientalism is a style of thinking, a form of representation that created opinions, ideas and images of the non-European cultures in racialized ways (12-16).

Frantz Fanon has also been an important figure in postcolonial theory. His *Black skin, White masks* ranks with some of the ground breaking texts in twentieth century. In context of African Americans, Fanon says that the black people inculcate an inferiority complex on account of their skin colour, and end up emulating their oppressors. They internalize the white standards and see their own traditions as inferior. The black man wears a kind of white mask over black skin. Fanon also discovered similarity between the colonizers and the elite class of the postcolonial countries. During postcolonial period most of the countries achieved freedom from the clutches of the colonial masters. However, a new kind of power struggle emerged between the working class people on one hand and the upper class educated people on the other. Fanon termed this as neocolonialism in which native subjects were exploited by the elite classes (1-7).

Diasporic literature has emerged from the unremitting quest for identity, a sense of regret of leaving the birth land and endless longing for the roots. Such writings are revived by one's longing souls to recollect the memories of the past. The constant ache of being severed from the roots is subdued by the emergence of new cultural synthesis, one acquires by living in the new environment on the adopted land. The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek word for scattering which means dispersion of a particular population from homeland to some alien countries. The dispersion may not necessarily be permanent and may entail a constant movement between one's own lands to the new world. Diaspora originally referred to migration of the Jewish communities to different parts of the world. It was a forced dislocation of Jews from their homeland, with a strong wish to return someday. So migration is not a new phenomenon, and has been going on since time immemorial necessitated by various factors like wars, conquests, disasters etc. But in modern times, the term diaspora has been redefined to make it more open-ended, that has little connection with Jewish model. The diasporian movements at a large scale were witnessed in the colonial times. In that period, enormous increase in migration was noticed as the colonial rulers would send their colonized subjects to different places to work as labourers. Post-colonial period was also marked by large scale migrations to the first world nations from the newly freed countries of Asia, Africa etc. trying to establish economic and social stability. Elleke Boehmer, another postcolonial theorist traces the history of post-colonial migration to late twentieth century, when there were large scale displacements from countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Sudan, Bangladesh etc. These displacements were driven by forces like economic scarcity, famine, search for better prospects and opportunities, etc.

Present world is a cosmopolitan world, where migration to a lesser extent means forced exile from home but is facilitated more by socio-economic factors. There has been a change from what diaspora used to be "migration as colonialism" to what it is now "uprooting and deterritorialization" (Imran Majeed Bhat 6). The colonial rulers have been replaced by the elected representatives, but movement from one place to another has not stopped. On the contrary, it has escalated in great number. In fact, diasporian movement has taken new forms of exile, immigration, etc.

A survey conducted by United Nations shows that some 100 million people in the world are migrants. Thus, the uprooted existences that developed in cosmopolitan countries during twentieth century have now become a global phenomenon. Further, cultural displacement is now widely considered as a postcolonial experience. At present, the meaning of diaspora has undergone a sea change. It means uprooting, displacement or migration from one's homeland as well as settlement in the host land. Looking back from the past to the present, all forms of displacements and association with the colonialism and its effects have brought diaspora close to the postcolonial thought and literature.

The migrations from South Asian countries can be seen through the lens of postcolonialism, as it addresses the issues of the marginal groups which are here represented by immigrants. With these immigrations, the issues of identity, class, race and religion have also emerged to the surface. This is because of the fact that millions of migrants who land on the foreign soil from different corners of the world are not always welcomed in their host countries, and have to often face subjugation and exploitation. So these people experience double dislocation; one is emotional and the other is geographical.

Different diaspora theorists and critics have defined diaspora from a variety of yet equally essential angles, including identity, geography, imagination, and place of origin. Some of the theorists that have attempted to mould the theoretical structures of this newly developed discipline include KachigTölölyan, Stuart Hall, James Clifford Robert Cohen, Vijay Mishra, Avtar Brah, and William Safran etc. Vijay Mishra distinguishes two types of diasporas: The old diaspora, made up of slave and indentured labourers and the new diaspora, made up of economic migrants and refugees and the result of late capitalism (26).

In "Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" William Safran contrasts diaspora with other related but separate groups such as expatriates, immigrants, refugees, and aliens, as defined by six distinguishing criteria. According to Safran, the first category of diaspora occurs when people are dispersed from a specific original centre' to two or more peripheral or foreign regions; the second

occurs when those dispersed communities retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland, its physical location, history, and achievements; in the third category, diasporic communities are marked by a firm belief that they are not - and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society and thus feel partly alienated, isolated from it; the fourth category investigates that, diasporas overwhelmingly regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return, when conditions are appropriate; in the fifth category, diaspora communities are seen to firmly believe that they should collectively be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and in the final category, diaspora and diasporic groups often relate, directly or vicariously, to the homeland in some way, and the existence of such relationship is vital in defining ethno-communal awareness and unity (24-25).

Whenever any immigrant reaches an alien country, he comes face to face with two commonly asked questions: 'Why is he here?' and, 'when he is going back home?' So, these are the questions that constantly haunt him. He is unable to find proper answers to these questions. In this connection Stuart Hall, an eminent cultural theorist, in his essay "Minimal Selves" states that, "migration is a one-way trip, there is no 'home' to go back to" (1).

Sin Yee Koh, in "Postcolonial Approaches to Migration in Asia" observed that, postcolonial approaches to migration are innately political and ethical, as they show how 'here' and 'there' (i.e. the host and sending contexts) and 'past' and 'present' (i.e. the colonial period and the post-colonial period) are embodied in and carried by the figure of the migrant (432-444). Postcolonial migration scholars have attempted to show this from time to time by paying attention to historical legacies, and by giving voice to marginal and bottom-up perspectives. This offers alternative view points to the same migration phenomenon without glorifying and relying only on official and formal accounts by the authorities (e.g. national governments and international organisations) or abstracted academic theories which may have little relevance to individual lives. In this connection, Yeoh states in "Postcolonial Geographies of place and Migration" that, in order to be a truly transformative

scholarship, postcolonialism must be seen through material forms, places, spaces and experiences (369-81).

Postcolonial literature deliberates upon reclaiming and rethinking of the history and past. It also examines various forms of subordination under imperialism. The postcolonial writers minutely study the native people, places and practices to cull off the biases and stereotypes created by the colonizers. They underline the cultural-political issues related to national and ethnic identity, 'otherness', race, imperialism, and language, pre and post-colonial era. In the narration of the experiences and the endeavours of the subjects of the imperial culture, the question of cultural identity emerges out to be central. They clinch, dispose of, like or loathe the practices of both the worlds they live in. Postcolonial literature reflects changes in the social, political, economic and cultural practices in liberated environment, and challenging anything that reminds of the colonizer. Similarly, diaspora literature emphasizes on the questions of preserving or shifting identity, language and culture while living in another country.

Diasporic or migrant literature and postcolonial literature confirm some significant convergences. Both, postcolonial and migrant literature delve deep into the themes of culture(s) and identity(ies). Hybridity and mimicry are two other essential characteristics of postcolonial and diasporic literature. But it is pertinent to mention that not all migration takes place in a colonial backdrop and not all postcolonial literature deals with movement and displacements.

It would not be incorrect to assert that diaspora and postcolonialism collate meaningfully to discuss and critically analyse movements and migrations. The juxtaposition discusses vast mobility, displacement, boundaries and crossings, etc. Postcolonialism is the most glorious period which signs the momentous and much awaited independence from the colonial subservience, but the colonial subordination brought with it numerous cultural dilemmas and crisis. The colonial rule ended and promulgated liberation of its subjects, but left them in a state of confusion about their cultural roots and identity.

One of the key concerns in postcolonial studies is the critique of Eurocentrism and its continued domination of the Eastern world. According to Sidaway in "Postcolonial Geographies", it has been widely acknowledged that postcolonial approaches in the domain of geography offer opportunities to challenge the colonialism of knowledge and ideas (591-612). And this is made possible by "problematising, deconstructing and de-centering the supposed universality of Western knowledge" (Kothari 255), and as Briggs and Sharp observes by incorporating 'indigenous knowledge' systematically (661-67) and engaging in, "a creative, uncertain, indirect [process] of learning with people ⁄ places ⁄ cultures of knowledge production" (Jazeel and McFarlane 122).

In general, postcolonial scholars have critiqued Eurocentrism in two ways: firstly, as Alatas examines, by paying attention to the fact how knowledge has been shaped primarily by Anglo-Western experiences and epistemologies (9-15); and secondly as Said observes, by creating the awareness about the Oriental or the 'other' (29) or the subaltern (Spivak 25) who continues to have his or her voice(s) regulated and (mis)represented by an unequal global landscape dominated by Eurocentrism. In simple words, postcolonial migration approaches raise important and standard questions about "the complex and effective relationships between issues of power, inequality and exploitation and themes of identity, knowledge and representation" (Nash 105) as they relate to migration. Mains et al observes that "the potential for postcolonial theory to fundamentally change how we understand migration is underexplored" (133). The existing studies on post-colonial migration flows from former colonies to countries of the former colonial power – such as migrants from Caribbean to Britain (Chamberlain 2) and Latin American migrants to Britain (Mcilwaine 4) – have attempted to focus mainly on experiences of the migrants at the host countries. Although these accounts of migration and diasporic experiences are situated within the structures of colonialism, these have little to do with what a postcolonial lens might uncover for migration studies. Presently, there are a few empirical works that have specifically claimed to adopt postcolonial approaches to analyse migration (Madge et al. 34-45). These few works, however, have raised the

crucial issues pertaining to postcolonialism such as race, the minority 'other' and nationalism.

Some of the recent themes that recur in postcolonial migrant literature are migration, gender, identity crisis, racism etc. The present research will mainly study dislocations, diaspora consciousness, cultural hybridity, emotional uprootedness, racial prejudices and other socio-cultural issues in relation to postcolonial migration. Postcolonial diasporic writing features; return to the past; analysis of the communities' heritage; and memory of history. It discusses how the migrant subjects have to face greater challenge in postcolonial discourses due to various forms of oppressions. It is displacement and cultural imperialism which adds to their woes. Bharti Mukherjee asserts, "The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation" (274).

Diaspora consciousness is one of the important themes in postcolonial migrant writings. The constant effort to associate with the two different worlds, and the continuous process to assimilate in the new world, pave way for some social or cultural exchange to take place between populations belonging to these respective different worlds. "The question is not simply about who travels but when, how, and under what circumstances? What socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions mark the trajectories of these journeys?" (Brah 105).

The reasons of such movements are many. It is a known fact that the human aspiration to achieve is insatiable. This has resulted in frequent movements from one country to another, which have increased with the comfortable travelling facilities. Migration can be one's choice or one's compulsion, depending upon one's situations and circumstances. Hence, sometimes the movement is the result of much thinking and planning, while sometimes they are sudden. Planned movements premeditate on all issues such as; for how long one will stay; whether the stay would be very short or very long; whether it would be permanent or temporary; and most importantly, such planned movements know the destination of journey and suitable time to move, etc. It would not be wrong to state that usually the planned movements are the result of economic compulsions or social concerns, and sometimes political reasons also

become responsible for such preferred displacements. To mention them specifically, many move away from their native land in pursuit of business or to find work for themselves.

Sometimes circumstances in the family may also be a key factor in the decision making of displacement. Marriages also uproot many, particularly women from one place to another. Migration due to expulsion instigated by political considerations can be a forced decision. This can be traumatic and shocking because it pushes them to the foreign borders to manage living. Migration, irrespective of choice or compulsion may leave the migrant with a bewildering or a traumatic feeling. Vijay Mishra observes that, "All diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way" (189). To leave or flee from the homeland and to settle in a strange society, may result in unutterable and excruciating pain to get back to the world to which they originally belong.

The decision to be a permanent settler or a temporary is governed by circumstances and situations. Some settlers detach themselves completely from their homeland, while some keep the possibility of returning home always open, as they fail to endure the pain that results from the memory of the native place. No matter, whether the migration of first generation is a much planned decision or a compulsion, the yearning to return home is much stronger than the second generation migrants. For the first generation migrants, the feeling of being 'outsiders' always follows them, and so for them the present country is not their real place. They find themselves to be struggling between the native land and the present home. The sense of displacement and homesickness do not allow them to detach themselves completely from the land of their birth. However, the similar desire to return remains absent in the second generation migrants. They do not consider themselves dislocated the same way because of having born and brought up in the new land. Consequently, they have a sense of belongingness for the country in which they take birth.

Geographical dislocations resulting from immigration is often marked by emotional uprootedness and upheaval, because the migrants find themselves amidst a completely unfamiliar environment and culture. With the onset of the process called

decolonization, there was rapid increase in human-mobility either through forced dislocations or willing migrations from the newly liberated nations to the western countries. Modern age is witnessing an unprecedented rise in immigrations. Consequently, the problems of alienation, emotional trauma and identity issues have become all the more evident. It often results in what is called identity crisis, which is the most controversial issue in postcolonial literature. The phrase 'identity crisis' was originally coined by German psychologist Erick Erikson, who described it as a period of deep probing into the various roles and facets of self (15-20). These expatriates severed from their original roots suffer from a sense of alienation, trauma and identity crisis. They strive to adjust with a completely alien culture to relocate in a strange country. But, no matter how hard they try, they are unable to completely identify with this new culture. As a result of this, the identity of a person undergoes crisis and he often questions his own existence. In relation to postcolonial migrant literature, identity can be seen at two levels: one at personal and the other at national level. The latter covers a vast area to include cultural, religious and ethnic identity etc.

Iian Chambers, an influential postcolonial theorist states that, in contrast to travel which shows movement between "fixed positions", migrancy involves "dwelling" in different places and identities that are "constantly subject to mutation" (5). James Clifford categorically states, "Diaspora is different from travel (though it works through travel practices) in that it is not temporary. It involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home (and in this it is different from exile with its frequently individualistic focus) …" (252)

In such circumstances, the possibilities of homecoming are very rare. Further, this kind of journey is metaphorically often one way. Everything is imagined in this world, so much so that even one's sense of self also seems to be a part of this imagination. For instance, a migrant imagines himself to be a complete being having a definite identity in the midst of an alien culture. But in reality, he becomes a fragmented and confused individual, torn between two cultures. About migrants Elham says, "We do not really have an identity; the stronger you are feeling of not having an identity, the more you want to pretend to have one" (138). A migrant has the traces of both, but is unable to identify with any one culture. Edward Said

advocates the issue of the marginal and gives the colonized a sense of identity and status (15-20). In the words of James Clifford:

> Diaspora discourse articulates or blends together both roots and routes to construct what Gilory (1987) describes as alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference. Diaspora cultures are not separatist or irredentist moments… (252)

Cultural identity is a major issue in postcolonial diasporic literature. The question of cultural identity is answered by the expatriates differently. Some migrants relentlessly attempt to assimilate into their new situations and new environment, while some retain their cultural identity and refuse to change. So they remain 'eternal other'. While some of them try to strike a balance between the two worlds to what possible extent they can. Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* suggests fourth category of migrants who experience not 'unbelonging' but 'excess of belonging' (10-15). Wolfrum addresses migrants as 'new minorities' (153). Hammet termed alien residents as "denizens…. new status group …not regular and plain foreign citizens any more, but also not naturalized citizens of the receiving country" (4). This excessive belongingness can only be achieved if somebody completely obliterates 'otherness' as well as dissolve consciousness of belonging elsewhere. In many cases, it has been seen that migrants not only come to foreign countries and stay there for quiet long but also acquire membership of the host lands, though fail to get citizenship. Their efforts to procure permanent citizenship leave them in utter disillusionment and poor psychological state. No matter how hard they try to adjust into the host societies, the feeling of not belonging to any land haunts them.

Staurt Hall articulates that cultural identities are neither fixed nor complete in any sense. It is so, because identities are the byproducts of society and culture which are essentially subject to the differences of time and place. Identities which are essentially positioned in time and space, cannot negate its positioning in a certain culture, which in the words of Hall is "the positions of enunciation" (222). There are two deeper perspectives of this cultural identity. Firstly, Cultural identity of a

particular group of people has some common cultural practices which unites them. Each group of people has its own past. Such unique and historical practices differentiate them from other. Secondly, within the cultural identities the blend of similarities as well as differences is a common aspect (Hall 226-36). Postcolonial struggles mainly revolve around the issue of the sense of cultural identity. The transition from colonialism to post-colonialism unfolds the efforts of discovering such identity through re-shaping, re-establishing and re-claiming the 'true self'. It is an act to recover and restructure what colonization has damaged. In this act, one imagines rediscovery which is pivotal in the restoration of such identity. In the process of discovery, rediscovery and restructuring and recuperating the losses and the damages, the 'hidden histories' are unfolded which gives true sense of cultural identity. Another important act that is central in the cultural identity is the act which requires the discontinuation of certain practices, so as to purge of those differences which are responsible for the historical ruptures within cultural identities. Cultural identity is not just an issue of the past. In an attempt to restore past, the future depends. In the words of Hall, it is a, "matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (225). Therefore, cultural identities do not just suggest an accomplished set of practices which is already present, but are subject to the position of history, power and culture. They alter from time to time. Staurt Hall affirms that similarities and differences in cultural identities results in trauma and tension under the colonial experience.

The present age is an age of globalization and cosmopolitanism. To explore the relationship between postcolonialism and cultural studies we have to look at the role of globalization and multiculturalism through the postcolonial lens. Since, postcolonial studies are concerned with the oppression (in the past or present) of the non-white races by European ones, cultural studies in a globalized culture focus on how dominance is ensured through consent rather than force, which is termed as 'cultural hegemony.' It is a key concept given by Antonio Gramsci. It shows how in the present globalized world, colonialism is effected in a new frame, and with new modes of exploitation (432-49). Since, postcolonialism is all about subjugation, in the modern times, culture becomes a new weapon for domination, of course through consent. In simple language it means western cultural trends penetrating the everyday

culture of third world countries. But this culture has little to do with traditions or territories. It is determined more by economic factors. So, contemporary multiculturalism and globalization have become a new mode of cultural exchange, appropriation and marketing.

However, one should also not forget that a culture cannot be reduced to its material goods or products. But at the same time these are not merely material products, they often carry cultural values. Thus, postcolonial studies mainly focus on the images or cultural values associated with the material objects, especially by third world countries or immigrants living in western countries, which facilitates their cultural dominance by the west. And the strange thing is that, this whole process takes place at a subconscious level

Further, cultural identity in simple words means one's sense of belongingness to a particular culture. It is built by embracing some traditions that are passed down generation after generation. Cultural theorist, Stuart Hall in one of his famous essays, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" explains cultural identities, as he states that, "Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power" (236). Borrowing from Derrida's concept of 'Differance' Hall states that cultural identities always undergo transformation and difference, and constantly produce and reproduce themselves again and again. So, cultural identities are not stable, as Hall states in his essay that, they are characterized by hybridity and heterogeneity (230-37). At a basic level, cultural hybridity refers to a new culture mixed up with both parts or any mixing of Eastern and Western attributes. In postcolonial context, it most commonly refers to once colonized subjects who have found a balance between Eastern and Western cultural attributes. However, in Homi Bhabha's initial usage of the term in his essay, "Signs Taken for Wonders" he clearly thought of hybridity as a subversive tool whereby once colonized people might challenge the agency of the West. Homi Bhabha underscores that hybridity is the "'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (211). The concept of hybridity is characterized by identity and culture. Our identity is primarily shaped by the environment and the culture we belong to. But cultural hybridity poses a challenge to the notion of cultural authenticity, a much

believed element that strengthens the foundation of any culture. Homi Bhabha defies the notion of essentialism or fixity of identities in any part of the world. He mentions that, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (211).

Bhabha also points out various paths by which one can come to embody a mix of Eastern and Western attributes. He also attempts to differentiate between people who consciously strive to achieve a mixed identity and those who accidently reflect it. Hence, there can be different registers of cultural hybridity ranging from slight mixing, overlap to creolization.

Stuart Hall states that restlessness is a common feeling under the colonial power as it makes the colonized "experience ourselves as others" (225). Under this colonial experience, the identity is most affected. It makes us uncertain in our life, our desires, and our thinking. The colonial world increases the tension due to the rip between the two worlds in an unidentified space. This uncertainty due to uprootedness weakens the concept of cultural identity and one becomes doubtful about oneself under the colonial rule. It would not be wrong to call cultural identity highly volatile and a shared entity. "It is not one and for all" (226). It is subject to change, and the changes continue to take place as it is not something which happens in the past. It is important to understand that we construct our past through "memory, fantasy, narrative and myth" (226).

Detachment from the native land to the new land paves the way for multiculturalism. Due to this, self-definition becomes the most urgent issue to be addressed. New environment instills insecurity of losing the old identity, and so the question of defining oneself in the strange world becomes foremost.

Expatriates suffer the pangs of anonymity, alienation and hostility in the foreign lands. This feeling of anonymity does not lessen even after they return to their homelands, as they are no more capable of claiming what was already lost while leaving their homelands. They see a sharp change in the demeanor of those ties they had left behind. Hence, they might experience the same hostility they live with on the foreign lands. Meaning of 'home' may not be as warm as it used to be once. Coldness

of family ties may make them feel lonely, unwanted and anxious. Consequently, the urgency to return and belong to the new world becomes stronger.

Diaspora is a strong articulation of identity, belonging, and home. This trio is entangled and inseparable. In diasporic writings, the issue of identity is volatile as individuals or communities constantly undergo the anguish of uprootedness, dispossession, dislocation and marginalization. So the feeling of unbelongingness and belonginess changes with time and space. Gayatri Spivak in "Teachings for the Times" advocates that the migrants are always branded as outsiders, and so when their nationality is discussed, such people are recognized as the citizens of their original nations. Such treatment leaves the migrants with the sense of marginality (3-7). In other words, these migrants fit appositely well under the Foucault's concept of 'centre' and 'margin'. Sometimes, the migrants feel that they fit well in the host societies and sometimes they are made to feel dejected. So, the notion of unbelongingness and then belongingness is fluid. This struggle intensifies when diasporic population comes across the recognized dwellers or citizens of the nation and is subject to their racial prejudices. Every new encounter brings before them the most sensitive issue of identity. The urge to know their identity and status becomes stronger and pressing. They often look for answers to the questions like, 'Who am I?' or 'Who are we? 'It also leads to the question, 'Where do I belong?' or 'Where do we belong'? Such questions when are not answered, make this diasporic group insecure and skeptical. They also become insecure about the very idea of 'home'. Another set of questions which hurt them even more are about the real definition of 'home', the exact location to find 'home', the real features of home, the relationship and the experience of diaspora and home, the notion of home as well as homeland etc.

This causes restlessness, and the tension between home and exile emerges. It happens because people are aware of one home they originally belonged to, but association with another home and new culture gives rise to simultaneous proportions. Therefore, the resistance to define and shift identities becomes an integral aspect of diasporic writings. Such writings reveal that, separation from home for a good number of years has traumatized them, and so they experience homesickness. Diasporic writers shape their own experiences, or the experience of people around them, being

away from their homelands and on the surface of foreign lands. The idea of 'home' is tightly woven in their works because literal and metaphorical meanings are attached with it. Avtar Brah remarks, "…the 'referent' of 'home' [is] a qualitatively different… 'home' in the form of a simultaneously floating and rooted signifier. It is an invocation of narratives of 'the nation'. In racialised or nationalist discourses this signifier can become the basis of claims- …that a group settled 'in' a place is not necessarily 'of' it" (3).

'Home' is a complete feeling of one's existence and so it would not be wrong to attach it with existentialism and identity. It shows a deep sense of attachment to one's ancestral roots and past. Writers recount their journey from their homeland through the recollections of past. The reminiscences of the past, old home and old ties leave them with inexplicable pain and agony for their detachment from their origin for any reason. To feel the pain of expatriates, it is pertinent to understand the history of displacement and the meaning of 'home' in true sense. The history of diaspora is equally important for the better understanding of pain due to detachment. Diaspora enables one to understand the process of settlements, efforts made in the due course and the changes that have emerged over time.

Home and the sense of belongingness are the two major issues which have remained recurrent to the literature of diaspora. The shuttling between past and present, old and new are the unremitting aches in such writings. Roger Kennedy states:

> Having a home implies both having a physical entity, the physical structure of the dwelling, the house, but also something that goes beyond the building blocks into the area of the interior of the soul…. If exiled, we may be able to carry the sense of home with us, yet there is often a poignant yearning for the original house. (12)

Homi Bhabha has referred to this issue of 'home' as a space that exists between the two worlds called "interstitial space" (4). Diaspora, who lives in this in-between state, erases the definite contours that demarcate the boundaries of these

worlds. The two worlds or nations refer to the nation left behind and the new nation they are settled in. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* underscores that the diasporas identify space between the native and the alien land and call it 'home' (4). In a way, the process of displacement and settlement transforms them, as the struggle of adopting new life styles and cultures continue, gradually sowing seeds of cultural hybridity. This might be traumatic and agonizing as the desire of 'home' remains unfulfilled, since they are in the middle of the two worlds. Despite being amid space, the presence of an existential and a metaphoric 'home' haunts them. Hence, they find a new way to strike a balance between the old and the new. Diasporic population begins to identify with such group of population who share the same food habits, same cultures, dressing sense and practices.

They constantly face the dilemma of where 'home' is, and so they move back and forth between the two nations. Each narrative of search of the 'home' speaks a lot about pain of displacement, physical, socio-psychological endurances and pangs of separation and feeling of loneliness, feeling of uncovered distances in family relations and temporariness. This proposition does not rule out those who identify 'home' as per their convenience. According to Rosemary George in *The Politics of Home,* in the complex configuration of migrant literature, postcolonial migrant literature can be applied to describe literary texts in which concepts of location and dislocation are the central narratives (171). This literature takes into account works of those authors who are directly or indirectly associated with the once colonized countries. The postcolonial migrant literature is chiefly characterized to accentuate upon such literary texts which are written by authors, who have colonial past and have moved permanently to a new setting. Another feature of this literature is that, it not only includes first-generation authors who have spent a good length of time in a former colony, but also second-generation authors who are still under the sway of the historical and political effects of a former colonial time. Postcolonial migrant literature mulls in one way or another on the experiences of migrants, their feelings of displacement, and the idea of home and their positioning within the native society. This form of literature not only incorporates the experiences and perceptions of the migrant writers, but also brings to surface the political and historical connotations.

Postcolonial migrant literature is always a political endeavor. It attempts to examine complex inter/cross-cultural relationships, which are the outcome of the combinations of hierarchical and separating elements such as power, authority, supremacy, race and also the conundrum of national belonging and non-belonging. This implies as David Carter has noted that "literature is not just a set of individual texts or authors but rather a set of institutions and institutional practices which regulate the making and transmission of (literary) meanings in a given society" (18). As a result, the historical and political nuances inherent in the migrant experience delineate the literary expressions of the migrant writers.

Postcolonial literature also focuses on the issues of race in discussing about the West and West's interaction with the East. In general, racism, which is also called racialism, is the belief that man may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called 'races'; that there is a connection between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, morality, intellect, and other cultural and behavioral features; And that some races are innately superior to other races.

The present age can be termed as a politically correct age, but still racial prejudices can be witnessed everywhere. In many first world countries, the immigrants from the third world countries are often judged on the basis of their skin colour, religion and dress code etc. The process of 'other-ing' entails production as well as violence on identities and can be examined through issues such as race, gender and caste. Factors like racial prejudices, stereotypes, etc. affect the cultural orientation of the individuals to assimilate. The original dwellers see the immigrants from post-colonial nations as inferior, owing to their colonial past and see them as a great threat, as they can defile their superior culture. Hence, they resort to racial tactics. Postcolonialism strives to expose this superciliousness of the West, and understand the psyche behind racism by examining colonial-colonized relationship.

Postcolonial approaches offer an analytical lens through which such ventures might be possible. The present study will analyze select novels of Adib Khan Viz. *Seasonal Adjustments*, *Solitude of illusions*, *Spiral Road* and two novels of Monica Ali namely *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* using postcolonial approach. It aims to

explore issues related to displacements, Cultural Identity and politics of racism. The characters in the novels have been displaced, exiled and alienated owing to immigration to other countries. They are unable to relate completely either to the new culture of their adopted country or to their own cultural roots.

Chapter-3

Overlapping Perspectives: Examining Adib Khan's Works

The postcolonial migrant literature does not restrict itself to any space which is outside the national periphery. In fact, it defines itself in a specific position within the community. Consequently, it blurs and transcends boundaries and borders. In this situation, the roles of the outsider and that of the insider switch simultaneously. The outsider in a host country gets into the role of an insider and vice versa. The experiences, emotional attachments and the day to day rendezvous with the known and the unknown, result into new formations which points to the heterogeneity of a location. It brings to surface all those movements and variegated observations of spaces, which create gaps and splits, ultimately leading to new thoughts of the nation, culture and its environment.

Postcolonial migrant literature also discusses such situation in which the 'other' sometimes appears within the same border. Hence, there is a frequent wavering between one and the other, the concrete and the abstract. It is not necessary that to have a feeling of alienation, one needs to cross the borders of one's native nation. Such people are pushed to the periphery, which often makes them feel like a foreigner or a stranger among their own people. In this fluctuation, the defining and shifting, the space of belonging smudges and hazes the definitions of a tangible and valid in-between contour.

Culture is dynamic as nothing can fix it. Even time and place cannot make culture static. This is a fluid concept; as we change, we add, we transform our cultural identities from time to time and as per the need. It is characterized by change, flux and transformation due to the mixedness and interconnectedness with different cultures. As Anzaldúa puts it, "The future belongs to the mestiza (woman of mixed race, hybrid). Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos – that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves and the ways we behave – la mestiza creates a new consciousness" (2214).

The postcolonial migrant authors live in a country in which they find themselves in a pre-set, the space of which is packed with past and present imaginations from the other side. These writers attempt to modify this space through their recounting and diversified forms of imagining. New encounters and new experiences lead to changes, re-structuring and makeover in terms of language, clothing, attitude, mind-set and perceptions. Therefore, the equation between East and West can never be regarded fixed. The pattern changes and modifies, as the spaces they are in are unfixed, and their borders fluctuating and unpredictable.

This results in double perspective of migration; an important and undeniable aspect of the diasporic writings. The complexity of such diasporic population derives from a setting where two worlds collide-the old and the new. The choice of the new world implies in a sense, preference for a foreign land over the familiar world. And in some cases, return to the homeland implies vice versa. As migrants move from their own countries, they leave behind their familiar world. The significance of what has been left behind changes with time. Many things remain unchanged even after the return. Looking back, the expatriates are haunted by their own contrasting perspectives, as well as of those who are left behind.

The ‘in-between’ dilemma further confuses them with the hazy image of their own self. Besides the common concerns about the actual country to which they claim with certainty to be theirs, the pestering question that remains unanswered is about the traditions and the culture they must follow. Due to the past association with the homeland and the new connection with the host land, such population learns the respective cultural practices and traditions of the place they dwell, whether temporarily or permanently. This confuses them even more, as they are born somewhere else where they live for some short span, while they settle somewhere else. This may result in cultural hybridity also, as these migrants make a choice between the acceptable and unacceptable practices of both the worlds they have been and they are part of.

The concept of mixedness comes only when displacement has taken place. Consequently, displacement from one land to another results in new exposures and

new learning about new cultures and norms. In fact, this new positioning paves the way for mixing of cultural forms. In the process of intercultural communication and literary inheritance, people not only learn new culture but also borrow the cultural practices, as per their liking and suitability. They imbibe them and begin to relate with them. These borrowed cultural practices become important part of their identity later. This process of learning, imbibing and identifying further deepens and refurbishes one's self-culture. It is a manifestation of multiculturalism, which appears at a point where the migrant associates with the host. Nikos Papastergiadis in *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity* underscores the "twin processes of globalization and migration" (3). He also asserts, "… the automatic assimilation and gradual integration of migrants into the host society" (3) provide such opportunities to some migrants that they become prominence "within the cultural and political circles of the dominant society, they began to argue in favour of new models of representing the process of cultural interaction, and to demonstrate the negative consequences of insisting upon the denial of the emergent forms of cultural identity" (3). Papastergiadis says that, "A quick glance at the history of hybridity reveals a bizarre array of ideas" (169).

The migrant may face this conundrum because of their hybrid position 'on the margin' or 'in-between' cultures. As Stuart Hall remarks:

> You have to be familiar enough with it [the centre] to know how to move in it. But you have to be sufficiently outside it, so you can examine it and critically interrogate it. And it is this double move or, what I think one writer after another have called, the double consciousness of the exile, of the migrant, of the stranger who moves to another place, who has this double way of seeing it, from the inside and the outside. (381)

In effect, it is common for the marginalized people perceived as 'others', to develop a 'double consciousness' in the process of cultural hybridization. The conception of 'double consciousness' constantly hover upon the migrants which results in a fragmented psychic space. In this situation, there is a possibility that they either refuse to accept or to re-appropriate supremacy of any culture. Stuart Hall

points out that cultural identity is, "not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic transcendent 'law of origin'" (236-237). In fact, double consciousness is a forceful and never ending process which attempts to get rid of varied covered issues that hinder true self-understanding in order to restore one's consciousness. As in cultural hybridization, one does not freely swing between or among chosen distinctive identities. In double consciousness also one cannot deny the critical awareness of one's susceptibility. It would not be wrong to say that double consciousness is much more than the process of self-knowledge or self-identity. Du Bois opined that double consciousness of these migrants cannot deny that their activities, beliefs, practices depend on the cause and effect formula and hence, they are engaged in a constant process of producing and re-producing human relationships (97-100).

In other words, hybridity is suggestive of the formation of identity. Intermixing, multiculturalism and mixedness are quintessential to adjust to the new world. It is a code for creativity and for translation. To quote Bhabha, "hybridity is camouflage" (193). He also refers to, "hybridity as heresy" (226). It is "how newness enters the world" (227) and it is bound up with a "process of translating and trans-valuing cultural differences" (252). Gilory also underscores, "…the idea of hybridity, of intermixture, presupposes two anterior purities…I think there isn't any purity; there isn't any anterior purity…that's why I try not to use the word hybrid…Cultural production is not like mixing cocktails" (54-55).

After displacement, migrants try to make a space for themselves through the process of cultural mixing. They endeavour to adopt the ways and practices of the host culture. They make efforts of adjustments, assimilation and adaptation, by reworking on themselves, and also of reforming themselves in terms of everything that enables them to embrace the newness. And the new world too reciprocates their endeavours to be accepted. This constant reconfiguring remains central in production of a new hybrid culture or for that matter, the hybrid identities. The new cultural form focuses on the relation between the 'centre' and the 'margin' in one way or another, where the centre may be the West and the margin may be the East, further referring to

the binary of majority and minority. From this, a new hybrid identity surfaces, which challenges this binary opposition.

When one crosses the borders that divide one nation from the other, it allows us to see others more closely, and so the possibility to have biases that exist for the one's own culture diffuses. The migrant gets perplexed to see himself amidst other cultures and so he feels his own identity is under peril. He is exposed to other cultures and practices to which he had remained ignorant so far. In the new environment with new people and new culture, the migrant becomes 'other' in the space of 'others', the unfamiliar. Paul Ricoeur suggests that:

> When we discover that there are several cultures instead at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with the destruction of our discovery. Suddenly, it becomes possible that there are just others, that we are ourselves an 'other' among others. (278)

In the struggle to identify with the past and to discover oneself in the new world, one tends to pollute the much valued purity. His identity emerges out of the mixedness of cultures. The expression of hybridity is essentially related to postcolonial discourse and the much talked about cultural imperialism. In host societies, where there is yearning to either be accepted or to absolutely reject the new patterns of life, the cultural dynamics is the much deliberated theme. Commonly, the mixedness of various cultures, variegated beliefs and social codes confront each other. This hybridization may also influence one's political ideology and linguistics. Hence, the grip of these traditions and beliefs get loosened with the new associations. This hybridity according to Diana Taylor is 'transculturation' which she explains in her article "Transculturating Transculturation." Transculturation implies transition and the ability to translate the two different cultures, so as to understand and mull over the pertinent questions of affinity and difference within the dynamics of cultural exchange. This exchange involves the process of negotiation, inclusion and exclusion, in order to encode and respond to the hegemonic society (90-104).

Consequently, in the process of negotiation, a new form of transculturation emerges which further results in the contact zone to be produced by the colonizers. As Ashcroft asserts that hybridity refers to, "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (118). In the words of Bhabha, this mixedness has managed to produce a familiar but new identity. In turn, a new hybrid identity which has the relics of both, the colonizer as well as the colonized, challenges the authority and genuineness of any set of attributes that are necessary, and remain permanent expression to the cultural identity. Homi Bhabha defies the notion of essentialism or fixity of identities in any part of the world. He mentions that, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (211).

Many migrants get disillusioned due to multiculturalism or transculturalism. In the contemptuous feeling of 'otherness', the element of nostalgia tries to rejuvenate pure and indigenous regional cultures. Cultural identity is, "not based on exoticism or multi-culturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha 109).

Homi Bhabha has propounded the theory of 'third space', because he believes that this space which does neither belong to the colonizer or the colonized, can provide a favourable place from where one can speak for oneself and for the others too. Such a 'third space' may also end discussions which direct towards the politics of polarization and also the otherness (Third Space 207-21).

Adib Khan is a first-generation postcolonial migrant writer. He was born in Dhaka, where he continued to live until he left for Australia in 1973 and became a permanent resident in 1977. In 1978 Khan received an Australian citizenship. He started writing in his 40s. He penned down his emotional split between Australia and Bangladesh in five novels. His works accentuate upon the theme of individual migration processes from one place to another, in order to explore the diverse migration experiences, cultural identities, and conceptualization related to one's domicile and the host or foreign land. His works highlight the struggles of the migrants on the new land, and on return in the home countries as well. Their narratives record different experiences from within the dominant culture, the country

to which one migrates, etc. In this engagement, these works also record the various attempts in terms of adaptation to dominant forms, few attempts to escape the improper and alterations at the same time. Expatriate writings usually appear as dialogic encounter between the centre and the margin.

In *Seasonal Adjustments* (1994), Iqbal Ahmed Chaudhary had never thought that one day after a shattered matrimonial experience, he would have to return to his roots after eighteen years. In his long absence, his hometown had also undergone many changes but those changes could not match the rapidity with which Australia was growing. Almost two decades had greatly changed him as a person. The memories of being born and brought up in Bangladesh had been many, but all of these reminiscences had loosened with time. The land and its relations had learned to live without him and so had he. In fact, his return had made his opinion about his own self stronger that he was a misfit on his own soil. He broods over the severe losses he had incurred after leaving his people, his blood relations and each possession which he could have claimed his. However, Adib Khan's characters do not generally return home with a notion that the natives and the native land will not accept them. They are also vividly clear about the fact that they do not embrace their past willingly. In the struggle to identify oneself, fusion, mixture, interracial marriages and creolization are the common efforts which may lead to cultural clashes, along with efforts related to hybridity. It is the binary opposition of insider and outsider, the miscegenation between the Whites and the Blacks, which results into cultural clashes. This interracial relationship between the host and the migrant, dismantles the model of pure culture and the purified identity. As borders and crossings are transcendental, so the idea of purified identities, purified spaces do not exist. William Connolly argues:

> When you remain within the established field of identity and difference, you become a bearer of strategies to protect identity through devaluation of the other; but if you transcend the field of identities through which the other is constituted, you lose the identity and standing needed to communicate with those you sought to inform. Identity and difference are bound together. It is impossible to reconstitute the relation to the second without confounding the experience of the first. (329)

Adib Khan had left Australia because he could never live in Bangladesh with its dark history. Iqbal is believed to represent Adib Khan's life and struggles. Like the author himself, Iqbal left his country for Australia in 1973 in a very confused state. Iqbal, like Adib, has not spelled out clearly as to why he left his native place, which had achieved its independence recently then. His choice of Australia over Bangladesh has often been mentioned as his attempt to disassociate himself from the legacy of Chaudharis. He, at times repent his decision to adopt Australia as his new home but categorically expresses his satisfaction for not moving to the abode of his colonizer. He despised the British for their imposed subjugation on their colonized subjects, and playing havoc in their political and social lives. He hated them for tormenting them and wrecking them before announcing freedom of the subjugated nation for two hundred years.

Iqbal has a lengthy altercation with his family, who were not appealed by Iqbal's idea to go to Australia. He was told to be more sensible in his choice of country he was planning to move to. His family wanted him to go to England, but Iqbal had always despised his colonial past which had been suppressed by the British. He moves away to Australia because of his dissatisfaction from his native country. He aimed to broaden his outlook towards life, which he thought would be impossible if he stayed in Bangladesh. He also thought that, how would he live in his backward country, which is dwelled by the people who were happy and contented amidst its endless superstitions and dark ignorance. He laments, "History has treated Bengal with supreme disdain…Bengal is warily mentioned as a backward, hostile land of ignorance" (*SA* 208).

In some way, he had escaped the political discords Bangladesh witnessed in its making. This work recounts the disdained glory of Bengal which once witnessed protests, agitations. Iqbal agonizingly describes the birth of Bangladesh, the conflict of superiority between East and West Pakistan, "…The attempted cultural assimilation and economic subjugation of East Pakistan were valid expressions of genetic superiority of the people from the west" (*SA* 209).

Seasonal Adjustments is a heart touching narrative of Iqbal, who endlessly tries to cope up with what he had lost in those eighteen long years, and his constant struggle to identify with a nation, culture and family he can no longer relate to. Each family norm or a cultural practice reminds him of the host land he was once located in. It is commonly seen that postcolonial migrant literature does not absolutely belong to any one geographical, political and social precincts. It swings between the two worlds which blurs the contours of boundaries and borders. However, even a mere mention of any action reminds them of the heterogeneity of a location. His decision to break away from the family norms and to detach himself from the colonizer, did not bring him any happiness either, because he could not find the sense of ecstasy in Australia. Australia made him struggle exhaustively. The issue of his identity and being accepted remained central to his difficulties. He is treated as an outsider, a migrant. He is made to feel the same in his country too. In fact, he recalls that his old friends in Bangladesh, who were once his best buddies, had distanced themselves from him because he had travelled to a foreign country. Distance and time had changed the proximity they once shared. He is made to feel like a traitor. He says:

> I am not worth even a fleeting glance. The reality of my presence is as unsubstantial as a transient destined to disappear without a trace of its unwelcome presence. It is a blunt way of letting me know that I do not deserve to be in their company. Hashim invited them. They are his friends. Their loyalty to Hashim has brought them here. In their eyes I am a traitor to the Bengali cause, an opportunist who turned away from his country in its time of patriotic need. (*SA* 143)

The diasporic literature is characterized by movement from one culture to another, so it can be made more understandable through the conceptualization of postcolonialism. It can further be studied from the perspective of cultural identity and hybridity. The pain of losing motherland and homesickness are majorly responsible for arousing strong anxiety related to cultural identity.

Iqbal was also anxious because he was constantly reminded of being a stranger in his own country which filled him with a feeling of melancholy. He failed to

understand the behaviour of his own countrymen. He would be filled with anger and frustration. He wanted to yell over them and wanted to hurl abuses to correct them for their haughtiness and narrow-mindedness. He wanted to make them understand that he has no regret for his decision to displace himself from his roots, and for what he had become in all those years of absence from his homeland. He asserts, "…they were not mistakes. Marrying Michelle was not a mistake! How can anything that has brought me happiness and made me think be a mistake? Was Nadine a mistake?" (*SA* 237-238).

The rejection and disapproval of his state, frustrates him to the extent that, what he never was becomes. He gets infuriated to see that a long absence has not changed his country and its people much. His return had complicated his life even more. He would often feel like giving vent to all the pent up emotions of having both the worlds slipped far away from him, which would result in unbearable pain. He asserts:

> Do you know what it means to be a migrant? A lost soul forever adrift in search of a tarnished dream? You live in a perpetual state of conflict, torn between what was and what should have been. There is a consciousness of a permanent loss. You get sick of wearing masks to hide your confused aloneness. You can never call anything your own. (*SA* 143)

Iqbal is looked with suspicion in both the worlds. He is made to give extensive explanations about all that he does in his two worlds, which goes farther as he attempts to clinch them closely. Frustration would creep inside him often. He says, "Because I am fed up with being treated as an oddity, a stray from the forbidding darkness of the world up there. I'm tired of misconceptions and assumptions, of being an object of curiosity!" (*SA* 149)

On numerous occasions, he wishes to yell that he is weary of blatant rejection by his own people, especially his family. He expresses his anguish, "…It is the helpless despair of being stranded on an iceberg, talking to a world empty of understanding…" (*SA* 144). He recounts his experiences on the foreign land as well as

his own. He clearly remembers an incident that took place in Australia, in which he tries to clear the misconceptions people carried about his motherland. For the people who lived in host country, Iqbal belonged to the subcontinent country, which according to them was no other nation but India. Iqbal was believed to be an Indian and when he corrected people about himself, his response surprised many. "They have a prototype image of me as an Indian. It is laundered and made acceptable in their own minds. Everything from language to food, religion and accent, has been molded into a composition to fit a uniform view about an Indian. And I am one of them" (*SA* 148).

Iqbal's Bangladeshi origin often resulted in utter confusion. Whenever he would tell the host people about his true background, people considered him a flippant. He would tell assertively, "No, no. I am not an Indian. I was born in Pakistan. I am a Bengali" (*SA* 148). He would often be bombarded with weird reactions such as:

> 'Bangladesh? Bangladesh… That's where you have the floods! There was a war, wasn't there?'… 'Do you speak Indian at home?' 'There is no such language,' I explain patiently. 'I speak Bangla.' 'Pardon me, but are you a Hindu?' 'No. I was born into a Muslim family'. 'Do you go to church?' 'No'. 'Do you believe in Christ?' 'Only to the extent that it is probable such a person existed.' (*SA* 148)

Prior to his marriage, his wife, Michelle, told him that she belonged to a white Catholic family who had prejudices for blacks. She told him that her decision to marry him will not be handled easily by her family, and he should be ready for their reactions, as all their actions will be governed by their prejudices and reservations for blacks. He knew that his parents would have reacted with the same loudness, because his family would not have accepted a Christian pork-consuming bride. Australia had always made him feel isolated, belonging to none. He hated the fact that his presence was oblivious to people around him. He narrates:

> I feel chastened and a trifle ridiculous sitting here by myself, holding a can of beer, surrounded by decaying pears. The high-pitched sound of a slightly inebriated conservation makes me feel the sadness of isolation. They are oblivious of my presence. I can listen and watch with impunity. I have melted into the shadows of a fear they vaguely perceive and vigorously surpass. I have discovered the powers of invisibility. (*SA* 150)

Many studies unfold the similar narratives of migrants' experience about how it feels to adjust themselves with the new ways of living in order to accept the newness of new destination. They commonly bring to surface their sufferings resulting from the reverse cultural shock on returning home. Such narratives further underline the restiveness and uncontrollable urge to move back to new relocations, only to relive the reminiscences of their past. Iqbal Chaudhary's reflections of his position as a migrant is the, "discontinuous state of being" (Said 360). In this state, migrants usually try to see around themselves more keenly in order to find themselves, by making sense from the changed world around them. In the quest to identify themselves, they are pained to see that their presence for the foreigners does not gain much attention, rather maintains a status quo, though, the position of these migrants change with each experience, as it cannot be fixed and is flexible in the new community.

Iqbal's experiences transform him. He had understood the cultural differences, and that the prejudices and biases had to be endured as relative to his existence. His personal reactions to his individual experiences in a foreign world were based on his personal negotiations. His contemplation and his ambiguous representation eventually lead him to new forms of contemplating identities, and to new forms of incorporating them into a cultural reality.

Adib Khan's *Seasonal Adjustments* has brought to light the confused state of mind of yet another migrant named Nadira Hussein. Iqbal could relate with his restlessness being away from his original home, because of his own frostiness to embrace what he had left eighteen years ago. He is curious to know how Nadira,

Hashim's friend and a migrant, felt after coming back and the compelling reasons of her return. She narrates:

> …Coming back was like a second migration. My perspectives had to be readjusted. It wasn't easy to go through the whole process of acclimatization. The attitudes of men were enough to make me think I may have made a mistake. Marriage offers were quickly converted to less permanent propositions once they realized I was divorced. (*SA* 152)

No matter, life had been difficult for Iqbal in Australia, but he still could not relate himself with Bangladesh, its people, their thinking, their culture and the practices. He would often bask in memories and would feel that the emotions would consume him. Despite being with his people, he would feel tightly gripped by a feeling of loneliness. He says, "I feel a surge of loneliness as if I am in an empty train compartment after waving goodbye to friendly faces on the platform" (*SA* 158).

His displacement and settlement in Australia had created a gulf between his old and new home. On his return, he would feel awkward and nervous as to how to catch up with the old ties once again. When he goes to meet Iftiqar, his childhood and the dearest friend once, he takes a minute to decide to plan his reaction on meeting his old pal. He stands motionlessly at the stair case to plan his meeting. He thinks, "What shall I say to him? How do I greet him? Should I be reserved and settle for the formality of a handshake? Would Bangla be more appropriate than English?" (*SA* 109). He feels like a stranger in the country to which he belonged once, and had again come to fill all those gaps he had created years back.

Iqbal had migrated to Australia to pursue his future dreams and to be away from the political unrest his country suffered due to its division thrice. First it was India, then East Pakistan and then became Bangladesh. 'Home' for Iqbal was a site which fostered the spirit of Bangladesh, but with its certain bitter truths, it also disintegrated the structure which had infused in him a love for its motherland. To revitalize himself, he moved away from home to benefit from the professional opportunities and financial betterment, the new world was ready to offer. Iqbal had

realized that in order to accept what the new world offered, he had to assimilate, acculturate himself by discarding the old habits and traditions, and to attune with the new culture of the other world. In his attempt to change his standard of life from old to new, he had experienced the death of his 'self' limitlessly. Ritu Joshi in her article states:

> …He (migrant) is asked to despise home culture (his collaboration is implied in the act of immigration) which is seen by the New World as inferior, as less culturally and technologically sophisticated. The contempt the colonizer taught the subjugated in the colonial era in the colonized territory is now encouraged in the immigrants who cross over to the First World believing in the myth of equality in the Western world in a post-colonial era. (Nations and Alienations: Diaspora in recent fiction)

Whenever he was alone, he would recollect his past actions and would have mixed feelings of anxiousness, vexations and disquietedness. He would think of difficulties in terms of adjustment, and apprehensive state about the inability to connect with the old world on return. It was in a way true, as when Iqbal returns to Bangladesh, he experiences a schizophrenic state because of his dual identities. He is disillusioned because of the dominant feeling of belonging to neither space. Consequently, he would think of himself lowly, doubt himself, and his psychological stress would make him skeptical about his life. He was in a state of dilemma, as he thought his circumstances had derailed his life. He writes:

> In the solitude of night, the voice of my mind speaks in many tones. Accusatory. Anxious. Reflexive. Vexatious. I listen to the murmuring disquietudes of my ongoing troubles. Another explosion in an already fragmented world has once again made me retreat into the gloomy shelter of my inner self brood on the wilting landscape of my life. To orchestrate myself toward a sustained period of uneventful predictability is seemingly beyond my control…. (*SA* 158)

He is at discomfort because he feels he has reached a point, where he does not wish to recall his past or to reflect upon his future. He says:

> …I am at a point where a state of soul-destroying, mentally crippling boredom is appealing. I long to reach a point of stasis where nothing really happens to me. I do not wish to remember the past or contemplate the future. My life is like a mischievous child I cannot control. If only I could glide backwards over a smooth surface of time and reach another beginning without the remembrance of what has been! (*SA* 159)

He is made to realize that he is a foreigner who is a misfit in his own land. There was a possibility that he had forgotten the real ways of Bangladesh, and so his actions would leave many flabbergasted. He narrates an incident when he receives a letter from Michelle, from Australia. He gets infuriated to find the envelope ripped open and the stamps missing. He makes a great hue and cry about it. But his family members think that he was unnecessarily making a fuss about nothing. Iqbal had lived a considerable part of his life in Australia, where privacy was treasured. For him, this incident was not any trivial matter. He storms into the post office to raise a complaint against the postman of his locality. He had to witness the non-cooperative attitude of the post office employee he meets. He loses his calm when he is told that without bribing that man, his complaint cannot go further and so no action would be taken. When he fills the complaint form and hands it to the employee, he announces:

> ‘That is very light’. Iqbal fails to understand what that man was trying to convey, so he replies in irritation, ‘Excuse me. What weight?’ A man who had also come with some work in the post office asks Iqbal, ‘You are from abroad?’ Iqbal nods. He again asks Iqbal, ‘Are you a Bengali?’ (*SA* 216)

This question confuses Iqbal even more because this was a question which would often lurk in his mind, but had remained unanswered till now. When that man inquires him of his origin and national identity, Iqbal is afflicted with a sense of guilt that he had betrayed his people and his land. In that state of dilemma, when he is told that the employee of the post office was expecting him to put some money on the

form, Iqbal seethes with anger and tears the form into small pieces and flings them across the counter. He is unsympathetic to the corruption and dishonesty that had become an integral part of South Asian countries. There were many Bangladeshi practices he had tried to the best of his capabilities to reconcile with, but not all. He remarks:

> Outside I felt strangely at home among the dust, the noise and the flurry of movements. I was no longer a being apart from the disordered pattern of living. This unpredictable rhythm, with its wildly irregular beats, was also my pulse of life...I was no longer imprisoned within my own resentments. There was an acceptance of irreconcilable facets of my polarized self. Perhaps I was meant to live as a fragmented being. The idea did not disturb me anymore. (*SA* 217)

There have been numerous instances where Iqbal has been seen cursing himself for his lack of knowledge about the ways and actions of people from his own country. He would seethe in anger for behaving like a:

> Bumbling foreigner unfamiliar with the local customs. I was gullible enough to be cheated by a rickshaw wallah and offloaded unceremoniously before reaching Wari. I have lost the cunning for bargaining. I was no match for his skills. After a feeble negotiation, I succumbed to a highly inflated fare. I was stung into a state of surrender after seeing his reed-thin body, his torn singlet and bare feet. (*SA* 108)

His mental dilemma is further highlighted when he says, "…It could not be easy to accommodate people like me-bumbling agents of change who spread themselves across the globe and unwittingly seek to impose their hybrid perceptions on closeted culture" (*SA* 217). He had left his land, his people, and the major part of him for Australia, but his expectations from the new world remained unfulfilled. Like other migrants, Iqbal would often find himself in a fix, where both the worlds constantly stand in opposition, and the past and present draw daggers at each other, and he finds himself glued to the quandary of belonging and non-belonging. Iqbal

would find himself detached to the homeland, and so would experience a constantly challenged identity. He tries hard to strike a balance between a scattered historical legacy and an assorted present. When he arrived at Australia, he was high-spirited.

He was always made to realize that he has yet to learn the actual living standards of Australia. He was constantly reminded of his naivety which initially did not trouble him. As he started to grow in the new environment, he realised that his efforts to adopt Australia is futile as the inhabitants of Australia considered him an outsider. In Australia, he had to answer the repeated questions asked by the strangers. They would express surprise when come to know, that Iqbal had not made a single visit to his country after coming to Australia. He says, "A few are intrigued that I have never been back to the subcontinent, even for a brief visit. I have no explanation. It simply hasn't happened" (*SA* 145).

After having lived in the new environment, Iqbal continued to search and identify himself. He had to prove his allegiance to the new world and its custom each day. In the state of trauma, he would be trapped in the cultural flux, nostalgia for what he had left behind in all those years. He could not explain this feeling of inadequacy to any one because it was his choice to leave his country. He would maintain his calm when people from his own land treated him as a foreigner, and would misunderstand his any disapproval for anything, as some perspective governed by the foreign influence. He recalls an incident in which he is offered tea and he refused, not because he doubted the purity of water but because he did not wish to drink it, as in any normal situation anybody would refuse. Iftiqar assures him, "Oh, the water is safe. I boiled it twice this morning, especially for you. Of course, it may still upset your delicate foreigner's constitution" (*SA* 116).

His return to his roots added more confusion to his life. It changed his perspective absolutely. What he usually used to follow and observe changed after his migration. A society takes years to evolve its customs and practices. Iqbal had changed his ways but his society had not. So when he returned, he found himself to be a misfit. He witnessed numerous occasions when he would disapprove of many ways of his family. But his denials would only shock his people but in no way they would

comply his directions, as there was no one who would trust him in Bangladesh, because for all he was a foreigner. Be it his suggestion regarding menu or a family discussion, he was almost invisible for all. Nafisa, his sister, had never forgotten that Iqbal left them, and had disassociated himself from the family in its moments of happiness and sorrows. Iqbal felt humiliated when reminded about his silent absence in the family. He was sad to see that his own family members, who once loved him so much, had grown suspicious of him. They would quiet down on various sensitive family matters in Iqbal's presence. He recalls a family discussion which became an unpleasant confrontation between Nafisa and him, "He says, 'We are talking about my sister!' 'You finally realized that, did you?' Deftly Nafisa put me on the defensive. 'That hasn't altered in all these years despite your silent absence. How often did you write asking about her? About us?'" (*SA* 30)

He knew Nafisa's claims were not wrong. He had remained indifferent to them even when his sister, Sabnam, met with an accident. So, he decided to deal with this accumulated annoyance of years silently. He says, "…But after the accumulated years of my appalling indifference, how could I presume a greater degree of trust?" (*SA* 30) Iqbal confesses and regrets at the same time that he himself had created a fissure in their relationship.

Iqbal was unable to accept the doleful life in Bangladesh due to poverty, besides the other reasons which distressed him deeply. "What upsets me most," he concedes, "is my inability to slip back into a tradition I assumed was an integral part of me" (*SA* 116). Iqbal had always lived under the superciliousness of Chaudharies which he never objected too. His parents always reminded him of his and his family's reputation. He was always told, "We are Chaudharies. Not for a second should we forget our wonderful identity. It is a privilege! A privilege with responsibilities which are an essential part of this great and proud family…" (*SA* 184-185).

Even after his return from Australia, he appreciated the respect his family had in the vicinity. He enjoyed each moment of any occasion when people from around would come specially to greet them. He recalls the festival of Eid, he celebrates with his family after eighteen years. He says:

> We must have been quite a sight. With swaggering steps, we stepped out in close formation, the male servants carrying the prayer rugs at a respectful distance behind us. The women stood on the front verandah and waved us off. People on the streets acknowledged our presence 'Eid Mubarak!' They greeted us. 'Eid Mubarak!' 'Chaudhary Saheb, how well your family looks!' 'Mashallah! What a blessed family!' (*SA* 186)

This was a moment of utmost pride, but it was temporary. Iqbal tried to come to terms with his roots and their practices and says, "I became part of family again" (185). But soon he would come in conflict with the duality in which his family was drenched. His dreadful encounter with lepers and beggars in the mosque, where he was asked to accompany the family for Friday prayers, left him with a shuddering feeling that Bangladesh was a poor country and his absence for eighteen years had really not changed it. He gets involved in an altercation with his brother, Hashim, whose insensitive and indifferent views on the country's poor state, shattered his false picture about his family's values. When Iqbal inquires about any hospital where a leper he had met some time back could be taken, his brother expresses his utter bewilderment for Iqbal's meaningless concern for such people. He is told to remain indifferent to such people because things were like this before he left for Australia and had not changed in all those years. Hashim tells him pertly to mind his own business, and not to think about poor population. Hashim curtly tells:

> Don't be silly. I know you are not in touch with the way things work here. I had similar problems when I came back. Of course, you have been away far longer than I. But surely you haven't forgotten how it was before you left? You are not naïve enough to believe that things have changed. Are you? …Look, don't make the mistake of imposing your adopted values here. They don't work. It sounds harsh, but in a poor country compassion must firstly be directed towards oneself. Ignore that rule and you will be ruined. (*SA* 194)

Iqbal could not believe his ears, and realized that Hashim was so unsympathetic. He is told by Hashim to talk about charity only if he himself could show it. Hashim says, "Practice charity when you can. But don't let it get out of

control. Otherwise you will begin to feel the pain of an incurably crooked and unjust world" (*SA* 194). Iqbal realizes that his words could not miraculously change the thinking of his brother, who is a representative of Bangladeshi society in which majority of population agreed with Hashim's views.

In the past eighteen years, Iqbal had made tremendous efforts to uphold his beliefs and practices tightly even being away from his motherland. He was never a staunch Muslim, but when the ties he had made on host land challenges his religious piety by imposing theirs, Iqbal stands firm. Double consciousness describes a constant fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction towards, and repulsion from one object, person or action.

Iqbal's liberal attitude for Islam has been spotlighted on many occasions in the novel. His lack of religious fervor is upsetting to his parents, who are strongly devout. His mother is horror-struck when Iqbal confesses that he had forgotten how to pray, in his struggle to embrace the new ways of living. In fact, a recollection from his childhood underlines his conflicting religious beliefs and mixed feelings for Islam, due to his schooling in a Christian missionary. Christian missionary schools indicate towards the colonial traces. Iqbal's school days had made him resentful towards the subject of religion, because he was living under two different religious influences. He was confused about which faith to follow. In school, he was to adhere to the Christian missionary standards, and at home he had to act like a devout Muslim. This resulted in utter confusion between the two different faiths. He considered his parents responsible for his dismay due to shuttling between the two faiths. But he realizes, "It would be unfair to blame my parents for sending me to a Catholic school. How were they to know how tortured a child's life can be?" (*SA* 88)

With the colonial period, new temptations and fascinations became part of the life of colonized people. In an attempt to express contempt for the colonizers, the colonial subjects imbibed the new and strange ways of the colonizers. Unknowingly, in an attempt to negate the new developments and changes, the colonized accepted and embraced the foreign values, and hence brought massive alterations in

themselves. The colonized neither fully appreciated nor fully devalued the colonizers. They underwent changes in terms of their piety, attire, thought process, etc.

Iqbal's religious dilemma is the result of the contradictory claims of Christianity and Islam. The colonization had left many in the state of confusion. As Adib Khan underscores:

> Of all the harm colonization has inflicted on the sub-continent, none has been more damaging than the cultural havoc wrought by that hallowed and sacrosanct institution, the English medium school. It is a remarkable mechanism which has survived the insular fury of nationalism and continued to flourish. It uses impressionable children from affluent families as raw material to be shaped and moulded into arrogant stereotypes before spouting them as aliens in their indigenous environments. (*SA* 88)

Iqbal remembers:

> Each day, after returning from school, we found a dreaded, malodorous mullah awaiting us with the Koran and a waxed cane. In the thick afternoon heat, overbearingly perfumed with the sweet sticky smell of ripe jackfruits, the mullah leaned on a bolster and dozed… We swayed backwards and forwards and read aloud in a shrill, sing-song voice. (*SA* 93)

Iqbal could never relate with the Islamic readings because his tutor failed to explain him the principles in a language he could understand. He recalls how superficially he chanted, "Ah ouz zoh billah eh minash shoitan er rajim…Bismillah er Rahman er Raheem…" (93) in Arabic, which was beyond his comprehension. Iqbal hated the irrational belief of his mother who would compellingly take him to the scary Maulana Azad for performing poorly in school, and Maulana would make Iqbal an amulet as if that would miraculously change his attitude towards everything. He recalls:

> Had I known the tabeez was merely a folded bit of paper scribbled over with Koranic verses and wrapped in a piece of black cloth sewn at the edges with a

> string attached on two sides, I might have accepted it more readily. I felt like a condemned prisoner being led to the gallows. The string held the terror of a noose as it was slipped over my head. It became a penitential millstone for several years and a constant reminder that failure of any kind was not permissible in our family. We were the Chaudharies-rich, clever, industrious. Infallible. Without human weaknesses. (*SA* 45)

Iqbal had always felt that his schooling had changed him absolutely, and he could see in himself a sort of liberalism after studying in a Christian missionary. He recalls an incident when he confesses his agnosticism to his family on Eid, which used to be a happy and auspicious occasion for the Chaudharies. He shocks his family while sitting in the mosque by confessing that, he has forgotten to pray, because in Australia he was not regular in offering prayers to Allah. Moreover, he would not like to drive for two hours to reach a mosque. His parents jump out of their wits on knowing this ugly truth about their son. Iqbal is not handled easily by his parents. They give a usual reaction because they had been holding the religious sentiments and rituals tightly.

In fact, at that moment in the mosque, he was unable to find any sense in being there. He felt like a hypocrite, who never believed in the teachings of Islam but was sitting there. Hashim chides him for behaving insensitively in the mosque. Hashim tries to instill religious sentiments in him, but Iqbal was not interested. On being asked by Hashim, whether he was claiming to be an atheist, Iqbal answered that he was "zetetic" which means "a skeptical inquirer" (*SA* 197). Hashim still tries to make Iqbal understand the strength of religious fervor. Islam was his identity, his culture and the meaning of his existence. Hashim says, "…Islam is your identity. Your culture. Your entire being. It defines you as a man. You cannot escape from your religion any more than you can run away from your shadow. You cannot elude yourself. Belief is what you were and what you are now. It …it is your life" (198). But Hashim fails to convince Iqbal. Iqbal rebukes his brother, because for him Hashim's claim that he was a staunch Muslim was nothing but a mark of hypocrisy, as he was highly indifferent to the cause of sick and poor Muslims of his country. He coldly tells Hashim, "…and to conclude, my brothers, may I remind us all that we are

responsible to each other as Muslims-beggars, servants, princes, ministers. It does not matter who you are. We share a common faith. That is our greatest strength. Those who are fortunate, be charitable without being proud…" (*SA* 198).

Though, Iqbal was a Muslim he never practiced Islam religiously. Since childhood, he had been under the Christian influence. On the host land, he was surrounded by Christians but somehow he wasn't convinced by both the religions. Strangely, on the foreign land amidst all foreigners, he asserted his opinions and his religious sentiments, which is a way sometimes migrants oppose the obduracy of the foreign culture. When the issue of religion was pressed upon by Michelle and her family members while deciding the religion of Nadine, he had a heated argument with Michelle and her friends. He objected to Nadine's baptism, which is done to Christian Catholics. Under a religious compulsion he negated Michelle's decision to baptize their daughter. "Michelle said, 'I am not sure I understand. What do you mean you don't want her to be baptized?' To this Iqbal reacts, 'Exactly what I said. I don't see the point in it'. Michelle asserts, 'She is a Catholic. It's an essential part of our religion'. Iqbal again argues, 'I wasn't aware she was born with a religious tag around her waist'" (*SA* 82). According to Homi Bhabha, this mixture of wanting and unwanting, attraction and repulsion is an important feature that exists in the binary equation of colonizer and the colonized. The relationship between the two is never that of a complete repugnance. They are in a relationship of a 'complicit' as well as 'resistant', which keeps changing from time to time (121-25). Consequently, in such situation, migrants produce and reproduce their assumptions, habits, values, etc. They sometimes assert themselves and sometimes mimic the colonizer. This may result in a controversial proposition.

Transculturation remained central to Iqbal's personality since his school days. He was trained in a different faith, and so naturally absorbed himself in some of the teachings of Christianity. As he lived under the shadow of two different cultures so he could not realize that cultures become deterritorialized. His identity became a blend of multiple qualities and allegiance to different faiths and practices. He never approved of some of the practices of his religion. On the eve of Eid, he had steadfastly refused to let Nadine view the slaying of cows. The incident reminded him of his childhood

experience which had troubled him for years together. He could not purge the bitter memories of Eid-ul-Azha, almost thirty-eight years old, of his mind. He says, "…It remains untarnished despite my sporadic attempts to purge the memory of the dreaded incident. Now it springs on me like a clawing, hungry panther" (*SA* 97). He did not wish his daughter to undergo the traumatic pain. His denial is not well accepted by his own family members. He is looked with suspicion when he honestly reacts to this custom without any clear remembrance. He asks his mother, "Will the animals be slaughtered in the backyard?" His mother with a frown replies, "Choto Babu! You have forgotten everything about our customs" (*SA* 96).

What he could not do for himself, and silently and compellingly followed the orders of the family, he protested for his daughter. According to postcolonialists, it may be easy to break away from the colonizer politically and economically, but it is much too difficult to uproot the tangible or intangible control of culture. This is just what postcolonialism is primarily concerned about. In fact, we can go so far as to claim that postcolonialism is actually a cultural colonialism.

Iqbal's quest to identify himself, whether he was a Bengali or an Australian, unveils various truths about his ownself, which had remained hidden under the garb of his mental dilemma. He thought that eighteen years of separation from Bangladesh changed him and his thinking. Despite being on the host land, he had changed himself only superficially, because he would still think like his own people who dwelled in his native land. He speaks about his duplicity of modernism when his sister confides the biggest secret of her life that she was a lesbian. She tells her brother, "I don't like boys. I don't like being near them. Sometimes I think they want to touch me. I hate that. It makes me feel dirty" (*SA* 220). He is filled with a contemptuous feeling for his sister. He hates his spontaneous reaction of hearing a big no from somewhere inside him, for which he regrets. He feels highly disappointed with his own reaction on Nafisa's revelation. This incident proves to be an eye-opener, as he realizes that till now he was criticizing his people for being narrow-minded, and he himself was no different. He contemptuously says:

> I am disappointed with myself. Right and wrong can be such dreadfully crippling words…I try to use them sparingly, and then too in relation to myself when I am not prepared to go through the analytical process of cause and effect. I think I am fairly tolerant and reasonably broad-minded, legacies of my exposure to the diversities of the world. How then do I explain my initial reaction to what Nafisa said? How can I deny that the first images which sprang to my mind could be summed up by that commonest of condemnatory words? If I did not think anything was wrong, why the consternation and the shock? (*SA* 221)

He always had welcoming response to the gay rights, but he fails to understand that a mere truth about her sister could change his outlook towards her. He very naturally develops a feeling of repulsion for his sister, though, he knows that the truth will not lessen his love for her. He writes, "'Was it wrong?' Nafisa had asked. 'Of course it wasn't. What, then, made me shrink in my chair? Why this clenched fists and jaws? The impulse to leave the room?'" (*SA* 221) He knows that he might have reacted in a different way but in this situation he does not even hug her to release her tension. He curses himself, "How much more is there to know about myself? (*SA* 221)

Nafisa too, honestly tells him that his actions surprised her, because she expects him to be more progressive in his approach, and to be more farsighted as he has seen the world from diverse angels. Iqbal had firmly believed that his return to Bangladesh will comfort his turmoil to know himself, but results contrasted from his expectations. He had thought that his people will understand him, but now he realizes that he had failed to keep a track of even himself. He finally articulates his disappointment:

> I am not as adaptable as I thought myself to be. Age? Or is it just me? In the Arcadian surroundings of the villa, I thought I could come to terms with myself, calm the turmoil inside me, understand the dissatisfaction which brought me here. It isn't quite as easy as I thought. More questions. More

> problems. I am now more of a stranger to myself than ever before. A few weeks have created a restlessness for the familiar… (*SA* 228)

It's not easy to move away from one's roots, and harshest reality is to claim the same position one once enjoyed. Return of the migrants creates a void which is difficult to fill. Iqbal tries hard to be a part of the family again but at various junctures he would differ from his people, and then the yearning to go away from them gets even stronger. His father would often tell Iqbal, "You should be thinking of coming home" (232). Iqbal gets annoyed with his father's attitude who fails to understand that he had lived in Australia for a long period, and that independently too. Back home, he is time and again told by his father to return to his homeland as he had ruined his life enough in Australia. Many a times, he wanted to shout at his father who had not changed himself even a bit, and still wanted to hold the reins of his family in his hands by being an autocrat. He dislikes his father's attitude who would make unpleasant remarks against his ways and his broken marriage, and all that he had done to his life without seeking his father's consent. He tries to explain himself to his father who after some obduracy to change, seems to withdraw his powers. Iqbal realizes that things have begun to change in Bangladesh, not only in terms of thinking but also in terms of its physical look as well. As Satender Nandan remarks, "…Diasporic identities …[are] constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and differences" (54).

Towards the end of the novel, he himself transforms and relates himself to the reality and truth he had been running from. He was divided between Bangladesh and Australia. His visit to the graveyard where his ancestors had been buried, pushes out the most dormant thought of his psyche. He had the smugness of being an Australian but that fizzles out when he realizes that no one recognizes him on his own land. Even his family's employee, Moti Mia, serving as the caretaker of the graveyard fails to recognize him. He tells himself, "Choto Babu is not in this life" (*SA* 290). He tries to convince himself that he might have died for his people eighteen years back, when he had decided to leave Bangladesh, and had set for his journey to Australia. He had always conflicted with people about being forgotten after death. But his visit to the small graveyard makes him realize that his forefathers were not completely extinct,

they still had their presence on the land, in the archives of the family. A weird thought creeps into his mind, and he laments that his death in Australia will not be celebrated or remembered the way it happens in his own land. He asserts, "Deep inside, I reject ultimate extinction. The possibility of losing the accumulated riches of knowing and feeling makes me resentful…" (*SA* 291). Iqbal himself is surprised to hear his inner voice which was insisting on having been buried in his own soil. He states, "Despite my fears, I am afflicted with a morbid desire to finish here, near the house of my birth. To be buried in a foreign land is an inordinately cruel ending" (*SA* 292).

With time, Iqbal's detachment from his soil changed into an inexplicable attachment. He kept denying his idea of returning home, but something inside him still wanted to live close to his roots. He sensed a strange completeness when he touched his soil. He gets carried away in that moment and describes his real emotions:

> I bend down to touch the earth. It feels warm and hard. This is where I should end, among my own. There is a vain comfort in the absurdity of a posthumous identity. This is our place. The earth breathes our spirit here. There, next to my grandfather…there is a room for three or four more. The affinity with the land and the feeling of oneness with the surroundings may be an extension of my act of reconciliation yesterday. (*SA* 292)

He had come to Bangladesh, to put his mental conflict to peace, which had been resulted because of being pulled apart by the two worlds, but his purpose could not be achieved. He had his own commitments with the world he had moved to, and so he ultimately announces his return to Australia. This announcement leaves all dazed.

Masud Alam of Adib Khan's *Spiral Road*, like Iqbal is a migrant who had left Bangladesh thirty years ago for Australia, because he could not endure the military battle that took place between Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971. After being away for years and years, he had visited Bangladesh twelve years ago. He had no purpose of returning to his country so soon but his father was diagnosed with Alzheimer. He rushes to his homeland.

In his flight, he boozes because he knew that alcohol would not be available in Dhaka, where he will be watched by his family. While travelling to his native land, he looks down and realizes that his country had changed. He remembers his brother informing him about the changes their country had undergone, "The city has changed. Its unchecked growth confounds visiting expatriates. Very few landmarks are left for me to associate Dhaka with my younger days. I may have difficulty finding my way around" (*SR* 8).

To his utter surprise, unintentionally, he mutters "I'm home." This admission leaves him in disbelief. He remarks, "The words sound hollow, like the beating on the rind of an empty ground" (*SR* 8). For him meaning of home had been Melbourne, and not even in his wildest imaginations he had thought of Bangladesh as his 'home'. After meeting his family, not even for a minute he stops thinking about Melbourne, a home which he claimed to be his. He sounds nostalgic from the beginning of the novel when he returns to Bangladesh, till the very end when he is about to go away to Melbourne. Once his country was his true love, he would often express his love, "My golden Bengal, I love you" (*SR* 104). Now, he yearns to get back to his new home because his life was more planned and systematic there. He asserts, "There's an unvarying routine about most things in my life–the time I leave for work and when I return. A run on the Richmond oval most mornings. Competition racquetball after work on Tuesday. Wednesday nights devoted to the washing machine, and the weekly jaunt to the supermarket on Thursday evening…" (*SR* 17).

Antonio Gramsci's cultural hegemony claims that a culturally-diverse society can be ruled or dominated by one of its social classes (445-49). Hybridity indicates the penetration of the centre in the lives of the marginalized which naturally indicates the dominance of the centre. This absolutely contaminates and defiles the original culture of the migrants, which can be substantiated by the very fact that these migrants insist on belonging to the centre and yearn to be accepted as well.

In thirty years, Alam had imbibed the Australian ways of life. His life was all systematic before his return to Dhaka. He was never free, because besides his work he had a lot to do. He would go for a walk, read, listen to music, watch movie or play

computer chess. He would have his friends and a very special bond with Amelia, who works in a book shop. Back home, he is familiar that life will become meaningless. His family will try to ask him a lot about his personal life away from them, and would exert pressure on him to marry, and then to have kids. He comments:

> I brace myself for home, and all impending attention. My mother will probably lead the charge with inquisitorial enthusiasm. I have no doubts that there will be probes into my personal life, revolving around my unacceptable bachelor status. My future intentions. A pointed remainder of the diminishing numbers in our family. Responsibilities. (*SR* 27)

His footsteps on his own soil freshens his mind with the smugness of his family, because of the privileged lineage they belonged to. His mind resounds with the fact they were trained since childhood that, "We belong to the Zamindari tradition" (*SR* 30). He is surprised when his elder brother, Zia, reminds him, "We have a responsibility to maintain the image of respectability in order to justify our prerogatives. Our public behavior must characterize us an exemplary family" (*SR* 30-31). Masud always objected to the false superciliousness his family lived in. He was raised in an atmosphere which flaunted its cultural background, its past glory. His family was not ready to shun off the image of zamindars, even if time had swept away all their riches and glory. He remembers that, to maintain the pride of the family, his father had been selling off their properties to pay their debts. He was taught, "Anyone who has to work every day to make a living is an insult to Zamindars" (*SR* 32). Masud remembers, when in younger days Zia and he decide to take admission in university, they are told not to, because learning comes naturally and not through books.

On his way to home from the airport, he has endless questions to ask from Zia. It was the only time they could chit chat without anyone's interference. He is keen to know from his elder brother about how he was managing his life in the mad house dwelled by their parents, their sister and her children. He realizes that he had opened his mouth insensitively, because he was raised in a family which was always full of

people comprising his aunts, uncles and cousins. Melbourne had changed him, and now the very thought of living in a large family shudders him dreadfully.

Iqbal of *Seasonal Adjustments* could never openly tell his brother that he had never thought of Bangladesh as his hometown, though, he had his own dilemmas. On the other hand, Masud frankly tells his brother the real meaning of 'Home' for him. Zia enquires, "I don't suppose you've any intention of coming back home permanently" (*SR* 37). To this Alam replies, "Home? It's not a physical location any more. More like several places in the mind. I like the flexibility of such an arrangement" (*SR* 37). For him, Dhaka is no more his home as he had moved quite far from it and its bindings, thirty years ago. In fact, here he has a mixed feeling of, "regret, nostalgia, dread and curiosity…in which I feel myself trapped and my sense of selfhood already splintering" (*SR* 38). His sense of alienation has been underscored by the author very effectively.

There was a time when Alam could die for his country. As a University student, he was actively involved in the student demonstrations against the political and military pandemonium of 1971. He was classified as a left wing student, a miscreant. He was actively involved in the activities which were challenging the security and integrity of Pakistan. He was a face which had gained a lot of limelight. Alam had to live in hide outs so that he could not be traced and shot. He had plans to fight for his country once. He recalls, "Meanwhile, I would be on my way to Jessore to cross the border into India...A crash course in guerrilla warfare. And then back into the occupied territory for adventure, heroism and liberation. The inception of a new country was our goal…" (*SR* 88). His involvement in the war of 1971 disillusions him, because somebody from their own group betrayed them, which resulted in massive killings of villagers who had evacuated their villages in search of safer places. He along with his two comrades was left alive, interrogated, and later become the prime reason for Alam's migration to Australia.

But with time, everything changed. Now that Alam is on his native soil after twelve years of his last visit, his mind is still in Melbourne. He yearns to go back and escape the boredom and ennui his own land is offering him after years of separation.

He remains indifferent to his original world, because he was living with the truth, that he in no way could reconcile with his past. His return aggravates his utter confusion about his life, because he was finding it hard to decide where he should preferably be. He pours his emotions:

> The indigenous man of the subcontinent and the migrant will never reconcile their differences and live as an entity. With each passing year, it becomes increasingly difficult to decide where I'd rather be. There will always be an awareness of the pieces that are missing. Now I'm unable to silence the voice of lament that whispers about denial and loss. But regret had given way to resigned acceptance. (*SR* 38)

Amidst an emotional outburst and emotional unwillingness to be in his roots, he is welcomed by an ugly demonstration and protest which had packed the road with endless vehicles. People were shouting slogans and promoting a new political party to topple the government of the then ruling party. This sight fills Alam with an intense loathing for Bangladesh and its people who were fighting for their selfish motives. He honestly tells his brother that he was no more used to such meaningless protests. He contemptuously says, "…Bangladesh doesn't figure in the international scheme of things…My new boss from the States visited me last month. Friendly man. Honest enough to confess he had to look up where Dhaka was" (*SR* 41).

After an unpleasant experience, Alam finds himself standing in front of his family's house. His discomfort is sensed by Zia. He tries to bring restlessness to an end, he says, "It's warming to see everyone together once in a while" (*SR* 48). He is warmly welcomed and all flock around him. Ma gets excited, and so were his nephews and nieces. He is received, after his mother reads surahs from the Koran. Alam is stunned to see all the preparations his family had made for him. In that minute, he unintentionally mutters, 'Fuck off' which is an obscene word to use, and so Zia tells all the children to mark it as a mistake done by people who live in Christian countries, and who speak English. For Masud, all was still tolerable until he meets his father. He does not feel good when his father does not recognize him. Zia tries hard to help their father recognize Alam who had travelled from Australia to see

him. Zia tells Abba, "He's come to see you, all the way from Australia." Abba could only speak dazedly, "My son! Australia?" (*SR* 52)

Adib Khan's migrant characters have numerous similarities. At one time, they are headstrong and clear about their future plans to settle in Australia, and the very next moment they are guilt-driven for having remained absent from their family ties in their difficult times. Iqbal too feels bad for not being with his sister when she needed him, and so was Alam. His sister, Nazreen, had a failed marriage which culminated in divorce. Zia stood by her but Alam could not do much. He feels bad after meeting his sister for the first time after her ugly experience. He thinks, "I've let my sister down. The guilt nags at me. I should have been here when she needed help. Instead, I wrote long letters. Secretly I was relieved to avoid a tense and embarrassing situation…" (*SR* 55).

His return had infused newness in the atmosphere, and when everyone sat on the dining table to have their meals, Alam is touched by a feeling of nostalgia of the past days of his childhood when all family members would sit and dine together. In Australia's hustle bustle, he hardly had time to enjoy his meals. He is gripped by a strange feeling to be around by so many people and children. When he retreats into his room to repose after a long day, he thinks of Australia where he had so much, yet he had an undeniable loneliness of entering a frozen and unlit house. He is utterly baffled by the way life was moving ahead. He says, "…Don't I feel lost? Have I not been uprooted? Am I not struggling against a tide that flows towards my native homeland?" (*SR* 92) It seems that his mental dilemma was conspicuous enough to be noticed by Alya. She asks him, "Are you ashamed of your background?" (*SR* 157)

After coming back to Bangladesh, Alam realizes that his confusion was pulling him apart, as he was being indecisive about his own decisions, his life and his friends. Time has changed him a lot, and for him all those ties which were once so precious to him were of little significance now. His old pals, Fazal, Sami and Nizam, with whom he had plans to create his own country, were no more important. He is also unclear about his feelings for Amelia. He doesn't know how Amelia's absence from his life will affect him, though, he misses her after being away from her. The

two worlds to which Alam belonged to had their expectations and demands from him. Amelia always demanded him to make her clear about their relationship. She sought commitment, whereas Alam's mother tries to fix his marriage with a Bangla girl of their religion. She insists him to plan outings with Alya, but Alam avoids all such encounters because he does not wish to be committed. Although, he loves Amelia he is attracted to Alya also.

All through his stay, he would meet people, his relatives, and when finally, he would retire to his bed, he would often think of what his life would have been in Bangladesh, if he had not moved to Australia at all. He reinvents his adult life in Bangladesh:

> I don't leave Dhaka, the war never happens. Pakistan remains unified. I have an unexciting but well- paid job. Marriage and children. I'm towards the end of my working life, sitting on a balcony, contemplating retirement. The uneventful years have slipped away. I'm left wondering what else I could've done. But I'm not burdened by the enormity of twin cultures or strained by the tension of polarized selves. (*SR* 160)

Like Iqbal, Alam too realizes that Dhaka was fragmenting him from within. He was growing emotionally torn. Till then, he was just a wandering migrant and an atheist but his long stay in his own country was making him regret for some mistakes, he could not figure out. He laments:

> The sense of loss is maddening because I'm unable to pinpoint the reasons for the regret I feel. I doubt if I'll ever come back to live here again, and yet there's an elusive being within me that wants to redefine belonging, and whispers about homecoming and morality. About ending where I began. About a completion to the circle of life. (*SR* 170)

No matter, Alam has his own regrets about having run away from his past, and even he tries to fill the gaps he had created due to his absence from his family and roots, but he naturally feels from within that he does not belong to Bangladesh any more. He remembers when he was very young he used to have undying craving for

paranthas, jelabis, chicken tikka, naan, but now he looks at everything with suspicion. He finds the products of his own land cheap, below quality and unhygienic. He confesses, "I have no inclination to prolong my stay in Dhaka. I must accept the restrictions of being a foreigner here. It's sad to think what I've lost in my migrant years" (*SR* 171).

Vijaysgree typifies expatriate consciousness which manifests itself in a number of ways, such as being:

> Straddled between two cultures and anxiety to belong – either to one's cultural milieu or the new environments, an assertion of one's nativity into strength and agenda of multiculturalism, an active interrogation of different notions of belonging, an insistent celebration of 'unbelonging' and an ultimate urgency to prove oneself. (224)

Not only he had trust issues, even his family members had stopped taking him seriously. When he tells his mother to let his father enjoy his meals according to his taste, he is snubbed by her, "You don't have to look after him, I follow what Zia and the other doctors tell me…" (*SR* 179). Masud Alam feels the anguish, distance had created between him and his family. He could sense that his parents no longer take his advice. He feels he is disconnected with everything that should have been important for him. He is pretty upset to know that the house, Dhanmondi, he had lived in and was alive in his memories had been demolished. He felt so bad as if, "someone had deliberately smashed me with jackhammer" (*SR* 183). He feels his own land in a way brings to surface his migrant guilt. He urges to have a feeling that attaches him with his family. He tells his sister:

> …the umbilical cord to feed me with the nourishment of the life I've known… 'I don't have a sense of oneness like you seem to do. I can't focus on anything –it's as if there are bits of me all over the place … And there are things that I find I don't understand. What was once familiar has gone. That troubles me. I'm anxious, even afraid –of what, I don't know. I'm finding it impossible to adjust to the new reality here. (*SR* 183)

He usually gets upset to see himself nowhere in the lives of his family. They are happy that he has come but his absence was also not affecting them much. They have their own way of life. He knows that he himself has created this hiatus. He also knows that it is irrational to think about his past which had vanished years back. He guesses that it was his fear that even the memories of the past too erase from his life. Vijaygsree remarks that such migrants are, "Forever troubled by a sense of failure, futility, isolation, dispossession and rootlessness, experiences emotional and psychological state of being torn between two worlds without belonging completely to either one or the other" (224).

Alam is surprised to know that like him, his mother is often down with the sense of solitude. She finds herself alone amidst the whole family. She tells him, "I only have these chairs for company. There was a time when the dining table was always crowded. An hour or two of food and talk and laughter. It brought us all together. We cared for each other then. There was never any hurry" (*SR* 207). To ease her, Alam tells her mother that it's a matter of time which everyone is in dearth of, otherwise she is dearly loved by all. He also tells her that in the busy life of Australia it's a delight to be alone and enjoy any meal of the day. But, then in a minute he contradicts his choice of solitariness. He comes to know about another dark secret of his family, which he could relate with his mother's loneliness. He comes across a deep and dark secret of his Abba. He finds out that his Abba cheated on his mother. He was involved with a Hindu girl, Sumita, who got pregnant by him. His father kept the secret very close to his bosom, till he had control over his body. After his illness, he began to spill beans about his hidden relationship. His mother also comes to know about this ugly truth but lives with it, because she feels her duty is to look after her husband, and it had been a long time since it ended. After this disclosure, Alam realizes that he too usually treats Amelia inconsiderately. He then calls her up to show how does she matter to him.

Alam was trying to bridge the gap between the new world and the old world, which he had never thought of before coming. Unfortunately, he realizes that his family has lost its royal sheen it once had. His family was on its verge to break. His brother was a suspect in the eyes of government; his sister had a broken marriage; his

mother's trust had been breached; and his cousin Omar was found to have connections with the terrorist groups.

Like Iqbal, Alam is also a non-believer and a non-practicing Muslim. There are numerous instances in the novel which substantiates Alam's claim. The author mentions it in the beginning of the novel that the column for religion had not been filled by him in his immigration card, which clearly substantiates his claim that he was only a born Muslim. In fact, when he is told by Zia that it was time for prayers, he tells him straight away that he doesn't pray. He mentions to Steven Mills, an officer, "…I wish I had the gift of religious faith. Sometimes I long to believe in a structured universe designed purposefully for mankind" (*SR* 89). For Mills, it was hard to believe but he had no option but to live in a dilemma. He questions Alam, "Isn't that unusual for someone born a Muslim?" He continues, "I guess the lapsed Muslims also tend to be quiet ones. It isn't prudent to wave a banner promoting the virtues of atheism" (*SR* 236).

Adib Khan has witnessed the brutal partition of Bengal in 1905. He is well aware of the fact that the partition brought with it the huge dispute among the Hindus and the Muslims in the colonial Bengal. A conspicuous divide and the religious antagonism resulted in identity crisis among the people belonging to both the peripheries. As British had planned to divide the people and rule the world, the Muslims were made responsible for this rebellion and they were no longer believed. Adib's works present debate between Christianity and Islam, because after the British devastated Bengal with a split, Muslims became suspicious that they would slowly be converted into Christianity.

This has been depicted through Alam's dreadful situation. He tries to throw light on the fact that, when migrants come to their native places from Christian countries, they have to encounter the same sense of alienation. Alam is not accepted and his homecoming is perceived with suspicion. He narrates his ugly rendezvous with this bitter truth when he has to make an unsuccessful attempt to convince Steven Mills about his ignorance regarding the attack that killed Shabir Jamal, a famous newspaper journalist. Mills insists him to reveal his purpose of coming back to

Bangladesh. Alam feels utterly helpless because he had only come to see his ailing father. But he feels unhappy because his visit to his homeland is looked with suspicion. There were so many things that years had brushed under the carpet, but now they were emerging before him one by one. He had a past record certainly not of a miscreant but of a freedom fighter, which was still following him. He is asked, "Where does your loyalty lie?" (*SR* 240) Alam had never thought about this question ever. So he affirms:

> My loyalty is certainly not with any religion or race of people. I don't believe in making a virtue out of patriotism…Maybe I'm among the Muslim men of the twenty-first century living without permanent ties to the West, emotionally and spiritually uprooted. Sometimes to be viewed with reservation and even dread. (*SR* 240)

He also tells Mills, "my ties are much weaker than yours. For you, patriotism comes naturally. Mine has had to be artificially developed…" (*SR* 241).

In a state of fear and frustration, he decides to return to Australia, but with a strong urge to return permanently to his roots. He realizes that there wasn't anything he could change around him. He accepts the harsh reality, "…thinking of future, without any great conviction that I can change things, or the way I am. I even consider coming back here permanently…" (*SR* 352). When Zia comes to know about Alam's decision, he speaks his mind briefly, "The weeks have gone quickly" (*SR* 357). A day before he had to leave, Alam eats his lunch on the front stairs of their old house he was closely attached with.

He knows that goodbye would neither be easy for him nor for his family. There was so much to be done but could not be achieved. He looks at the sad and stoic face of his mother and then his father, ignorant of his plans to fly back. Before Alam leaves, he breaks all the barriers and allows the ice to melt between them. He tells his father about Rani, his and Sumita's unison, being alive. He looks at his father, "I scan his face, anxious for a sign of understanding…Then he grips my hand and tear trickles down his right cheek. I hold him close. Now, there are no barriers between

us" (*SR* 359). One last time, before he leaves, his father says, "My son…My son" (*SR* 360), being unaware that he would end up all his dilemmas by realizing that he would not be set free from Bangladesh ever. So he blurts, "I'm unable to run anymore" (*SR* 362).

His heart fills with remorse and excitement too, as he would soon bid goodbye to his old world and meet his new one. He describes the moment, "I look around the room and think how familiar I am with the house. It almost seems as if I'm leaving the country for the first time" (*SR* 357).

Adib Khan's works bring to fore the subcontinental cultural legacy, and the distinctive yet common migrant experiences, which have been manifested through his protagonist's delineations in his novels. His characters provide various images of diverse societies in terms of their peculiarities, which are further marked by ossification of the customs and traditions of the two worlds they are part of. Consequently, Adib Khan paints cultural binarism in all his diasporic writings. Khan not only focuses on the life and identity crisis of his characters who are originally Bengali Muslims, but also has a sympathetic and affirmative approach towards the anxieties they encounter in their attempt to be accepted. He further investigates the ways and means which enable the culturally dislocated Muslims to assimilate, adapt and adjust themselves to the changed postcolonial world they once belonged to. In all his selected works such as *Seasonal Adjustments*, *Spiral Road* and *Solitude of Illusions*, Khan attempts to redefine the history of the Indian subcontinent to understand the ways of life, efforts and the changing mind-sets of his characters, who originally belong to the Muslims of Bengali heritage from the colonial to the postcolonial era.

Like his other works, Adib Khan's third novel, *Solitude of Illusions* (1996), also aims to inspect the difficulties and mental dilemmas of Khalid Sharif, an Indian Muslim, who leaves his home in Calcutta and makes chosen modification and alterations in his life, which are heavily shaped by his historical identity crisis that subsides his rigid cultural label. The novel is drenched in the colonial India which suppressed Indians to the extent of slavery. It also highlights the devilish purpose of

the British to intensify religious antagonism, resulting in discord and animosity among the Hindus and the Muslims. *Solitude of Illusions* mulls upon all these issues, besides discussing the most predominant features of postcolonial migrant literature. Khan's Indian Muslim protagonist, Khalid Sharif, is liberal towards different cultures, may be because India is famously known for the kaleidoscopic range of cultures being practiced. Khalid, like all other protagonists of Adib is capable of shaping and reshaping himself as per the need of the changed cultural background. Life itself is all about learning and unlearning which has been beautifully described by Adib, "…There was vitality and hope in nature's cyclic rhythm of life. Decay and regeneration. Nothing really ever dies in a garden" (*Solitude* 17).

Khalid goes to Australia to visit his son, Javed. In Australia, he is haunted by the feeling of loneliness and depression. Even amidst a complete family consisting of his son, Javed, daughter- in- law, Shanaz and his grandsons named Asif and Safdar, he tries to find his happiness in roses and petunias planted on either side of the pathway. He tries to adjust to the strange mornings of the unfamiliar and unfriendly country, Australia. He expresses grief for having been away from Calcutta, "He felt a sudden longing for the sticky, oppressive heat of Calcutta and its broken footpaths crowded with the agony of a destitute humanity. He missed its amplified heartbeat and its blackened, monumental soul" (*Solitude* 18).

He realizes that he is unwanted in his son's house, particularly by Javed's sons and wife. He feels disgusted when Shanaz tells him about the noise he makes as he limps while heading for the bathroom, though she says that she likes him. He is at pain, thinks he will be understood by his 'so-called' family, but he is wrong. He feels himself to be dependent on others because with age he had lost control over his bodily functions. Adib describes Khalid's state, "It embarrassed Khalid Sharif to overhear the boys muttering restrained complaints to their mother about the drops of water on the tiled bathroom floor. This happened regularly despite his conscious effort not to leave behind any traces of the wazuh" (*Solitude* 19).

Many a times, Khalid feels that he has forced himself upon Javed, who took really long to decide where his father would live, if he would sale out his Calcutta's

house. He felt like a rolling stone because out of his four children, no one was willing to keep him, not even Javed. He feels that being the only son who would get the maximum share from his property, Javed showed mercy on him. He remembers, he had told Javed, "I might come here and live with you. After all, you are my only son. It is only proper for an old man to seek the family comforts his son can provide" (*Solitude* 56). He describes his emotions, "I cannot blame him for not wanting me. I am no more than a stranger in their lives. I can only be a disruptive influence in their domestic rhythm. I am unfamiliar with its beat. Why does he … why do they have to pretend that they want me? Duty and desire …they are not the same…" (*Solitude* 57).

He feels he is disrespected by the grandsons too. His words are either intentionally unheard, or if heard, are merely laughed at. He remembers that on his arrival, he insists the boys to rearrange the furniture in the spare room so that his foot while lying does not point to Mecca. But the boys would have the nerve to offend him with all silly questions. Another major disappointment after his arrival was his rendezvous with the truth that his son had not instilled the religious values in his sons. They were unfamiliar with the significance of Mecca in the lives of Muslims. Khalid had encountered many Muslims in his childhood who struggled for a distinctive identity. He does not want his grandsons to drift away from the religious sentiments of Islam. Adib Khan's writings provide a world which has identical inheritance of Mughal traditions. Initially, Khalid, like any true Muslim, stands for the conservative view of cultural identity.

Adib Khan's *Solitude of Illusions* simultaneously depicts narratives of two Indians. Khalid is in the main focus, and Angela is in less prominence. Both of them very strongly quest for 'home' because they constantly delve into their past memories, which give them their space and a feeling that they do exist and are important in other's lives too. In order to fulfill their quest for their 'lost home' they keep their home alive in their memories, but at the same time tries to assimilate into the new cultures, resulting in hybridity. It is a peculiar feature of postcolonial migrant writing that characters are constantly involved in the process of harmonising between the homeland and the host land. In this process, one's nostalgia tends to find shelter in what is called a 'lost home'. Khan's experience of having lived in the era of the

British colonial rule, Bangladesh's War of Independence and migration to Australia, and the dilemma between his idea of home and culture shape his writings. He himself constantly yearned to discover himself between what he had left behind and the new world. Therefore, his protagonists struggle for an attainment of home and identity. The feature of 'homeland' is a recurring theme of argument in almost all the diasporic discourses. It is utterly interesting to see the struggles of migrants who have both a fractional and a plural outlook of the two worlds they are part of, and hence they try to exert their influence on home and host cultures simultaneously.

Khalid's two worlds, Calcutta and Australia, make us aware of the religious and political antagonism, he had witnessed in colonial Bengal. As commonly noticed in all the works of Adib, *Solitude of Illusions* also discusses the writer's desperation to represent the Muslim community which endeavours to retain their Muslim identity. Khalid belongs to a typical conservative Muslim family. For him and all the members of the family, religious rituals and practices were to be sincerely followed. But his son's family seems to have no regard for the religious values.

Khalid had already lost his peace because he had the experiences of the two worlds, so he usually would sit and compare the past and the present situations. The misconduct and open mindedness of his son, daughter-in-law, his grandsons and granddaughter leave him in desperation, because he had been observing all the values his family had taught him since he was a child. He remembers clearly that, be it about marriage or any other matter final decisions were taken by the parents. He is pained to see his granddaughter, Zareen, yelling at her parents who rejected her plans to go to movie with an Italian boy. In his family, Muslim boys and girls could only mix freely, once they attained marriageable age. Besides, there was pardah system, and so only male members of the family would sit together and talk, and the females had separate rooms. He says, "He wished he could help to repair the damage they were blindly inflicting on themselves. But he was aware that any advice he offered would be spurned as the interference of an old man with no comprehension of the dynamics of the relationships in an alien culture" (*Solitude* 73).

His thoughts constantly flow from the past to present and vice versa. His son's family leaves him dissatisfied, because he believed that this new concept of family in the changed times is weird and unknown to him. He prefers to enjoy his old world, which richly showcases his family's distinct identity in terms of traditional manners, etiquette and eating habits. He is reminiscent of his past which had a rich food culture as it consisted of, "chapattis and rice, bhajis, dhal, beef, mutton and chicken cooked in ghee with a rich texture of masalas" (*Solitude* 108). He remembers clearly that no one could have a morsel without expressing their gratitude to the almighty. This ritual was absent in Javed's family. Khan's attempt to mention the traditional food culture of Bengal, depicts his sense of nostalgia that marks the tone of all diaspora writings. Jayaram in his article "The study of Indian Diaspora: A Multidisciplinary Agenda" says about such migrants who carry with them, "a socio-cultural baggage which consists among other things a predefined social identity …a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organization, food habits and … language" (54).

Khalid lives in the moments of past to relieve himself of the feeling of loneliness. Loneliness has gripped him tightly not because his children have no time to sit with him and listen to the glorious past he had enjoyed, but because whom he wanted in his life were no more around him. His solitude is due to the absence of his wife, Jahan Ara, who was no more; Nazli, his unfulfilled love; his friends, his culture, and his distance from his original roots. He remembers that he wished to marry Nazli but under the family pressure, he had to break his ties with her and marry Jahan Ara. He felt bad for the true love he had for her, but to uphold the family honour, he sacrificed his love. He would smile remembering his wedding night. To avoid his unabated feeling of loneliness, he delves into his past. Without even a sense of realization, his feeling of solitude gets him close to his Australian neighbour, Angela, a White Australian woman. She is an Anglo-Indian, but calls herself English. Her father was English and mother Indian. Initially, she holds grudges against Indians because her father had been killed by Indians, but later she comes out of her colonial prejudices against the Indians. She, like him, is alone because her husband has died and her children are occupied in their own lives. Her son, Tim, had not visited her for many years, "Six years. It was a long time without a visit. He was too busy to

contemplate an Australian holiday, she was told. Maybe in a couple of years. Always maybe…There were times when Angela felt that she existed only as a familiar voice on the phone for her son…" (*Solitude* 29).

Angela disliked Indians but when her eyes fall on Khalid, who was sitting in the backyard of his son's house, she feels excited. She says, "Indian. Very definitely Indian, though not as dark as the southerners…" (*Solitude* 35). She gets attracted to him. They enjoy each other's companionship because of the common origin. For hours, they would talk about the ways of Indian life. Sometimes they have polarized interpretations of modern Indian history, particularly about partition of the country, and sometimes attitudinal differences based on different experiences towards the pre-partition life in Calcutta. Their closeness had increased because they could share all those moments and experiences that could not be shared with others. She would talk about her childhood spent in Calcutta, an account of her fond memories of the clubs and shops on Park Street. Strangely, she saddens to know that Calcutta's famous Hall & Anderson departmental store had closed down, and that Christmas and New Year are no longer celebrated with the same zest. She also feels depressed to know that poverty and dilapidation have gripped Calcutta.

Adib Khan has also highlighted the political backdrop of India and Calcutta to which both, Khalid and Angela, belong. This has been discussed through the conversation of the two. Khalid talks about the political riots and agitation as a result of the colonial rule. He speaks about the disharmony between the Muslims and the Hindus which ruptured the true meaning of independence. He also blames the colonizers, who before setting them free destroyed their cultural heritage. He laments that there was disintegration among Muslim nationalists also, which intensified the demand of separate territory and partition. The demand came as a move to secure Muslim identity which was believed to be at the risk of suppression by the Hindus. He laments the very idea of the two-nation theory and the catastrophic partition. He narrates the incident from his community's point of view. He shifts his attention from the general aftermath of partition to the effects, Muslim community had to endure. He narrates how the Muslim elites in Bengal were kept at bay in politics. His family business too lost its prospect after the partition.

Angela also shares her bad memories of the violence in Calcutta which had a traumatic effect on her life, as her father Robert Morton, who was a Civil servant, became a victim of extremists. Angela had found her father lying all smeared in blood on the footpath, almost dead. She painfully recollects the moment of her father's killing by an Indian mob, who laughed at her as they saw her beside an Angrez. For many years, she loathed Indians and detached herself from India, until she met Khalid. S.S Sharma in *The Great Tragedy of India's Partition* contends that, "the two-nation theory and Muslim separatism received encouragement as it presented them [the British] with a very handy and effective weapon to weaken nationalist forces" (310).

After hearing the poignant narrative of Angela, Khalid narrates, "For over a week the Sharifs had voluntarily imprisoned themselves behind shuttered doors and windows, listening uneasily to distant noises of mob fury.... Their grave demeanors expressed their concern for the city" (*Solitude* 206). He apprises her about the political strife and the riots in Bengal that culminated in the partition of Bengal in 1905, cornering the Muslims to the East while the Hindus were in the West.

Angela invites Khalid often to her house and sometimes Khalid himself turns up without a prior invitation. In this interaction, the differences they once were familiar with melts. Angela had not liked Indians, especially Indian Muslims but surprisingly, now she likes the company of Khalid. Despite being a Muslim, Khalid also does not mind cleaning the used utensils at his new friend's house. Had they been in their own worlds, they would not have created a world of convenience and need. Indian Muslim had learnt to accommodate an Australian and vice versa.

Postcolonial migrant literature is marked by configuring, reconfiguring, generation and degeneration of cultures and identities. The migrants on new land break away the binaries of religion, colour, language, nationality and create a common zone for interaction and association. *Solitude of Illusions* is the similar attempt of the two different cultures. It represents the 'contact zone' created by Khalid representing South Asian and Angela depicting Australian culture. Khalid's friendship with his Australian neighbour, Angela, dwindles the significance of the fence between

the houses of Khalid and Angela which earlier marked the dividing line between the two cultures.

Salman Rushdie holds that, postmodern diaspora writers have double perspectives as they are both 'insiders and outsiders' of society. They have the choice of making any great literary figure from any country as their role model. Such writers can also present a world without a "politician's version of truth" (14). He is of the view that these writers do not occupy "an infertile territory," and explains that "if literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective may provide us with such angles" (15). Nonetheless, in their creative writings, such multicultural and diaspora writers can express the potentiality of their being. Such accommodating capability helps them make voluntary adjustments to their alien surroundings, albeit, while also retaining their distinctiveness.

Australia had changed Khalid to a great extent. After change of place, he had started dozing off at unusual times and so would miss the prayers he had always been particular about. He notices a slight change in his attitude as well. He had started enjoying his solitary presence in Javed's house during weekdays. He considers that time, free from any worries, tensions, frustrations. It gives him freedom and time to recreate and relive his past. Khan states:

> Khalid Sharif enjoyed his own solitary presence in the house during weekdays. The solitude was not oppressive, but rather gave him an elated sense of freedom as though he had suddenly sprouted wings and learned to fly... The emptiness of the house was conducive to the slow expansion of his reveries. He spent his time recreating the past as it should have been, without the monumental regret of the most significant year of his life. (*Solitude* 94)

For him, adjustment had become a part of his life. He had changed his outlook towards life. He realizes Australian land had its charm, though his love for his country had not left him. He had accepted that with time, attire of people also changes. He does no longer mind seeing Shanaz in salwar kameez instead of a sari. He does not

mind the fact that his grandchildren had little or no knowledge of Islamic religion. Khalid's diasporic experience enables him to reconfigure the historical issues through negotiation between the two cultures. Being an ardent Muslim, he has a strong feeling to retain his religious identity. He is surrounded in the confusion of colonial and post-colonial situations. Hence, he makes voluntary adjustments to their changing socio-political and demographic milieus. In an interview with Morley and Chen, Hall explains his viewpoint in the following way:

> I think cultural identity is not fixed, it's always hybrid. But this is precisely because it comes out of very specific historical formations, out of very specific histories and cultural repertoires of enunciation, that it can constitute a 'positionality', which we call, provisionally, identity. It's not just anything. So each of those life stories is inscribed in the positions we take up and identify with, and we have to live this ensemble of identity- positions in all its specificities. (504)

Adib Khan's works depicts the major and minor details of his life in his Australian home. He puts across the crucial situations in terms of adjustments, assimilations, adaptations in the new world by keeping the Bengali Muslim culture alive in memories and practices. All his characters are first generation migrants who have been transplanted in different and new environments. They have different names but their predicaments, anxieties are same. Khan has delineated in such a way that they adopt different ways to cope with alienation. With different personalities they react differently to loneliness. Ironically, their situations seem to converge at certain points. As Satender Nandan calls, "…the cut and mix of diasporic culture and the dialogue creativity which further blossom into narratives of displacement" (54).

Chapter- 4

Theorizing Cultural Identity: An Enquiry of Works of Monica Ali

Displacement is the ultimate result of movement whether intended or forcible. This process of uprootedness from one place, and settlement on another land results in an intense contact with different cultural environments. This dispersal places migrated people amidst innumerable difficulties and confusions related to their survival in a new setting. As they struggle to survive, they are haunted by a sense of alienation, memories of their homeland and yearning to return. To shun off these feelings which cause excruciating pain, they make all possible adjustments which pose threat to one's original identity. In this attempt to adjust in order to survive in new surroundings, they encounter problems related to identity and their quest to identify with their self and their cultural standing, which they had left behind in past as a result of migration and dispersal. M Bhatt believes that cultural cross-currents surely lead to a hybrid culture and a new process of cultural assimilation (37-49).

Diasporic population deals with displacement and identity crisis differently, as a result of different dilemmas they encounter as citizens of their nation, and the settlers on the land which they opt permanently or temporarily. The issue of identity is highly influenced by the degree of attachment to the nation of origin, and also the new found bonding with the country of habitation. This culminates in multiple conflicts based on the subject of identification. To add more to the discussion, one cannot remain unaffected by the identificatory and affective relationships such migrated populations establish in and outside their nation. According to Brubaker and Cooper:

> [i]dentity […] tends to mean too much when understood in a (strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity) which is why they conclude that it is too ambiguous, too torn between "hard" and "soft" meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis. (2)

Foundation of identity for any group in an unknown space is always a challenging task, if the new surrounding cannot acknowledge even partially, their

cultural and behavioural prototypes. In fact, pondering on identity crisis leads to more confusions as diaspora people face both intangible and practical problems because of the disarrayed ethnic, national and cultural 'identity'. Faist emphasises that, "Migrants' culture can't be seen as a baggage which can be figuratively packed and unpacked, uprooted (assimilationists) and transplanted (cultural pluralists)" (215).

Migrants are often seen to shuttle between the past and the present. The mental dilemma often puts them in a situation where they have to make a choice between the two. They have alternatives such as, to either discard the past by adopting the new culture, or to act in opposition and retreat to a mixed culture, or to completely reject the newness of the environment demanding a complete embracing. In the article "A Cultural Hybridization Perspective: Emerging Academic Subculture among International Students from East Asia in U.S." Jian Lia puts across the view point of Homi Bhabha, who asserts, "Cultural hybridity in the postcolonial perspective can be viewed as a reaction to cultural hegemony" (2219).

This chapter discusses various tribulations of the immigrants who leave their countries due to different reasons. Monica Ali's writings *The Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* have been deeply studied for the same. Monica seems to have a stronger eye for such subject as she herself belongs to Dhaka, but grew up in England. She is the unison of English mother and Bangladeshi father. Initially, the married couple lived together with their two young children in Dhaka. During that time, Dhaka was fighting its battle to become independent from Pakistan, and to be the capital of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Ali's father had to send the family to a safer place and so in 1971 they were sent to England. Ali's father, Hatem, later joined his family. He always wished to go back to Bangladesh. This feeling has been treated specially by the writer in her writings, and such a situation will also be depicted through some of the fictional characters in *Brick Lane*.

Ali becomes a second generation migrant and realizes that after a feeling of settlement in London they could not think of returning. She relates herself with the main character in *Brick Lane,* Nazneen. Since childhood she had penchant to read and after her grandfather's death, she felt a surge to write. Her first novel *Brick Lane* was

published in 2003 which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, the George Orwell Prize for political writing and the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Her second novel *Alentejo Blue* came in 2006 and *In the Kitchen* in 2009.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is purely soaked into diaspora as it brings to surface all the difficulties, efforts, and failures and successes of the diaspora people in their attempt to constitute their identity in other land. The novel depicts the narratives of Nazneen in the main lead. Besides the story of Nazneen, the writer also shares the ugly experiences of exile, exodus of other diaspora characters such as Chanu, Hasina, Karim, Dr Azad, Mrs Azad and Shahana.

The novel brings to fore, the painful journey of displacement, alienation and nostalgia. The characters are tightly gripped by the sense of alienation and the identity issues. All the above mentioned themes can well be gauged through the lens of migration and multiculturalism in a postcolonial locale. Monica has underscored the most common features, such as discrimination and oppression, of any diasporic writing. The writer also demands readers' attention to the pertinent issue which investigates, why the migrated people are discriminated against in foreign countries. Also, *Brick Lane* by Ali challenges multicultural societies.

The themes that float on the surface or beneath are in no way different than other diasporic works. Like other similar works, this work also settles upon the same array of diasporic concerns such as migration, multiculturalism, religion, cultural variations, economic disparity, fundamentalism etc. This novel narrates the similar stories of prevalence of prejudice, intolerance, racial differences in the multicultural societies. But what makes Monica's works distinct and dynamic from other diasporic writings is her personal sense of attachment and feeling for diaspora people. The writer allows the readers to know how the characters think, how they consider the world around them, and how they see themselves. It is also interesting to note how the various characters comment on each other.

Cultural anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski posits the static entity of culture and opines that the purity of any culture can be maintained (36-43). On the

contrary, Bhabha in *Location of Culture* propounded that this purity in a culture is nothing more than a myth, as the purity of a culture gets dwindled with a mere association with other cultures, directly or indirectly (177-99). Thus, a new cultural form emerges from multiculturalism. But interestingly, Bhabha himself has also thrown some light on the concept of 'fixity' in his essay, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." He observes that some migrants remain fixed to their old traditions, customs and beliefs and in turn display their refusal to completely imbibe new ways of life (155-57). The attempt to revive the past and renounce the embraced is nothing but a reaction against what are seen as the ominous forms of cultural hybridity. Cultural hybridity is a slippery concept. So, in the process of acculturation some migrants show slight mixing, while there are some who display excessive mixing depending on their circumstances and preferences.

Brick Lane by Monica Ali has prominently placed before us different types of diaspora. Chanu is Nazneen's husband, who is the protagonist of the novel. He is that kind of migrant who comes to foreign country to earn more money, so that he can raise his standard of living in his own country. He promulgates from time to time the two promises he had made to himself when he had left Bangladesh. He tells Dr Azad, Chanu's acquaintance in London, that, "…And I made two promises to myself. I will be a success, come what may. That's promise number one. Number two, I will go back home. When I am a success. And I will honour these promises" (*BL* 34-35). Chanu also plans to construct a house in Dhaka. For his plans to see light of the day, he collects money too. In fact, in the novel he also tells Dr Azad that he does not want his son to live in London and go astray. He opines that London could teach his son to talk back to his mother and disrespect his father.

Though, he does not realize that despite his pertness for the foreign ways, he had also adopted those ways. Nazneen is surprised to find that her husband, who desperately yearns to go back home, does not say prayers. He also drinks alcohol, which is forbidden in Islam. She thinks that he might even eat pigs in the days to come. This also conveys the duality of Chanu's character. He issues different and more stringent set of rules for Nazneen, and for himself the rules could be changed flexibly. When Mr Azad offers him a drink, he reacts, "You see, it's part of the

culture here. It's so ingrained in the fabric of society. Back home, if you drink you risk being an outcast. In London, if you don't drink you risk the same thing…" (*BL* 110).

Jian also articulates Bhabha's notion about such endeavours of the migrants. He quotes Bhabha, "The term intercultural hybridizing process refers to transforming diverse cultural constructions in local cultural perceptions in the global context" (2219). In the cultural hybridization, it has been observed that new cultures emerge which are the result of some sort of reaction to the splintered cultural identity. It further becomes responsible for the creation of multicultural consciousness in migrants, who experience a sense of diverse cultural ideology within themselves due to decentralized perspective. The acceptance of multiple cultures paves way for rich hybrid cultural perspectives. Furthermore, hybridity consists of mixture of two hitherto relatively distinct styles and different identities. It also involves cross cultural contact, occurring across the national as well as cultural contours. All these are the quintessential of hybridity, and migrants find themselves experiencing this sooner to later.

Chanu's close attachment to his roots, forces him to adjust only partially in the foreign land. He loves his roots unconditionally. Neither he accepts the new culture, nor is he accepted in the new environment. He finds his professional aspirations unachievable in London and so resigns. He feels that his race was his invincible impediment. He tries effortlessly to get promotion but each time he faces defeat. Hence, from time to time he vents out his frustration in front of other migrants. He expresses his exasperation to Mr and Mrs Azad, "This is the tragedy of our lives. To be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy" (*BL* 112).

When the reasons of movement vary from people to people, the experiences too differ. Mrs Azad does not agree with Chanu because she believes that initially everyone has to make adjustments. They also lived in one room hovel, and ate only dal and rice, and would skip afternoon meals because of financial constraints, but with time everything settled and now her husband is a famous doctor. Chanu still tries to keep his view point, "But behind every story of immigrant success there lies a deeper

tragedy" (*BL* 13). Mrs. Azad represents another category of diaspora who firmly believes, "Assimilation this, alienation that! Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing…." (*BL* 113). Ali has herself lived and experienced the same dilemmas of diaspora, so through Mrs Azad, she has tried to carve another peculiarity of diaspora people, who strike a balance between the two worlds by making modifications in their personas as per the need of space and location. When visiting their native country, they change themselves in terms of demeanor, clothes and perspectives and vice versa. Mrs Azad makes her point clear by citing an example from her own life. She says:

> Listen, when I'm in Bangladesh I put on a sari and cover my head and all that. But here I go to work. I work with white girls and I'm just one of them. If I want to come home and eat curry, that's my business. Some women spend ten, twenty years here and they sit in the kitchen grinding spices all day and learn only two words of English…They go around covered from head to toe, in their little walking prisons, and when someone calls to them in the street they are upset. The society is racist. The society is all wrong. Everything should change for them. They don't have to change one thing. That is the tragedy. (*BL* 114)

Chanu is an archetype of that category of migrants who assimilates in the new culture as per the need. Such migrants remain aware of their roots. Chanu is committed to the memory of his past, but at the same time he also desperately wants to assert his identity in the new environment. He has built a cocoon around himself which enables him to fight the cultural dilemmas, hostility of the West and unfriendliness of its inhabitants, who are driven by feeling of superiority. His assimilation is reflected in his language, his work and the number of courses he does so that he can be identified as knowledgeable and an asset to the organization he worked with. His hope to return reflects in his dress, the life style of Bangladesh and the etiquette. He prefers Bangladeshi cuisine, music, history, literature, etc. Bhaktin clarifies the concerns of the migrants who generally encounter the problem of belongingness. Many of them are unable and show unwillingness to exclusively

belong to, either live with one or with the other parallel worlds. The double consciousness certainly embodies a cultural version of Bhaktin's definition of linguistic hybridization. He calls it, "a mixture of two social languages within the limit of a single utterance, an encounter between two different…consciousness, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (358). In terms of dress, food, habits, Baudrillard says, "This is a phenomena of simulation. [T]o dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has, while to simulate is to feign to have what one has not:" (5). He also adds, "Simulation means concealment of the nonexistence of something, in other words, it is the display of a simulacrum, a copy with no original" (138).

Chanu also associates with people from his own country such as Dr Azad and Mrs Islam-people of high social stature. He is often gripped by the sense of anonymity that commonly comes when a migrant thinks of his past, which he feels is in danger because it is getting defiled with the mingling of the two worlds. He remarks:

> I'm talking about the clash between Western values and our own. I'm talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity and heritage. I'm talking about children who don't know what their identity is. I'm talking about the feelings of alienation engendered by a society where racism is prevalent. I'm talking about the terrific struggle to preserve one's sanity while striving to achieve the best for one's family. (*BL* 113)

In fact, many diaspora migrants display self-categorization and external ascription by wearing clothes which determine their originality; they cook and eat their own food; speak their own language; besides these, they adhere to the old customs and traditions. Many of them also observe their religious practices ardently, but Chanu is a little different here. He does not pray like a true devout Muslim. Nazneen would find it very strange that her husband would not offer prayers like they do back home. He, however, holds all his relationships from his original country very close to his heart. He has a very strong diasporic- national attachment with the land of his birth, which was the land of his ancestors. Chanu experiences the pangs of

expatriation in the true sense of word. He wistfully longs for his past. He feels low due to the pain of homelessness. He also feels the pangs of the struggle, people like him undergo in order to maintain the difference between one's culture and the new one. He is reminiscent of his colonial past, and promulgates his intention that, the way the English landed in India to drain the country off its wealth, he would also do the same. He says, "…And that is what I am doing now. What else can you do?" (*BL* 214) According to Herbert Gans, "Ethnicity is a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country, a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior" (9).

Homi Bhabha advocates that some migrants in spite of dwelling in another country, consider their cultural practices true and pure (155-57). Bill Ashcroft asserts, "The character loves his culture, but is also open to aspects of the foreign culture." As he negotiates with the dominant group, "he destroys the mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as an expanding code…the disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces the narratives of the western nation" (208).

Chanu always believed that he belongs to his own country and, no matter how many degrees in academics he procured, he will always be considered an outsider. He struggles and fails to gain recognition because he was from Bangladesh. He gets frustrated and ultimately accepts his defeat by resigning from his job. He gives vent to his pent up emotions in front of her daughter Shahana, who hated him, and tells her, "You see, the things I had to fight: racism, ignorance, poverty, all of that – I don't want to go through it" (*BL* 320). To live in the host country and bear all expenses, he becomes a taxi driver and lives with only one aim in London which is to earn as much money as he could, so that he could return to his own country one day. The death of his son, Raqib, breaks him, and he yearns even more to get back to his native place and tell his people that all his life he faked that London has made him live all his dreams. He tells Nazneen:

> All this time they thought I was rich. Why should I live in this foreign land, if it did not make me rich? I let them think it. It suited them and it suited me.

> Actually, I told them some things that are not true, have never been true. Made myself a big man. Here I am only a small man, but there…I could be big. Big man. That's how it happened. (*BL* 132)

He feels bad to see how citizens of Bangladesh or any South Asian country are treated and discriminated in foreign countries. He finds pride in his history and wants the inhabitants of London to remember that India, particularly Bengal, was invaded by many and the British also got lured by the riches of the country. He wishes to shout at the top of his pitch the truth about his nation. He considers his country to be culturally and historically superior to the host country. In utter disillusionment, he tells Nazneen:

> If you have a history, you see, you have a pride. The whole world was going to Bengal to do trade. Sixteenth century and seventeenth century. Dhaka was the home of textiles. Who invented all this muslin and damask and every damn thing? It was us. All the Dutch and Portuguese and French and British queuing up to buy. (*BL* 185)

Gilory explains the counterculture of modernity as, "Cultural insiderism" (3). He asserts, "it is the various forms of ethnic essentialism and nationalism that expound ethnicity and identity as immutable categories set against markers of Otherness in binary oppositions such as black versus white" (7). He disagrees with a different but more difficult consideration of inter cultural association which entails, "the theorization of creolisation, metissage, metizaje and hybridity" (Gilory 2).

He repents that his daughters were very far from the glory of Bangladesh's past. He often shares his feelings for what his daughters were not being informed. He wishes them to know why Bangladesh was named as the Paradise of Nations. He also contemptuously looks at the English education his daughters were receiving, which deprived them of the real knowledge about their original nation. All they knew about Bangladesh was that the nation was poor due to frequent famine and flood. He says, "A sense of history. That is what they are missing. And do not forget –the

Bangladeshis they are mixing with are Sylhetis, no more, no less. They do not see the best face of our nation" (*BL* 186).

He keeps his homeland alive through his daughters, Shahana and Bibi, whom he teaches to recite 'Golden Bengal' of Rabindra Nath Tagore. He tells his family that he could manage his life away from his roots only because of the hope that one day he will return home. So, to prepare his family to be taken back, he thinks that Tagore is the first step of journey. Chanu is adamant of returning home with his wife and the two daughters. So, he tries to hammer down all that essential information in his daughters' minds, which as a citizen of Bangladesh, one must know. He tries his best to enable his family to retain its identity and not to get lured by the flashy and so-believed liberated life of the West. He warns Nazneen about Shahana that, "She is only a child, and already the rot is beginning. That is why we must go" (*BL* 182). He also says, "Planning and preparation, the girls must be made ready…" (*BL* 182). He is often heard of making comparison between the East and the West. He claims, "Because our own culture is so strong. And what is their culture? Television, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball. That is the white working - class culture" (*BL* 254).

He himself lives in a constant tension of the need to live with the same identity without acquiring new identity as immigrant. In a report prepared by UNESCO on culture and identity, it is stated:

> Culture belongs to man, to all men…recognizing and reaffirming with conviction and force the equal dignity of all cultures, rejecting any hierarchy in that area…it is therefore reaffirmed the duty of each to respect all cultures. It could be clearly seen that the affirmation of cultural identity had become a permanent requirement, both for individuals and for groups and nations…Cultural identity [is] the defence of traditions, of history and of the moral, spiritual and ethical values handed down by past generations. (8)

He also tries to evade the tension that his daughters, particularly Shahana, who are born and raised in the West, are more western in their ways. Here, Monica Ali has also mentioned second generation migrants through Shahana. She has no love for

Bengali classical music, no liking for salwar kameez. She wishes to dress up like girls of her age. Ali writes, "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 her face…Shahana did not want to go back home" (*BL* 180). When her father tries to force his desire to return on her, she would yell, "I didn't ask to be born here" (*BL* 181).

Shahana also reacts to the unnecessary restrictions her father had imposed on them. They are not allowed to speak or converse in English. Nazneen tries to tranquilize the situation and tells both of them, "And we are always keeping to the rule?" She complains to her mother, "But it's his stupid rule in the first place!" (*BL* 194) She had become a misfit for Bangladesh as she had never been to her father's country, and so was ignorant of its ways of life. A mere thought of packing their bags to being forcibly taken to that country scared her. She also tries to create confusion in Bibi's mind, so that she also disagrees with their father's plan to leave London. She shows her father's daaton to Bibi and tells her that, "In Bangladesh, you'll have to brush your teeth with a twig. They don't have toothbrushes." She also adds, "You know, Bibi, they don't have toilet paper either. You'll have to pour water on your bottom to clean it" (*BL* 398). She also tells Bibi that if they will go back to Bangladesh, they would be married off soon, as it is a common practice in Bangladesh. Each passing day instills a strong fear in Shahana that she will be forced to return to her father's 'home'. She tells her mother, "I'm going to run away, if he tries to get me on an aeroplane, I'll bite his hand and run" (*BL* 363). And the night before, when Nazneen's family had to leave, Shahana runs away from home, though, later she is found and brought back home. Bibi tells her mother, "She's gone, she's run away" (*BL* 465).

The novel centers on Nazneen. It narrates Nazneen's journey starting and ending in Brick Lane, a street in London. It begins from passivity, loneliness, lack of confidence to a new found confidence and independence felt by Nazneen in the end. She discovers herself in this street, far away from Bangladesh where her father

controlled her life and clipped her wings many years back. So in a way, London not only gives a new identity to Nazneen but also results in her metamorphosis.

In the beginning of the novel, Monica introduces us to timid Nazneen, who had moved to London after her marriage with Chanu, a man twice her age. She finds herself lonely and is filled with a feeling of ennui. She has to deal with her anguish for being away from her home, which is very special to her because of Hasina's presence in Bangladesh. Her initial journey in London depends on her connection with home and family ties. She keeps that alive through the exchange of letters between her and her sister. Salman Rushdie underscores that the person who goes through exile and emigration experiences, let loosing of something indescribable in his personality. He feels that the cultural and national bindings have unleashed them, and consequently a new and unusual feeling urges them to cling to a few pieces of roots that have essentially shaped them. As he says, "… exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt" (10). This kind of urge is the reason why a lot of migrants depend on their native customs to remain in touch with the country they left behind. The longing for homeland makes them dependent on the dream of going back. Only in few cases a migrant will go through transformation and finally emerges as an independent personality, who can adapt to the existing foreign society.

Nazneen's experiences are the usual identity issues diaspora people face when come to live in a new country. Initially, they feel frustrated as their life style and living patterns show resistance to gel with what they are required to learn. This phase makes them depend on the memories they have of their native land, and the connection of home which define their persona. Edward Said in his essay "Reflections on Exile" talks about the concept of exile as an indispensable chapter of the life of migrants, who have the feeling of letting the past slip from their hands and leaving one's native place behind, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (173). The unutterable sadness and an upsurge of emotions make them live on the idea of their roots and heritage. In that moment of frenzy due to loss of the sense of

belongingness, they try to estimate what has been achieved and what has been lost. To quote Said, "The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever" (173). In fact, this feeling of unwantedness and the yearning to be accepted not only cripples their self-esteem, but also makes them remorseful with the feeling of having no home. Certainly, such feelings are not permanent, but such people take time to overcome the feeling of alienation and isolation. Said too, agrees upon the fact that after displacement, diaspora people step in the new world with the feeling of being lost and dejected.

Nazneen is the central character who is projected as the victim of dislocation which poses at her, questions related to her identity in the new setting. She was born almost as a still born child, and she was almost dressed for her burial, but suddenly she comes to life. Banesa says, "God has called her back to earth" (*BL* 13). She is nurtured tenderly by her mother because she was weak. Later, she grows up as a solemn child. She followed her parent's instructions carefully. After her mother's death and her sister's elopement, she is informed about her marriage in the following month. After arranging everything about her marriage, her father asks if she would wish to see the photograph of her would be husband. Nazneen replies, "Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma" (*BL* 18). She does not disapprove of her father's decision, even though, she was not happy to see the photograph. May be because, since childhood she was made to believe in one story of "How You Were Left To Your Fate" (*BL* 15). Her life revolves around this truth. Any difficult situation in London takes her back to her past.

When Nazneen is married to Chanu, he was forty years old and had a frog like face. Her marriage dislocates her from Bangladesh and brings her to London. Nazneen's journey which began from her hometown Gouripur in Bangladesh ends in the concrete apartment in London's Brick Lane. This ending is another beginning of her life. Initially, she finds herself depending on her husband for every small thing. To put her feeling of loneliness to lull, she tries to keep herself occupied so as to put her inner turbulence to ease, by cleaning the apartment, cooking etc. Ali writes:

> …Nazeen cleaned and cooked and washed. She made breakfast for Chanu and looked on as he ate, collected his pens and put them in his briefcase, watched him from the window as he stepped like a band leader across the courtyard to the bus stop on the far side of the estate… And the days were tolerable, and the evenings were nothing to complain about. (*BL* 41)

This is Nazneen's life pattern which was around her, beneath her and through her. Initially, she has nobody to pick up a conversation with. So, when she does nothing, not that she had any choice of not doing anything, but it is her time after the completion of the households, she peeps outside her world to gaze at the by-passers or the 'tatoo lady'. Many a times, she thinks of going downstairs to establish a strong bond with the lady, but she had yet to learn the ways of this country. She thinks, "That tattoo lady might be angry at an unwanted interruption…And even if she wasn't angry, what would be the point? Nazneen could say two things in English: sorry and thank you. She could spend another day alone. It was only another day" (*BL* 19). She feels utterly lonely in her early stage of settlement. She shuttles between her past and present to find an escape from her loneliness and sense of alienation.

Her life becomes programmed. She sets time to get up, do all chores, etc. But she has no one to talk to. In fact, she does not have much to share with Chanu because he only talks about himself, but does not lend his ears to listen to what she has in her heart. Ali asserts, "He talked and she listened. Often she had the feeling he was not talking to her, or rather that she was only part of a larger audience for whom the speech was meant. He smiled at her but his eyes were always searching, as if she were a face in the crowd singled out for only a moment…" (42). Nazneen lives in a constant fear of pretending that she understands what her husband blurts to her in English. Whenever she senses a situation like this, she deliberately looks for some task in kitchen. Monica Ali says:

> Nazneen, who feared her husband would begin one of his long quotations, stacked a final plate and went to the kitchen. He liked to quote in English and then give her a translation, phrase by phrase. And when it was translated it

> usually meant no more to her than it did in English, so that she did not know what to reply or even if a reply was required. (*BL* 38)

Her confinement in her apartment typifies all those women who are dislocated because of the social obligation, which pressurizes them to accompany their husbands to the land which is not theirs. Tongue-tied they follow their husbands. Nazneen too follows Chanu to London, knowing life will have to start from nothing. She had neither any credentials, nor any knowledge of foreign language which could support her. Besides other issues, language barrier is the major problem she faces in London. She does not know English, and she realizes that words like 'sorry' and 'thank you' would not solve her problem of communication in the alien country. Due to her inability to converse in the language of her new world, she is forced to confine herself to her so called home, which is nothing less than captivity for Nazneen. In fact, in all eighteen years of her married life, she feels imprisoned and could barely remember a moment that she had not spent alone.

As she belongs to a patriarchal family set up, so all decisions of her life are eventually taken by her husband. He instructs her often. Once, while watching television with Chanu, Nazneen asks her husband about the name of the sport they were watching, he tells her it is ice-skating. Nazneen pronounces it as 'Ice e-skating'. Chanu corrects her but she continues to pronounce it in the same way. At this, Chanu smiles and says, "Don't worry about it. It's a common problem for Bengalis. Two consonants together cause a difficulty. I have conquered this issue after a long time. But you are unlikely to need these words in any case" (*BL* 37). Nazneen takes her first step towards acceptability and assimilation in the new world by telling her husband, "I would like to learn some English." To this Chanu replies, "It will come. Don't worry about it. Where's the need anyway?" (*BL* 37)

Besides this, Chanu restricts her movements and asks her about the need to go out without him. He tells her to observe the same restrictions she would have lived with, while being in Bangladesh. He acts like a patriarch who would not allow liberation to find a place in Nazneen's life. He likes her dependence on him. He says, "'Why should you go out?' … 'If you go out, ten people will say, "I saw her walking

on the street." And I will look like a fool. Personally, I don't mind if you go out but these people are so ignorant. What can you do?'" (*BL* 45). He continues to convince her with some strange mildness to hammer down the fact that Nazneen must avoid going out alone. He says, "Besides, I get everything for you that you need from the shops. Anything you want, you only have to ask.' … 'I don't stop you from doing anything'… 'And anyway, if you were in Bangladesh you would not go out. Coming here you are not missing anything, only broadening your horizons'" (*BL* 45).

Chanu depicts a very essential feature of postcolonialism by acting like an occident, who considers itself superior to the orient as represented by Nazneen. He repeatedly reminds her of his powerful position in her life, and that her identity is shaped by his position in the society. He is her master, and she is a puppet, who is what he has given to her. He also makes her realize that she is weak, underdeveloped, dependent and misfit for Brick Lane.

Chanu is a patriarch, who exerts his power over his wife's life. On one hand, he tries to convince her that her shift from Bangladesh to London is to be seen as an opportunity to taste new life which will broaden her horizons by experiencing new things and new ways of the world she was living in, but on the other hand he tells her to remain unaffected by what she sees around her. Her attempts to imbibe all those things which could enable her to adapt to the new environment were outrightly rejected by Chanu. He categorises himself as that kind of migrant who adheres to old customs and traditions of their original homelands. He holds them tightly, and constantly reminds Nazneen of what their condition would have been in their own country. He tries to keep her choices and desires upsurged in the new environment, leashed and controlled. This somewhere highlights another diasporic characteristic where some migrants live with strong attachment to the land of their origin.

Nazneen comes to know about Razia, her new friend in London, that she has joined a college to learn English. She waits for Chanu to come home, but he comes and gets absorbed in reading a book. She looks for apt time to talk to him. She tells him about Razia's joining college to study English. He responds without looking up from the book. She asks him, "Perhaps I could go with her." He says, "Well.

Perhaps." She again says, "I can go then?" Chanu changes the topic and talks about changing his taste for reading politics. Nazneen again asks him, "Will it be all right for me to go?" He rolls onto his back to look at her and asks, "'Where?' … 'To the college' … 'What for?' 'For the English lessons.'" He tells her that she was carrying a baby and it will not be possible for her to continue her studies after the baby comes to them. He categorically says, "Will that not keep you busy enough? And you can't take a baby to college. Babies have to be fed; they have to have their bottoms cleaned. It's not so simple as that. Just to go to college like that." Nazneen surrenders at the end of the conversation and says, "Yes… I see that it is not" (*BL* 76-77).

Women are producers of children, they are responsible for nurturing them, their feeding and cleaning are the major tasks women must devote their life to, and from a woman she must switch into the role of mothers and wives. They must forget who they are? What do they expect from life? What do they want to do for themselves? How would they like to live? Relationships trounce on their back and demand them to let go of their desires and to live as they expect them to.

Chanu also tries to clamp restrictions on his wife with regard to the type of friends she must make. He tells her to be more class conscious, and so it is better for her to get along with Mrs Islam, because she comes from a rich and respectable family, while Razia's husband does some menial work. He is uneducated and illiterate. He talks critically of Razia's physical appearance too. He does not like her hair cut which makes her look like a tramp. He also does not like her because her son roams around on the streets like a vagabond and pokes his nose. He tells her that her choice of friends could affect their son's nurturing. With such people around, he could grow as a disobedient child. Chanu warns her about the repercussions, he says, "…Then they are disobedient, they start vandalizing, fighting, drinking, chasing women, gambling…Just keep in mind. I don't forbid you to see Razia, but I ask you to keep it in mind" (*BL* 84). She feels irritated but does not say anything. She shared a special bond with Razia and for her, class does not matter much. With Razia, she had begun to forget her past, which was Hasina. She enjoys Razia's company and the way she would mimic people. She finds her funny and not at all harmful. She realizes that Razia had taken her, "mind off Hasina" (*BL* 47).

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* has narrated various instances of patriarchal mind set. Nazneen is married at the age of seventeen, and that too to a man double her age. This candidly describes the mentality of people who think that marrying off a girl relieves them from a very big responsibility they shoulder, right from the time a girl is born to them. This same instance is narrated to Nazneen by Razia about Jorina's daughter, a common acquaintance. Razia informs her that Jorina's daughter will no more be visiting them, as she has been married off due to the fear that she might elope with somebody, and will bring disgrace to family's reputation. Nazneen reacts, "'To be married?' 'Of course, to be married and to live in the village.' 'They took her out of school?' 'She is sixteen. She begged them to let her stay and take her exams…Any way, the brother has gone mad, and they wanted to save the daughter. So there it is. Now she can't run off for a love marriage'" (*BL* 49).

Nazneen is not astonished to hear such incidents because she herself belongs to a very conservative family. She had been taught the difference between a man and a woman. She had never seen her mother arguing with her father. They would rarely disagree upon something. Her mother would meekly accept everything. She remembers that once she had inquired about her father from her mother, who said, "Look! Now my child is asking where he goes. If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men" (*BL* 80).

Nazneen changes herself with what she sees around her. She ponders upon what she had lived in her past and what she has yet to see in this new world. The writer underscores the protagonist's forward looking approach in the alien land. Monica has portrayed Nazneen's life as a pure depiction of diasporic life. She is marginalized, docile, yet upholds inquisitiveness to new strange world she is now part of. She makes friends in Brick Lane. Mrs Islam, Razia, etc. were some of her friends. They make a little Bangladesh on the foreign land, as they all had migrated to London due to one or the other reason. This association enables Nazneen to forget her loneliness and to live in a familiar space, where she could speak in her native language, and eat the traditional food of her country. Nazneen's loneliness brings her very close to Razia. Her friends often drop at her house for tea and coffee and with lots of gossip about other Bangladeshi migrants. She feels good to be with her friends,

particularly Razia. "When she had come [to England] she had learned first about loneliness, then about privacy, and finally she learned a new kind of community" (*BL* 182).

In the new world, she unintentionally begins to miss her morning prayers too. In her struggle to learn the new pattern of living, she misses on many practices which were from her past life. She feels a change in herself. She develops a new love for ice-skating which is an indication of a step towards her hidden desires, and can be seen as a mark of one's identity. Her eyes fall on a magazine which has the news of a couple ice-skaters. She carefully notices the posture of the female ice-skater, who stands on one leg and balances her body and the other leg. She stretches her one arm to hold her partner's hand. She absorbs herself into the role of the female ice-skater and holds the man's hand. Nazneen's imagining herself to be a part of other world is an igniting point in her journey of self-discovery and self-realization. Ali writes, "…she imagined herself an independent woman too" (*BL* 94). In the context of the postcolonial perspective, Bhabha delves deep into the concept of hybridity. Hybridity can be viewed as an indication of resistance by those who are coerced to the subjugation of the colonizers. The colonized resist by adopting the ways of life their masters maintain. This contaminates the imperial ideology, their elegance and uniqueness as and when the oppressed strike back at the colonial domination. This results in "cultures of postcolonial contra-modernity" (Bhabha 6).

She learns to survive in this strange world by learning English words that she would hear. Besides sorry and thank you, now she learns words such as pub, money and hospital. Later with her association with Karim, she learns 'radical'. A very major event needs a mention here. Hasina's walking out of marriage and moving to Dhaka leaves a deep impact on Nazneen. She feels that her sister has been lost forever, and so in utter disturbing situation, she also leaves her house and walks in the streets of London alone. She feels that she is lost in London because she is not familiar with the roads of London. Whenever she had left her apartment, she had done that with Chanu. She is not sure if she could cross London roads without bumping into any vehicle plying on the road. Ali narrates the incident, "…Nazneen, hobbling and halting, began to be aware of herself. Without a coat, without a suit, without a white face, without a

destination. A leafshake of fear- or was it excitement? – passed through her legs" (*BL* 56). This experience makes her realize that it was stupid to look for Hasina in the streets of London. In fact, this experience smashes Nazneen's myth that she could live in two worlds, East and West, simultaneously. She runs after her past, in her present, but when the experience leaves her empty- handed, she accepts the truth. Nazneen thinks:

> …But how would she go home? That was the point of being lost. She, like, Hasina, could not simply go home. They were both lost in cities that would not pause even to shrug. Poor Hasina. Nazneen wept but as the tears started to come she knew that she was weeping more for her stupidity than for her sister. What propelled her down all those streets? What hand was at her back? It could not give Nazneen any idea what Hasina was suffering… (*BL* 59)

This incident does not result in anything fruitful, but it gives Nazneen a new confidence and satisfaction, as she managed to reach home and she could speak in English to a stranger. These two developments ended her fear that she will not be able to do without any help in this new environment. Ali writes, "…and in spite of the fact that she was lost and cold and stupid, she began to feel a little pleased. She had spoken, in English, to a stranger, and she had been understood and acknowledged. It was very little. But it was something" (*BL* 60).

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha writes, "It is in the emergence of the interstices--the overlap and displacement of domains of difference--that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2). He adds, "the negotiation of cultural identity involves the continual interface and exchange of cultural performances that in turn produce a mutual and mutable recognition (or representation) of cultural difference… this "liminal" space is a "hybrid" site that witnesses the production--rather than just the reflection--of cultural meaning" (2).

This feeling of newness begins to grip her. She tries to purge it off but again it tries to creep in. She constantly fights to keep her mind to rest. What keeps her close

to her origin, is the promise she had made to herself to follow all that she had learned since childhood. She tells herself that she must not miss her prayers, as true Muslim has to pray five times a day. After coming to London, she often misses prayers and regrets later. As gossiping was 'haram' or profane in her religion, she would promise not to do it. Another promise she makes with herself is that she would never disrespect her husband, but she could not help it. Her adaptability to the new culture distances her from him eventually.

Monica Ali also brings to fore the hidden desire of Nazneen, hidden until she comes to London, that she likes women who wore western clothes and are independent in their appearance and ways. When she meets Mrs Azad for the first time, she looks at her minutely and notices what she was wearing, and a cigarette in her hand develops affectionate feeling for her. Nazneen herself steps out of her underskirt and puts on Chanu's trousers, and imagines herself to be dressed up the way white girls do. She admires herself in the mirror and tells herself that there isn't any harm in wearing dresses which reveal her brown legs. This is Nazneen's another initiative to get along with the needs of the new World. She wishes to embrace the change, and so when she comes back from hospital, she tries western attire. Ali explains:

> …To see herself she had to stand on the bed and look in the curly-edged dressing -table mirror. Then she could see only her legs, and ducked and twisted to try to gain an impression of the whole. She took the trousers off, put her underskirt back on and hitched it up so that it stopped at the knees. Walking over the bedspread, she imagined herself swinging a handbag like the white girls. She pulled the skirt higher, and examined her legs in the mirror…Her leg wobbled. She opened her eyes and was thrilled by her slim brown legs… (*BL* 141)

Homi Bhabha refers to a new identity which emerges from hybridity (2-3). Such migrants cherish what they see around them and begin to reject various aspects of their past traditions. Nazneen chooses the path of hybridity and considers it a suitable way to survive and learn. She finds this arrangement constructive, less painful

and glorious. With the effects of time and new space, her nostalgia for the past weakens and the yearning to return also dims. In the character of Nazneen, one may find that fixity and hybridity are juxtaposed.

She also learns asking bus ticket from conductor. This is a very new experience of her life. She had never thought that she would one day be wandering on the London streets and managing transportation on her own. Her feelings for London changes and she does not grumble about living in that country any more. She gets so accustomed to that life that she prefers being in the world of strangers. After living in Brick Lane, she tells herself that until she had left Gouripur, everything back home looked convenient. But now when she thinks of the kind of life she and her Amma led, even a thought leaves her awe-struck. Ali writes, "…When she thought about Gouripur now, she thought about inconvenience. To live without a flushing toilet, to abandon her two sinks (kitchen and bathroom), to make a fire for the oven instead of turning a knob…" (*BL* 78).

To cope with her new environment, she creates a 'third world' of her own which is something of the western world and her original Bengali world. Homi Bhaba also underscores the same fact that diaspora creates a 'third world' by fusing some accepted features of the two opposing cultures (207-10). In fact, such population tries to attain such identity which can neither be claimed by the colonizer (the host culture) nor by the 'other' (the Bengali culture). Consequently, Nazneen emerges as a new person who can respond in an assertive way to both her old and new worlds. Yasmin Hussain notes that "culture is not genetically inherited but is instilled by upbringing within a given cultural context" (3).

By assimilating in the new world, Nazneen looks back at her past in which marriage was imposed on her by her father, because of the apprehension girl's parents have in Asian countries. She never objected to it, but she could never love Chanu ever. Chanu is a dominating man and lives in his own illusionary world. He talks to himself and answers too. Nazneen feels a little tensed in his presence. She does not eat properly if he is around, and many times have to change her routine so that she does not have to listen to the bulky list of instructions from her husband. When Chanu

would sleep, she often looks at him to scrutinize his face which was not handsome. She finds his face as round as a ball. She recalls, "…when she looked at his face in the photograph, she thought it was ugly. Now she saw that it was not handsome, but it was kind…" (*BL* 40). She would often think, "Why did her father marry her off to this man? He wanted to get rid of me, she thought. He wanted me to go far away, so that I would not be any trouble to him. He did not care who took me off his hands. If I had known what this marriage would be, what this man would be…!" (*BL* 101)

In the early years of Nazneen's coming to London, she does not react to the subordination her married life had forced on her. But with the establishment of a compromise between the old and the new, Nazneen attains a new identity which compels her to question, or at least react against the imposed situations. Being caught inside the precincts created by two distinct cultural milieus, Nazneen becomes conscious of herself, which results in self-discovery and self-realization. Her discontentment becomes vivid when she speaks her heart openly and says, "What? What, then? I would have run away, like Hasina? I would have eloped with the sweeper? Hah. I would have wept on my wedding day. I did! I did weep. What good did it do?" (*BL* 101)

Nazneen was silently tolerating all this since long, but she does not like at all when he refuses to spare time to hunt for her sister, Hasina, who had left her husband to live in Dhaka. Nazneen was apprehensive about her sister's condition, who would be living and sustaining all alone in Dhaka. She requests her husband to go to Dhaka to bring Hasina back, but her idea is laughed at by Chanu. She is filled with abhorrence to hear Chanu's reaction to this, "Shall I pack a suitcase? Perhaps you have prepared one. I shall go to Dhaka and pluck her instantly from the streets and bring her back to live with us. On the way, I could pick up the rest of your family and we could make a little Gouripur right here. Is that what you have in mind?" (*BL* 62)

Nazneen wishes to yell at her husband, that she went to pub without telling him. She left home without his permission and walked around the whole of London. She also wishes to tell him that she went to a Bangladeshi restaurant to ask directions, as she could have been lost in the streets of London. She just murmurs, "It is up to

you. I was only suggesting" (*BL* 63). She gives vent to her anger by tasting a boiling golden mixture. She burns her tongue, but she realizes that it was not that hurtful as Chanu's words. She feels, "…But it was her heart that was ablaze, with mutiny" (*BL* 63). She was raised in an environment where wives could not announce protest against their husbands' decisions, so she also shows her resentment silently. She wants her husband to notice that she had withdrawn herself from almost all those works which were his. Ali writes:

> Nazneen dropped the promotion from her prayers. The next day she chopped two fiery red chillies and placed them, like hand grenades, in Chanu's sandwich. Unwashed socks were paired and put back in his drawer. The razor slipped when she cut his corns. His files got mixed up when she tidied. All her chores, peasants in his princely kingdom, rebelled in turn. Small insurrections, designed to destroy the state from within. (*BL* 63)

The same kind of reaction is to be noticed when she is not allowed to go to college to learn English. "She slung his trousers on a hanger. Without folding them properly, put them in the wardrobe. He did not notice the dirty socks, the crumpled trousers. Her rebellions passed undetected. She was irritated by the lack of interest; she was pleased by her subtlety" (75).

Homi Bhabha observes that, "Hybridity is a mode of resistance. He describes it as a space that is exposed to contradictions and ambiguities. It is paradoxical space in that it is agreeable but an instrument of resistance" (1). He also asserts that, "It initiates new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestations" (1).

Before Nazneen becomes mother, she would feel that Chanu was disinterested in her. He would read and only read and if ever he would talk, he would give very knowledgeable inputs or recite some very popular literary quotes of great writers. As she was not much educated, so she has no understanding for such insights. Chanu's voracious reading reminds her of Makku Pagla from Gouripur. Chanu's comparison with a mad man is another line of attack shown by Nazneen. She would find her

husband funny as he could carry his book anywhere with him. She also imagines him going to a Bangladeshi latrine with a bulky book in his hand, sitting there for half an hour or more and flies hovering around him.

Despite her hostile feelings for Chanu, she realizes many times that Chanu is kind to her. He does not beat her like many other husbands. She tries to evade the negative feelings which were enough to create wide gap between her and Chanu. She tries to cope up with her new situation by promising herself that, "…No more disrespect to my husband…" (*BL* 102). When their son, Raqib, is hospitalized, she gets to see the caring attitude of Chanu. He would sit all day looking at their baby and waiting for the doctors to tell him that Raqib has recovered fully. She realizes that after all Chanu is not as bad as she thinks of him. She thinks, "Abba did not choose so badly. This was not a bad man. There were many bad men in the world, but this was not one of them. She could love him. Perhaps she did already. She thought she did. And if she didn't, she soon would because now she understood what he was, and why. Love would follow understanding" (*BL* 121).

The irritation she used to feel for Chanu, until their son fell ill also had begun to subside. She finds him as similar as she herself is. She finds him her strength in that weakest moment of her life, as Raqib was fighting for life. Ali writes:

> Where Nazneen turned in, he turned out; where she strove to accept, he was determined to struggle; where she attempted to dull her mind and numb her thoughts, he argued aloud; while she wanted to look neither to the past nor to the future, he lived exclusively in both. They took different paths but they had journeyed, so she realized, together. (*BL* 121)

Nazneen feels to have a bond of togetherness with Chanu. This is never felt by her before. Raqib's illness changes Nazneen and her feelings for Chanu. This is Nazneen's another step forward towards acceptance and assimilation. She is not happy with what her father had imposed on her, but in her journey for self-identity, she makes her decision to reconcile with Chanu. This happens not out of any compulsion, but out of her own self-realization. She compares her situation with other

Bangladeshi women and finds herself to be far better than them. She acquires a new confidence in her relationship with Chanu. According to Micheal Foucault, the rules of formation refer to, "conditions to which the…objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices…are subjected, conditions of existence…coexistence, maintenance, modification and disappearance" (38). In order to lay emphasis on associations, processes, and connections, a dual approach proves to be useful to establish hybridity.

It is not incorrect to believe that as individuals we live with a wide range of multiple social identities, which come into being as a result of negotiations we make within our situations and circumstances, and the interactions we do with those who are affected by the roles that are under question. In this process of negotiation and interaction, identities undergo a major change and new are formed. Sanchez- Mazas and Klein comment, "Identities are not self evident consequences of particular social contexts but they are constructed and contested through debate in the public sphere" (5).

Unfortunately, they lose their son. Their child's death is a turning point in their life. Where the death is a harbinger of an awakening and consciousness of freedom for Nazneen, it detaches Chanu from Brick Lane. He becomes even more desperate to return. He also becomes dependent on Nazneen. The death of their son changes everything. With her son's death all her weaknesses come to an end, and she becomes free in her thinking and actions. Raqib's death ends Nazneen's chapter of dependence and subordination. It also marks the beginning of her new life in Brick Lane. For the purpose of self construction, "Identity is formed at the unstable point where the stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history" (Hall 153).

The second chapter of Nazneen's journey in Brick Lane begins with the birth of her two daughters, Bibi and Sahana. Her daughters are born second generation migrants, who do not have to make any arrangements to adjust in the world which is given to them by their parents. Their culture and their parents' culture are different because their experiences and learnings are more influenced by the West, though they are not free to rule out the influences of the East. Nazneen learns numerous things from them. She enjoys the music her elder daughter, Sahana, plays in Chanu's

absence. She does not impose any restrictions on her daughters, and so when Chanu is away she allows them to complete their school task in front of television. As soon as he returns, they switch the television off and pretend to be more absorbed in their studies.

While Nazneen tries to make adjustments to the new environment, Chanu tries harder to accumulate money to buy tickets to Dhaka. He realizes that his earnings will not be sufficient in the fulfillment of the promise he had made with himself. So, he buys sewing machine for Nazneen. He tells his daughters, "As you are all aware, we have decided –as a family –to return home. Your mother is doing everything possible to facilitate our dream through the old and honourable craft of tailoring…" (*BL* 208). This feeling of independence makes her powerful in her own eyes. She feels that she does not have to bow before anyone for the sake of money. She earns substantial money from this new venture and saves money for herself and her sister, Hasina. She finds that with the economic sustainability she had attained, she has become more valuable in the family. She also senses a change in Chanu's behaviour. For him, the description of family in London is Nazneen, Sahana, Bibi and he himself. He desperately wishes to have his whole family back home. He, who had hardly heard her or tried to understand her, gets very attached to her. The more he gets close to her, the more she drifts away.

This is another turning point in Nazneen's life because with her feet and hands working on the sewing machine, her life also accelerates. With economic self-sufficiency, she looks for her sexual gratification as well. Nazneen gets close to Karim, the middle man who brings dress orders for her. She feels good with this association. She begins to forget covering her head in Karim's presence. She becomes more decisive with time. She begins to roam on the London streets to search for one look of Karim. She does not tell her husband about the religious meetings where all Muslims living in London were to assemble. Without informing Chanu, she also gives Karim some money as fund for the organization, Bengal Tigers. She has a slight apprehension about her decision and fears that Chanu will not like it, if he discovers it. But she flushes off this thought and still helps karim. Karim gives her a sense of pleasure, while Chanu's constant reminders about the home return makes her

disillusioned. When she is pampered by Karim, she is filled with the feeling of grotesque that she is betraying her husband, but the next moment she forgets everything in Karim's presence.

She recalls Mrs Islam's strong comment, "…If you think you are powerless, then you are. Everything is within you, where God put it. If your husband does not do what is required, think what you yourself have left undone" (*BL* 65-66). She decides to end her dilemmas by untying all the ties which were leashing her. She sees herself in the dressing-table mirror and thinks, "…If she changed her clothes her entire life would change as well…" (*BL* 277). She takes very firm decisions about her life, and now she realizes that she could not let go off everything in the name of her destiny. She decides to make her own fate. She shuns off the old principle she had always believed in, that is to leave everything on fate.

She feels that she is being pulled apart by the roles she performs in her life, and so decides to end the drama forever. She decides to start her life afresh. But before she does anything, she decides to set everything right. She takes Mrs Islam to task. Mrs Islam, with her sons, comes to close Chanu's account which he had opened, when he borrows money from her. In spite of paying the whole amount with interest, the lady asks for more. In Chanu's absence, Nazneen handles the situation herself. They abuse her, intimidate her and also vandalize her things, but she fights against all alone. She sternly refuses to pay her extra. Her pertness discourages Mrs Islam and she leaves her house. She feels a sense of relief after that moment. Ali writes, "As she squatted in the debris, everything inside was peaceful. She stopped working and slipped into the moment like a hot bath. Gradually, a thought began to form. God provided a way. Nazneen smiled. God provided a way, and I found it" (*BL* 446).

She then leaves her apartment and heads for Karim's place of dwelling. On the way, she experiences mixed thoughts. She wants to continue her relation with Karim, but the other moment she decides not to. She breaks her ties with Karim, and frees herself from that relationship which gratified her sexual desire, but always made her feel a sinner. She explains, "Oh Karim, that we have already done. But always there was a problem between us. How can I explain? I wasn't me, and you weren't you.

From the very beginning to the very end, we didn't see things. What we did –we made each other up" (*BL* 454-455).

The last and the final task seems a little difficult to Nazneen. She remembers the day she comes to London on an aeroplane. She made so many changes in her life. There were so many things she wanted to do but does not do, because she waited for Chanu's nod. She thinks that there was a lot she could have done to make permanent changes in her life, which she does not do because of the feeling that her life in London is temporary. She realizes, that the life that Chanu had forced on her is what she likes now. Her daughters too, love to live in London and returning home will unsettle them. She now decides that she needs to do something for herself and for her daughters. She feels powerful enough to make things right for her daughters. Jian quotes, "I, too, have ropes around my neck. I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose I buck, I snort, I whinny, I rear, I kick. Ropes I do not choose between you, Lassoes, Lariants, I choose neither of you and both. Do you hear? I refuse to choose" (116).

Nazneen waits for the day to come when they will have to board the flight to Bangladesh. But, she leaves Chanu flabbergasted with the announcement that she is not leaving London to return to Chanu's home, Dhaka. She will continue to live in Brick Lane with her daughters. So, she closes all those chapters of her life which had tried to noose her existence and identity. She breaks all those ties to feel the freshness of liberation. She joins Razia's Fusion Fashions business. Now she dances to the music tune and lets music rule her entire body. Being away from her relations, she does everything which she had never done before. She is gifted skates by Sahana and Bibi. A mere look of skates make Nazneen see the dream of her being on ice skating and dressed in jeans. She always wanted to change her wardrobe overflowed with saris, and she finally does in her dreams. Ali writes:

> …Glinting, dazzling, enchanting ice. She looked at the ice and slowly it revealed itself. The criss-cross patterns of a thousand surface scars, the colours that shifted and changed in the lights, the unchanging nature of what lay

> beneath. A woman swooped by on one leg. No sequins, no short skirt. She wore jeans. She raced on, on two legs. (*BL* 492)

She feels happy to hear from Razia, "This is England, you can do whatever you like" (*BL* 492). She acquires confidence and liberty away from her home. This sense of freedom comes to her only when she unties herself from her marital bondage, and lives all alone in the world which had made her achieve, what her roots had always denied to her.

In the Kitchen is very different from *Brick Lane*, but the issues of identity and loneliness remain central themes in both the novels. Besides identity crisis and loneliness, the writer unfolds the theme of death which aggravates the issue of self-consciousness in the protagonist of the novel. In *Brick Lane* Nazneen's transformation in terms of her personality remains the focal point, while in *In The Kitchen*, the protagonist Gabe's struggle to find his true identity is the prominent point of deliberation. In order to find himself, he bridges the gaps with his family from whom he had distanced due to various issues and reasons.

Through the choice of the title of the novel, Monica Ali has endeavoured to accentuate upon the predicament of the foreigners in the strange and new world. She emphasizes on the fact that when migrants come to the foreign land for different reasons they encounter various hardships. But to sustain in the new environment, they compromise on their dignity, self-esteem, etc. Ali in her novel *In the Kitchen* also attempts to narrate the conditions of the immigrants, who get employed in London but live illegally in Britain, and so encounter numerous problems being on new land without proper procedure and documentation. These immigrants belong to African and Eastern European or other globally remote areas. Ali does not show any link with Bangladesh but in general with the South-Asian communities.

The writer highlights the world of immigrants which is full of tribulations, struggles, agonies and frustrations which fail to catch any one's attention. Through this novel which has lot of events taking place in the kitchen of the centrally located hotel of London, The Imperial Hotel, she compares the world of migrants with that

corner of the house which is less seen by people around, i.e., kitchen. So, Victor, Nikolai, Suleiman, Benny, Albert and Damania belong to different nationalities but are all employed at Imperial Hotel of London. They perform many activities but their labour is not seen and acknowledged by any one. In fact, they work in a hidden area in a place whose function is central for its existence, but which is not resplendent to eyes or is prohibited to the visitors. The writer also underscores the ugly reality that migrants are ready to leave their country to work even for the low-paid and menial jobs in a foreign country. The kitchen of the Imperial Hotel employs large numbers of immigrants, legally or illegally, who remain unseen to the outside world, which sings songs of hotel's glory.

The beginning of the novel introduces us to Gabriel, who seems to be Eurocentric. He carries a pride in his personality, because he is one of those English people who held commanding position above other employees of the hotel who were not English. Ali writes, "Every corner of the earth was represented here. Hispanic, Asian, African, Baltic and most places in between…It was touching, really, to watch them all, every race, every colour, every creed" (*In the Kitchen* 129). He calls them wittily "his brigade, a United Nations task force" (99). He does not show much interest in knowing about them, though later he establishes friendship with some of them and gets to know about their reasons of migration.

Even in his personal relationships, Gabriel holds the superior and inferior position. He is portrayed as an androcentric character. He looks at things around him with male perspective, and hates those female employees who flaunt those peculiar experiences and interests which are considered feminine. He expects women to be more professional in their approach, when at workplace. According to Jeremy Hawthorn, androcentrism describes "a habit of mind and set of attitudes which are based upon a male perspective and which ignore female experience and interests" (7). Gabriel does not think very high about Oona, one of his colleague, because:

> What offended him about Oona was simply this: her domesticity. When she blew into his office and sat down it was as if she had just got home with the shopping, looking forward to a cuppa and a chat. The way she talked, the way

> she walked, the way she pressed her bosom when she was thinking, all of it, at core, was irreducibly and inescapably domestic…The professional kitchen was not the same as the domestic kitchen. The two were worlds apart… (*In the Kitchen* 19)

He sometimes does acknowledge her knowledge about the Imperial's by-laws and footnotes. He also feels glad that if by chance he misses some significant upcoming event, Oona would remind him of it. But he is a hard task master who does not allow leaves or half leave immediately. He is driven by his ego and so even when he is grateful to Oona, he prefers not to mention. Once he was late to work and until then the hotel is well managed by her. Instead he asks her, "Have you thought about retiring? You know you could after all these years" (168). She does not like this statement and immediately says, "Retirement? Hoo! Not me, darling. I goin' stay here' till I drop" (*In the Kitchen* 168).

His antifeminist approach is further highlighted by the writer through his relation with a girl, unnamed, whom he could not tolerate after some time. After her, he had Catherine as his girlfriend, who wanted a lot from him. He felt suffocated with her and so he found Charlie. He finds Charlie different from the rest of the girls because she is independent. He is very clear about marrying her.

Gabe's life seems to be on rails until Yuri's death. Gabe has a family, a caring sister, grandmother and a fiancé. Besides them, he has his established career. The dead body of Yuri, another employee of the hotel is discovered in the basement of the hotel. His death leaves behind various unsolved mysteries. Gabe fails to understand the cause of his death. But this incident marks a major change in Gabriel's life. Yuri's death leaves a deep scar on Gabe's mind. He is unable to sleep, and when he falls asleep he has weird dreams. He only thinks about Yuri or the place where his dead body had been found lying. He dreams:

> In his dream he descends to the catacombs and drifts in a phosphorescent light, a jellyfish glow on the walls, guiding him deeper and deeper still. The body is where he left it… Yellowing nails…The scrotum is hard and shriveled, but the

> penis – he has to look at it – is soft and horribly long…He has to look at the face but he cannot. He closes his eyes and – gagging, retching – feels it with his hands. (*In the Kitchen* 115-116)

In "The Hidden Face of the New Millennium: Migrant Exploitation and Reader Expectations in Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*" Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez says:

> Indeed, his approaching nervous breakdown is announced in subtle ways: on the one hand, through his recurrent nightmares about Yuri's dead body and the act of eating rotting food, which in Freudian terms can be read as a sign of his guilty feelings and his moral degradation; on the other, through the growing frequency of compulsive gestures such as tearing his hair out and scratching his head to the point of bleeding, which can also be interpreted in Freudian terms as symptomatic of his growing insecurity.(53)

He starts to interpret the nightmares as an indication of Yuri's telling him about his murder. He thinks that he has been chosen by Yuri to discover the details of his murder and also to find the culprit, "Why do I keep having it [the dream]? Over and over again. It might mean [...] something significant, like Yuri's death was no accident. It might mean that the dream won't stop until the killer is caught" (*In the Kitchen* 343).

All the themes seem to evoke from Yuri's death. Until his death, Gabriel lives with pride as the executive chef of the once-grand Imperial Hotel in London's Piccadilly. He is full of excitement to open a classic French restaurant. He loves Charlie, his red-headed, jazz-singer girlfriend, and has plans to marry her. After his career settlement, he also plans to spend more time with his family in Lancashire. But one incident changes his life drastically. His life comes to a halt after the accidental death of Yuri, a kitchen porter and illegal immigrant. This accident slowly exposes the hollow life of Gabe. Not only the vulnerability of Gabe's plans comes to fore but depth of his relationships is also brought to light. In this grave situation, Gabe gets disillusioned and tries to find himself. Gabe suffers due to the mysterious death of hotel's employee which leaves him sleep deprived. Nikolai, the Russian commis chef,

comments, “The significance of Yuri's death is that it is so insignificant. That is why it is so troubling. That is why you dream” (*In the Kitchen* 463). In *Death and Identity*, John S. Stephenson states that, “The loss of one’s role is another form of loss of self which may foster a grief reaction” (139).

The accidental death results in Gabe’s emotional breakdown and he remembers all the circumstances from his life. He suddenly feels that he is very lonely. His family is far away, his mother died some time back and his father is on the verge of death. He has a girlfriend who is very busy with her work. He meets Charlie and asks, “My place or yours tonight?” Charlie replies, “I’m tired as well, lover boy. I want my own bed tonight and I want to sleep alone” (*In the Kitchen* 45). He feels that it is all right to be alone, if Charlie does not want to be with him that night. He had not thought like that before but Yuri’s death creates ruckus in his life. He realizes that he has distanced himself from all his relations. In *Death and Identity*, Fulton and Greg Own argue that, there have been changes in our attitudes towards death. According to them, the late German historian Franz Borkenau was one of the first scholars to recognise new definitions of the social self and the social order, “It was Borkenau’s conviction that to avoid existential extinction, the individual would find a sense of identity through some temporal absolute such as a racial, social or national group” (18). Gabe thinks of what will happen to his life. He is pressurized by the uncertainties of his life and so he keeps reminding himself of the deadlines to follow for the fulfillment of his assignments. He reminds himself:

> He had to open the restaurant before Dad was too ill to travel. He would check with Jenny how long that would be. Get Dad to the opening. That was something he had to do. Get the restaurant on its feet, he’d be working all hours, Charlie would understand. They’d move in together. The restaurant would be going. They’d be living together. They’d have a kid… (*In the Kitchen* 115)

He often thinks about his dead mother and desires her presence at the opening. He also recalls his childhood, when he and Jenny were raised very warmly by their parents and the two shared a very beautiful bond too. Due to job, Gabriel shifts to

London and his sister remains in the fictional town of Blantwistle in Northern England. She tries to call him but Gabriel makes excuses of being away at work or being occupied. The death of his mother makes his heart beat for his father and he plans to go to see his father after a long gap, may be for one last time. He thinks of calling his sister to pick him up from the station as he wanted to talk to someone. He thinks he could talk to Jenny, but the other moment he gets apprehensive because he had not met her for years together and so he thinks, "…he didn't really know her now" (*In the Kitchen* 200). So, he does not tell her to come. When she comes to meet him, she looks very different to him as she has put on weight and has become a blonde. He is surprised to see that she had started smoking. He realizes that he does not know her at all, as she has overhauled her entire look as well as her ways. Ali writes, "Every time he saw her he knew her less. The years didn't add up, they only took away. He watched as she blew streams of smoke out of the window that sailed back…Jenny always seemed to have someone new" (*In the Kitchen* 224). Ali tries to underscore the truth that not only immigrants feel themselves to be far away from their people, and have a feeling of complete loss of warmth, when they meet their relations back home. Sometimes, despite being in the same country, people feel that time has changed everything, and with distance and lack of social meetings they feel that they hardly know their relations with whom they had once shared a very close bond. Gabe wants to talk to her about Lena but it seems that words will fail to find a way out.

After meeting his sister, who seems to be so full of love for her friends, he feels that there were people in his life too, whom he can hardly recall now. When he thinks about them, he realizes that he himself never knew them well and so they do not exist anymore. He thinks, "They did not exist, except in his mind, and then not even there" (*In the Kitchen* 226). Many a times, he tells himself to catch up with friends but he does not. He tells himself, "…What he needed was an adjudicator, someone who knew him, who knew what he was really like. A friend, you see, a friend could say impartially, oh, you were always destined, you were cut out…" (*In the Kitchen* 436). He takes a resolve to revive his circle, but he guesses it was already late.

Gabriel learns to live without his friends but a revelation about his mother makes him berserk. He is blamed by his sister that when his family needed him, he was not with them. She tells him about the bipolar disease their mother was suffering from. She tells him that their father has suffered all through his life. When their mother was alive, he witnessed his wife's madness. Gabriel repeatedly asks his sister if she was talking about their mother. He gets to know that:

> She'd run off with another bloke, some random person she'd met at a bus stop or in the launderette, though one time it was Daniel Parsons and he brought her back after one day and said, I'm sorry but I've bitten off more here than I can chew, and it was awful because Dad had to work with him and it was worse even than when she took up with the milkman and rode around with him… (*In the Kitchen* 231)

Gabriel tells his sister to stop because she was accusing their mother of something very indecent. He smokes, drinks heavily and feel the burn inside his throat which was still less than the truth his sister had revealed after so many years. He shakes his head in anger and says, "No. I'd have known. If you knew, I'd have known as well. I'm older than you" (*In the Kitchen* 233). Gabe is filled with remorse and guilt to know from his sister that he had separated himself from the family. She tells him:

> …and Mum said we've not to trouble Gabe, he's going places, that boy, and it's not for us to drag him down with cares. And she'd sit and watch the phone because you'd said you'd ring on such and such night and so she'd sit and stare at the phone, take a chair into the hall and set it by the little table… and of course you wouldn't ring and in the end she'd go up to bed… (*In the Kitchen* 233)

He cries all night after knowing this bitter truth. He realizes that, "He hadn't cried for years" (*In the Kitchen* 238). When he is with his family, Jenny requests him to reconcile with their Dad who could die any moment, and tries to find the truth about the wide gulf between father and her brother. He feels upset and calls Charlie to

tell that he cannot talk to his father, his grandmother has become more senile, and Jenny shouts a lot. He hated his father because his father had taken him to his mill and made a mockery of him. He made him stay there all night. He wanted to go but his father did not let him. He wishes his father to be dead. He remembers, "When he ran into the weaving shed he saw Dad lying on the floor beneath the girder, like he'd fallen off…Dad wasn't moving" (*In the Kitchen* 336).

Gabe also begins to feel bad about his deteriorating looks. He could see baldness getting prominent day by day. He feels bad that his baldness was making him ugly. He goes to Charlie and tells her, "I come to you for help and what do I get? You're supposed to say, no, that bald patch is not visible to the human eye" (*In the Kitchen* 451). He touches his bald patch and feels tensed when it seems to have doubled in size. There is repeated mentioning of his baldness in the novel, but there is another point of discussion too, that whenever Gabe would look at himself, he would try not to think much about it. This also shows that he is an escapist who runs away from the bitter realities of life. It also represents that, with the growing of patch of baldness his problems had also begun to grow. The way he could not help shedding his hair and control it, in the same manner his life was also going out of gear, but he does not wish to see it.

Another result of Yuri's death is the new relation that Gabe makes with Lena. Lena is another migrant who was hiding herself from police, as she had migrated to London illegally. Her incomplete documentation is the cause of concern. Ali has drifted our attention to such immigrants who settle on foreign soil illegally and always find themselves apprehensive about their survival. Lena undergrounds herself after Yuri's death, and so is virtually without a house to live in and a job to work at. She is found loitering in the loading bay of the hotel by Gabriel and he asks her, "Do you…do you have anywhere to go?" He says, "It's OK. You can stay with me" (*In the Kitchen* 104). She comes to stay with him. She becomes another mistake of his life. He breaches his girlfriend's trust and estranges their compatible bond.

Gabriel realizes that she was no match to Charlie but still gets close to her. He feels strange when Lena offers herself to him and asks, "If you want sex, I don't have

problem" (106). He denies it outrightly, though inside he wanted to desperately. But more than anything else, he finds strange that he wishes to tell her everything about his life and family. He thinks:

> He wanted to tell her. But what? Why did she come to him, anyway? Had she come to him? One look they exchanged in the catacombs what could one look mean? How much? Did she look at him, then, the way he thought she had? They had only seen each other for a second or two, the rest he had made up, invented now, tonight, because he was –what? –lonely? Was he lonely? Had he been lonely? Or was that something he had just now begun to feel? Was she making him lonely... (*In the Kitchen* 110-111)

She tells him that, she is hiding from a pimp who has taken her passport and also beats her. She also reveals that, "Yuri help me. Only from goodness of heart" (*In the Kitchen* 198). She tells him that she had been kept in Kilburn at the eleventh floor by Boris, the pimp. He was put with one more girl and they were made to work in brothels. He would bring different men to them and one favourable day she ran away. She was helped by a Ukranian girl who got her job at a café. But her past chased her and one day she saw Boris walking past the café. That Ukrainian girl took her to Yuri. She hides herself because of the fear that she will be killed by Boris. Gabriel feels bad for her and assures her that he will help her. He says, "I'll do it. Of course I'll do that for you" (205).

Through Lena's narrative, Ali tries to spotlight the darker side of migrant's life which is brushed under the carpet, either because it exposes many, or because it is not considered to be significant. She unfolds that some migrants get trapped into some criminal activities such as prostitution and human trafficking. Ali unfolds the life of the protagonist which is somewhere linked with the theme depicting the unknown facts about migration. She belongs to such category of migrants who have little emotional bonding with the host nation and its culture. Lena, assimilates into the British culture only to that extent which was necessary for her to survive in a foreign land. According to Lau, "They are people who are as multi-cultural as they are multi-lingual. They do not regard themselves as fully belonging in either culture, and have

practically evolved a sub-culture peculiar to themselves. They try to take the best from both worlds, but suffer the sense of hybridity and cultural entanglement" (241).

Towards the middle of the novel, Gabriel's feelings for Lena become strong, and he tries to compensate her with all his savings and promises to find his so-called brother, Pasha. Lena ultimately leaves his flat, gathers all money and leaves him forever. Lena's detachment from Gabe indicates the disassociation of some of the migrants from the host land. They live, they earn and go back. Such category of migrants does not get emotionally attached with the nation which is not theirs.

Gabe undergoes a lot of transformation because his relationships were derailing his life from the track. He was almost on the verge of getting married when Charlie calls it off at the revelation that he was cheating on her for Lena. She feels disgusted at the very thought that they both were sexually involved. She rebukes at him and asks, "You fucked her, didn't you? You coward…How many times? Well, was it once? Was it twice?" (*In the Kitchen* 287) Gabriel is shattered to have a broken relationship. He shares his feelings with Oona. He tells her, "I split with my girlfriend, with Charlie…She split up with me" (341). Oona says, "That lovely girl." He says, "The very one" She asks him, "You want her back?" He utters, "Of course I do" (*In the Kitchen* 342). He regrets that because of Lena he had spoiled his relations with Charlie. He feels bad that how he used to think of Lena and the lovely moments they had spent together, while being with Charlie. He laments how his relationship with Lena had slowly and gradually distanced him from Charlie. There were many developments in his life when Lena was with him. Charlie would feel that Gabriel had begun to change. He had started smoking which surprised her and she had said, "Taken up smoking. What else is new? What else have I missed" (*In the Kitchen* 179).

This heart break leaves Gabe unsettled. He becomes restless. In the muddled state, he thinks:

> …was he heartbroken about Charlie or not? The answer seems to be sometimes yes and sometimes no, which wasn't helpful in the least. Leave that

> one aside for now. What about Lena? Was he her knight in shining armour, or was he currently the last in a long list of men who had abused the poor girl? Being painfully honest with himself he had to say he did not know. Maybe the honest answer was both. (*In the Kitchen* 379)

Life after Yuri's death proves to be hollow and weird. Due to his differences with Charlie and Lena, he feels very lonely. He has an emotional breakdown. He becomes a lunatic and finds his life meaningless. He fails to find himself amidst the chaos. He feels that he does not know himself. He thinks, "What am I? What am I? A nobody? A nobody? A zero? Am I a hollow man? ...Was he a man without qualities? A man about whom nothing could be said? No, he was somebody. He knew who he was" (*In the Kitchen* 478).

But the next moment he is blank and he goes to every employee working under him to describe him and his personality in three words. When all of them fail to give him any satisfactory response, he goes to Charlie and asks the same question. He tells Charlie, "Oh, for God's sake, Charlie, it's a mess. It's a mess. It's all a mess. What happened to me?" (*In the Kitchen* 482) He talks, then he paces in the room, he asks for cigarette and then he litters ash everywhere. He acts as a madman. He says, "Tell me what I'm like. Describe me. In as many words as you want…You're the one who knows me…I'll never ask you for anything else. All I'm asking for is a few words" (*In the Kitchen* 484). Charlie finds him out of senses and tells him, "…insensitive, unfeeling, stubborn, stupid, selfish, selfish pig!" (*In the Kitchen* 484) She ultimately tells him to leave and he leaves in that state of lunacy. Out of her office, he gets lost in the streets of London and keeps announcing that he is a Chef. He finally collapses and prostrates before God to help him, if he exists.

Unfortunately, all the occurrences of his life contribute to Gabe's identity crisis and breakdown. In the moment of vulnerability, he remembers his mother and father. He also thinks of all those decisions he had taken in his life, right or wrong. He regrets about many and then he feels excruciating pain in his chest. He thinks it is a heart attack, he gasps for more and more oxygen. He tries to contact Lena, but despite being in the same flat he is not heard. He falls on the floor but manages to dial

Emergency service and is taken to hospital. To his surprise, when he regains his consciousness, he realizes that he is alive.

Not only his social and family ties weakened him, but things in his career were also not smooth. His father also dies and his desperation to marry Charlie gets stronger, but he knows that Charlie will not reconcile. With the sudden death of Yuri, Gabriel begins to feel that there was something not going right in the hotel. Lena's past had already made him suspicious about things around and his father's death makes him a little more conscious. He carries an investigation on his own to understand the exploitation of migrants and their involvement in criminal activities. He discovers that Gleeson, Deputy Manager of the Imperial Hotel is involved in prostitution and human trafficking. Victor, an employee of the hotel, tells him all the practices taking place around them. He tells, "He gets girls from the hotel. He gets them and sells them on." Gabe tells him to elaborate, "Girls from the hotel" He replies, "Cleaners. The maids. New ones coming in, so no one knows them, no one misses them". He further adds, "Ivan, like, introduces them to the club, the bar, the whatever, that's the line. He takes them, he sells them like meat, man, two dollars a kilo" (*In the Kitchen* 469).

He is astonished to know that his own people runs a prostitution network by deceiving young foreign waitresses at the hotel into becoming prostitutes and trafficking Eastern European workers into Britain, only to be forced to work under conditions of slavery on a Norfolk farm. He gets to know this when he goes to find Pasha. He confronts Gleeson but he tells him:

> You sanctimonious little arsehole. What gives you the right? Passing judgment on everyone else. People want work, we employ them, it's called giving people what they want. There's a market price, it's called commerce, that's how everything works. Why don't you just get over it? Get real, Chef. Start accepting how things are. (*In the Kitchen* 529)

With the end of the novel, the criminals are also exposed. But Ivan gets arrested and Gleeson and Branka flee. Life utterly disappoints Gabe but brings him

close to his family. He tries to bridge all gaps with his family, brought due to displacement. He unites with his family after witnessing lot of ups and downs. He settles all that which began to emerge, when he was just ten years old. With so much turmoil happening in his life, he realizes that he had been very harsh to his father. He misunderstood his father and considered him the cause of his mother's suffering. He changes his attitude for his father when he gets to know the truth from his sister, Jenny. Towards the end of the novel, before his death, he reconciles with him and treats him as his confidant. He is the first man in the family who gets to know about his relations with Lena. He regrets that for many years of his life, his relations with his father remained estranged for no reason. He thinks of telling his father, "You're a good dad, he decided, plain and simple" (*In the Kitchen* 387). But hesitates a little and thinks, "He should have said it straight away. To say it now, it would sound false, as if he'd taken all this time to come up with it, as though it was something he had to force himself to say…" (*In the Kitchen* 387).

Towards the end, Gabriel's mind also attains calmness. He recollects the happy moments of his life he had spent with his father. His mind finds peace at the realization that he celebrated Christmas with him, his last one. He feels good about having talked about all important things of his life with his father, and they had very long talks with each other, compensating what they had missed for so many years. Life changes and changes Gabe too:

> Since he had returned to Blantwistle six days ago, he had talked endlessly to Jenny about what had happened to him…He had told her about Gleeson and Ivan and their dirty secret. He had told her about Oona, and the way that he had behaved to her. And about Charlie. It wasn't easy, but he had tried to piece the story together, without leaving anything out, including his breakdown and how he had thrown away both his job and the new restaurant along with the punches he had thrown at Fairweather on that Saturday night. (*In the Kitchen* 541)

After this, he calms down as if returning to normalcy by shunning of something undesirable and embracing of something wanted. Gabe's personality

undergoes a complete transformation. His positive hybrid identity is revealed at the end of Ali's novel. He revives himself and knows where to go and what to do. He manages to overcome his identity crisis and now knows himself clearly. He finally realizes that his family and Charlie are his priorities. He also accepts the truth that he was getting bald but now he laughs at the issue and does not avoid it. He also shuns off his superciliousness and becomes friends with his staff at the hotel, before he leaves his job. He feels regretful for his coldness towards Oona, and so he confesses to her that he had tried to get her fired. He settles everything towards the end. So, he discovers his new hybrid identity through acceptance. Hall's theory that an identity is always in process and never complete can be applied to Gabe. He fully recovers from the mental and emotional breakdown and prepares himself to encounter all the difficulties life will fling at him. He firmly begins to trust his mother Sally Ann's words, "no matter how many weeds you pull up, there'll always be more" (403), symbolising that there will always be problems in life.

Identity remains at the core of both the novels. Nazneen in *Brick Lane* goes through metamorphosis after the death of her son Raqib. Nazneen changes herself after all the troubles she experiences. Similarly, Gabe in *In the Kitchen* too adopts a new outlook towards life. He comes to terms with the truths of life and decides not to run away from them anymore. He accepts the truth about his mother's past, a truth that enables him see things differently and reconcile with his father. He gets close to his childhood town of Blantwistle, a town he had avoided for many years. He finally gets united with his old relationships, his father and sister. He gets Charlie back in his life and leaves Lena, because of which he had lost his senses and had broken down. Here, Ali tries to emphasize that identity issues do not only trouble immigrants, even natives can feel the acute pain of being lost, especially when displaced from their home as in the case of Gabe who dislocated from his home town Blantwistle to work in the city of London. There is a possibility that despite being amidst our own people and land where we are born, confusion and dilemmas related to identity can strike you. In both the novels, *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*, death remains a turning point in the lives of the protagonists, Nazneen and Gabriel. They deal with death and their loneliness in their own ways.

In the novels, *In the Kitchen* and *Brick Lane* the main characters find their true identity through means of acceptance, resistance and refusal. Nazneen attains her new hybrid identity by breaking all ties with her family and by embracing the new culture and on the other hand, Gabriel attains his sense of completion through reconciling with his old relations, leading to his unison with the family. He has a sense of achievement by leaving behind all those relations which he had developed accidently, but which filled his mind with pessimism and glumness. He forgets Lena and his mother too. Even his baldness does not worry him anymore and he also leaves his job. He feels happy to be with his sister, his nephews and his girlfriend, Charlie. Both of them break themselves free from the unwanted burden of sore relationships and societal pressures. Their difficulties give them an opportunity to separate their choices from impositions. As soon as they leave behind such cumbersome ties, they redefine themselves and carve out a new identity for themselves. Whereas, the other two characters Chanu and Lena show their refusal to assimilate fully in foreign soil. This very idea of partial imitation makes it the mockery of the superior culture. Chanu migrates to abroad with a clear intention to earn lots of money, so that he can raise his standard of living in own country. In the process of assimilation, he adopts some practices of foreign culture as per his convenience. Still, he rejects many aspects of western culture and longs to return to his country. Towards the end of the novel, Chanu in a state of disillusionment returns to Bangladesh. Similarly, Lena lives with Gabe just for survival in an alien nation. She displays her refusal to get emotionally involved with Gabe, a white man. In this way she rejects the white culture. When she gets a chance, she also runs away taking all his money. The writer has shown how these characters are pulled by opposing forces of either refusal or acceptance in order to deal with displacement. Homburger Erikson writes that, Identity-consciousness is, of course, overcome only by a sense of identity won in action. Only he who "knows where he is going and who is going with him demonstrates an unmistakable if not always easily definable unity and radiance of appearance and being" (300).

Chapter- 5

Politics of Racism: Investigating Adib Khan and Monica Ali's Works

South Asian migrants face umpteen challenges and problems to fit in the new environment. Besides the major adjustment they make after coming from a majority to a group of minority, they face racial prejudices as another threat to their identity as immigrants. Racism remains at the core of diasporic consciousness. It has affected almost all the institutions such as social, political, national, different discourses, ideas and cultures to show its influence on them. Migration to the foreign land for economic reasons and the natural desire for acceptance by the natives of the new nation has been the major theme of discussion. Despite the fact that this populace lives in the host country for generations together, yet they experience the discriminatory mind set of the natives. The ratio of migrants versus natives is growing rapidly due to a huge influx of migration. The migrants become victim of racial abuse, marginalization, communal hatred and hostility. Various terrorist attacks have sown seeds of suspicion in the natives. The questions like, why they have come to our country? What are they doing here? When will they leave our land? Our country does not look like our country, etc. are often lashed against them. Hence, the topos-exploitation remains consistent.

Migrants make numerous efforts to be accepted but in many cases their efforts to integrate or assimilate fail. F.M Deng calls these experiences, "racial identity crisis" (12) or confusion over what people objectively are and what they perceive themselves to be. They experience serious intensity of differences and discriminatory attitudes of the citizens of the nation they have come to live in. The issue of racial conflict remains central in the diaspora writings. Amidst the diasporic conundrums, their feeling of otherness is intensified by the multiple threats they receive from the natives. It seems, the natives and the immigrants are engaged in a struggle which emerge due to insecurities.

The countries with the colonial past often become victim of the Eurocentric notion of difference between the Blacks and the Whites. In diasporic writings, racial

conflict and biases remain a reality. The racial tension between the natives, who have been in the role of the colonizers, and the immigrants, who have served as the colonized, has its basis in the colonial past. Down the ages such an oppressive system carried within it, inherent notions of racial inferiority and exotic otherness. In such cases, racial discrimination remains one of the most persistent elements of diaspora literature. The natives wish to see the immigrants at a disadvantaged position. In fact, this factor stands up to deprive the migrants of the actual opportunities one need for survival, such as employment, promotion, right to live peacefully, etc. Inequality in terms of social and professional opportunities is also affected due to the racial discriminatory practices. D.T Wellman in *Portraits of White Racism* defines racism as, "a structural relationship based on the subordination of one racial group by another" (53). Contrary to this, Thomas comments, "The determining feature of racism is not prejudice towards Blacks, but rather the superior position of Whites and the institutions – ideological as well as structural – which maintain it" (79). It clearly points towards existence of racial politics where superiority of one race is perpetuated by keeping the other disadvantaged races in subordination.

The other important reason behind this racial politics is 'the third space' created by cultural hybridity, which enables the minority subjects (migrants) to claim a degree of agency within a majority culture (of natives). The natives, thus, feel threatened and resorts to racial tactics. According to Bhabha, though the colonizer (natives) wants the colonized (migrants) to mimic him, to imitate him, he never really expects or wants the latter to catch up. According to Perera, this double bind of assimilation of the West that says to its subjects, "Be just like me" and again in the same breath, "You can never be just like me" (103) exposes the ambivalent stance of the superior West to promote racial differences.

The diasporic writings compellingly juxtapose an adopted world and the world of origin. According to Jon Stratton and Len Ang both the worlds are, "a mutual symbolic mirroring, in a battle of overlapping, interested self/other misrepresentations" (179). They converge and diverge simultaneously. In fact, they juxtapose to mark the prominent differences, as they are drawn parallels. They are two binary oppositions which depict the dichotomy of the 'East' and the 'West'. Such

writings critically present the unarguable differences, biases and prejudices that exist in the relationship of 'East' and 'West'. They hold the binary representations such as national/ethnic, Europe/Asian or colonizer/colonial. This actually is a tug of war between us and the others, where 'us' stands for the colonizers and the 'others' for the colonized. In diasporic works, the role of the colonizers is assumed by the domicile citizens of host nations who look down upon colonized subjects, here represented by migrants. Because of this clear distinction, the relationship between the two remains estranged. After going through the process of assimilation, the hybrid status of the migrants enables them to question and shatter this binary opposition. And this is something, which is not acceptable to natives. Hence, racism comes into picture.

Displacement from one nation and settlement in another, particularly from South Asia to Europe is affected by the notion of the superiority of the natives, i.e. Whites or Europeans and the inherent inferiority of the migrants, because they originally belong to the once colonized part of the World. The natives see 'others' as individuals who are not made to fit into their world, as the 'East' is considered as uncivilized, dark and ignorant. They are considered to be blacks and are viewed as misfits and barriers in the nation's attempt to flourish. The presence of migrants causes insecurity amongst the natives, as they take that as a buffer in their culture, and assortment of race. They consider their race as ideal and supreme, and hold the migrants responsible for mixing into their race, and so contaminating its purity. Race is, "a term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups" (Ashcroft et. al. 198).

Racism demonstrates an extraordinary display of prejudice and superiority towards the others, who are not considered as one of them just because they are originally from such nations, which are considered to be less developed, and have lived under the colonial subordination. Hence, oppressiveness exists between the binaries which are presumed to be essentially different. This results into power relations. Staurt Hall underscores Said's statement on the power relations, as he writes, "In 'Orientalist' sense, not only were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They'd the power to

make us see and experience ourselves as 'other'" (225). In fact, the very concept 'race' has been influenced by society in which superiority and inferiority are inherent.

Adib Khan and Monica Ali have attempted to mark fascinating links and gaps, that play predominant role in the shaping of migrant identities. The writers have tried to bring to fore, that in the formation of identity, diasporic population explores the developing connection of representation, discourse and power. In this effort, the writers also accentuate upon the idea of a fixed centre in relation with the cultural reference and power. Giddens points out that "Power . . . is generated in and through the reproduction of structures of domination. The resources which constitute structures of domination are of two sorts – allocative and authoritative" (258).

In Adib Khan's *Seasonal Adjustments,* Iqbal restlessly faces all the difficulties that arise because he is considered as an outsider belonging to different social spaces. As an outsider, he does not conform to the expectations and standards of the majority of population, who have their own nationalist cultures and traditions, xenophobia and other forms of cultural stereotyping, which make them superior in their own way. In the quest to identify himself, Iqbal finds himself in the middle of the common confusion because of being a non-white. Hall writes, "The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization" (225).

Iqbal has to constantly face a situation which prompts him to think about his relations with Australia. Each time he thinks of Australia, he feels low and pessimism creeps into his mind. He had come to live in Australia fifteen years back with big dreams, but after living life in the alien land he seems to be unsure of his feelings for the country. He has mixed feelings for the place. He recollects his memories of the place fifteen years ago and thinks:

> …Australia used to remind me of a naïve, uninhibited youth born into affluence, intelligent yet thoughtless about an opulent lifestyle, unintentionally arrogant, yet to discover the pains of growing up…Australia now stands

> tottering on the brink of adulthood, enmeshed in the process of finding its soul and learning about the traumas of maturity. Australians are learning about the commonality of the human flaws it shares with the rest of humanity…The country is slowly teaching itself the difficult task of being humble. (*SA* 114-115)

Iqbal feels that the difference of mannerism between the Asian values and those of the West are quiet categorical. He very clearly remembers how intimidated he used to feel in front of his Australian wife Michelle and father-in-law Keith, because they would often try to impose their cultural values and beliefs on him. They tried to raise Nadine, his daughter, as a Catholic and so wanted her to be baptized, but Iqbal did not let this happen. His denial is not well received by Keith, and he remembers, "A shroud of desolate silence descended over the table… Keith pushed back his chair and moved to a side table to carve the meat. There was a surgical precision about the way he used a knife… Knives and forks scraped the plates in a collective apology for the lack of conversation…I noticed his tight hold on the knife and fork" (*SA* 83).

Keith asks him, "What do you have against baptism?" Michelle also tries to convince and pressurize Iqbal to accept her family's decision. She tells him, "You have to understand we are a very tradition-oriented family. Rituals are important to us. They are essential landmarks of our faith" (*SA* 83). Iqbal feels the exerted pressure on him. Keith repeats his question, "What is your objection to baptism?" Iqbal responds, "None at all. It's of no significance to me. But I do object to your assumption that it is an affirmation of my daughter's identity. How did you determine she is a Christian and not a Muslim?" (*SA* 84) Keith is amazed to hear Iqbal's statement because he had never thought that he cared about religion. Keith expresses his anger by clattering knife and fork on his plate and says, "Religion is not about rationality. It is about a sense of purpose in life. There is a commonality of unshakable belief among Catholics which gives us strength and clarity of vision about ourselves. It is all about sharing and participation in the richest communal tradition in the world" (*SA* 84). Iqbal does not succumb to his father-in law's pressure, and rejects it on the ground that his daughter will never do a thing that pleases the religious

sentiments of anyone who belongs to her life. With conviction, Keith tells him, "Every child is born into a tradition." Iqbal tries to explain his contention to Keith and Michelle, he says, "Nadine will be among a slowly growing minority which will learn how to combine traditions. It won't be easy." Iqbal sounded repulsive to Keith, and he retaliates, "No. That will only confuse her. She must grow up with a clear understanding of who she is and where she belongs. If she lives here, it is only right that she be brought up in the mainstream of Australian life. There is no advantage in being a fringe dweller." Iqbal gives vent to his frustrations which resulted out of his difficulties as a migrant. He makes himself clear, "Like myself? I felt like my pulse quicken. Like most first-generation migrants I was sensitive about the uncertainty of my place in the community." Keith aggressively utters, "This is a Christian society. Even you cannot deny that. My grand-daughter must not be deprived of a place here…She must have security! Don't you understand that?" (*SA* 85) Stuart Hall points out, "Cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation" (225).

Adib Khan's portrayal of Keith represents his rigid sense of Australian nationalism which does not have a place for any Asian. He showcases Keith's animosity for Asians, who according to his belief could smash their cultural values as a display of Eurocentrism. Gooneraine comments, "Look. We're Asians. They're Australians. When Australians meet us, that's what they notice first, Difference" (*SA* 118). He encounters this hostility every now and then, especially when he is considered as someone who has been smuggled from somewhere to make way to Melbourne, and to lead a standard life at the cost of his tax-paying Aussie life partner. Keith makes him realize the same, and dislikes him, as Iqbal thinks that:

> What makes me unacceptable to Keith, even dangerous, is not my colour or my background. It is my refusal to uphold what he considers to be the immutable virtues of every decent Australian – a blind devotion to the monarchy, an active support for the policies of the RSL, a life-long

> membership of the Liberal Party and an undying belief that Australia should continue to draw all its spiritual and cultural sustenance from Europe, even in the distant future. (*SA* 86)

Iqbal is bothered by Keith's attitude which brings to surface the unresolving problem between religion and secularism. The bitter argument between Iqbal and Keith also speaks about a conflation between secularized and religious nationalism. Iqbal expresses, "What irks me is the calm certainty with which Keith expounds his extreme views against a changing world moving rapidly beyond his understanding and exposing him to the foreignness of secularism. Keith experiences no doubt about his myopic vision of Australia…" (*SA* 87). Edward Said asserts, "culture also becomes one of the most powerful agents of resistance in post-colonial societies" (88). Fanon argues, "If culture is the combination of motor and mental behaviour patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow man, it can be said that racism is indeed a cultural element" (19).

Franz Fanon puts it, "Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the natives' brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (170). Not only Keith but Michelle's whole family looks at him with suspicion, because he was not one of them. This becomes apparent when he is invited to a party in Melbourne, at Michelle's house. He is introduced to Judy, Michelle's brother, Martin's, wife. Judy asks him about his origin and comes to know that he is from Bangladesh. She says, "Lived near a Bangali doctor in London. In fact, there were quite a few people like (him) living in Putney… Too many for [her] liking." He snaps at her and says, "Just like there were too many Britishers in India not so long ago … We [meaning India] have more subtle ways of colonizing countries" (*SA* 147).

Adib emphasizes that Asians or outsiders in Australia make many natives uncomfortable, because it challenges their sense of who they are and where they belong. Jenkins comments, "The question of how Australia pugs into Asia…is a topic that makes many Australians uneasy. It challenges their sense of who they are and

where they belong. It exacerbates an identity crisis in a nation which once seemed so sure of itself but which …[now] sometimes seems most unsure of itself" (39).

Iqbal recalls an incident when he spares time to read a provocative newspaper article, which sets a sort of alarm to the natives that the increased influx of outsiders in Australia might one day jeopardize their existence in their own country. He gets perturbed to read the harsh and the judgmental language of the article. He gives a pert comment:

> It is the sort of speculation which causes communal consternation. What will they say behind the exclusive doors in Collins street? …What? Singapore? South Korea? Asian countries? Surely not! What a preposterous idea! There is a rectifiable flaw somewhere in the evolutionary pattern. That is not how it meant to be. It shall right itself. Let us march on with the all-conquering spirit of Europe. We carry the world's treasures of culture with us. How can we possibly allow them to catch up with us? (*SA* 32)

Iqbal feels extremely angry when Australians call him an Asian. He feels that why all those who are believed to be from the same corner of the world, with the same colonial past are not only considered dark, inferior and unknown but are also lumped together under the tag of Asians. He is irate at the practice of being considered, "devious, unscrupulous, greedy and godless. Our unstated philosophy – copulate and populate. We are a bunch of untrustworthy rat -bags extending our sinister shadows to blight the country he claims to be God's gift to Christians" (*SA* 87). Another reason that irks him is that he is considered to be an 'Indian' by all Australians around him. When his own wife also picks up the same conversation, he reacts, "I am a non, am I? Jews, Hindus, Muslims – we are all nons. Outside the human race" (*SA* 149). Michelle asks him the reason that had spoiled his mood. He replies, "Because I am fed up with being treated as an oddity, a stray from the forbidding darkness of the world up there. I'm tired of misconceptions and assumptions, of being an object of curiosity!" (*SA* 149) Adib Khan underscores a very common contention, which bothers every migrant on the foreign land, that they are not addressed as Australians or insiders but are always Asians or non-whites or non-westerners.

Michelle asks him, “But tell me, how would your family react if they met me? Wouldn’t they be curious? Wouldn’t they be offended if I went around correcting them so bluntly? You are overreacting to people who have reservations about you…” After listening to this, Iqbal ponders upon it and finds a rationale given by Michelle. He accepts that his Australian wife will also have to undergo the same process. There will be a possibility that she also might feel lonely, isolated, victim of prejudices, etc. He admits, “My family would have met her with a festering potpourri of prejudices. A white woman, a Christian and a consumer of pork, would have been treated as a catastrophe destined to ruin my life” (*SA* 150). In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim wrote about the saliency of “race” as a social fact. Scholar, Jennifer Lehmann, observes that according to Durkheim, “[T]he word ‘race’ no longer corresponds to anything definite” (569). Similarly, “Even when blacks win acceptance, their stigmatized color is not forgotten” (266).

He soon realizes that Michelle being referred as a ‘White woman’ is a prejudice, much driven by colour. But colour is something that never emerged as a subject of discussion between Keith and him. As Goldberg states, “Race is irrelevant, but all is race” (6), that is, irrelevant because while there are no non-arbitrary or absolute markers of race, 'debates about and struggles around race in a variety of societies are really about the meaning and nature of political constitution and community, “Who counts as in and who out, who is central to the body politic and who peripheral, who is autonomous and who dependent?” (83) He identifies his cultural clash as the major reason that estranged his relationship with Keith. He differed from Keith, because he expected him to accept and uphold the Australian principles. As Lars Jensen aptly observes the argument between Iqbal and his in-laws, which proves to be even more revelatory in highlighting “how the resort of Asian stereotypes is never far below the surface in Australia and how it is not the preserve of the uneducated. Rather, such stereotypes are bred into high and low through a whole range of representational systems” (142).

Australia makes Iqbal encounter another very derogatory experience influenced by racial prejudices. He feels pity at the ill treatment of black-skinned people. He realizes that, “dark-skinned foreigners were probably meant to subject

themselves passively to verbal insults and physical abuse in return for the privilege of living in this country." He also realizes that no matter, how much these blacks had to endure, they could not retaliate at white residents of Australia. A white man shouts at Iqbal, "Fuck off, you diseased convict dick!" (*SA* 196)

Iqbal on numerous occasions looks at his past home contemptuously, and in a comparison of the two locations, he places the new world over and above. Initially, the arrival of a migrant in any new nation confuses him. Iqbal expresses his dilemma about both the countries, he says, "I am not idealistic enough to dignify its manifestation of suffering I have confronted. My family has been the other disappointment. What upsets me is my inability to slip back into a tradition I assumed was an integral part of me" (*SA* 116). He concedes, "There is a lingering foreignness about Australia that I find disturbing. I don't have anything to hang on to with conviction, nothing I can really call my own. I don't feel passionately for anything that happens there" (*SA* 117).

The confusion deepens when such migrants find themselves at odds with the past, and unfamiliar with the present. This further worsens when they experience the double perspective of society, which sometimes gives them the status of 'insider' and then that of an 'outsider' instantaneously. His attempt to be accepted in both the worlds leaves him in seething pain. According to Salman Rushdie, "Hybrid identity is in effect a refusal, or perhaps an inability, to make definitive identity choices. As the past is rearticulated in the present and the present is projected onto the past…Hybridity is not a negation of identity; rather it is its quotation, vicarious and inevitable condition" (147). Iqbal was conveniently accepted as an 'insider' by Michelle particularly when she was madly in love with him and wanted to marry him. But time estranged their relationship on a mere realization that both of them were so different from each other.

After their separation, although not legal, when Iqbal tries calling up Michelle to inform her that their daughter is unwell, he again has to bear the cold dejection from her and her father. Keith, Michelle's father, picks up Iqbal's call and faces his rejection for being someone not like them. When he comes to know about Nadine's ill

health he reacts by saying, "Thank God! I suppose one has to expect these illnesses in your country…" (*SA* 175). Michelle also expresses the same distrust for the health system of Bangladesh, which hurts Iqbal. She says:

> 'Has a doctor seen her?' 'Of course a doctor has treated her! That's a bloody stupid question!' 'Was the doctor properly qualified?' 'This one was trained and experienced in England. You know where they know everything and never make mistakes. He happens to be my brother.' 'I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to be rude.' 'I am sure you weren't. It comes naturally when your family talks about the third world. What happened to your friend?' (*SA* 176-177)

Iqbal knows the truth that they both could never trust Asian system and its people, but when his daughter expresses her longingness to be back home, he feels utterly lonely. He feels unsure if their daughter would have felt the same yearning for him, had she been with her mother. He feels sad and unwanted at Nadine's outburst, "I want mum! I want to go home! Why can't you call her now? Now Dad! I don't care! I want to talk to her now! God! I hate you! I don't want to see you again!" (*SA* 173-174)

Iqbal wanders from one corner of the room to another, so as to escape the truth that Nadine was not happy away from her mother. He realizes that, no matter how hard he tries to make Nadine a Bagladeshi, she belonged to Australia, which he had left, but for his daughter her home was Australia. He feels shattered because he suddenly realizes that he belongs to nowhere and has no place to go to. He says, "I am hesitant about going down, even though I feel like getting as far away from my bedroom as I possibly can. I linger undecidedly in the middle of the staircase as if I have suddenly realized I have nowhere to go. I allow myself to feel lonely again" (*SA* 178-179).

He feels even more irate when his family sees his self-imposed migration as an "act of greed" (*SA* 136) and accords him a cold welcome. He has been flirting with the 'west' for quite some time, and their mutual relationship has been irreparably

altered. The gap is further widened by the family's mistaken belief that he has been enjoying great privilege by living in such a wealthy and progressive country. This is in fact, in sharp contrast to his personal experience of an unpretentious life regulated by provincial uniformity and suburban routine, "like a good Australian I have been seduced by the common dream of a brick-veneer house […] the neighbours, unlike the free-roaming koalas, are politely amiable from a distance" (*SA* 122). He remembers that he was so sure about his decision of leaving his country, but when he faces racial challenges, he is reminded of his friend Iftiqar's, reaction, "So you went looking for a morally better world. I won't ask if you found it…" (*SA* 117).

Like Iqbal, Nadira, Hashim's friend also feels uncomfortable in England, and so she also returned after admitting that England could not be her permanent home. She expresses her happiness about her decision to return. She tells:

> My dignity was restored. I was once again a part of an ethnic majority. That was vital for my self-confidence. No abuses or snide remarks about my colour or my dress, no fear of racist attacks, no blame for Britain's difficulties…Everything around me spoke intimately. It was all a part of me. It was a great feeling to be in love with life again, to embrace it without the fear of rejection. (*SA* 153)

New environment does not warmly welcome migrants, who already struggle to come to terms with the utter cultural disparities which leave them in awe. Migrants usually feel defeated in hostile surroundings. These racial limitations condemn the presence of outsiders due to their status in the foreign nation. The same feeling continuously degrades Iqbal and makes him aware that he does not belong to the new nation and its people. His dissatisfaction is the result of his feeling of being a fragmented piece divided between Bangladesh and Australia, but belonging to none. His apprehensions deepen with the increasing awareness that he is living in two diverse cultures. Australia makes him feel that human relationships are frugal and hollow and at least in Australia they are calculated by "the fallacy of cultural superiority" (*SA* 33). He owns up his guilt of coming to a nation which has exerted hierarchical domination on outsiders and so he laments his experience of "the

diversity of cultural radiation, which has bleached [his] individuality" (*SA* 9). He finds himself in such a situation where he is compelled "to entrench oneself in the groove of an established tradition (and) requires a certain amount of unconscious dedication to ignorance" (*SA* 249-50). He feels dissatisfied in this multi-discursive world, "the world seems to open up just a little more each day to expose the magnitude of its imperfections" (*SA* 153). The inequalities and prejudices arising from Christian and Islamic cultural traditions, the Anglo-Saxon and the elite Chaudhary superiority, are creatively connected and re-configured in his imagination into transcultural partnerships, such as in the passage where he envisages himself as a United Nations referee appointed to supervise a battle between Christians and Muslims:

> It is an honest confrontation. There are no political or moral pretentions. It is an open display of bigotry, prejudice and ignorance in a conflict for global supremacy […] Those without fervent belief in their cause may not participate. Rational thinking is forbidden. Compromises are not allowed. Inflammatory placards and banners are compulsory. (*SA* 203)

He tries to strike a balance between the existent religious binarism, through a transcultural vision that transmits his thought of a benign divinity, "In moments of outrageous daydreaming, I have mobilised Michelangelo's masterpiece [David] and whisked it away to another land where it stands white and resplendent in the fiery pink and silvery-gray light of an Agra dawn in front of the Taj. A discourse between Michelangelo and Shahjahan" (*SA* 63).

This shows that, where Iqbal faces complexities amidst the cultural fragmentation, he has also begun to appreciate, how much different people and cultures have in common. Jian says:

> Hybridity must be understood in its historical depth. In the context of cultural consumptions, elements are selectively unearthed from the remembered past and integrated in an unstable present to make better sense of the present…Migrants invoke different histories and appropriated myriad cultural bits and pieces to make sense of their present-day identity. Conversely, the

> present is also projected onto the past, in so far as the experience of a hybrid identity makes it imperative to construct a past that justifies the current state of affairs. (147)

Adib also highlights the irony, that on one hand Iqbal laments the prevalence of racial biasness in Australia and on the other he himself holds prejudices against his own community of people. Back in Bangladesh, he considers himself superior and creates a binary of superior and inferior. His stay in Australia makes him feel that in many ways he is polished as compared to the natives of Bangladesh. What he condemns in Australia, he practices the same in his original country. Iqbal also calls himself discriminatory on many occasions.

Iqbal's realization that he is discriminatory is to a great extent Adib's attempt to counter racism directly with sharpness and revealing retort. In *Seasonal Adjustments,* Adib Khan brings before us the wide gulf between 'West' and 'East', the relationship of superior and inferior and then a shift in the roles. 'East' tries to prove its supremacy on its own people and finally a sharp denial.

In *Solitude of Illusions,* Adib Khan examines the unchallenged control British exerted on its colonies. The British had deliberately fanned religious animosity in India which created a very wide gulf between Hindus and Muslims. The writer attempts to discuss the result of this religious antagonism and the common feeling of loneliness, ennui, loosening of religious faith and communal disharmony. This novel also accentuates upon the candid gulf between the Australians and the South Asians. The writer emphasizes upon the prevalence of racial differences in Australia by representing two different cultures practiced by Asians and Australians. This has been done by him side by side, so as the emphasis on both cultures could be discussed simultaneously. This novel revolves around Khalid Sharif, who takes a trip to Australia to visit his son's family. His presence in Australia offers a panoramic view of all those issues that draw our attention to the "contact zone" between the cultures followed by South Asians and Australians.

The wide fissure between the natives and the migrants becomes conspicuous through his Australian neighbour Angela's preference for a house, that is a little elevated and situated on higher ground than that of her Indian neighbours. This elevated house gives her a satisfying feeling that at least she is at a raised position in her nation. This, "was compatible with the moral superiority she enjoyed over her materialistic and status-conscious neighbours" (*Solitude of Illusions* 32). This is substantiated by the fact that Angela has fenced her backyard, which symbolizes another country inhabited by Angela, who before the coming of Khalid does not like Indians. She thinks high of her because of her English roots. Angela's attitude of taking pride in her British lineage, represents the general attitude of Australians who have an aversion to their Asian neighbour. She is exceedingly proud of what she perceives to be "the essential features of her imperial heritage", that is "propriety, correctness and decorum", not to mention unabashed racist attitudes" (*Solitude of Illusions* 28). She proclaims that, "[a] well-kept garden is a reflection of a civilized soul" and is convinced that "[i]n that respect, most Indians are inadequate" (*Solitude of Illusions* 33). She is pleased that the Sharifs "finally tid[y] up their backyard." She believed that "[i]t was essential for the neighbourhood to maintain its orderly appearance" (*Solitude of Illusions* 33). Hence, ethnic origin becomes an issue, whenever Anglo-Australians feel that the status of the nation or national life is at stake.

Angela has a very strong sense of identity, which she acquires not only from her sense of belongingness to Australia but because of her upbringing as an English. She considers herself nothing but only an English. Her mother, Indra, was an Indian but her father was an English. When her father was alive, she remembers, "her Hindu mother, without nostalgia, as a shadowy, silent figure lurking behind Robert Morton's domineering presence, someone who had fulfilled her life's function in giving birth to his offspring and was, afterwards, destined to be redundant until her death" (*Solitude of Illusions* 28). Angela reminisces her past, which nurtures her in such a manner that she feels that, despite her childhood in India she is not attached to the place. The writer writes, "Angela had been raised to ignore the Indian connections in her life, so that the term Anglo-Indian was never a cause of conflict of identities and had no

bearing in determining the cultural boundaries of her life. She adopted propriety, correctness and decorum as the essential features of her imperial heritage" (*Solitude of Illusions* 28).

She has her own reasons to dislike Indians. Living away from India for so long, Angela remembers the days when India was fighting its battle against the colonial rule. Her father was in the Imperial force, who becomes a victim of the Indian rebellion against the British. She clearly remembers that their servant comes running to them to inform that her father was lying on the floor, as a result of religious bigotry of Indians, and their hatred for the English. She recalls, "Her mother fainted without uttering a sound, and her sisters ran sobbing to their rooms and locked the doors…Despite warnings and pleas from the servants, Angela stepped outside the house. She burned with a slow anger against a world that had torn off its mask to reveal its hideous blemishes and vindictiveness…" (*Solitude of Illusions* 36).

This incident shakes her faith in India permanently, and takes her far away from the country which had nurtured her childhood. The struggle for independence snatches her family's peace, her birthday excitement, and she becomes powerless in no time. She witnesses the "unstoppable currents of hatred and prejudice" (*Solitude of Illusions* 36). She confesses that the incident left a deep scar on her mind. After that incident, she felt estranged from India. It becomes clear that, "India was not her country, she determined…She sensed that a way of life was being torn away from her, leaving the Mortons marooned in a darkness of uncertainty" (*Solitude of Illusions* 36). The bitter remembrance of being addressed as "Anglo-Indian bitch" fills her with a feeling of loathing for Indians. She recalls, "The incident, with the bemused cynicism of accumulated experience, which had taught her the adversities in life often had to be accepted without any form of compensatory justice" (*Solitude of Illusions* 37).

This becomes the biggest reason for Angela's uncontrolled hatred for Indians. This incident not only changed her but snatched the peace and happiness of her family. Her father was almost killed by Indians. She recalls:

> The Indians really killed Robert Morton that afternoon, Angela concluded much later in her life. The administrative power of an imperial civil servant had deceived him into an assumption that he was invincible. Suddenly his arrogance was crushed…confined permanently to a wheelchair, Robert Morton left Indian for the gentler climate of his native Dorset where he settled into a life of a bilious retirement. (*Solitude of Illusions* 38)

He started looking at his Indian wife Indra, with utter disliking, as if she was the one who was responsible for the incident. She ultimately died without doctor's diagnosis of any ailment. Angela remembers clearly, "He rarely spoke to his daughters and treated his wife with an indifference, as though she was to blame for the unthinkable daring and impertinent savagery of her countrymen" (*Solitude of Illusions* 38). Edward Said, speaks about Flaubert's concept of Orientalism as, "a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid of filtering through the Orient into the Western consciousness" (6), which has formed into an idea "of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (7).

The protest of Indians not only smashed her father's belief in his standing in India, but also affirms her faith that she is not an Indian but purely British. Her father died on 15 August 1947, which marks the Indian independence. This day does not make her happy. Rather, this day reminds her of the torments her whole family underwent. The pain of injustice, overpowers the celebrations of 1947. She affirms in the story, "The injustice of it all was a searing pain that had not been dulled by the analgesia of time" (*Solitude of Illusions* 40). She also announces that she was not affected by the momentous glory of India's freedom because, "She was British" (*Solitude of Illusions* 40). Angela's past in Bengal, makes her suspicious of an Indian Muslim, which gradually dwindles as they become friends.

This marked hatred for Indians, and Angela's superiority over Indians, and English distinctiveness is evident in her aversion for non-European neighbor. She considered them to be unhygienic and uncivil. She considers the presence of non-

Europeans on their soil as something devoid of "aesthetic dimension of living" (*Solitude of Illusions* 33). Tia Byer comments:

> When perceived inferiority complexes, which the colonizing culture feed back to the colonized, subsist, such insecurity necessitates a means by which to operate within a world where power relations will continually deem one culture as subordinate to the hegemony. During colonial mimicry, the colonized strives to distance themselves from their original identity in order to align themselves as close as possible to the colonizer's preferred identity. (7)

Angela characterizes same attitude which generally almost all Australians carry. It has been observed that Australians dislike having an Asian neighbour. This racial conflict between the two cultures is illustrated by Khalid's experience, when he is introduced to Angela and her grandson, Adam. On their first meeting, Adam reacts weirdly on seeing Khalid. To Adam, 'the other' is a black man and, therefore, he shouts "Black man! Black man!" (*Solitude of Illusions* 80) when he first encounters Khalid in his backyard. Khalid's skin texture and colour make him different in his looks from the Australians. This plays the role of a 'signifying code' for Adam, as he is brought up with an orientalist attitude which enables him to understand the meaning of racial difference through the 'black' colour. In *Solitude of Illusions*, Khalid Sharif, an elderly visitor to Australia from Calcutta, wryly comments that through his own experiences he has learnt that "pariahs are unsettling for any community. They bring with them too many strange ideas" (*Solitude of Illusions* 122). The colored foreignness is a profound reason of indifference, and so they are unaccepted by Australians. Adam having nurtured in an oriental atmosphere, instantly categorizes Khalid as someone different from his race, on the basis of his skin colour. Thus, in this postcolonial Australian context, blacks are seen as inferior, ignorant and of course less human beings.

Blacks are dark, uncivilized and in Adam's knowledge 'the black man' mean something to be scared of. Angela continues to live with the same feeling of superiority, until she finds that some Indian man, Khalid Sharif, of her vintage has come to live in her neighbourhood. A mere look of Khalid Sharif makes her certain

that he was an Indian, as she has seen Indian culture very closely, and so she knows even a small detail about Indians, their skin, their features, physical appearance, etc. She describes him, "Indian. Very definitely Indian, though not as dark as the southerners. Aquailine nose. Angular face…" (*Solitude of Illusions* 35).

No matter how hard feelings, Angela shows for Indians but her childhood memories of the country still grip her. She is enticed by the presence of an Indian in her backyard. She shuns off her superiority for a while, and tries to pick up a conversation with him. She is also sure of the fact that Indians are uncivilized and ignorant, who surely cannot speak the language of their rulers. She still asks him, "Do you speak English?" To her surprise, he answers, "Yes, I speak your language" (*Solitude of Illusions* 80). She no longer holds her prejudice against the Indian Muslim. She had lived in that era in India when Indians did not know English, and education system had yet to be developed, or if at all had developed then too it was beyond the reach of common Indians. When she discovers that Khalid could converse in English, Angela experiences a shock. Through this, Khan attempts to represent the deconstruction of such binaries that are responsible for challenging the potentialities of Asian culture. Angela's childhood in Calcutta of 1947 had shaped her thinking contemptuously for the Indian Muslims. Her father was a civil servant and so she had looked at India from the Western perspectives. She was taught that Indian Muslims are uncouth in terms of their culture and intellect.

She is unable to cope with the situation. She fails to understand his accent and tells herself, "It certainly wasn't Indian. Perhaps he was one of those privileged subcontinentals with the benefits of an education in the United Kingdom. Her controlled hostility weakened. His eyebrows were unusually thick and furry" (*Solitude of Illusions* 80).

This discovery that an Indian can speak English flawlessly, enables her to shun off her stereotypical thinking and antagonism for Indians, whom she had always seen as much below her status. For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the foremost adversities behind postcolonial 'otherness', are speech and language. Upon asking, "Can the subaltern speak?" Spivak proposed that speech and silence are determined

by the history of power relations and colonial discourse, in that the 'subaltern', traditionally becomes victim of an "injunction to silence" (25 and 61). To add, Tia Byer says, "Speech is indicative of power, whilst silence is synonymous with marginalization. The history of power relations, signified by colonial imperatives of political domination, determines who can speak and who cannot, and for Spivak, must be broken" (2).

Later, when he hurts himself in the playground and is taken to hospital, the doctor comforts him through his smile and a gentle touch. This has been protested by the writer as he feels that, "It was the doctor's unfounded assumption that English was not included in the patient's linguistic repertoire" (*Solitude of Illusions* 201). To establish the opposite 'Other', the 'Self' maintains his distinctive superiority, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said 3).

Adib Khan attempts to show that sometimes the 'West' and the 'East' meet and make a meaningful bond. Angela develops friendship with her neighbour, Khalid, which offers a prospect to look at the two cultures together. Adib Khan writes, "Their regular across-the fence conversation had revealed their polarized interpretations of modern Indian history" (*Solitude of Illusions* 95). The racial prejudices which are always upheld by Angela seems to be dwindling, and the fencing between the houses of the two, that earlier marked a wide fissure between the two cultures erodes permanently. Angela's side of fence was once like another world which could not be reached by any Indian, a world which was restricted for Indians, whom she despised.

Later, she tries to bridge the gap which had been years old, by allowing Khalid to visit her house without any prior invitation. After numerous visits and interactions, the differences they once were familiar with melts. Angela had not liked Indians, especially Indian Muslim, but now they were close friends. Khalid too, does not mind cleaning the used utensils at his new friend's house. Had they been in their own worlds, they would not have created a common zone of convenience and need. Indian Muslim had learnt to accommodate an Australian and vice versa. The migrants who newly arrive in Australia can never belong nor experience belonging in the same way.

The extent to which they can accumulate Australianness depends upon the cultural codes they are keen on adopting.

For Adam and Angela, racial differences were held and perceived differently. As Angela was an Anglo-Indian, so she shakes off her prejudices against an Indian Muslim friend, Khalid, in no time. This cultural binary is further highlighted, when Angela looks astonished to hear Khalid speaking English proficiently unlike Indians she remembered. She is satisfied to make friends with an Indian who could speak English flawlessly. As a result, she shuns off her hostility for Indians.

This gesture is one of the most unusual attitudes to be seen in the 'West'. Perera underscores that for Asian Australians 'acting white' "guarantees their parallel existence as the underside of successful assimilation" (103). In the novel, the narrator says that "an outward show of restraint was a mark of civilized behavior" (*Solitude of Illusions* 33). Samuel Huntington comments that this distinction and distinctiveness of culture practiced by an imagined West (Australia) and an imagined East is constructed through what Jon Stratton and Len Ang considers, "a mutual symbolic mirroring, in a battle of overlapping, interested self/other misrepresentations" (179).

Besides Angela and Adam, Khalid's son, Javed, treats him as an outsider for whom life will not be as sorted out, as it is in India. He constantly reminds him of the distinction between the natives and the outsiders. Javed acts as any other native of a foreign country who would discriminate migrants in the name of various reasons. Shanaz, Javed's wife, also looks at Khalid as someone who does not belong to Australia. She believes, "Khalid Sharif did not belong in these unfamiliar surroundings. It was far too late for him to adapt to an alien way of life. Shanaz didn't think that Khalid Sharif, would be conscious of his loss of resilience. At his time of life, an unwillingness to accept the limitations of his age was common…" (*Solitude of Illusions* 78).

Judy, Angela's daughter also speaks about India sarcastically, as her mother must have recounted her bitter experiences in the country. Because of the picture of India that she gets from her mother, which is both exotic as well as terrible, she

declares her plans to Khalid, "I would like to visit India someday. All that is wonderful and tragic appear to coexist there. It would be breathtaking experience" (*Solitude of Illusions* 131).

Khalid does not like Judy's way of expressing her feelings for his country, nor does the writer like it. The writer says, "Khalid Sharif smiled wanly, as was his habit when confronted by innocent ignorance. To predetermine the nature of an unknown experience was to invite a crushing disappointment. India didn't respond to preconditioned notions about what it had to offer" (*Solitude of Illusions* 132). Sharif eventually laughs at the wrong perception the people from the West carry about India. He first thinks of asking Judy, "Why do you wish to experience more extreme forms of tragedy…Isn't there enough here?" He thinks of all those whom he knows very closely. He looks at his son and his daughter-in-law whose life is almost fragmented. He thinks of Angela, who according to him:

> …not entirely conditioned to her loneliness, filling in the emptiness of her days with the faded dreams of a past that continued to throw up its ghosts to please her…Here it was quiet, personal struggle of individuals against themselves, rather than the unremitting, noisy panorama of communal suffering that made it easier to be selective about what one chose to see. (*Solitude of Illusions* 132)

Khalid laughs at the irony that the 'West' makes fun of the 'East', and thinks that India has nothing to offer to its people. The 'East' is nothing but deplorability, and so only results in tragedy. He mocks Judy's remark, and says, "Judy should not have spoken about the tragedy of India when her own life was eventually in turmoil. One shouldn't have to contend with so much unhappiness" (*Solitude of Illusions* 132).

His stay with his son and daughter-in-law in Melbourne stresses him often. They both had absorbed themselves in western style of living, so much so that they were not fit to be called Indians. Besides their attire and mannerism, their approach towards their personal relationships had also been affected by the western pattern of life they were living in Melbourne. His daughter-in-law marks a contrast between the

Indian women and those women who belonged to the 'West'. For her, carrying out Indian ways of life in her dressing and behaviour were not practical. Khalid notices:

> …how often Shanaz used the word practical in the course of her conversation at home. There were a hard-edged commonsense about everything she did. When feelings threatened to influence her domestic decisions, she allowed herself time for her rationality to rescue her, like a reinforcement unit bringing much needed relief to beleaguered troops. (*Solitude of Illusions* 136)

Khalid ridicules the western culture by finding that the practicality of the 'West' is highly responsible for making the 'West' look superior to the 'East', where things were more sorted. The writer expresses, "Khalid Sharif was intimidated by the stress of western life, the combination of emotional and psychological strain that had a corrosive effect on personalities and relationships…" (*Solitude of Illusions* 137). Clearwater explains, "a territorialisation of space." This idea confirms that "to territorialize means to assign identities for collective subjects within structures of power, and, therefore to categorize and individualize human beings" (192). This shows that in order to be able to establish identity, we additionally need to compare and mirror ourselves to something we are not, we are dependent on the other to determine (personal) identity.

On the other hand, despite being an Indian Muslim male, Khalid does not mind helping Angela clean the used dining dishes in her kitchen. Like any other Australian, he seems indifferent towards the conversation that takes place between Angela and her daughter, Judy, over their family affairs. Khalid is no more an intruder in Angela's Australian home. In Khan's diasporic narrative, both Khalid and Angela's family display a hybrid nature of culture, operating at the mingling juncture over the border line. Acknowledging the discomforts and insecurities of migrant life, Bhabha identifies the 'innovative potential' in the migrant self. Therefore, Khalid is accommodating of the Australian family, while, despite their initial racial prejudice, the Australian family accepts the Asian as their regular visitor.

Postcolonial migrant literature is marked by configuring, reconfiguring, generation and degeneration of cultures and identities. Cultural hybridity attempts to break away the binaries of religion, colour, language and nationality and create a common zone for interaction and association. *Solitude of Illusions* is the similar attempt to integrate two different cultures. It represents the "contact zone" created by Khalid representing South Asian, and Angela depicting Australian culture. Hubel asserts, "We are the same in different ways; we are also different in the same ways" (246). According to Homi Bhabha, "The construction of the colonial self is always caught up in identification with and against the other, and this dependency on the positioning of the other offers a space for subversion and transgression" (18). This shows that two different nations stand as two antagonistic units and so endorse inscribed dualism.

Monica Ali has dealt with racism in various ways which have been depicted through *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*. Racism emerges as one of the themes of her writings. Besides the variety of themes *Brick Lane* unfolds, issues related to racism are most conspicuous. The novel is set in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which almost looks somewhat like Bangladesh, as it is dwelled mostly by Bangladeshi immigrants. The place is also inhabited by white people and black people. Nazneen has white neighbours, "In the flats immediately next door, there were white people" (*Brick Lane* 304). In such a mixed-racial society, issue of race becomes noticeable.

Racism and colour discrimination are sometimes coined interchangeably, as Frantz Fanon cites a quotation from Sir Alen Burns's *Colour Prejudice* while he is talking about the racial prejudice:

> It [colour prejudice] is nothing more than the unreasoning hatred of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and richer peoples for those whom they consider inferior to themselves, and the bitter resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so frequently insulted. As colour is the most obvious outward manifestation of race it has been made the criterion by which men are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments. The

> light-skinned races have come to despise all those of a darker colour, and the dark-skinned peoples will no longer accept without protest the inferior position to which they have been relegated. (133)

Colour is considered to be an important parameter which manifests race. Africans and Asians are classified as one as their skin texture is black or dark.

Brick Lane substantiates it because Chanu, who is originally a Bangladeshi, which is an emergence from Indian origin, fumes with anger to see the leaflet from the *Lion Hearts* because it had categorized Africa with India. So he reacts, "Putting Africa with India, all dark together" (*BL* 251). According to the South Asian diaspora writers, Africans are black, but calling Indians dark is not correct. But people judge or categorize people on the basis of colour. Hence, colour has become the criterion of inferiority or superiority. Chanu suffers due to the colour prejudices. This discriminatory feature affects his career and becomes a major hurdle in his promotion. He explicitly states, "I think I am certain of the promotion in any case" (*BL* 39). But he realizes very late that his colour could be a barrier in his career growth and so in place of him, his colleague gets promoted. Initially, he thinks that just because his colleague is very close to the boss and accompanies him to pub, it does not mean he will be promoted, so he comments, "He thinks he will get the promotion because he goes to the pub with the boss. He is so stupid he doesn't even realize there is any other way of getting promotion" (*BL* 37). Later when he does not get the promotion he gets to know that because he is not a white man, so he lost the opportunity. Nazneen expresses this racial discrimination and injustice of white people and says, "My husband says they are racist, particularly Mr. Dalloway. He thinks he will get the promotion, but it will take longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem... My husband says it is discrimination... He says that racism is built into the system" (*BL* 72).

Chanu's dreams and his zeal to work come to an end because of his bitter experience of the racial divide. For years he had been working with the white people, and all through those years he considered himself as one of them. His bitter experience of institutional racism shatters him from inside and he tells his wife that

white people make hollow relations and are not to be trusted. He says, "All the time they are polite. They smile they say 'please' this and 'thankyou' that. Make no mistake about this, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in the back" (*BL* 72). This feeling of rejection, racial discrimination and humiliation depresses and disappoints him to the core. He tells Nazneen:

> It is the white underclass, like Wilkie, who are most afraid of people like me. To him, and people like him, we are the only thing standing in the way of them sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, then they are above something. If they see us rise, then they are resentful because we have left our proper place… They can play on those fears to create racial tensions, and give these people a superiority complex. (*BL* 38)

The writer has underscored emphatically the wide fissure between the two races because of the superciliousness and cocksureness of the whites. They consider Bangladeshis, "dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan. But these people are peasants. Uneducated. Illiterate. Close-minded. Without ambition" (*BL* 28). Monica Ali asserts the truth that the Whites consider Bangladeshis not only inferior but uncouth too. The cause of racial tension between natives and immigrants is the fear that Bangladeshis might outnumber them.

Chanu throws light on the socio-economic status of English people in Bangladesh during the colonial period. He does that by highlighting disparity being promoted by the natives of West from the time of colonial period to the present day. He says:

> You see, all my life I have struggled. And for what? What good it has done? I have finished all that. Now, I just take the money. I say thank you. I count it… You see, when the English went to our country, they did not go to stay. They went to make money, and the money they made, they took it out of the country. They never left home. Mentally. Just taking money out. And that is what I am doing now. What else can you do? (*BL* 214)

This disillusionment changes his personality, and from an enthusiastic figure he becomes a pessimist. This setback hurts him and results adversely on his mind. The writer says, "He started every new job with a freshly spruced suit and a growing collection of pens. His face shone with hope. And then greyed with frustration, with resentment… But he was slighted. By customers, by suppliers, by superiors and inferiors. He worked hard for respect but he could not find it" (*BL* 203).

Chanu's skin indicates that, when migrants try to settle in a foreign land, they encounter the racist mindset of the natives which emerge in different forms. Racism has resulted in extreme disliking for the immigrants and discrimination over time. Chanu now firmly believes that no matter how educated a Bangladeshi is, he cannot successfully establish himself in Britain. Racial prejudices fail him in the new environment, and so he is treated like any other illiterate Bangladeshi person.

Karim tells Nazneen, "The racists-they cleared out of here ages ago. What about Shiblu Rahman? Nazneen recognized the name. The man had been stabbed to death. It could happen again. Thing is, see, they are getting more sophisticated. They don't say race, they say culture, religion" (*BL* 241). Cultural differences have also been resisted by the inhabitants of the country. Chanu avenges his unpleasant experience of racism by making his daughters wear salwar suit. His daughters' attire demonstrates his indignation for the white people. After becoming a victim of racial discrimination, he becomes confused about the West - East conflict. Prior to this incident, Chanu looked at hijab-clad women with contempt. He used to consider them illiterate, but now he does not like girls wearing skirts. He later tries to exhibit his rebellion against the West by compelling his daughters to dress up like Bangladeshi women. He asserts, "If he had a Lion Hearts leaflet in his hand, he wanted his daughters covered. He would not be cowed by these Muslim-hating peasants. If he saw some girls go by in hijab, he became agitated at this display of peasant ignorance. Then the girls went out in their skirts" (*BL* 265). Chanu tries to prove that dress code is a way to reflect one's culture, and also unacceptability of that culture which belongs to the new country they have come to live in. The Lion Hearts leaflets deepens Chanu's contemptuous stance towards the dressing culture of the 'West'. So, he uses his daughters' way of dressing as a way to protest the western culture.

Another instance which demonstrates Chanu's sense of hatred is, when he uses the word 'rot' for Britain, as he entrusts his son to the care of Bangladesh. He detests the influence of 'West' on children. Chanu disapproves of the people of Brick Lane and places them in the category of bad. He decides to keep his son away from 'rotting' by taking him back to Bangladesh. He considers Bangladesh to be a safe place for his child. Ali has depicted the racial subject by showing both the perspectives. Chanu is a victim of racial discrimination but his demeanor highlights the fact that Bangladeshis also hold and promote the same against the British.

Monica Ali has also highlighted that, this gulf between the 'West' and the 'East' is due to different religious beliefs practiced by Muslims and the Whites. Christianity and Islam stand in disagreement with each other. Both Muslims and Christians, do not approve of many sentiments and opinions of each other's religion. Since England is a non-Islamic country; living in the country of Whites where Christianity is dominant, they have a fear that their life is under threat, and they can be victimized. Nazneen is filled with fear, when she gets to know that her daughter, Shahana, has run away, as there was a pandemonium in the vicinity where Bengal Tigers had gathered to protest against the racial discrimination. She runs aimlessly as she does not know where to find her daughter. She hears, "Jorina said that police had been to the mosque and questioned the imam for two hours. No one had any idea why, although many predicted trouble and everyone doubted that a church had ever been treated with such flagrant disrespect" (*BL* 206).

Nazneen realizes that Muslims are not accepted and are looked with suspicion by the Whites, otherwise they would not have allowed secular harassment in a religious place. But policemen enter the Mosque to arrest the rebels. She is also surprised to know that the imam, the leader of Islam, has been questioned by police for two hours. Through this incident, the writer presses upon the truth that religious consciousness also plays a pivotal role in determining the racist mentality of people. The novel brings to fore a very sensitive religious uncertainty prevailing across the World. It discusses the growing apprehensions and worries of Muslims, on account of Muslims being lynched or murdered across the world. The novel discusses a Muslim organization named Bengal Tigers, which mourns the world's aggression against

them. The organization aims to instill a feeling of oneness among the members and so they address the members as 'our brothers'. A member of the meeting says, "Now America is taking her revenge and our brothers are being killed" (*BL* 415). They also deliberate upon Chechnya revolt to understand the causes of killing of Muslims. At the meeting, the Multi Liaison officer reads a paper that every Muslim should contribute and think in terms of unified Islamic state across the world. Javaid Rehman suggests that, "Muslim communities have also retained the ghettoization syndrome: 40 percent of those [Muslims] with Bangladeshi origins are concentrated in a single London borough- the London Borough of Tower Hamlets" (846).

The sole purpose of this unity is to make the Bangladeshi Muslims realize that they are equal to the natives of the country and they must stop threatening them. They also protest the threats of the Lion Hearts who stand against the Bengal Tigers. The organization detests the Lion Hearts salvo, which states:

> HANDS OFF OUR BREASTS! The Islamification of our neighbourhood has gone too far. A Page 3 calendar and poster have been removed from the walls of our community hall. How long before the extremists are putting veils on our women and insulting our daughters for wearing short skirts? Do not tolerate it! Write to the council! This is England! (*BL* 257)

Chanu feels pleased to know that his community has been successful in instilling fear in the natives. He says, "You see, they feel threatened. And this is their only culture – playing darts and football and putting up pictures of naked women" (*BL* 257). Chanu is aware of the fact that Christians are petrified of the Muslims in their country, because they believe that their people are being Islamificed by Muslims. A calendar and poster being removed also aggravates this fear. Christians react against the Islamic culture penetrating into their life. Through this leaflet, the Christians choose to take action to impede the Islamification of the community. They claim '[t]his is England'. England should protect its own religious culture. Their community should be Christian. That means women are free to be unveiled and girls are free to wear short skirts. To point against Lion Hearts' accusation, Bengal Tigers proclaim

that showing women's body parts in public is degrading women. They warn Christians to "keep your breasts to yourself" (*BL* 258).

Chanu feels that in the non-Muslims' eyes, Muslim is synonymous with terrorism. He feels the agony when he realizes that, nobody tries to understand that a terrorist attack has nothing to do with religion. Just because terrorists are Muslims, an analogue is drawn in which all Muslims are branded as terrorists. These issues compel him to say, "We always kept quiet. The young ones don't want to keep quiet any more" (*BL* 258). He is utterly in a confused state because at one moment he seems worried about the bad impression his brothers will create by making numerous errors in the leaflet, and the next moment he instructs his family to remain neutral. He calls his daughters and advises them, "Stay away from marches…" (*BL* 257).

Through the depiction of cultural and racial conflicts, Monica directs our attention to the attitude of the world towards Muslims. Monica Ali considers this strong antipathy for the Muslims as Xenophobia. September 11 is an epoch making event after which the Muslim immigrants were viewed with suspicion. Though the incident took place in America but shook the faith of the World. The animosity increased between the Muslims and the Whites also. Chris Allen accentuates, "Post-9/11 refectory processes have therefore both re-established and newly established Muslims as chimerical, monstrous others, drawing upon the legacy of anti-Muslimism endemic to the European mindset" (50).

Through the portrayal of Karim, a religious fundamentalist who views discriminatory practices with inexplicable resentment, the writer tries to highlight the endurance of Muslims in the West. He has been defined as a devoted Muslim, who could sacrifice his life for the cause of his people. Though, he is born and bought up in UK and so naturally felt like English. This further states that being a second generation migrant, Karim considers himself like the other natives of Britain. He could converse in Bengali but not fluently as he could in English, "It was a strange thing, and it took her some time to realize it. When he spoke in Bengali he stammered. In English he found his voice and it gave him no trouble" (*BL* 210). He also confesses his real feelings for Britain and tells Nazneen, "this is my country" (*BL* 212).

Karim also mentions, "According to United Nations statistics there was another big tragedy on September eleventh. On that day thirty-five thousand children also died through hunger in the poorest countries of the world" (*BL* 416). On knowing the facts, a woman asks, "How many were Muslims out of the thirty-five thousand?" (*BL* 416) This indicates that we show loyalty to our own religion and act insensitively towards the people of other religion. It is an undeniable fact that religious prejudice towards people of other religions prevail. The woman does not take notice of other people, because they do not belong to the same religion to which she belonged.

His ways were British, until the 9/11 event. But after this incident he shuns off the British culture by acquiring a new lifestyle and outlook towards his association with Britain and its natives. He rejects western attire and adopts traditional Punjabi clothes, so that he could be recognized as one of his countrymen. Attire has been used as a symbol of oneness against the racial prejudices. It also reflects his response to the harsh realities resulting from discrimination and racism. He also retaliates by rejecting English language and trying to speak Bengali, as flawlessly as he once used to speak English. This change is noticed by Nazneen and she thinks, "though he was speaking Bengali, he was not hesitating. . . Had he lost his stammer? He had gained control of his speech, but she had lost control of hers." She exclaims, "But you're not stammering anymore?" He astonishingly says, '"When I was a kid, I stammered. Now it only happens when I'm nervous.' ... She again asks him, 'But do you only get nervous in Bengali? Why don't you stammer in English?' He lifts his eyebrows and strokes his beard. 'But I do. Maybe you don't notice in English"' (*BL* 452-453).

Another change that becomes noticeable after 9/11 is the outlook of the whites towards non-whites. This further makes Britain suspicious about Muslims and they were seen as Islamic terrorists. Monica Ali underscores the hatred non-Islamic showed for Muslims and considered all Muslims as terrorists. The intolerance for Muslims has been depicted through the incidents of clashes between the whites and non-whites. The depiction of the Lion Hearts and Bengal Tigers discusses the way communities or races try to protect their interests. In the fulfillment of their aims, they oppose the other race. In the novel, Bengal Tigers retaliated against the Lion Hearts by launching their organisation. The racial prejudices and clashes affect the innocent

and this has been surfaced by the writer. She strongly puts across the woes of those Muslims who have to endure such religious, racial and cultural collisions. Ali writes, "A pinch of New York dust blew across the ocean and settled on the Dogwood Estate. Sorupa's daughter was the first, but not the only one. Walking in the street, on her way to college, she had her hijab pulled off. Razia wore her Union Jack sweatshirt and it was spat on" (*BL* 368). She condemns the way Muslims are targeted. She also criticizes that how mere attire decides the candidature of a person. A Muslim wearing hijab decides contention of the person and it becomes the basis of public's indignation. The animosity grew to the extent that they stood at logger's head, which is evident from many instances depicted by the writer in the novel. In the meetings of 'Bengal Tigers' issues related to the irrational murdering, repression and ill-treatment of Muslims all over the world find a place. Such meetings are attended only by Muslims who are believed to be staunch and committed to the task of the organization, which is to guard and protect Muslim's rights and culture, and unite them through spreading awareness. In agreement to it, Chanu also says that, "We are for Muslim rights and culture. We are into protecting our local ummah and supporting the global ummah" (*BL* 241). The organization spreads religious consciousness through leaflets, which encloses all those things and incidents narrating the agonies of innocent Muslims, how these Muslims are being neglected and are devoid of their rights. They table all the serious issues to safeguard the rights of Muslims and wish, "Allah willing - the Mujahiddeen will see you in the heart of your Mother Russia-not just Chechnya. Allah willing-we will inherit your land... It's a world - wide struggle, man. Everywhere they are trying to do us down. We have to fight back. It's is time to fight back." (*BL* 243). Karim is highly hurt and he reacts:

> A devout Muslim, right, willing to sacrifice himself for his religion. Does he go to bars and watch naked girls and drink alcohol? What kind of Muslim takes his Qur'an into a bar? And leaves it there? These stories are made up by idiots. People who don't know nothing about Islam. Maybe a Christian carries his Bible round like a pack of cigarettes. He doesn't know how a Qur'an is treated... They're saying another Qur'an got left behind in a rental car by these so-called Islamic terrorists. (*BL* 382)

He also adds that, "all these devout men throwing away the Word of God like wet papers" (*BL* 382).

Razia, another migrant from Bangladesh undergoes the same humiliating experience. She tries hard to assimilate into the western culture by adopting the same life pattern, but is mistreated at the hands of white people, just because she was a Muslim. Razia becomes another victim of the religious hatred. Despite the fact that people like Razia try to make their living in the new environment smoothly, they are considered terrorists who come to foreign countries as migrants with the malicious intention to destroy the peaceful and congenial atmosphere, as some religious fanatics did in America. Monica Ali tries to substantiate that Muslims are victims of the racist attitude of white people since colonial period. She authenticates it by incorporating the historical records.

Monica Ali also highlights the bilateral approach people have about racism. She directs our attention to Chanu, who himself faces a major setback in his profession, but shows excessive superiority over the black man. For him Africans are born to be slaves. He narrates an incident which he experiences on his way to Dr Azad's house. He tells Dr Azad that the bus they caught had an African. He tells him about his reaction on seeing African conductor. Chanu reminds every passenger about the dark history of Africa. He intentionally raises the issue of slavery, darkest practice in the history of Africans. He not only brazenly highlights the ugly past by making a comment on the conductor, but also treats him as a commodity. He raises his voice to make all the passengers aware of the knowledge he possesses about the Africans. He insensitively makes the conductor feel that he is solely responsible for his blackness and his lineage.

He authenticates this superior feeling by underlining historical facts. According to him, "they were bred for it. Slavery. . . That's their ancestry. . . Only the strong survived that. Only the strong ones were wanted; they fetched the highest price. Commerce and natural selection working hand in hand" (*BL* 99). Fanon remarks:

> I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships and, above all these, above all, 'Sho' good eatin.' (129)

That is the bilateral racism between natives and immigrants. He also considers himself to be in a much better state than other Bangladeshis. He criticizes people who have been colonized, because he feels that they deserve it because of being illiterate and ignorant. For him Bangladesh has a lot to change in terms of its development. This dichotomy is further highlighted by the writer through the description of Chanu's acceptance of the British rule in Bangladesh, "While the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British, our rulers, exported grain from the country" (*BL* 370). Chanu brags about his country's history and tradition. But he also disapproves of many Bangladeshi ways, and like the whites, call his own countrymen uneducated and uncivilized. His admittance that the British ruled them, and they were subservient to them, shows that he himself looks down upon his country and its people. Considering his race as subservient to another race signifies the prevalence of racism within the race of Bangladeshis.

He considers Bangladesh substandard sometimes, because of the level of his knowledge and intellect he feels he has because of his education. For him religion was education. He belongs to Bangladesh but he considers his people illiterate. He does not act like a fanatic. He flaunts his superiority by leaving no chance to give a lengthy speech to mark distinctness, he has from the other Bangladeshis. Chanu represents that category of population who considers it safe to be in - between the whites and the blacks. Another character, Karim also confesses that to be a Bangladeshi is not enough: "If you wanted to be cool you had to be something else—a bit white, a bit black, a bit something" (*BL* 263). Ali mulls upon the situation which many migrants chose as per their convenience. They safely accept that they are not superior to the white people but they are not as low as the blacks. This pact with oneself allows one to degrade others.

Monica has also touched this racial conflict from another angle. Besides Chanu, she has brought to fore the feelings and actions of other characters who have also contributed to the same. Mrs. Islam also promotes this racial discrimination when she does not show respect for Africans. She asserts that they are not as white as the British, but they are not as dark as Africans. So she holds the same sense of superiority which the British hold against Bangladeshis. She considers herself to be superior to the black people. To quote Frantz Fanon, "The light-skinned races have come to despise all those of a darker colour" (133). This has been substantiated in the novel, when Mrs. Islam takes Nazneen to see the doctor, she finds a family of Africans in the waiting room. She describes them as, "A large family of Africans, the colour of wet river stones with long, beautiful necks and small sloping eyes, fanned out on the front seats. The children sat on their hands and whispered to each other. The grown-ups were silent. Their faces expressed nothing other than the ability to wait. Waiting was their profession" (*BL* 63). Mrs. Islam expects the African family to make way for them and continue waiting for their turn. She must have encountered such racial biases being on the foreign land, and shows the same non-receptiveness for Africans.

Like Chanu, Mrs. Islam also refuses to accept other cultures. Mrs. Islam persuades Razia to cling to her religious and cultural values, and so tells Razia:

> Mixing with all sorts: Turkish, English, Jewish. All sorts. I am not old fashioned… I don't wear burkha. I keep purdah in my mind, which is the most important thing. Plus, I have cardigans and anoraks and a scarf for my head. But if you mix with all these people, even if they are good people, you have to give up your culture to accept theirs. That's how it is. (*BL* 29)

Mrs. Islam warns her people to be very cautious while mixing with other nationalities. Mixing could compel them to yield to the culture of others and to forget one's own. This shows that not only whites but non-whites also have racist ideas.

In the Kitchen is also cosmopolitan and postmodern in its approach. The depiction of such a world, which has massive influx of migrants, act as a locus of

transnational identities. Ali in the novel *In the Kitchen*, tries to illustrate "tension between immigrants and people born in Britain" (*In the Kitchen* 27). Through this novel, the author tries to draw our attention towards global society. Ulrich Beck remarks, "the whole conceptual world of the 'national outlook' into disenchanted, that is, de-ontologized, historicized and stripped of its inner necessity" (17). In opposition to this "national outlook" Beck proposes a "cosmopolitan vision", which he sees not as an idea (whether positive or negative), but as the reality of our global world. He states that "cosmopolitanism has ceased to be merely a controversial rational idea", arguing that "it has become the defining feature of a new era, the era of reflexive modernity, in which national borders and differences are dissolving and must be renegotiated in accordance with the logic of a 'politics of politics'" (2). This is not to say that we are already living in a post-national phase, however much transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are features of our global society.

In the Kitchen, brings to fore a world where the 'national outlook' is undeniably 'disillusioned'. The kitchen of Imperial Hotel demonstrates a forced cosmo-politanization, which is a permanent feature of British society. Kureishi writes that the figure of the immigrant is "an example of the undead, who will invade, colonise and contaminate, a figure we can never quite digest or vomit" (1). He goes on to argue that the immigrant can be easily "dismissed and denigrated since he [sic] is now no longer a person" (2).

In the Kitchen discusses the narratives of different immigrant communities which include individuals from Eastern Europe or Africa. The immigrants discussed in the novel have very slight historical ties with the British colonial domain, which explains the fact that in terms of culture and language these immigrants are not only distant from Britain, but also from the ethnic groups which migrated there after the Second World War from the British ex - colonies. Their narratives are the major focus of most diasporic fiction in the 1980s and 1990s and also of Monica's novel.

In the novel, many characters working in the Imperial Hotel of London belong to different parts of the world. Ali writes:

> Gabe had worked in places where porters came as a job lot, the first getting along a cousin who recommended a brother-in-law who also brought his friend. Before you knew it there was a gang of them, and that only spelled trouble ahead. The room service guy was fresh from Chile and Gabriel doubted that his English extended beyond fries and burgers and whatever else was on the menu. He'd fitted in all right. It was touching, really, to watch them all, every race, every colour, every creed. (*In the Kitchen* 99–100)

They have come to London to work and earn money. This is writer's another attempt to depict real Britain's globalized society at the turn of the new millennium, with the new immigration trends that can be observed since the 1990s.

To quote Patricia Bastida Rodriguez, "Indeed, recent studies have shown that the ethnic diversity of immigrants coming to Britain has grown in the last decade, particularly after important immigration policy changes began to favour the arrival of Eastern European workers as members of the EU" (3). "Furthermore, asylum seekers increased dramatically between the late 1990s and the mid-2000s, descending again after 2002" (6). Patricia concludes that, "All in all, net immigration is said to have contributed 1.8 million people to the British population between 1997 and 2007, which implies a rise in the arrival of immigrants with respect to previous decades and, thus, in the number of first-generation individuals, being the Polish community the biggest foreign-born group in the UK nowadays" (3).

The writer has discussed the difficulties immigrants face after making a decision to settle in another country. She discusses their problems and challenges through the cold and hostile attitude of the natives of the country. In the novel, she has discussed that under the headship of Gabriel, they are subjected to Gabe's superiority which showcases his Eurocentric approach. He humorously calls his subordinates "his brigade, a United Nations task force" (*In the Kitchen* 99). His British origin acts as a barrier between him and his employees, and so he even fails to show any interest in knowing about them. Initially, he has no keenness to know where they come from. David Newman states that borders that separate us and them have "traditionally constituted the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social

and economic spaces" (2). It is equally noteworthy that "However, such borders appear not only as physical, separating barriers, but also in mental maps" (4). This means that no matter how you characterize the well-defined contours, the spaces underlining such differences will "always determine the nature of group belonging, affiliation and membership, and the way in which the processes of inclusion and exclusion are institutionalized… distinguishing between those who belong and those who do not" (5). Newman's idea shows that the binary oppositions such as us/them, cultured/uncultured, black/white, colonizer/colonized, male/female, etc. maintain a huge difference between the dominant and the subservient.

The opening of *In the Kitchen* is marked by the theme of postcolonialism, the binary of coloniser and colonized. The binary of powerful and powerless is also quite candidly portrayed in the novel. Gabe, a short name for Gaberial Lightfoot, holds a senior position in The Imperial hotel in London, above his employees who belong to such countries which are far removed from Britain. Gabe is born in England and so he carries a supercilious attitude in the novel. He is described by one of his employee as "white and male" (*In the Kitchen* 373). His birth in England is a representation of the colonial power being white, and the other employees working under him as the other colonized subjects. The novel focuses on how the colonizers try to subjugate the colonized people and try to claim their past against the feeling of otherness.

He makes his subordinate staff take his instructions seriously, and if by chance they miss that, he would reprimand them. Victor's half unbuttoned coat bothers him and he tells him curtly, "Apology accepted. Now get your buttons done up" (*In the Kitchen* 118). In one of the incident in the kitchen, on checking the task allocated to his junior staff, Gabe coldly tells Damian, who is assigned with the task of dicing carrot, "They're not standard, I'll tell you what they are. They're shit is what they are. Get the bin, throw away and start again" (*In the Kitchen* 120). Though, he feels that he was very harsh to him in his words.

In the novel *In the Kitchen*, kitchen has been given a cosmic look by placing the immigrant populations on the plot and marking their experience in the new environment. To highlight the fact that the immigrants manage to hold secondary

position in the foreign countries, Ali places all of them in the kitchen where the movement of others is restricted. This further shows that they are not offered prime positions due to new political and social constraints. The migrants in the novel have been made to perform in the kitchen which is not to be visited and seen by anyone. This symbolizes that migrants are pushed towards hidden areas, which shows that they occupy negligible place. Monica Ali attempts to depict such features of globalization which are usually out of sight. A famous sociologist and economist Saskia Sassen suggests that many of the low-paid and manual jobs held in corporate cities are invisibilised by the corporate economy and presented as "other" to it (170-75).

Huntington underscores the double perspective of migrant consciousness, which makes them dismiss multiculturalism and internationalism, and at the same time oscillate between isolationism and triumphalism. He asserts:

> Some Americans have promoted multiculturalism at home; some have promoted universalism abroad; and some have done both. Multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and the West; universalism abroad threatens the West and the world like America. Both deny the uniqueness of Western culture. The global monoculturalists want to make the world like America. The domestic multiculturalists want to make America like the world… The security of the world requires acceptance of global multiculturality. (318)

Unfortunately, this scene of exploitation and loathing for the migrants does not confine to the boundaries of America but can be seen all around us. Gabe witnesses it in London and wonders what could be the reason of this hatred. This antipathy and hostility has been depicted in the novel through the contrast between the land dwelled by the natives such as Gabriel, and the area habitated by immigrant communities. Gabriel recalls from his childhood in a Northern England town, where racist attitudes were generalized:

> In Blantwistle there were only the Asians, or the Pakis as they were called then, maybe still were... People said things about the Asians. They never scrubbed their doorsteps, the children pissed on the flagstones, they made

> curry with Pal dog meat. Gabriel played a game with Michael, walking behind them making monkey noises, he didn't know any better then. (*In the Kitchen* 100)

The difficulties of the migrants have been described through Gabriel's discovery, that they have been dragged into various criminal activities in which several members of the hotel staff are implicated. To sustain in a foreign country without the cooperation of natives, many resort to prostitution. This is revealed in the novel that young foreign waitresses are compelled at the hotel into becoming prostitutes. Gabriel feels pity for the living conditions of the migrants, not only in the city of London, and in his own workplace, but also in the countryside, who come to a country legally or illegally to witness and endure the pain of racial discrimination. They are made to realize that they belong to countries which once were under their control. Gabriel discovers that migrants are exploited as slaves by trapping them through human trafficking network, which brings illegal Eastern European workers into Britain. As bonded labourers they are forced to work under conditions of slavery on a Norfolk farm. This worsens Gabriel's mental state, because he is surprised to see another shade of his country and its people. He questions the moral fabric of twenty-first century society in which he had lived since birth. This realization fills him with detest, as he also claims that he is also a colonizer who has colonized someone for his benefit.

The racial prejudices, do not embrace the new population which comes with a hope to earn sufficient money to either return back home or to strive more to be successful by establishing themselves on the foreign land. Unfortunately, their dreams are smashed to smithereens. Consequently, many migrants face the dire consequences of their aspirations to become economically strong by getting involved in criminal activities like prostitution, human trafficking and enslavement, which are proliferating in the world as a result of the competition to earn more and more money. The urge for better future prospects in terms of money or raised living standard or a riddance from the past history of politics, sometimes distress migrants in a direct way, as they are usually the victims of these forms of exploitation. This has been brought to spotlight by the writer by the depiction of Yuri's death. His death unveils the rapidity with

which various forms of crime against migrants are increasing in the new globalized world.

Yuri's death takes us behind the screen of the underworld of illegal workers, asylum seekers and immigrants; the people who are ready to do menial works of providing the necessary services. The reference of Yuri's dwelling in the cellar, located right adjacent to the rubbish channel suggests that such people displace themselves to dwell even in human waste. The writer underscores the fact that such migrants undergo utter humiliation and then die without being noticed. Yuri's death does not affect any one, except Gabriel and to some extent Lena. When the hotel manager comes to know the truth that his death was only an unfortunate accident, and not the result of a racially motivated hate crime, he gives a sign of relief because that will not bring out the ugly truth of human trafficking. The other employees too, dismiss any emotional attachment with Yuri. Yuri's death has been depicted as a turning point in the novel, as it instills a sensitive feeling for this unnoticed side of immigration. The writer has taken into account the seriousness of the issue, by elaborately dealing with marketization of labour, and pretty long network of subcontracting and outsourcing of labourers. She has also spotlighted the truth that employers buy labourers at cheaper price to increase the production without raising the unit price. By unveiling this, the writer attempts to highlight Britain's attitude towards refugees, illegal immigrants and how it results in racism.

Gabriel's feeling of superiority might have been influenced by his father, Ted, and grandmother, Nana, who lament the settlement of people belonging to other nationalities. He firmly believes that once world considered British as a race, who could be relied upon, as they could help people define themselves in relation to their assigned place in the social order. In other words, Gabriel, the protagonist, has been raised in an environment which is highly racist, and looks at the migrants as if they are responsible for creating confusions by mingling with their so-called superior and refined race. Gabriel realizes this when he talks to his father about Nana's racial prejudices. Ted sounds nostalgic about London's glorious past, and tells Gabriel that with the influx of migrants in London the demography of their country has changed so much that now all faces look unfamiliar. He says, "We're talking about how it was,

when people round here cared about each other. When you knew everyone in the street and they knew you. Not that means anything to you" (*In the Kitchen* 218).

Ali has delineated various other instances which speak about the hostility and unwelcoming gestures of the natives towards immigrants. Gabriel's grandmother, Nana, does not understand multiculturalism and for her, migrants coming from outside were outsiders. She does not accept such people. Gabe tries to make her understand that they come to London to work and earn money. Gabriel feels strange about his grandmother, who was suffering from Dementia, that how could she forget everything and not her prejudices against those who were not even personally known to her. He asks his father, "…Funny how can you lose your memory but not your prejudices" (*In the Kitchen* 217).

Nana does not admit that she is a racist, but she says that there are few things about the migrants which she disagrees with. She says:

> 'What I don't understand is'… 'why do they make such a fuss? The Pakistans, the Asians or what have you – always on about something, aren't they complaining about this and that. There was this lass in the paper, Gabriel, only t'other day, she wants to wear the veil to school. Well, I mean. This is England. If they want things exactly like home they can bloomin' well go home, can't they? There's no use trying to make it like home, is there, because they didn't like it at home and that's why they've left and come here.' (*In the Kitchen* 219)

She explains herself, "…When people say it's all about colour, well that's just nonsense, because I've nothing against any colour, black, white or brown. It's what they do that's important. You do right by me and I do right by you, isn't that the way?" (*In the Kitchen* 220) Ted, Gabe's father, reminiscences the lost splendour of Great Britain. According to him, with the emergence of multiculturalism which is the after math of migration, the pride of the nation has lost somewhere. He says, "Great Britain, no one says that any more. United Kingdom. Well, we're hardly that. It's going to the dogs, Gabe. Going to dogs…We have lost the 'Great'. Know what else

we've lost? Britishness" (*In the Kitchen* 241). Though Gabriel himself feels pride of his nationality, yet he tries to convince his father, "You should see my kitchen, Dad. I've got every nationality in there and everyone gets along" (*In the Kitchen* 242).

Herbert Schiller, a U.S. media critic writes in his seminal book *Communication and Cultural Domination* (1976), "The concept of cultural imperialism…best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the value and structures of the dominating center of the system" (9).

He is astonished to hear his father's views on immigration. He feels that after massive immigration, London has lost its community it once had. He tells Gabriel, "Houses are only houses. Them houses could be anywhere, they could be on bloody Mars. But this town's had the heart ripped out of it. I tell you that for free" (*In the Kitchen* 218). Gabriel does not agree with his dad's feelings and asks, "What's the disease, Dad? Foreigners? Progress? What? ..." (*In the Kitchen* 218) Ali brings to fore the true feelings of the citizens of a country who feels threatened about the presence of people who come and settle in their country from some other nation. They feel that the outsiders defile the purity of their culture.

One can feel the pain in Ted's tone when he tells his son, "We used to know, what it meant to be British. We didn't have to discuss it, because we knew. We used to know what it meant to be English. It's a dirty word now, that is" (*In the Kitchen* 187). Gabe's father flaunts that Britain was one nation that used to be defined by what it produced. He picks up the Mary Rose and inspects the hull, and brags about his Britishness. He says, "We used to build ships in this country, Gabe. That was part of who we were. We built merchant shipping for the world over. I reckon when you built on Teesside these days. It's a breaker's yard now. They send ships there from all sorts of places, full of asbestos and oil and God-only knows, and they break'em up" (*In the Kitchen* 243). Al Saidi asserts, "White, to be conceivable, relies upon the conception of Black, cold must have hot; inside must be what is not outside, and civilization needs barbarism" (97).

Gabriel does not feel like his father, because he belongs to that period which has seen massive immigration, and so have understood the meaning of multiculturalism. He does not feel anything strange or awkward about the subject. So he slams his father, "It's not even the subject." Ted reacts spontaneously, "It is the subject because this town is dying, Gabriel. There's no cure for it now." Gabriel fails to understand his father's emotion, so he points at a building occupied by immigrants and says, "Anyway look-look out there, the new estate doesn't look like death to me" (*In the Kitchen* 218). Migrants try to adjust and desperately wait for acceptance. They make endless efforts to do so, but it is not that easy. The cultural fusion is a complex social issue which has its own implications. Migrants are not seen as similar species who can win the hearts of the locals or native residents of the place.

Gabriel fails to accept his father's views about immigrants in their country. This dissent is neither appreciated by Ted, so he taunts his son for even a small thing like boiling eggs. In the discussion, Gabriel forgets about the eggs kept on the gas for boiling. When he tries to pick them up with his fingers, he is told by Nana to be careful. Not missing a chance, Ted tells Nana, "Careful you'll have our Gabe accusing you of racism in a minute." Nana senses the gravity of the situation and tells Gabriel that, "I have never been a racialist" (*In the Kitchen* 219). Though Nana has never liked the changes London witnessed in the name of multiculturalism, and also she hates the fact that after coming to her country they try to mark the difference of their originality and nativity by practicing their own culture. She expresses her umbrage, "There's this girl in the paper, only t'other day, she wants to wear the veil to school. Well, I mean. She's forgot what country she's in" (*In the Kitchen* 221).

Another character named Mr. Howarth also agrees with Nana and concedes to it. He says, "what's that word? – "multiculturalism", they've got no common sense" (221). He narrates an incident about Sally Whittaker's mother. He narrates that when he asked Sally about her mother's wellbeing, she tells him:

> …she's a bit upset at the moment because they're stopping the library van and she can't get out, you know, the way she is…Do you know what they spend their money on, Mr Howarth, I went in there meself and talked to the librarian

> and she wasn't happy about it at all. Every leaflet they do they've got to translate it into fourteen different languages. That's a hell of a lot of money is that. And they buy these books by Muslim preachers who are in prison some of them, what say you should take up arms against the infidel, that's meaning you and me, and they make a nice little display with them. (*In the Kitchen* 221)

Monica Ali critically presents the unarguable differences, biases and prejudices existing between the East and the West through the feelings of the natives of the West. She has tried to bring to light, society's distrust towards Muslims, who according to her are more vulnerable in the foreign countries. Gabriel's Nana is highly suspicious of Muslim population in her native land. While watching television, showing anti-war demonstration in London, with the whole family, Nana expresses her displeasure for the incident in which Muslims were holding banners and one reads, "Our Blood on Your Hands." This invites resentment from Nana, who counters, "These what-sits, Muslims, there's no understanding them, is there? I mean we've took 'em in. We've give them a home" (*In the Kitchen* 390). She shouts to know the reason behind this conduct shown by Muslims in London. She tries to find rationale, "What have we done to them? And we've to check under our beds every night. Not safe, none of us. Are we? Not safe in our own beds." She says, "I'm not ga-ga you know. Now what's all this? What they showing now? Why don't they just give over, these Muslims? Protesting this and protesting that" (*In the Kitchen* 389-390). Gabriel tries to tranquilize the reaction but no use, as she continues, "Look how they've blocked the road. There'll be no traffic down there today. It's dreadful, isn't it? It is" (*In the Kitchen* 391).

The writer attempts to bring to discussion the thoughts and feelings of the natives for the outsiders, which noticeably dejects migrants who wind up everything, even their close relations to fulfill their dreams to be accepted in the new world. They strive to be considered a part of the new chosen environment, through various struggles and failures they experience on the land to which they originally do not belong. She interrogates the hostility of the natives towards the migrants who are racially victimized, and hence face resistance from them in all the arenas of the life.

She also depicts that Muslims are looked with suspicion, and weighed as terrorists or some group that causes commotion and pandemonium on the foreign land. Nana represents such feeling for Muslims. She says, "I was saying to Gladys only today… How is it these Pakistans take over all them houses, buy up the whole bloomin' street, and you know, they've not a mortgage between them, they club together, that's what, though how they get the money I do not know…Ooh, look at all them children. They've ever so many, haven't they?" (*In the Kitchen* 391) She contemptuously looks at the migrants as someone who have defiled the purity of her race. She says, "…When they go shopping, know what they do, they squeeze all the fruit and all the vegetables. And then we've to buy what they've touched and left behind" (*In the Kitchen* 391).

On the contrary, for Gabriel everyone around him is a Londoner. He reflects upon his feelings about the subject of immigrants and thinks, "The city bound everyone together or kept them all equally apart. Or maybe it didn't but atleast everyone was too busy to give much thought to it. That does sound unfair" (*In the Kitchen* 222).

Gabriel realizes that due to massive immigration to London from various parts of the world, London seems to acknowledge the outsiders, and hence has learnt to accept multiculturalism. However, the instances depicted in the novel highly contradict this perception. The migrants undergo the pain of being far away from their motherlands, and face exploitation due to the prevalence of racial prejudices in London. The economic compulsions compellingly push them into the world of slavery, subjugation and human trafficking. He realizes that the migrants come to London with the dream to earn and be accepted in the new settlement, but in reality they have rendezvous with the harsh humiliation which makes them realize that they are nothing in the new place. This expression of the exploitation of the migrants is a common occurrence in Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*. The writer attempts to reveal the bitter truth that the restaurant manager is involved in women trafficking, and also supplies cheap work slaves for his brother's onion farm. The writer broods over the matter remorsefully, as she makes Gabriel suffer mentally and physically on knowing about the illegal practices and exploitative labourer camps.

The protagonist of the novel, Gabriel Lightfoot exposes the unknown truths of migration. Through him the grotesque realities of settlement of migrants on alien land are exposed. Ali directs our attention to the difficulties of immigrants on foreign soil. Gabriel talks to Benny, an employee of the Imperial Hotel, in a party and finds that Benny, who is not an English, could speak English very fluently. He is apprised by Benny that he had to wait for three long years to make an entry in London. He tells him, "After two years of waiting I was interviewed by the United Nations Officials and after another year of waiting I was offered resettlement here. I used these years of waiting to improve my English" (*In the Kitchen* 151). He tells Gabe that things were not as complicated for him as were experienced by some of his friends who made their entry into other countries illegally. He narrates that everything can be bought with money, such as national insurance number, passport, an identity and also a fake story, but what cannot be bought by the outsiders is credibility. He says, "Lack of credibility is the stamp they use" (*In the Kitchen* 152). His friend, who was a Professor of economics at the University of Kinshasa, was caught by the government of Congo. In his first arrest, his teeth were extracted:

> 'The next time,' … 'they locked him up, they did not torture him but when he was released he went home and discovered that they had killed his wife and children. With the help of a colleague he fled to Zambia and from there he came to the UK'… 'Lack of credibility. They asked him all sorts of questions. They asked how many children he had and how many had been killed. Eleven, he told them. And how many, they asked again, have died? Eleven, he said again. He should have said two or three. That was his mistake. We do not believe your story, they told him. It lacks cred-i-bil-ity.' (*In the Kitchen* 153)

He narrates another dreadful story about his friend, Kono, a Liberian. He tells how his mother, father and his siblings were dragged out of the house. His parents were shot and siblings were killed one by one with rifle butts. Antonela Arhin in his famous essay " Child labour migrants or victims of labour trafficking"comments:

> Partial and non-existent citizenships present a serious issue to those in a more precarious situation, including

> undocumented migrants, internally displaced persons, and refugees. For example, there is a strong correlation between statelessness and human trafficking as statelessness can turn displaced persons into easy targets for traffickers since their legal status is devoid of police protection, and they lack access to systems of justice. (58)

Eleonor Kofman adds that the important number of lower-wage jobs created in global cities has "supplied the opportunities for flows of immigration, both legal and – to a notable extent – undocumented and illegal" (282) and it is at this point that migrant exploitation begins to play a role in global economy, a cityscape which is depicted in Ali's novel. A sociologist, Saskia Sassen highlights in *A Sociology of Globalization:*

> The corporate economy characteristic of twenty-first century society, whose greatest concentrations can be found in major Western cities, requires large concentrations of workers devoted to lowly paid non professional and manual jobs and these are often held by women and migrants who are usually ignored and excluded from economic representation." (170)

The dehumanization of the world outside, especially London, as depicted by the writer expresses London as a metaphor of centrality. The local is depicted as human being's digestive system. This part is always in constant motion and whose greediness crumbles and breaks everything in fragments that comes its way. Gabriel looks at the condition of the migrants remorsefully and regretfully thinks, "London wasn't the brains of the country, as people said; it certainly wasn't the heart. London was all belly, its looping, intestinal streets constantly at work, digesting, absorbing, excreting, fueling and refueling, shaping the contours of the land" (*In the Kitchen* 240). He thinks of other migrants who as per his investigation experience an excruciating pain of being outsiders. They are involved in specific criminal activities and hence, this world has been portrayed through the microcosmic kitchen. Deconstructionists disagree that the world is structured in opposites, and that these opposites are ranked, where one is superior and more important than the other. Rather, the superiority is reversed, and this will only work if we consider every existence to

be temporary. According to Lawlor, "The previously inferior term must be re-inscribed as the "origin" or "resource" of the opposition and hierarchy itself" (5). The famous theorist named Nancy Fraser asserts:

> Claims for the recognition of group difference have become increasingly salient in the recent period, at times eclipsing claims for social equality… Empirically, of course, we have seen the rise of "identity politics", the decentering of class, until very recently, the corresponding decline of social democracy. More deeply, however, we are witnessing an apparent shift in the political imaginary, especially the way in which justice is imagined…The result is a decoupling of cultural politics and the relative eclipse of the latter by the former. (2)

Gabriel, during the course of the novel unfolds the most dreadful side of London. He unfolds that his hotel staff not only struggles to adjust and sustain in the foreign country, but also succumb to the pressure by accepting their exploitation as sex slaves or bonded labourers. Another truth that astonishes Gabriel is that someone from his own hotel is involved in dragging female migrants in prostitution network. The influential employees were pimps who would deceive young foreign waitresses at the hotel into becoming prostitutes. Gabriel also comes to know about the fact that Eastern European workers were brought to Britain to be pushed into such situations, where they were being forced to work under conditions of slavery on a Norfolk farm. Gabriel is astonished to know that prostitution, human trafficking and enslavement are some of the evils his colleagues were involved in, and some of his known people are the victims. Through this novel, Ali tries to direct our attention to all such criminal activities which are spreading fast. Her effort aims to make readers reflect on issues of moral responsibility and guilt.

Ali unfolds the harsh truth that exposes the connivance of many influential people such as London politician and benefactor Fairweather. Gabriel is informed by Fairweather about the exact meaning of bonded labour situation in London. He says, "A form of slavery for the twenty-first century. Taking away passports, debt bondage, threats of violence, that sort of thing. The gangster stuff you'll have read about in the

newspapers. The pressure groups like to call it slavery, sounds more impressive, and we're really world class at that because we've gone so big on deregulation, you see" (*In the Kitchen* 326-327).

The vulnerability of the migrants affects him deeply, and he discusses this matter with Fairweather, thinking that he could help to eradicate the menace of prostitution and human trafficking from London. His efforts fail, because he discovers yet another irregularity that such practices are run with the due patronage of influential people. The politician and benefactor named Fairweather expresses his inability to shun off such irregularity from their society. When Gabriel rakes up Yuri's matter in front of Fairweather, to convince him that as a politician he could prosecute the agency who allows illegal immigration in London, he is crisply told by Fairweather:

> What happens is, the traffickers use regular migration routes and work visas, but then charge fees for arranging work which put the workers into debt before they've arrived in the UK. Sometimes their documents are removed, they're kept in poor housing and charged a fortune, charged for transport to and from work, and so on and so forth. Threats, abuse, all sorts of things… Your porter, he could be a victim, should we say. Or might not be. The fact that he was an illegal immigrant is neither here nor there. (*In the Kitchen* 420)

Fairweather, thus, tries to convince Gabe that Yuri could be a victim of such an illegal practice. Fairweather asserts, "You've got longer and longer chains of sub-contracting and out sourcing, and employers want to buy labour as they buy other commodities – supplies which they can turn on and off as necessary without raising the unit price…" (*In the Kitchen* 421).

Fairweather is portrayed as a prototype of whites who look down upon the outsiders, and consider them to be born slaves. He persuades Gabe that the blacks are meant to live in subordination, and this practice is already deep-rooted in the system. Hence, it is futile fighting against them. He tells Gabriel, "What you've got to understand is that even if it did happen to your guy, you're not going to change the world by making a fuss. It's too widespread for that. It's endemic, it's structural

problem. You get the odd media story but that's only the tip of the iceberg" (*In the Kitchen* 420). Gabriel fails to understand Fairweather's indifference towards the woes of migrants. He wishes that they must be allowed to enjoy the goodness of his culture, but is surprised to find that even influential people like Fairweather cannot do anything to help illegalities end. He is astonished to hear Fairweather's responses to the exploitative conditions of migrants in London. Gabriel questions him, "So why aren't you doing something about it?" He answers, "The government? Even a Labour government? We're trying but it's not that simple…but for very complex reasons we've been unable to back it" (*In the Kitchen* 421). Gabriel does not take much time to understand that the human trafficking system runs on a very strong network line, which is impenetrable.

Fairweather also holds his originality at a much higher platform. When he has a conversation with Gabriel, he tells him about the reshuffle which is likely to take place in his party. Gabe asks him if he has his choice of portfolio clear. He answers, "Quintessentially British. Isn't that the British way?" Gabriel affirms that he knows what does he mean by "to be British" and so he responds, "Being open minded, you mean?" Fairweather jumps with excitement and verifies Gabe's understanding:

> Absolutely… a core British value. Freedom, fairness, tolerance, plurality. Does one have to order a top-up of coffee or will it simply appear, do you think? … I mean it. Plurality. Our so-called British identity is like our economy, Gabriel, deregulated in the extreme. It's a marketplace of ideas and values and cultures and none of them are privileged over the rest. Each one finds its own level depending on supply and demand. (*In the Kitchen* 364)

He adds, "We talk about the multicultural model but it's really nothing more than laissez-faire. I think that's quiet unique. Our national identity, in that way, is very distinct" (*In the Kitchen* 364). He categorically marks a prominent difference between the British and other nations. This clearly shows the feelings of the 'West' for the other countries as their strong hold on many nations make them feel they are highly superior race. He asserts, "It's a function of nation-building, naturally, to say, we are different from them" (*In the Kitchen* 364). Bolivian writer Luis Ramiro Beltran

(1978) defined cultural imperialism as "a verifiable process of social influence by which a nation imposes on other countries its set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioral norms as well as its overall style of life'' (184). Gabe confesses that his idea of Britishness is some-what neutral, which is not reacted upon by Fairweather, as he tells him that he has some important work to attend upon, and so he has to leave.

Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen* has documented this racial conflict by bringing to fore the harmful effects of transnational economic course of any country. These effects have been clearly depicted in Blantwistle. When Gabriel goes to his native place, he discovers that the Northern industrial town is about to close the last mill standing, because of the simple reason that the manufacturing can be done much cheaper elsewhere. Immigration and then the struggle to survive in a new country compel the immigrants to provide services at cheaper rates. According to Jopi Nyman, "the transformation of identity is personal, cultural and national" (14). He argues that refugees construct temporary identities in order to endure the unfamiliar, prevalent and often racist culture. Acute regional unemployment acts as the prime factor behind this. The natives face the implications of this arrangement, and so the disliking for the outsiders becomes even more intense. Ali paints the same situation in the novel through Gabriel Lightfoot's sister condition. Gabriel is informed by his sister that the call centre in which she works might get closed, as the company is looking for an Indian call centre which could help it to save money by reducing its unnecessary financial expenses. Gabriel Lightfoot's nephew, Harley's life is also affected due to this, and so he is shown unemployed. His other nephew also faces the charges of vandalism and is jobless. This has also fueled racism. Fairweather explains the same calculations to Gabe that there are two possible narratives about the economy; in the first of these, you could say that "the British economy is hollow"; that is, "it's a wooden man who's hollow, and when he goes up in flames he's going to burn up pretty fast because there's nothing solid there" (*In the Kitchen* 248). Equally, he suggests, it would be possible to spin this into a positive argument, if you "say the economy is booming because the economy is in good shape" (*In the Kitchen* 249). He further illustrates:

> Say that we're into "sunrise" industries. Use the words "knowledge economy" and "creative economy". Throw in accountancy, insurance, advertising, banking; mention it's minds not muscles that are required, and don't forget to say we're producing more graduates than ever before. Imply that the new Gods of Commerce are easily insulted and if we fail to appease them daily they will vanish into the sky. (*In the Kitchen* 249)

This worsens Gabriel's mental state and compels him to question the moral fabric of twenty-first century society. This feeling aggravates with Yuri's death, because Gabriel tries to solve the mystery behind the sudden demise of his employee.

The writer brings to fore contemptuously, the British superciliousness in Gabe's personality, when he comes across a Belarusan teenage prostitute Lena. Gabe being in the role of the white colonizer seems to subjugate Lena, whom he uses for his sexual gratification. He however, admits that Lena "merely submit[s]to his claims" (*In the Kitchen* 238) as any prostitute does. He believes, "…both of them were using one another for their own reasons, yet they were together" (*In the Kitchen* 181). His relationship with Lena starts on a light note. Later he gets attracted to her ethnicity, her youth, her demeaning professional circumstances. He begins to control her by hiding her in his flat and they start an affair.

Their relation thus comes to existence because Gabriel considers her "his charitable cause" (*In the Kitchen* 88) as she had no place to live. He provides shelter to her and listens to Lena's truth of being trapped into the vicious network of prostitution, her exploitation by her pimps and capricious clients. This sympathy gets changed into possessiveness in which he forgets his role of a protector and his own sexual impulses become alien to him, "His desire was a foul creature that climbed on his back and wrapped its long arms around his neck. What did it want with him? He would cage it if he could. One day he would have the strength to kill it, for it was not part of him" (*In the Kitchen* 239). When he plans to meet his father who was dying of Colon cancer, he tells Lena, "…But maybe it's best if you stay in". He does not know why he says so and "Why should she not go out?" (*In the Kitchen* 197). He also insists her to wait for his return and says, "We'll sort out everything when I'm back.

You'll be here, won't you, when I come home. Won't you? You'll be here" (*In the Kitchen* 197).

He loves her, but somewhere he also tries to control her. Gabe becomes possessive about her. He calls her up a number of times when he had gone to see his father, but she neither picks up his call nor calls him back. On his return, he asks her about not taking up his calls. But Lena does not answer him properly as if it was something, she does not wish to discuss. Gabe would give her money but not enough that she could run away. He would even spy on her movements. "One time he'd waited out of sight to see what she did. He'd stood in a door way for a couple of hours, craning his neck to see, and when she came out of his building she went into the grocer's and then back home again straight away" (*In the Kitchen* 300).

Later he introspects his own relationship with Lena, especially when she revolts and breaks herself away from the bindings by making Gabriel realize that their relationship is that of a beneficiary, and he could not hold her as a slave any more. This indicates that Gabe and Lena's relationship was that of oppresse-oppressor or that of powerful and powerless. He tries to leash her liberty. Unabated control results in revolt and the same happens between the two. Lena feels restricted due to the inequality in terms of power between her and Gabe. Lena explodes in frustration that her life has become a hide and seek game. Before living with Gabriel she was hiding herself in the basement of the hotel and now in his flat. She says, "Two, three months I hide in cellar, in flat – what difference to me?" Gabriel in astonishment asks her, "You had to hide the fact that you were down there? Or you went down to hide from someone? From what? From who?" (*In the Kitchen* 197)

Lena says that Gabe is keeping her inside his apartment, comparing it to a prison, a cage, "You keep me here like... like prison. Like animal in cage'. He could see what he was doing wrong. He looked at himself with a mixture of pity and disgust... 'Don't I give you everything you ask for and more?" (*In the Kitchen* 341) Lena shouts at Gabriel, "Why you don't pay me? Pay me what you owe" (*In the Kitchen* 440). This rebellion makes Gabriel not only reflect on his own attitude but also to accept his behaviour contributing to the evils of his contemporary society. This

also shows that female migrants undergo more difficulties and challenges than men. This is a turning point in the plot. Before this, he had never seen himself as someone who could control anyone's life. After Lena's description of their relationship, he introspects his actions. It fills him with a feeling of repentance as he chides himself:

> How, oh, how had it happened? Why had he not behaved – as he knew from the very start-the way he should? He had given free rein to his impulses, turned his desires into needs and his needs into obsessions, all in the service of –what exactly? It was as though he had some monster lurking inside him, some great and greedy ever-feeding beast, some half-blind animal enraged by an old wound, some troll beneath the bridge, a narrow and boundless figment, his certified and monstrous self. (*In the Kitchen* 498)

As Gabe gets to know more details about the world around him and the frightful experiences of Lena with her pimp and clients, he is driven by the sense of guilt that if he condemns all that she had suffered, he is no less than a sexual exploiter. He tries to convince himself that it is not his lust but love, that has held their relationship strong. He justifies his action, "She had come to him. Keep that in mind. He didn't keep her locked in the flat. He hadn't stolen her identity. She wasn't in his debt. There was no debt bondage here. And anyway, he loved her. Why shouldn't he? Was there a law against that? He loved Lena. He loved that stupid girl" (*In the Kitchen* 257*).*

Gabriel thinks about Lena. He knows what could happen with Lena. He feels bad for her, because she had been hiding from police. He tells her, "London's not so bad. We'll get you back on your feet. You'll see" (*In the Kitchen* 164). He also feels that the police were not looking for her. Her legal or illegal settlement in London will not bother them. He also thinks of telling her, but he decides to do that some other time.

Consequently, in compensation, Gabriel decides to look for Lena's brother, Pasha. In his search, he closely observes the doleful living conditions of migrants in the countryside. The dwellings remind him of concentration camp. In his quest he

lands up in such a place and, "Gabriel pressed his face against the window and got a better look at the sheds, which now appeared more like army barracks, flat-roofed, metal-shuttered, purposeful, comfortless" (*In the Kitchen* 505). The inside view takes him to the unbelievable small corner of the world which was accommodating workers from all over the world. He witnesses their predicaments minutely. He narrates:

> He watched as the men emerged from the low chamber and stood uncertainly in the yard. They formed a ragged line. They were all tall, dark, unshaven, foreign, Afghans or Kurds, and the contents poked out of their hastily packed bags. They stood in silence. One of them ran over to the washing line and began to stuff the clothes into a plastic sack. The other remained in the glare of the headlights as if facing a firing squad. (*In the Kitchen* 506)

He pities their sordid conditions of living. He says, "…the Afghans in a blur of light, being sucked into the bus" (*In the Kitchen* 507). In the words of Geertz, "Foreignness does not start at the water's edge but at the skin's" (261).

He fails to find Pasha, Lena's brother, but uncovers a big illegal scam taking place in his country. He finds that on the Onion farm, migrants have been detained illegally. When he realizes that none could be approached for help, Gabriel becomes even keen to find more details about what migrants were made to do in his native country. His conscience compels him to gather more evidences in the same regard, so that he could counter-attack his colleagues whom he knew were also practicing the same illegalities. He describes the slave camp:

> A naked light bulb lit the room, which rightly belonged in the dark. The place was fetid. There were two metal-framed single beds, one made of soft cheap pine, and a fold-out camp bed. A mattress leaned against the wall, a tall cupboard with broken hinges stood in a corner, and a camping fridge masqueraded as a kind of bedside cabinet. Despite the signs of habitation, it seemed unlikely that any life form would flourish here, except perhaps the mould that bloomed in large patches along the walls. (*In the Kitchen* 507-508)

To understand the whole network working under the government's nose, Gabriel also acts as one of the slaves. He realizes that the migrants are made to work in a farm and different farms as per the need and requirement, but are not paid justly for the same. He finds a young man shouting at Tymon, who supervises the work. He finds out that the boy is not only paid less but also his passport is illegal, and so the farm owners take advantage of the situation, as they know that such migrants could not find any work for themselves. Olek, another worker apprises Gabe about the issue. He tells him, "Tymon saying, this boy illegal now, can't working nowhere." Gabe asks him, "Why have they got his passport?" Olek answers, "For register-work legally." Gabe is surprised at this apprising and asks, "But they didn't do it?" (*In the Kitchen* 522) Gabriel decides that he will not react to this situation, but he protests when he finds Tymon exerting his power on the boy. He tells Tymon, "What you're doing is illegal. You're infringing this boy's rights…You might like to know, I'm friends with a government minister. He'll be very interested to hear about this" (*In the Kitchen* 522). He is threatened by Tymon, "you wait there. I bring Mr. Gleeson" (*In the Kitchen* 523). This unfolds the whole mystery. Gabe gets to know about the involvement of Mr. Gleeson, Deputy Manager of Imperial Hotel, and his brother in the illegal practice of human trafficking and prostitution. Gabriel warns Mr. Gleeson, "Giving you fair warning, I guess. That kind of intimidation, you know, it amounts to forced labour, a kind of slavery. Your brother could end up in a jail" (*In the Kitchen* 528). Gabriel also has rendezvous with another hidden truth that Fairweather is also involved in the whole issue. Gabriel thinks of cleaning the system but he fails to. He gives vent to his feelings of detest by hitting the famous politician. He leaves his job, because he does not wish to continue working at some place which is a hub of human trafficking and prostitution.

The writings of Monica and Adib bring to light the dreadful actuality of the migrants who leave their countries to live in another. They are received neither in their own country, nor in the other country they have chosen to live. Iqbal's decision to leave his roots for Australia is not appreciated by his family. The migrants long for social inclusion in the foreign countries but fail. They make numerous efforts to be accepted, but do not succeed due to racial limitations. The racial prejudices slam them

due to their status of being migrants. They are constantly degraded and made aware that they do not belong to the new nation and its people. They experience 'the fallacy of cultural superiority' (*In the Kitchen* 33) which is enough to make them feel that human relationships are frugal and hollow in foreign countries. Jian quotes Armand Mattelart thoughts about the predicament of migrants, he says, "One has to reclaim, in relation to globalist ideology, the notion of hybridity... We are in worlds that are not heading toward cultural globalization; one has to be intellectually dishonest to think that we are heading toward a global culture" (15).

Kalpan calls such discrimination as something that usually features in unipolar world and he believes that, "a unipolar world is not the same as a hierarchical system dominated by a single power that creates the rules as well as enforces them" (13). He strongly believes this to be double pain of migrants, which not only displaces them but it denies them any place in the deep rooted imperialism resulting in unipolarity.

The racial discrimination in relation to postcolonial migrations has its basis in the exploitative nature of the liaison between the domicile citizens (colonizers) and the immigrants (colonized). The natives, who stand for the colonizers revive age old stereotypes build around the essential inferiority of the culture of migrant settlers, who can be seen as colonized subjects, to justify their racial stances and xenophobia. Both the writers attempt to incorporate various hues and shades of discrimination of migrants on the foreign lands. They have depicted the wide variety of factors jeopardizing the identity of the migrants. They underscore racism as a major threat to them. The countries are witnessing a noticeable change in their demography because of massive immigration. This has resulted in the emergence of different cultures, races, religions and languages. This results in cultural hybridity, which challenges the very notion of binary oppositions (Self/Other). The two writers bring to fore that this has created insecurity in the hearts of the natives. Consequently, migrants are targeted, victimized and not accepted. Besides their own mental dilemmas, they face social exclusion. The migrants are made to realize about their colonial past, and also that they are not one of them.

The chapter has further discussed that some economic limitations compel migrants to be trapped into trafficking and migrant smuggling. The yearning to earn more has rapidly increased illegal migration. This growth of trafficking and smuggling of persons has been strongly dealt with by Monica Ali. To sum up, social inclusivity and acceptance remain at the core of their writings, but racial prejudices make their struggle unaccomplished. Racial bias is the result of sick mentality of native populace who rely on pre-conceived notions about the expatriates. First of all, an inferiority complex is inculcated in the migrants, and then through the mechanism of racism, they are targeted on the basis of skin colour, belief system and their having a colonial past.

Conclusion

A major impact of the recent literary tradition has been the construction of a dynamic canon of writing by expatriate writers. The writers have increasingly brought themes of displacement and uprooting due to different reasons leading to anguish, loneliness and a sense of displacement. There are however, other themes also, concerning attempts to assimilate in a new culture. Such themes are generally worked out in the context of all those migrants who opt to dislocate, either for betterment of professional life, for academic upgradation, or to meet their children settled away from their own countries. The characters of the novels written by Adib Khan and Monica Ali assert themselves uncompromisingly.

The complex process of acculturation is understood with reference to the textual analysis of selected works of Adib Khan and Monica Ali, by applying the theory of cultural hybridity. Cultural hybridity shapes identities of migrants differently. The two writers in their selected works have portrayed different categories of migrants. Some assimilate fully, some partially and some show overlap or double perspectives in their consciousness. The concept of identity in diasporic environment has established itself strongly in postcolonial discourse. This rapidity is the result of transnational migration, which has amplified significantly after the surfacing of nation states in the once colonized territories. The chapters discuss dislocation of characters from one country to another, to delve deep into the new interpretations of issues such as ethnic, racial and cultural identity.

The issues related to diaspora have been studied from the postcolonial perspective. The novels show immediate anxiety of migrants, not only in the assertion of indigenous culture, but also in highlighting its significance and merits in lieu of western culture and values. Both the writers have attempted to assert the ethnic identity of their characters while being amidst the noticeable presence of another culture. Despite being on the other land, the characters have intentionally or unintentionally tried to uphold the postcolonial tradition of opposing a dominant culture's tendency to impose its values on marginalized communities. The characters in all these works cling to some of the values of culture and ethics from their past

lives, which in a way represent the diasporic tensions experienced generally when migrants come to foreign countries to settle, whether permanently or for the short term.

Monica Ali and Adib Khan's success as writers lies in their effort to evince the complex interplay of customs, distinctiveness and cultural actions which result in the contra acculturation witnessed in the first generation immigrants. All the works depict clear variation in the experiences which shoot mainly from the different reasons that compel them to migrate. The well-known reason for men's decision to undertake the journey to other country is mainly driven by their aspirations and anticipation for an improved life, whereas women mostly leave their homes after marriage. This has been clearly depicted by Monica Ali in *Brick Lane*. Chanu leaves his country to live his ambition. He endures unlimited difficulties emerged due to racial prejudices. He manages to create a new life for himself and his family in another country. His wife starts her life in an unfamiliar country with a stranger.

Brick Lane, also depicts the sense of loneliness consequent upon displacement as a phenomenon particularly experienced by women from the subcontinent, where family ties are very strong and social life effervescent. Nazneen comes from a conservative Muslim family, and for her, living in London is a new experience. The reason of Nazneen's utter disillusionment is her loneliness because of the busy life of her husband. Her husband, Chanu, drowns himself in his professional life. So, she has very few options to distract herself, as she does not have professional career in the beginning of her stay in London. Nazneen differs from women expatriate migrants who defy assimilation with the new life. She does not feel nostalgic about everything connected with Bangladesh. She does not assert her past identity. In fact, she adopts the dress, food and life style of the new world. She does not show any reference to her world back home. Monica has presented a contrast by depicting her male character as someone who clings to his past, while his wife asserts her rejuvenated self in the hostile environment. She does not express herself, but her way of asserting her identity is by withdrawing into her shell. She shuns off her forlornness, but chooses to be as silent and withdrawn as she can be. However, the metaphor of displacement connects all the characters.

Except Nazneen and Razia, assertion in the case of the characters created by both the writers can be seen in their defiance to assimilate fully with the alien culture. But it would be wrong to say that Nazneen and Razia did not assert. They try to assert by completely adapting to the ways of foreign culture. Assimilation equips them with the strength to face the challenges of life and assert their identity as women of the new world. They finally assert their independence by refusing to go back to their roots, and decide to run their business in the foreign country.

The characters in all the selected works have been unanimously found searching for their identity. The quest for identity remains one of the principal tensions that worry these immigrant communities. They agitate because of being transnational migrants. The experiences of these migrants are influenced by the cultural distinction between the homeland and the host country. They find themselves separated from everything they are known to, amidst the values and traditions of the new country. This makes them feel isolated and estranged from their new socio-cultural environment. When the migrants try to reshape their identity, confusion and stress emerge as after effects.

In all the mentioned works, the characters are commonly portrayed as such migrants who face excruciating pain due to the hurting experiences of the new atmosphere, and hence they cling on to memory which connects the past and the present. Memory also provides a link between the immigrants and their native country. They strike a comparison between the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar. The constant efforts to maintain an association with the homeland, hamper the process of assimilation, which aggravates the pain of the immigrants. Iqbal, Alam, Khalid and Chanu prioritize the connection with the homeland. They maintain connection with physical location by visiting or keeping the hope of visiting their homeland alive. This somewhat results in keeping intact their sense of belongingness for the origin, despite being in the new country, though many a times these characters feel disillusioned for not belonging to any world. Such situation results in dichotomy, as immigrants move to and fro between their past and present. Khalid is reminiscent of the glory of his past life which had witnessed the luxuries and aura of royalty, as he belonged to the family of Nawabs. In his loneliness, he recalls and feels nostalgic for

the grandeur, stature of the family and loquacious food, etc. On the other hand, Nazneen also reminisces her childhood days when she used to go to school with Hasina visiting green rice fields and so on. In the initial years of her stay in London, she would have visions of Hasina and her birthplace. She also claims that in London she cannot call any piece of land her own, so she considers the pool of land in Bangladesh greater than the pool of blood.

The works of the writers accentuate upon the efforts of migrants, who decide to settle down in a European country by establishing relationship with the surrounding host culture. They not only try to develop relationship with the people of the land by learning their language, but also adapt the ways of the host culture. Many characters such as Iqbal, Alam, Chanu, Karim, Razia, Mrs Islam, etc. endeavour to get socially adjusted in the new environment to satisfy their needs and expectations they have from their new life. In the novels, the characters are shown making several attempts to merge into the new cultural milieu, either through assimilation or by integration into the host culture. In this process, some of the characters completely adopt the customs of the host society, and try to erase the memories of the native land. Iqbal, Alam, Chanu and Mrs Islam do not assimilate completely but integrate only partially into the new country's culture. All these characters successfully adapt socially by learning the foreign language and culture of the country. In their dual approach, they not only preserve their traditions and explicit choice of attire, food habits, use vernacular language in communication, music and remembrance of their past history, but also subscribe to the laws and policies of the adopted countries. Chanu on one hand despises the ways of the West, but on the other, sincerely follows the code of conduct, language and demeanor of the colonizing masters. Iqbal also contemptuously discard the control of the West over the East. He boldly rejects the opinion of his wife about making their daughter practice Christianity rather than Islam. Alam also places his dignity above the western dominance. These migrants do everything to live with self-esteem. When things go out of control, they decide to leave the country permanently or temporarily.

In fact, Iqbal, Alam, Chanu and Mrs Islam retain their culture, language and religious values, despite being on the foreign land. Chanu and Khalid hold their

country's national culture in high regard. Khalid appreciates the quality life he had lived in Calcutta. They all stand for that category of migrants who make adjustments to new conditions in an unknown country by making preferences, which are influenced by their past experiences. All the characters discussed in this work, make necessary adjustments and consider adaptation to be the quintessential feature to cope in the new environment. The main concern is how migrant's identity collapses in the remaking of the new. As both the writers are highly influenced by the postcolonial diaspora theory, so they advocate the idea of 'melting pot' identity which migrants learn rather than inherit. In the works of Adib Khan and Monica Ali, the characters at the outset of their journey in the foreign land are portrayed as vulnerable and clueless, due to the massive changes they witness in their life. As they spend a little more time in the strange land, they imbibe change, accept and modify their individual circumstances and therefore, try to establish their independent identity. Some migrants like Chanu and Mrs Islam from Monica Ali's *Brick Lane,* stand in argument to represent that category of migrants, who do not accept the change, and dominate their identity at will. They assimilate only slightly as per their convenience. Chanu teaches the life style to be followed in Bangladesh to his daughters too. He makes his daughters recite Bengali poems. Like any second generation migrant, Shahana, finds this act meaningless because of little or no attachment with the native place of her father. So, she refuses to listen to Bengali classical music. Such characters develop a unique consciousness that their identity is very less about cultural heritage and more about their desire to excel, by observing the cultural bindings they have brought with them from their native lands. Hegel in his essay 'Lordship and bondage' discusses migrants' struggles in finding ones' own identity. He says that the immediate consciousness gained in the first place is not the one, that leads to self-independence and is:

> … not the immediate form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment, that it is only pure being-for-self. The individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a person, but

> he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. (114)

In light of Hegel's theory, all the main characters of identity development, like Nazneen and Razia have been projected independent, as they shun off that state of consciousness which is governed by their past life of patriarchal dominance and an imposed identity. Through these two characters, Monica Ali shows that when migrants come to foreign countries, they get exposed to the struggles of acceptability, inclusion and survival amidst hostility. They have rendezvous with the viciousness of reality, which enables them to achieve their true self independent consciousness. For example, Nazneen comes to London, being a good and obedient daughter, with a hope of becoming an ideal housewife taking good care of Chanu. Gradually, her family's financial problems make her embark the journey full of struggles. Like the native women of London, she steps out of the doorstep of her compartment to work. This financial independence makes her achieve her own personality and identity. Cultural hybridity enables her to rise above her inferior position of a submissive housewife. As a result, she gains her autonomy. Nazneen overcomes her own confusion by recognizing herself. Her journey remains a complicated one, as she struggles to make adjustment with an aim to achieve independence. Such migrants survive the outside worlds' reality by clutching their individual identity.

In all the works, the idea of identifying oneself in the context of culture and surroundings, and not by ones' heritage has been commonly discussed. This thesis has discussed identity as a medium to explain the varied experiences of migrants in the development of their personality as an individual. This issue has been effectively mulled upon by both the writers. They have depicted the common tribulations of migrants in diaspora life. Adib Khan and Monica Ali have successfully covered all the key issues reflecting upon the conflicting situations lived by migrants. They have commonly elaborated the term 'home', quandary about their existence, dissimilarity in language and culture, puzzled family life, conflict of belongingness to the old and new homeland, especially with reference to the first and second generation emigrants.

About the exiles of Jews, Palestine and Armenians, Edward Said, comments in *Refection on Exile,* that all this exiled population experience the same pain and suffering in religion and nationalism, which is later described in migration, and that makes the theory of exile applicable for any migration and diaspora generation. He talks about the territory beyond not-belonging, a place where people is united because of their banishment. "And just beyond the frontier between 'us' and the 'outsiders' is the perilous territory of not-belonging; this is to where in a primitive time peoples were banished, and where in modern era immense aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced person" (Said 104).

Both the writers underline the struggles of the migrants who are displaced from their homeland and attempt to express their personal dilemmas in new domicile. But both have dealt with the trauma of dislocation differently. Iqbal, Masud Alam and Khalid go to Australia due to different reasons, but they carry the baggage of their homeland when they relocate. They keep their memories alive and constantly make a comparison of the two lives they have experienced. Iqbal and Alam are portrayed as people belonging to such categories, who travel back to their countries to meet their family, but do not wish to return back permanently. They are shown as such characters who have tasted the two different flavours of life, one on the native soil and the other in the foreign land. They narrate their dissatisfaction for certain undesirable practices, and fixed demeanor governed by the fixities of the natives and the host people on both native and foreign lands. They express the utter cultural shock they encounter and the ways they adopt to deal with them. Adib Khan has discussed issues related to identity of the first generation immigrants, with the special focus on how the natives of the adopted countries treat them. The outlook of the natives towards the migrants has been one of the most prominent themes of diasporic writings, which has commonly been discussed in the works of the two writers.

Adib Khan and Monica Ali have underlined the presumed differences between the immigrants and the natives that originate from both sides. The resulted sense of alienation is another common feature of the works of the two writers. They have also accentuated upon the fact that the hostility is the result of the bitter truth, that most of the migrants do not identify with the values and traditions of the land of their exile, so

they neither accept them, nor are they accepted by the natives. These works also attempt to bring to fore, that no matter the social and economic aspirations may compel the migrants to come to foreign lands, but their cultural identity still firmly roots them in the places they leave behind. Karim and the Bengal Tigers show that Islamic fundamentalists maintain both their Muslim and British identities on the foreign land. Karim not only preserves his Islamic identity alongside a British identity, but also tries to make another Bangladesh in London.

Whether the characters are the creation of Adib or Monica, they exhibit their strong association with the homeland through sticking to the values, traditions and language of the place. And this is done through the observance of the values they imbibed in their original land of birth. They also tend to seek approval in the new environment they are placed in. They create a 'third world' or what Homi Bhabha calls 'a third space' giving way to hybridity by marrying the finest and acceptable practices of both the worlds. They craft a world which not only allows them to freely dwell in a space, but also make them feel dominant to live with their in-between identity. But the writers highlight the fact that in reality the search for identity is highly agonizing and distressing, as the cultural belongings picked up from their homeland, come in conflict with the demanding conditions of their everyday existence on the foreign soil. The new life exerts a sort of mental pressure on them to compellingly shed one identity and hold another world.

Thus, the characters delineated in all these works exist in a state of 'in betweenness', as Salman Rushdie puts it, "The effect of mass migration has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memory as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves-because they are so defined by others-by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur" (124).

Besides all these issues, the writers have brought to light the struggles of the characters to encounter the binary opposites and the orientalist 'othering'. They attempt to deconstruct these binaries, consciously or unconsciously. The experiences of being the other, make them realize that they are constantly being compared to the

native self. Consequently, their idea of personal self gets complicated. They live in utter confusion as a result of their subjection to orientalism. The switching of roles from 'self' to 'other' and vice-versa, due to the fact that they are considered 'the other' by both host and native society, disorients their recognizable pattern of determining identity. This makes their identity volatile, and so they attempt to determine a personal identity in the 'third space'. This contemplation of otherness demonstrates their in-between status, and they attempt to reconstruct their identity by remapping the idea of home. Therefore, they cope with the feeling of alienation and sense of being an outcast by substituting it with possible inclusion and acceptance.

The writers have also emphasized on the truth that issue of migrants' diasporic identity is not linked to simply one culture or place, rather it becomes multi-locational, like Angela, Alam, Iqbal, Chanu, Nazneen and Gabriel maintain their sense of ethnicity and belonging through the continuous connection with the different cultures, East and the West. All these characters uphold such identities which have the numerous possibilities of home, beyond their native culture, to manage the deconstruction of the binary system of which they are subjects. In this struggle they realize that the in-between world is quite a combination of two polarized parts. In order to manage a reconstructed identity, they remain floating in the open hybrid space, which eventually grows upon them. In other words, they identify with this in-betweenness due to the emergence of such an identity which is an outcome of the mixture of both, an amalgamation of the old and the new references.

So to say, this convincingly underlines the fact that the works of Adib Khan and Monica Ali demonstrate the merger of two contrary cultures. The constant shuttling of the characters between the old home and the new, prompts them into a hysterical search for identity. In all the works, the variety of experience of the characters, and their stories reveal their anguish and discomfort of leaving their home countries at the expense of their personal identity. The writers commonly speak about the conflict of identity floating between the known social context and the adopted countries. To put an end to their quest for identity, they ideally adopt the values of both the homeland and the new country. In reality, the issue of identity remains unresolved and only complicates the experience of immigrants in their adopted

countries. Adib Khan has discussed the issue of identity faced only by first generation migrants. For instance, Khalid, Iqbal and Alam are first generation migrants. Iqbal and Alam come back to their respective countries only to pay visit. Their narratives clearly indicate their decision to choose Australia as a place of settlement. They also very categorically discuss the tribulations they encounter as outsiders. They bring to fore, the perspectives of the natives as well as their own people from their homeland towards them. Khalid pays visit to Australia just to meet his son and his family living abroad. He also makes contrasting statements about the two different cultures he experiences. Yet, he tries to face the expectations of the new land by attempting to adapt to the new culture. He is appreciated by the natives, especially Angela. In other words, the writers attempt to depict the endevours of the characters living as migrants, to not only determine their identities in the new environment but also to seek acceptance and their inclusion in the new world.

Both the writers further discuss the issue of identity in the case of second generation migrants. In *Solitude of Illusions*, Khalid's grandsons are very clear about the question of belongingness as they are nurtured in the same country. Their actions and behaviour look unusual to Khalid, because he is closely connected to his original roots. He is surprised to see that in his own land, offering prayer to God is a common ritual, but in Australia his family does not observe the same. The same influence is conspicuous in Ali's *Brick Lane*. The two daughters of Nazneen are forced to follow Bangladeshi pattern of living but the elder daughter named Shahana, object to such bindings. They act and behave as other natives would. The second generation migrants have the influence of their upbringing, which is intermixing of the traditions and values they inherit from their parents as well as their surroundings.

The writers also underscore that some characters like Nazneen and Razia are influenced by the culture of the host, and so they withdraw from their native culture's traditional customs. They feel strangulated amidst the customs and traditions they have been taught to observe. With the growing liking for the new land, its food, its culture, they no longer find them inappropriate. Nazneen and Razia realize that their efforts to embrace the new culture leave their native society feel neglected, discarded and forsaken. At the same time, they look at the traditions with utter shock which

makes them hesitate to adopt the host society's culture. Thus, they create a mixed personality and identity belonging to none purely. Nazneen mixes both, and so creates a hybrid space for herself.

So, some characters in the works of these two writers like Nazneen and Razia, acculturate almost fully blending the acceptable features of both the cultures. By this, they succeed in asserting a new identity and thus create a new hybrid space for themselves. Characters like Chanu, Lena and Mrs Islam on the other hand assimilate only slightly or partially resulting in deep nostalgia for their motherland and a sense of alienation. And, lastly there are some characters like Iqbal, Masud and Khalid who show overlap or double perspectives in their consciousness, thus leading to fragmented psyche, cultural identity crisis and a sense of belonging neither here nor there.

Another very common feature of diaspora literature is the issue of discrimination faced by the migrants on the foreign soil. These works also depict the different reasons of prejudices faced by migrants in the host culture. The conflict or competition arises due to social unacceptability and behavioural patterns of these migrants, who are seen as outsiders and their presence is seen as toxic for the western environment. The characters are shown in confrontation with insulting unpleasant remarks and unpredicted discrimination. The indifferent response of the natives towards the migrants and also the use of such terms as "we" for the natives and "they" for the migrants agitate Chanu, Iqbal, etc. The constant reminder of being very different from the natives in terms of attitude, behaviour and cultural baggage, makes them feel unwanted. To sustain, the characters, like most of the migrants, make friends with people who can speak same language. This is how they keep the memories of their original homeland alive. When Nazneen finds herself odd one, she makes friends with other Bangladeshi women who had also migrated from their native countries. In order to make their living easy in host countries, they cling to their identity. Nazneen, Razia and Mrs Islam create Bangladeshi associations in the European countries. There emerges a psychological feeling, translated into words of Gautam:

> They are like us and belong to the same country from where I come. In social structure, many features can be the same, such as, the vernacular language, kinship nomenclature, ideology of caste, religion and culture. The difference is in endogamous marriage patterns, practices and ritual performances. There is always a tendency to marry within endogamous group. If the rules are broken there is always a danger of social ostracization. The group maintains its distinctiveness which helps keep its uniqueness intact. (5)

Another issue that has been dealt by both the writers very strongly is Xenophobia. The writers have brought to fore, the rise of xenophobia in the western society which is adversely affecting and deteriorating the social fabric of the western society. This suspicion for the Muslim migrants is creating a gulf between the natives and the Muslim migrants. The natives look at Muslim migrants as a serious threat to the stability and security of the western society. The selected works unfold the xenophobic trends and the role of natives in fueling the xenophobia against Muslim diaspora. Ali and Khan have attempted to illuminate the fears of the western society, about the decaying trends in their culture and living pattern due to the settlement of Muslims.

Iqbal, Khalid, Chanu, Razia, Karim, etc. face utter rejection due to xenophobia. They are considered as threats that could fracture the political and social stabilities of the western societies. The natives of London, especially Nana, Gabriel's grandmother in *In the Kitchen* look at the new Muslim population settled in London as strangers and danger, not only to the political set up of the world but also to the congenial atmosphere of the West. Nana pertly expresses her fear and hatred towards alien Muslim entities. It is believed that the terms xenophobia and racism can be used interchangeably as they do overlap at times. They vary only in how the latter includes an intolerance based on the physical features, while the former focuses on behavioural patterns which stem from the rigid notions of some particular group who is averse to the culture or nation. Chanu in *Brick Lane* decides to return to Bangladesh, because he feels that racial discrimination is a substantial reason that could hurt his dignity, anger and pride. His candidature suffers the pangs of racial prejudices. He returns to live with pride and dignity.

This racial bigotry makes the migrant characters feel unacceptable in hostile surroundings. Not only Chanu, but the same feeling degrades Iqbal and makes them realize that they do not belong to the new nation and its people. Their dreams are smashed to the ground because of their dissatisfaction of being an essential part of neither the original country nor the adopted. Both the writers have also justly brought to surface, that the migrants who face racial biasness do not root out the practice of discrimination. They themselves hold biases against their own people. Back in Bangladesh, they consider themselves superior, and create a binary of superior and inferior. The migrants consider themselves finer than the natives of Bangladesh.

Monica has also dealt with other serious issues like prostitution and human trafficking resulting from illegal immigration. *In the Kitchen*, unfolds the dreadful situation of the migrants who make an entry in the foreign country illegally. They become prey to the criminal activities. They allow the natives to exploit them with a clear objective to afford their sustenance away from their land. The writer exposes that in the name of employment many migrants especially women are dragged in prostitution network. She audaciously brings to light the evil intentions of influential employees who are no less than pimps, as they deceive young foreign waitresses at the hotel into becoming prostitutes. Gabriel exposes this criminal network after knowing that Eastern European workers are brought to Britain to do menial jobs and even kept in captivity as slaves, and are forced to work under conditions of slavery on a Norfolk farm. The natives firmly rely on the stereotype that the migrants from the third world countries are meant to be slaves, and to do odd jobs in their country because of their colonial past. Racial inequality has its basis in the essential inferiority of the East as conceived by the West. It stems from racial politics, as the 'West' never wants the 'East' to be on the equal grounds. It prevents all efforts of the migrants to become a class of people who are like the natives, as it will erase the assumed cultural gap between the superior West and inferior East.

All these novels present worlds of experience that overlap. On the one hand is the old world of tradition, strong family ties and informality, on the other hand, the new world of modernity signifying individualism and a mechanical detachment. This duality of perspective is more pronounced in *Brick Lane*, *Seasonal Adjustments*,

Spiral Road and *In the Kitchen*. In all the works, the old and the new worlds collide. There is conflict as well as resolution. The characters intentionally or unintentionally hold on to the world of tradition. The double perspective of these characters, results in the slippage from one world to another. The characters manifest the predicament of expatriates. They all manage to overcome their ordeals and continue their lives. Thus, the narrative is optimistic and promising. Regardless of experience and outcome of their stories, every novel ends with a sense of hope and settlement. The reader is able to close the book with contentment, as the protagonists have come to terms with themselves and suggested a possibility of identity and future.

All the works present a rich and wide canvas. The many-sidedness of the experience of being in an alien territory is simply overwhelming, to say the least. Displacement, assimilation, assertion, and all that which constitutes the struggles of the migrants, is sensitively handled by these writers. The way they treat the duality of perspective so integral to migratory consciousness is equally fascinating. Diasporic writing has already begun to make its power felt and is sure to emerge as a significant literary genre of the present times.

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CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FOR PH.D.

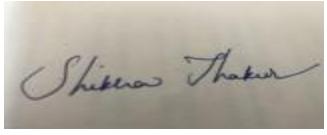
This is to certify that Ms. Chetna Negi pursuing Ph.D. (**Part Time**) programme in Department of English with Registration Number 41900021 under the Guidance of Dr. Shikha Thakur has the following Publications / Letter of Acceptance in the Referred Journals / Conferences mentioned thereby fulfilling the minimum programme requirements as per the UGC.

S No.	**Title of paper with author names**	**Name of journal / conference**	**Published date**	**Issue no/ vol no, issue no**	**Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/UGC-CARE list (*please mention*)**
1.	Dr. Nipun Chaudhary, Chetna Negi "Immigration seen as Geographical and Mental Dislocation in Monica Ali's Brick Lane"	Sodh Sarita	July-September 2019	2348-2397/Vol 6, Issue 23	UGC CARE
2.	Dr. Shikha Thakur, Chetna Negi "The Question of Cultural Hybridity and Shifting Identities in	Solid State Technology	2021	0038111X /Vol 64, Issue 2	Scopus

	Adib Khan's Spiral Road"				
3.	Chetna Negi "Displacements and Politics of Racism in Adib Khan's Seasonal Adjustment, Spiral Road and Monica Ali's in the Kitchen"	NIU International Journal of Human Rights	2021	2394-0298/Vol 8(X)	UGC CARE
4	Dr. Shikha Thakur ,Chetna Negi "Contradictory Claims of Christianity and Islam in Adib Khan's Seasonal Adjustments and Spiral Road"	NIU International Journal of Human Rights	2021	2394-0298/Vol 8(X)	UGC CARE
5	Dr. Shikha Thakur, Chetna Negi " Coping with Displacement through Refusal and Acceptance in Monica Ali's Brick Lane"	Design Engineering	2021	0011-9342/ Issue 9	Scopus
6	International Symposium, LPU	The Interdisciplinary Hermeneutic: Reappraising the Socio- Cultural Episteme	05 March 2020		

7	International Conference, LPU	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and concerns	25 September 2021		
8	Virtual International Conference, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai	English Language, Literature, and Culture in Digital Age: Wanderings and Enrootings	16-17 December 2021		
9	National Seminar, S.V. Govt. College Ghumarwin and Govt. College Bilaspur, H.P	The New national Education Policy of India: Challenges and Future Prospects	29-30 December 2021		
10	International Conference, Govt. College Una (H.P)	Changing Trends in Diasporic Literature	22-23 April, 2022		

Signature of Candidate



Signature of Supervisor