

**CONFUSED IDENTITIES: A DIASPORA STUDY OF AAMER HUSSEIN'S
CACTUS TOWN AND OTHER STORIES AND MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE**

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ABSTRACT: *Confused identity under the diasporic subject has become a crucial entity of the postmodern age that is creating the socio-political and economic interventions resulted by diasporic space. This space paves a new way for diaspora-native relationship; leads towards identity crisis of the diasporas, pinching question of hybrid identity and ultimately, towards assimilation. This research paper is going to explore the dispersion identity of diasporas by living in the host land as a product of native's otherness and the sense of belonging to the home in Hussain's literary enterprise, Cactus Town and Other Stories (2002) and Ali's novel, Brick Lane (2003). The paper unearths how homing desire of the dispersed diaspora is the product of the otherness of the natives and their issues related to conflicting identity by focusing on Brah's concept of native superiorized diasporic space: a diversion of the interpretation of natives.*

KEYWORDS: assimilation, confused identity, homing desire, hybrid identity, diasporic space, otherness.

INTRODUCTION

Diasporas are the forced exiles and displacements of the individuals as a result of the tragic incidents. Mostly it refers to the migration but when looking at the concept of diaspora from the exilic point of view, defect comes to the surface that they have to face identity crisis because of their trying to simulate in a third space and the complex relationship with the native is the result of the discourses of hybrid identity. Diasporas face identity crisis as president of first political issues which are the production of the complex and condensed rootedness of the diaspora as in the past and home. The diasporas face identity crisis and homing desire while encountering these crises they try to relocate their identity in their region through the working of nostalgia. Identity crisis also plays its vital role in producing and the forming of diasporas on the basis of their relationship with their left home. The paper encounters such issues faced by the diasporas from the perspective of their identity crisis and their attempt to adopt a hybrid identity through the process of assimilation through the study of Hussein's *Cactus Town* and *Other Stories* and Ali's *Brick Lane*. The intensity of the discourse produces identity crisis in case of the diasporas in the diasporic space. Discourses are produced about the

diasporas on the basis of their difference for belonging to other land and having their roots deeply connected to a different identity.

Diasporas are the forced displacements of the individuals which are occurred by some catastrophic incidents in which countries or even the continents are left behind by the people and they turned from the natives into diaspora. The catastrophe makes them share a collective memory, to all those who leave behind their land. The senses of assimilation do not work behind this transition from one land to another. Cultural assimilation is the product of diaspora experience a result of it, not its exponent. Diaspora imposes a kind of dislocation from the geographical barriers, from one geographical position, from one nation-state to other nations and territories. Hall has profoundly confronted such issues in his *Clash of Civilizations* which made the diaspora paradigm so authentic for the theorists and critics like Avtar Brah. Hall informs that there is always a New World outside one person's home. And he explores that this outside world is present there to be explored. In many cases these explorations come as a result of forced migration, self-exile and displacement. All the cultures in diaspora are seen as the part of a collective experience by all those who are dispersed.

Diaspora studies explore the dimensions of how the dispersions occur and in what forms they result among the individuals of both the native land and the diasporic products. All this make the diaspora to urge for their homeland as such an entity which can never be separated from their existence. This notion makes them feel a kind of hybrid life which is marked by geographical changes and transitions of culture, language and many times aesthetics also. Brah says about diaspora as:

It is a different way of exploring migrancy and the position of categories of people such as immigrants and ethnic minorities. ... the concept of diaspora offers you a way of conceptualizing the kind of global mobilities today and the ways in which, economically, politically, culturally and psychically, we cross all kinds of borders all the time. And we are having to think about questions of home and belonging (Brah, 1996, p. 45).

Hussein's *Cactus Town and Other Stories*, is based on his intimate knowledge of writing the text which is based on the nostalgic and exilic experience. There are sixteen stories side-by-side and introduction afterwards in this volume. All the stories are based on the things which are related to the crisis of the diasporic space and the issues encountered by the exiles. The characters of the stories present different kind of formulations given to them by the present time crisis of modernism. The stories not only present themes like identity crisis but they also focus on the nostalgic aspect of Hussein's fiction. Hussein himself lives in a diasporic space away from his native land. He is living in a space which is diasporic one. The impact of that culture and diasporic space is found in his writings from the very margin when he started writing over the paper and explained himself as one having the notions of "unfixed".

His fiction is replete with the themes like identity crisis, nostalgia, exile, hybrid identity and the attempt of assimilating in the diasporic space. He is trying to deal with the realities of the unfixed through the continuous struggle of the characters in new lands,

struggling for their survival and with the hope to return back one day or the other. Being a magical realist, his fiction presents Urdu folklore which provides a relationship of fiction and nostalgia working side by side behind unconscious of Hussein. The influence of fiction has a classical and experimental component which has undoubtedly explored the dynamics of diasporic writing from a critical angle of identity crisis. He reconstructs his own experiences from unimaginative concern to explore the working of nostalgia and memory in building up his concept about the world in which he lives. This is what his characters beautifully represent through their encountering with certain situations living there in diasporic space. For example in the story *Karima*, Karima encounters with such situations of facing nostalgia and hybrid identity. In the story *Champion*, the narrator describes the condition of nostalgic domination on the characters while living away from their land as a result of being exiled.

Monika Ali is a British born Bangladeshi writer, who was born in Dhaka in Bangladesh. She then moved from Bangladesh to Britain in 1971. She has faced identity crisis in her life and this is evident from her fiction that she writes about the Bangladeshis who are living there in diasporic space by giving her own stance about the issue of identity of Bangladeshi in the host culture and land. She has generated her own identity and her own perceptions about the view points of the world and thus she provided a voice to those who are living there in the diasporic space and in the world of their connectivity with their homeland. She has presented transformation ideas and themes of the current world by providing a story which is condensed with the meanings and explorations of the experiences of the diaspora as living there in the host land.

Brick Lane presents difference between two communities, East London and Bangladesh. The settings occasionally shift from England to Bangladesh. In the novel there has been presented two main characters who belong to Bangladesh and they are troubled with birth of the central character of the novel *Nazneen* who is known in the Western world as an East Pakistani. The novel moves around a community of Bangladeshis in London and it is concerned with the events that surround the lives of these diasporas after getting their involvement with one another in the name of their community's solidarity and religious solidarity. The novel deals with the incidents after Nazneen's marriage with Chanu. She is 18 years of age when she comes to London and gets the little knowledge of English and starts living her new life with her husband.

Brick Lane by Monica Ali's settings are made in East London but it switches many times according to the needs to Bangladesh. The novel starts up its story by the birth of Nazneen who is the central character of the novel. She plays her vital role in forming the position of the diasporas as the subjects of facing identity crises. She was born in 1967 in Bangladesh when it was called East Pakistan. After the exploration of short incidents, the story completely moves round her character and her arranged marriage. At the age of 18, she is brought to London when she has a very little knowledge of English. She is made to live in a new land and with a new identity. There Nazneen started sewing clothes at home to meet up the expenses because her husband Chanu leaves his job. During her stay in England she continuously gets her sister's letter from Bangladesh and she wants to go back to her homeland with her husband. But the shortage of money and dream of her husband to return as a rich man makes them unable to go back there.

Ali portrays the difficulties related to identity and homing desire which are faced in the diasporic land by the diasporas. Whenever she gets the letter from her sister the nostalgic vision of her native land gets over her and she wants to go there in reality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diaspora is one single term but putting forward a huge debate for all those who are migrated, immigrated to foreign lands wishfully or rather forcefully or are exiled by their own country and people or are displaced from their root ground. Etymologically, the term Diaspora has a Greek origin. The word Diaspora is from Greek word *diaspeirein* 'disperse', from *dia* 'across' + *speirein* 'scatter'. It means to take away someone, disperse him or scatter him from his native place and root grounds. The word first was associated with the dispersion of Jews after the Babylonian exile.

In the classical age, the term diaspora was used for the dispersion of Jews and Greeks. It begins to be used for the dispersion of the American and African with the passage of time as a result of their colonial subjugation and exploitation. Now in present times it refers to the dispersion of the individual and their dislocation and migrations as the result of many other manifestations of displacement. These manifestations particularly involve migrations, immigrations and exiles. Diaspora includes dispersion from the homeland made to often two or more lands leaving behind a traumatic influence on the individuals. It also encounters the diversification of the individuals from the homeland for economical perspectives, for better work places, and in some cases trade after colonial ambitions. For Brah, diaspora has now become a different way of exploring the condition of migrations and looking at the positions and categories of the people in which they become the immigrants and ethnic minorities in a new place. According to her the concept of diaspora now presents fresh angle of conceptualizing that kind of the Global positioning of the individuals through which they economically, politically, culturally and physically cross the borders over the time and region (1996, p. 180).

Safran (1991), explores the term diaspora as an establishment of the metaphoric specification which is used to describe different groups of the people and these groups are political refugees, expatriates, immigrants, displaced individuals, ethnic groups, racial minorities, exiles and alien residents. In this positioning of groups the international migrations have shaped the world in a globalized angle in which a large number of the groups and individuals left their places of their origin under the dilemma of certain reasons. As a result of migrations, massive changes have occurred to the civil societies and nation-states culturally, socially, politically, economically and religiously. In the case of diasporas, the immigrants face ambivalence in the wake of the interplay between the native territory and the host culture. The diasporas suffer from two kinds of notions, one of staying close to the homeland and the other one is of assimilating into the new society, the diasporic space. By looking at this angle, Brah states: "... diaspora is about globalization and dispersal, but at the same time it's also about location and 'staying put'" (1996, p. 180).

Diaspora is defined by William Safran as having six ways of illustration of displacements; the dispersal, collective memory alienation, respect and longing for homeland, a belief in restoration and self-definition with the homeland. Diasporic

subjects hardly find any of these complexities external to their existence. Diasporic existence is not only linked to living once there in the native land but it is the shared experience of descendants' years after the dispersal of their ancestors from their homeland. Farhana who has never been there in Pakistan ever since she was borne, feels the unending desire to visit her place of origin. She finds respect and longing for homeland; the place of her origin and she defines her father's homeland as her homeland and place of origin, left behind in past as a result of migration and dispersal.

He also discusses as the progress of other social formations the diasporic movement has also taken with different positions to explore its early forms. In the 20th century the economic issues of both the homeland and the national level became impulsively propelled for the diasporas in the host land. In the present time the focus of this relationship has shifted from the homeland towards the positioning of the oriented identity. Now the identity not only keeps it as the diasporic identity rather it is also viewed as the labor oriented identity. This positioning of identity has been a wide exploration of the conceptual working of diasporas. Now those diasporas who have left the homeland and migrated to other regions as a result of their need for the better economic resources and opportunities, they have not been addressed by the notions of their forced labor in the diasporic space where their identity is only of the oriented labor.

Braziel and Mannur (2003), write in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* that diaspora implies a "dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or cultures" (p. 1). For them, diaspora as an encompassing term is used to refer to those people who have left their homeland and their root origins as the result of the displacement which are forced and voluntary migration dislocations and exiles. As a movement diaspora can be explained through the formation of an extension from a geographical location and discrete land of origin. These migrations and dislocations are linked to the homeland of the individuals when they become the diasporic subjects. When the individuals cross geographical borders, they become the diaspora and referred to the disperse population in the host culture and land. These diaspora subjects present and intersect pluri-locale diasporic cultures.

According to Hall and Gieben (1992), the word is subjected by a constant dislocation and displacement of the individual as a result of the migrations and exiles. He formulated the idea that the dash presented as per cultures both are considered as a collective experience of the individuals who have been implicated by their dispersion from their origin land. Theoretically, diaspora studies elaborate the diasporic movement and it investigates the plaintive subtext of the movement that captures the motivation of dispersion. It also deals with interrelated issues of diasporas, the concept of homeland and the influence of lost homeland in the host land/country.

In the past two decades, the concept of diaspora has emerged as a highly favored term among the scholars who are associated with the contemporary postcolonial studies. In these scholars the names of Paul Gilroy, Floya Anthias, Carole Boyce Davies, Stuart Hall, Rey Chow, Diana Brydon, Rinaldo Walcott and Smaro Kambourie are the most famous. All of these scholars believe that diaspora studies will help to foreground the cultural practices of both forcefully exiled and voluntary immigrants. They also believe that the diaspora studies will challenge the certain assumptions about social, cultural, political and identity issues. They also believe that diaspora studies will help to force

new links between the immigrant, critical methodologies and the contemporary social justice movements in the globalized world. Diaspora subjects have their own consciousness and this consciousness represents the mobilization in a wide struggle to get the global social justice in a new third space in the host country. In this regard diasporas ultimately have a crossover with other communities and through this they get a specific attainment of identity. For Anthias, the idea of diaspora is based on across ethnic cooperative struggle which is enforced by the progressive forces and the third world people of many different backgrounds in a united space. In spite of the difference between the assumptions of the scholars and thinkers, diaspora refers to a single and ethnic group which has a fixed uniformity of history and a lifestyle which has been cut from their place of origin. Robin Cohen states in *Global Diaspora* (1997):

The field currently is in a state of consolidation: while complex phenomena such as deterritorialization and globalization cannot be neglected, notions of home and the inflection of homeland remain important discourses (p. 2).

By looking at the general characteristics of diaspora, scholars and critics have tried to classify different forms of diaspora in terms of their particular academic disciplines. It has been characterized by them in different forms and terms in which it has been used by different academic disciplines.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the paper is based on the study of the theoretical assumptions of Avatar Brah by keeping in view her notions about identity crisis and identity formation in diasporic space. This study has its focus on the exilic identity crisis through the critical diasporic analyses of Amer Hussein's *Cactus Town and other Stories* (2002) and Monika Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003). Brah focuses on issues relating to identity and puts forward a critical debate about identity crises in *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996). She has confronted many such issues which are captured both outwardly and inwardly but are never confronted in a static space.

In *Cartographies of Diaspora*, Brah has presented the most recent explorations of the concept of diaspora in relation to the concept of exiles in present times. She views the communities of the diaspora as not as the migrants but as the transnational identities which have overlapped their present static relationship with the homeland and have presented the meanings of the migrant and immigrant through different exploration. For her now the diasporas not only refer to the migrants and immigrants, instead they are also the best presentations of the exiled and refugee workers in the host culture. She refers to Tololian (1991) for defining this concept, she says Tololian suggests:

Contemporary diasporas are the 'exemplary communities of the transnational movement', and the term now overlaps and resonates with meanings of words such as migrant, immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker or exile (Brah, 1996, p. 183).

Cartographies of Diaspora discusses the issue of identity, difference and diversity more profoundly by addressing the questions of culture, religion, ethnicity, gender difference and politics. This discussion is encountered by post structuralism and modernity alike. It discusses the question of identity through an examination of themes such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, generation and nationalism. The experiences of the diasporas are not based on the experiences only rather they represent the impact of the narratives which are created about them through their lived experiences and journeys from reliving them into a new host culture. They are reproduced and they are always repeated in the case of the diaspora as because in the diaspora communities all the individuals who are living there do not belong to one community only rather they are the collective communities belonging to different regions of the world. Brah has rightly situated this idea of the diaspora from the angle of not individual exile but from the angle of a collective and shared community relationship by sharing the solidarity of being exile and diaspora. The diaspora communities share this solidarity with each other and the step form a new kind of shared experiences, which they lived through their journey, and they set their parameters of existence by the collective discourses which are produced about them by the natives. Brah points out this shared solidarity in these words:

They lead to a confluence of narratives that point to the one journey lived and re-lived, reproduced, partially or entirely repeated, as each diaspora and diasporic community goes through this journey and registers its parameters into the collective discourse (Brah, 1996, p. 183).

This is the result of the fact that the everyday life of these communities practices not only individually but collectively the shared notion of identity formation. The individual and the community have a very solid relationship of identifying their individual diasporic migration and collective imaginary symbolism of their journey with reference to their left home. These individuals and communities also try to relocate themselves in the host culture and society so that they may join the equal representation of the social regulations of class, race, gender, language and culture. When the term diaspora refers to the multiple journeys of the individuals by creating one solid community, the concept becomes heterogeneous in which a complex unit of multiple representations construct binaries of “we and them”, “black and white”, “native and the diaspora”.

Paradoxically, these constructions left behind the options of the accepted norms of the binaries produced in the past. This concept of diaspora is produced out of the ramification and magnification of the terms which have been discussed and these terms provide a symbolic significance. In reflecting the multiple definitions of the relocation and dislocation experiences of the diasporas. All these expressions of the concept of the diasporas prove that now the diaspora as a community should be treated in a specific way of exploring their identity which is fixed with their relationship with each other and the concept of the multiple location reality merges into one concept of diaspora community. Brah situates the construction of this binary about the diasporas in relation with the natives and states as:

Completing the model of multiple journeys, the term diaspora becomes heterogeneous, a complex unit of multiplicities, aiding to construct the “we” vs. “them” (diasporans vs. natives), paradoxically leading back to the bipolar oppositions us/them, black/white, insider/outsider (Brah, p. 185).

This way, identity becomes a process of renewing and refreshing and reforming itself under certain ways and it is never static in any case for the diasporas. Identity constantly fluctuates, and eventually it takes a step into formulating a sense of belonging to a common identity. This formation of identity helps in reaffirming the connection to diaspora. Multiple identities are created for the diasporas and they are reconstructed for the diaspora communities in the host culture. Butler puts these identities into theoretical paradigm as “simultaneous diaspora identities”. The journey of the identity formulation has been presented by Brah through this statement: “Diasporic identities are at once local and global, they are networks of the transnational identifications encompassing imagined and encountered communities” (Brah, 1996, p. 192). In the formulation of an individual’s identity the constituent role of historical and cultural experiences is also investigated. In the case of the exilic identity, this relationship of imagined and encountered communities is never static. Their identity keeps on shifting its political borders but it never gets any success in this regard as their forced displacement encounters certain terrains of fixity in the native culture. The subjectivity of the exilic identity postulates the local and global relationship. In this relationship, identity fluctuates and puts forward a sense of lost roots.

The diasporas are encountered by so many discourses in the host country. The diasporas whether they are exiled or migrated never get an attainment of their desired experiences in the host country. They are always denied of an equal identity in the host culture where they are residing now. Their existence is always haunted by the fluctuations of identity and thus, their lived experiences suffer from a denial. In this way, their lives become a trial for their survival. They try to assimilate in the host culture but owing to the reason of belonging to a different land and culture, they are never allowed to get assimilated in the host culture. This third space is generated for them and that is the diasporic space. This diasporic space takes its form from a matrix of migrations, exiles and displacements.

In this matrix, a complex nexus of relationship develops between the natives of the host cultures and diasporas. This relationship transfers from one generation to another with the passage of time. One generation after the other bores the tag of diasporas in spite of all the possible struggles of assimilation in the host culture. These generations of diasporas are subjected to indifference because they do not have the shared ground and roots of cultures with the natives in the host country. Their political, cultural and social grounds and economic relationships are different from the natives and they are located in their left home, in their native place. Brah puts this situation as:

Diasporic space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed (Brah, 1996, p. 205).

Hence, when a person becomes an exile in the diasporic space, he becomes more accurately rooted into his homeland and culture. His identity is subjected to a transformation by the aspects of his culture and structure of his life style. He is subjected to such transformations because of the fluctuating condition of his identity. In all this, he faces the dilemma of being an outcast and another one. This sense of being the other and being an exiled, these diasporas living there in abroad invoke a sense of going back to that land which they have left behind. They are referred back to their roots because of their belonging to a different land and culture.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Cactus Town and Other Stories (2002), is replete with Hussein's masterly art of writing fiction by using a rich Urdu tradition. He also uses his intimate knowledge of Western society in his fiction. This collection of short stories comprises sixteen short stories in which every story is condensed with rich themes, elegiac in its quality. The beauty of this collection is that it includes an introduction and afterwards. Most of his stories are the product of his personal experiences in one way or the other. Those stories that are not based on his experiences contain the element of fictional similarity with real incidents. He clearly describes his personal experiences of being an immigrant and exiled. He has viewed very realistically the traumatic crisis of Identity in the wake of the modern society at universal level. His characters in this book have been portrayed from a point of view of the representation of those who are unvoiced in the milieu of globalization. As an exiled, a person has to explore the enigmas imposed on him by the society. Karima, Champion, Aamer, Bhaiyya, and Yati are some examples of such characters very artistically produced in this regard.

When the exiles are viewed as dual beings, they are being referred to some those who are torn between memory and attachment to their past. Exiles in this position, always try to have their attachment with their past but paradoxically they try to reconstruct their memories in the land where they are surviving now. While paradoxical reconstructing the relationship with the past, the lost memories are invariably more grounded in their past than being in the present. The strange reality of present makes them feel grounded in the past. This is the same case that happened with the Champion in the story the Champion in *Cactus Town*. He is an exiled as a result of the forced migrations at the time of independence of the subcontinent. But despite of getting the freedom from the subordinates, he finds himself deeply rooted into his past as his past was the place from where he got his identity. After becoming an example he is no more rooted into the ground where he is living now. This ground is not giving him identity which he has been bestowed from the place of his origin. In spite of passing so many years in the new country history finds himself connected with his past through different features of the time. "Sometimes he doesn't know whether he's awake are dreaming; he lies on his back for hours and sees pictures, hears voices, from the past" (p. 45).

While running into the past the individuals are always found to celebrate between the present and the past. The present always gets its liability from the past that is why the exams always think about the past in their present as they are always wanted by the glorious past and their connectivity with their native lands. Every single moment reminds them of their past and their identity pro-given to them by their land. Physical

conditions provide a suitable refuge for the shattered fast implementations of emotions. In the present individuals are formed cherishing the past through looking from the glass of the present. In this way they become able to stabilize themselves from the instability of their past. “Most times he’s dull, sleepy; he dreams, of other places, in pieces; a dusty courtyard, a half-abandoned shrine... up to his shoulders” (p. 45).

The exiles always find themselves in a space in which the reality of the present is somehow strange. In the present identity imagination is invariably grounded in their past which they have left behind. Exiles are those people who live in one land and they always dream about another land they have left as a result of forced migration. They always share discomfort in a disconnected relationship between the past and the present. This kind of relationship leads them towards the imagination of relativity between the things and their own self. The exiles do not get the feelings of separation just because they have a different land, but it is also because they have a different past. In the trajectory of the present society, the exiles to need only face rejection of the identity but they are also referred back to their past. The past and present both try to assimilate from the angles of the exiles but there is found restlessness in this restlessness always hurts the individuals. It is the social antagonism of the society which never allows the individuals to find a stable identity of their own. Social conditions and circumstances throw them back to their left land and identity which suffers from shatteredness now. Individuals don't find a stable identity in the host country, the traumatic experience turns into a fragile concept of identification. At this point the exams try to maintain the equilibrium between the past and present identities by taking an account of their socially constructed flaws.

Another place, abandoned so many years ago, another name, long since replaced by the callous nickname he’s more used to now. He forgets names, of places where he’s fought and won, where he’s sweated and lost, of people long since left behind – there was a time when he left them behind, always, moving on, restless, until he came to this country where it hurts, hurts, hurts, and where people leave him behind (Hussein, 2002, p. 45).

In the process of fluctuation of the identity, the integration of an individual with the society becomes vital. When the individuals try to integrate in the society they have to face hybrid notion of accepting the new identity with their previous one and display of hybrid identity is created. This hybrid identity is not only the result of cultural assimilation which is also result of the historical, religious, lingual and social hybridity. The construction of this hybrid identity also allows a permeable boundary of the identity that categorizes not only the basis of names, nationalities, class and ethnicity, but it also encourages the historical and cultural changes on the basis of social antagonism. But having this type of hybrid identity, a person always finds himself as the outsider in the insider community. In this community, the outsider faces the fluctuation of his identity as he faces dual identity, one of the native and the other one of the exile. In the host land, the exiles do not have fixity of identity and they are referred back to their past identity on the basis of these social antagonisms of language and creed. The same situation happens with many of the characters of Amer Hussein. In the story *Champion* in spite of spending all the youth here in the new land they are encountered by the

identity which they left far behind. This is not the enough for the time being, they are also characterized as the outsider inferior in front of the insiders. “You’ll break my bones?’ says the other, a Bangladeshi, perhaps?” (p. 51).

It does not matter whether the individuals have left their land under some social political circumstances the truth remains constant that they are no more belonging to the land which they have left behind. The new identity is just of being the exiled. They are always haunted by the fact that they are living in a constant fluctuation of Identity on the basis of their memories which they share with their past. In spite of living for the whole life in the host land, the past different identities never fade away from the minds of the insiders. Likewise happens with writers who shift places as a result of the migration and exiles. Hussein himself has faced this traumatic reality of identity and he has very realistically portrayed destruction of identity through the character of the Champion. The champion has left his land and has come to Pakistan but in spite of living all his life abroad he is referred to his land in his old age. This shows that in spite of living the whole life in the new land, his is not accepted as the individual belonging to it. He is twice under the trauma of exile and he always tries to run from this effect but in spite of all his efforts, he is never left alone but the notions of cleaved identity follow him. He carries with him all the identities which his journey from the native land to the present host country has provided him. Hussein explains it this way:

When he first came here to Karachi, from Lahore, from Agra ... When he would sit for hours and tell the stories, all of them, the brawling, the matches, and the rings, his triumphs, name his scars, each one of them - - this one from Agra, that one from Bombay and those two in Gwalior (Hussein, 2002, p. 45).

The presence of the diasporas work as a threat to the social antagonism of the natives. It also serves as a threat to the national homes of the natives in their presence. The diasporas can never come up with the natives in their lands and behind this indifference there is a nexus of solidarities. These solidarities are social customs, economic and political spheres, religion and identity etc. Social antagonism not only creates differences but it also creates the binaries between the native and the diaspora. It also puts forth the difference between the identities of the natives and the diasporas. Identity is not only questioned by the social norms and traditions but it also serves as a trademark of one’s individuality. This individuality leads diasporas towards a mobility in the host country and to some extent they get the prestige to assimilate in the new land. The need of assimilation into the host country has led the diasporas to the notions of acquiring a particular citizenship and identity.

Sometimes his own stories entangle with other people’s account, of wars, dispossession, homelessness – stories he has heard on the road to where he is now, that dusty road with its big stores and its small shops and its tea shops (Hussein, 2002, p. 72).

Monika Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003) incorporates the stigma of diasporic space, elaborates the themes of identity crisis, cultural assimilation and struggle to find a balanced identity by surviving into the possibilities of the two traditions; the old and the new. It

is based on the story in which two characters struggle hard to identify themselves with their homeland which they have left as the result of their immigration and exile. The major focus of the novel is on the Bangladeshis who have migrated from their land in Britain in search of better standards of living. Some of them have left their land as the result of forceful exiles and many others have migrated to Britain in search of finding out a better way of giving their descendants a good life.

The novel centers round the characters of Nazneen and Chanu Ahmed. Both of them have been tied into the bond of an arranged marriage and Nazneen is a Bangladeshi immigrant. But as a result of arrange marriage with Chanu, she starts to assimilate herself in London. In London, she is encountered by cultural clash and struggle to find a balance between the two traditions. She is sharply faced by identity crisis in the host land and struggles to identify herself with her home. Nazneen at certain points relates herself with her contact with Hasina who is her outcast sister. She is outcaste due to her love marriage which results in utter ruin of her life and leaves her with becoming a prostitute.

Chanu has lack of decisiveness and therefore Nazneen becomes frustrated with him. They have a son but he dies in his infancy. As a result of it both the husband wife get closer and they have two daughters Shahana and Bibi. The birth of the girls makes Chanu worried about the future of his daughters. He becomes so much worried just because he is haunted by the thoughts that how in the foreign countries they would be determined about their identity and would they ever be able to return to the home in Bangladesh. To go back to his home, he adopts the job as a cab driver and also allows his wife to work and sew you the clothes. She also borrows some money from Mrs. Islam. When nothing starts working she meets Karim, he is the person who brings the sewing supplies for her from his uncle's store. Nazneen starts having an affair with him and this affair leads her represent the racial tension and injustice which is growing in the host culture and country. However Nazneen's relationship breaks up and she has a mental breakdown due to the feelings of guilt. But after ending the affair with Karim she is encountered by the pressure of returning back the money. It results into the realization that she cannot go back to Bangladesh and one day she plans to tell her know that they would leave.

Finally, one day when the family is ready to leave for Bangladesh the riots based on racism and motivated by the clash between the natives and the diaspora, makes it impossible for them. Nazneen gets horrified when she knows about the missing of her daughter Shahana. Getting the knowledge that she has run away and she might caught up in the violence of the riots, she gets Karim's help and becomes able to find Shahana. After this she decides to remain there in London and tells Chanu that they would not accompany him to Bangladesh. After a few months of Chanu's departure, Nazneen finds a new wave of independence and freedom as she gets outside of the home for her survival and for her children. She finds it very refreshing for herself to work for her children. At the same time Haseena finds a new start of life with the possibility of love and this is done in Bangladesh. She gets married to another man and starts having a good life. The novel ends up with Nazneen's going for ice skating and this is a sign of her dream of getting an independent life and identity.

In *Brick Lane*, Bangladeshi immigrants are encountered by identity crises in one community where they are not only the immigrants. People belonging to other places and communities also live around them. They are accompanied by white and black people also. "In the flats immediately next door, there were white people." (p. 304). People of different races are encountered by the Bangladeshis and they have the connection with them for the shared realities of life. When they go to shops, Ali writes "a group of African girls tried on shoes ... a white girl stood in front of a mirror turning this way and that" (pp. 392-94). This shows that they have the solidarity of identifying themselves with the other members of the society and it doesn't make any difference for them that the others belong to other communities and societies and races of the world. In the host country all of them are sharing one single identity and this identity is of other. They are the exams and immigrants and this is only one identification of their existence. It doesn't matter to what race and to what land they belong, the one thing that matters is their present identity and this identity is a shattered one. Social and cultural positioning has made them the other as being the immigrants and exiles.

In that host country all the immigrants always feel themselves referring back to their home and their roots. Not only these immigrants in exams but also the descendants share the solidarity with their homeland. It is their homeland and origin that gives them the identity that is solid and widely accepted by the world. In the present host country they are not only subjected by the social and cultural differences but also race works as a paradigm of shifting the borders of identity. When Chanu talks about his plan to take his son back to Dhaka at Dr. Azad's home, he refers to Britain as a racist society. Here are his words:

I don't need very much. Just enough for the Dhaka house and some left over for Ruku's education. I don't want him to rot here with all the skinheads and drunks. I don't want him to grow up in this racist society. I don't want him to talk back to his mother. I want him to respect his father.' ... 'The only way is to take him back home (Ali, 2003, p. 111).

Chanu vividly explains that his son will get his identity and his way of resembling himself with the life only by his homeland. It would be there that he would remain away from the negative intrigues of life. He also wants to save him from the shadow of his mother as he finds her and other persons as figures who will destroy the identity of his son. He wants his son to refer back to his home which he has left and he has to go back one day or the other. Chanu is denied by the locals because he is living in a society where he does not have a local identity. In spite of living with the local people, and his family and others are not allowed to survive as the natives of the land and therefore they face identity crisis as the result of the difference of belonging. All the immigrants in the local society are viewed as the other and they are given a sheer concept of belonging. This is the result of their leaving behind the homeland and their try to assimilate in the host culture. Assimilation in the host country is never without the fear of getting adopted and rejected in the host society. Therefore the individuals as the exams and immigrants have to face identity crisis and this is vivid from the character of Chanu and his son.

The sense of belonging to the homeland makes them realize the problems and issues of the natives of their own land with whom they shared the solidarity of identity. As a

result of this feeling of sharing the equal identity when the others from the native land come to the host land and they are viewed as the pitiable by the diasporas. "Why the crows and vultures stripped our bones, the British, power rulers exported grain from the country" (p. 370). Chanu in spite of living in the host land has deep associations with the native land and therefore he considers the host land as belonging to the rulers who are claiming for the pride of their own history and tradition by neglecting the history and culture of his country and homeland.

This is not only the feeling of the Bangladeshis living there in the British society but the others belonging to other races, cultures and lands also share the same feelings as he has. All these feelings are the result of the sense of not belonging to this land as being and as being outcast of their own homeland in the form of exiles. Diasporic space never allows the individuals to get simulated in the host country. The idea of hybrid identity is also not accepted in the case of the diaspora as because they become a threat for the natives. If the people are allowed to assimilate in the host country they would be having hegemonic position over the natives in one way or the other and the sense of fear never allows them to let the diaspora share their identity to identify themselves in this land.

Bangladeshis do not face identity crisis alone but the Africans and the other people belonging to the other regions like Pakistan and India also suffer from the identity crisis on the basis of the natives' rejection of the others to simulate in their country. All the migrants face identity crisis equal in the diasporic space because they are considered as the other and inferior in the community. As a result of this they do not find any kind of hegemonic identity and authority over the resources of the country. Not only the diaspora but also their descendants are bound to face identity crisis because of their different culture and belonging to a different land which is not acceptable by the natives. But the presence of the culture and norms of the exiles is never accepted as the equal in the host country.

A large family of Africans, the colour of red river stone with long beautiful next and small sloping eyes, fanned out on the front seats. The children sat on their hands and whispered to each other. The grown-up Ups were silent. Their faces expressed nothing other than the ability to wait. Waiting was their profession (Ali, 2003, p. 63).

This shows that as being the diaspora as the people have to face identity crisis and they are always found in a continuous struggle to identify themselves. The struggle is characterized by continuous wait which will never end or someday it will find out one particular solution and the particular solution is the identity of the diasporas. This is the only identity which is given to them and it is in itself shattered. Their identities shattered because as the diaspora they belong not to one community or one homeland but they refer to those people who are the immigrants and forced exiles from their own homeland. The diasporas have different ideological identification, different from the natives and they try to find a better way of identifying themselves with the help of their past. They hold different opinions from the natives in all the matters of life. In the case of Chanu he is one of the communities who identify themselves as Bangladeshi in the Britain. He analyses the difference between the natives and the diaspora from a fresh

angle and this angle is based on the failure of the simulation and the need to accept point that the sense of trying to assimilate in the host country diffuses their identity and in this way the clashes between the values of the natives and the diasporas occur. He gives birth to the point that the simulation and the production of hybrid identity never leave the haunted sense of rootlessness from the conscious and unconscious mind of the diasporas. Chanu describes his life as immigrant's tragedy. He explains to Mrs. Azad:

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. I'm talking— (Ali, 2003, p. 113).

According to Chanu, to be a non-western person living in a western society is hard. He mentions several points: value clashes, assimilation and alienation, identity confusion and racism. Bangladesh, an Asian country, has values quite different from the western one. The western values tend to be open while the Bangladeshi culture is more conservative. Having come to the new country, Bangladeshis have to tackle all the issues challenging their traditions. The conservative people come to the open country and witness a great number of cultural phenomena which are not allowed in their home country. They are shocked. Then they begin to use their home standard to criticize the new country. Chanu teaches his two daughters at home about Bangladeshi literature and songs and forces them to speak Bengali at home. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of knowing the history of his country.

As being a diaspora in exile, Chanu not only cherishes his culture and connectivity with his homeland, he also feels a sense of superiority over the natives in the host country. He tries to prove the battle of his own people in front of the natives of the host country. This way he tries to dignify his identification with the reference to his homeland. He cherishes the identity of being equal to them and somewhat superior to the natives, "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". (p. 254). He cherishes the richness of his lands culture and history and in doing so he presents negative perception of the culture and history of the natives in the host land. He compares his past history with the history of the British people and he finds that they do not possess as splendid past as he has. The past history of his land is full of the glorious achievements as the British land is responsible for the fight and the struggle of his people. He also compares the reflection of the host country on the daughter of Dr. Azad and his own daughter. He concludes very proudly that his daughter does not go to the pub rather she watches the TV and gets what is popular among the Bangladeshi youth. In spite of living away from her culture and homeland, she stills find the connectivity of being a Bangladeshi youth by adopting the ways of life which are adopted by the youth in her homeland.

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The diasporic space and homing desire encourage the concept of the identity crisis for the individuals being exiles. The relevancy of the identity crisis by the concept of both the natives and the diaspora make the discourses more intense in their encounter with diaspora. In the diasporic space, the diasporas are encountered by their faith through the set patterns of the society in different terms. These terms define their identity crisis with the notions of their fluctuations with their social regularities. Homing desire of the diasporas is not only a sense of belonging to one land whether it is a sense of correlating their identity with their lost home culture and land side by side referring them back to their roots with the sense of relocating their identity through the production of nostalgic imagination.

It has also analyzed that the discourses which are produced about the diaspora are the production of the relationship of the natives with diasporas on the basis of their being the different in the third space. According to the discourses which are produced by the natives the diasporas do not fit in the host culture as they belong to different cultural and traditional roots which are rooted deeply in their characters and lived experiences. When the diaspora tries to connect themselves with the natives they are never allowed to do so because their simulation becomes a kind of threat for the identity of the natives. The natives never allow them to assimilate because of this threat to their identity and thus the hybrid identity is found under the dilemma of the discourses produced by the natives about the diaspora.

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