79. Woman, here and there: Transnational struggles of Nazneen in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and Christine in *Hot Water Man* by Deborah Moggach[1]

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Abstract

Paralleling globalisation, wars, social and economic insecurities, and the desire for a better life push people to cross those borders. The case of postcolonial migration between the former colonies and Great Britain tells a different story of border crossing. Although the physical borders are open for the newcomer, the psychological and social borders are hard to cross. In this regard, the migrants manage to cross these unseen borders through their fluid transnational identities. This fluidity enables them to carry on their background while passing the other side. However, it is clear that the experiences of the migrant as a woman are far more different and precarious. In *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali depicts the lives of migrant Bangladeshi women who live in Brick Lane, London, and provides versatile pictures of different experiences. Nazneen is the main character, whose transnational identity helps to transgress the boundaries between the host culture and her origin. Throughout the novel, she transforms from a shy, insecure immigrant young girl to a strong and self-confident woman with a fluid transnational identity. On the other hand, in *Hot Water Man*, Deborah Moggach presents a reverse migration from Great Britain to Pakistan and depicts Christine's struggle to cross borders and gain a transnational identity. Although they share the difficulties of being a woman in the host culture, their experiences differ because of their positions and the representation of their background as a former coloniser and colonised. This study aims to examine the experiences of these two women, Nazneen and Christine, while crossing the invisible borders in their journeys to gain transnational identities.

Keywords: Migration, Transnationalism, Woman, *Brick Lane*, *Hot Water Man*

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Kadın, burada ve orada: Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane*'inde Nazneen ve Deborah Moggach'ın *Hot Water Man*'inde Christine'in ulusötesi mücadeleleri[3]

Öz

Küreselleşme ile birlikte savaşlar, sosyal ve ekonomik güvensizlikler ve daha iyi bir hayat arzusu insanları bu sınırları aşmaya itmektedir. Büyük Britanya ve eski kolonileri arasındaki, sömürgecilik sonrası göç farklı bir hikâye anlatmaktadır. Fiziksel sınırlar yeni gelen için açık olsa da psikolojik ve sosyal sınırlar aşmak için çok güçlüdür. Bu bağlamda, göçmenler bu görünmez sınırları akışkan ulusötesi kimlikleri sayesinde aşabilirler. Bu akışkanlık, diğer tarafa geçerken geçmişlerini de sürdürmelerini sağlar. Fakat, açıktır ki, kadın göçmenlerin deneyimleri çok daha farklı ve tehlikelidir. *Brick Lane* adlı romanında, Monica Ali Londra, Brick Lane'de yaşayan Bangladeşli kadınların yaşamlarını anlatır ve farklı deneyimlerine ait çok çeşitli resimler sunar. Ulusötesi kimliğinin ev sahibi ülke ve geçmişi arasındaki sınırları aşmasını sağlayan Nazneen romanın baş kahramanıdır. Roman boyunca utangaç, güvensiz genç bir göçmen kızdan, akışkan ulusötesi kimliğe sahip kendine güvenen güçlü bir kadına dönüşür. Diğer taraftan, *Hot Water Man*'de Deborah Moggach Büyük Britanya'dan Pakistan'a göç eden Christine'in ulusötesi kimlik kazanma ve sınırları geçme çabasını konu eder. Ev sahibi kültürde kadın bir göçmen olmanın zorlukları ortak noktaları olsa da deneyimleri pozisyonları ve eski kolonici ve koloni olan geçmişlerinin temsilcileri olarak farklıdır. Bu çalışma bu iki kadının, Nazneen ve Christine'in ulusötesi bir kimlik kazanma yolculuklarında görünmez sınırları aşarken deneyimlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç, Ulusötesicilik, Kadın, *Brick Lane*, *Hot Water Man*

Introduction

The fluidity of the identity lies in the intermingle of the migrant's background with his or her interactions with the host country. As Goldring et al. state, "Transmigrants maintain familial, social, economic, religious, and political ties with their country of origin even though they immigrate to a new country and become incorporated into a new society" (qtd. in Fouron & Schiller, 2001, p. 543). As the identity of a person cannot be shaped free from their circumstances—nation, religion, gender, family, and neighborhood—these migrants bring their identity with them to the host country. In other words, as Sarah J. Mahler and Patricia R. Pessar maintain, "Multiple dimensions of identity shape, discipline, and position people and the ways they think and act" (Mahler & Pessar, 2001, p. 446). Like their crossing borders, their identities experience the same shift between borders. However, this identity shift is not a state but a process; it is fluid. Although it may be ignored in terms of assimilation and adaptation to the new culture, women's experiences differ from men's, especially according to their background, which defines their identity and gender roles. Ruby Dhar states that "analysing the gender dimension of international migration helps to distinguish cultural differences between men and women and how they

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interact and shape the historical and social dimensions of international migration" (Dahr, 2007, p. 9). In this respect, the extent of clashes between cultures plays a major role in women's process of developing a transnational identity. Especially if there is a huge gap between these two countries in terms of cultural background, namely the ex-colonies like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and England, the impact will be stronger.

Regarding the relationship between gender and migration, Pessar and Mahler state that "gender is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, forces shaping human life and, accordingly, it influences migration and migrants' lives" (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p. 812). The strength of this power defines the shape and process of the transnational identity shifts of women in the host country. Unquestionably, there are significant differences between South Asian countries and England in terms of dressing, food, climate, lifestyle, and social norms defining the roles of women in society. In this respect, regarding the roles attributed to women in these countries, they are mostly deprived of proper education or jobs. Moreover, in many cases, they do not have a voice in the decision of their marriages; they are arranged according to their father's will. On the other hand, although patriarchy still shapes social norms and roles, Western women have more rights in society; they can access proper education and take part in the workforce. Consequently, they can be more active in social life, and their voice is higher when compared to South Asian women. However, in terms of migration, both are subjected to the decisions of their husbands or fathers. As Haleh Afshar, Rob Aitken and Myfanwy Franks express, "Women, who have been the bearers of nations, have been given the nationalities of their fathers and husbands, and when migrating have lost their birth rights to their homelands, only to acquire that of the male on whom they have been defined as a 'dependant'" (Afshar, Aitken & Franks, 2006, p. 171). Regardless of their national or cultural background, most women have little or no say in the decision-making process, and they are generally passive migrants who go as dependents.

Two women as transnational others in two new countries

In the two novels discussed in this study, the two immigrant women have separate experiences as the ex-coloniser and the colonised in the host culture. In addition, because of the clash between gender roles in the countries they came from and migrated to, acquiring their fluid transnational identity bears different challenges. Nazneen's and other immigrant women's experiences in London in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Christine and other British women's experiences in Karachi in *Hot Water Man* by Deborah Moggach are not similar in terms of transnational identity shifts. As their cultural background and the roles attributed to them by their society change significantly, their transformation and shifts in their identity take place separately. For the Bangladeshi women, their husbands and the males in the household have a chaining and restricting role for their integration and liberation. As Irene Pérez Fernández, maintains, "Men create relations with other people outside their community and women are presented as socialising only within their family network since they are dependent on the will of their husbands" (Fernández, 2009, p. 152). In *Brick Lane*, women can achieve their individuality and true identity only after they are free from the restrictions of their husbands or the males in the household. Mrs. Islam earns money as a usurer after her husband's death and boasts about how she survived over and over; Razia can start working only after her husband is killed in an occupational accident; Jorina is betrayed by her husband because she starts working and brings "shame" on her husband; and finally, the main character, Nazneen, rejects going back to Dhaka with her husband and rejects marrying her lover Karim. She frees herself from the boundaries of the traditions forced on her by male authority, and she stays with her daughters in England as a self-sufficient, strong woman. However, restrictions for Western women in Pakistan, like Christine and other British women in *Hot Water Man*, mostly come from the society of the host country itself, and they are pushed towards their husbands and the domestic

life provided by them. On the other hand, the British community living in Karachi is another restrictive power for integration with the target culture. Women are expected to behave like the extended representatives of the coloniser and play the role of "memsahib." For Christine, her efforts to build a connection with Pakistani society are prevented by both the structure of Pakistani society and the British community she belongs to. Both Pakistani people and her own community expect her to stay in her territory and fill the role of the British wife.

Individual experiences of transnational identity formation, specifically the female experience, have been of interest for the postcolonial literary area in recent years. According to Bruce King, *Brick Lane* "is also part of a growing literature written by immigrant women from the Indian subcontinent about the problems of their adjustment to England, their mistreatment by their husbands, their rebellion against their traditional roles and community, and their discovery of their individuality and ability to make decisions" (King, 2004, p. 91). Alistair Cormack draws attention to the two-way boundary and comments that the novel is "particularly of interest as an examination of the double bind that female migrants face, treated as alien by their host nation and as commodities by the men in their own communities" (Cormack, 2006, p. 700). Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* is developed around Nazneen, a young Bengali woman married to a man of forties when she is eighteen, as a result of a marriage arranged by her father and sent to Britain, where her husband, Chanu, lives as a migrant. For Mehmet Ali Çelikel, this marriage is traumatic for Nazneen as "in a typical destiny of the member of a formerly colonized post imperial society, her fate leads her to marry a man in his forties and she is forced to live in London leaving all her life, land, home, family and her dreams behind" (Çelikel, 2022, p. 172-173). Although she crosses the borders of her homeland, she is forced to live in a confined space in London. Sagarika Chattopadhyay and Jaya Shrivastava write that her home "is a constricted site that encloses her within the role of a dutiful housewife. Her contact with the outside world occurs through Chanu and his constant debates about the superiority of the Occident over the Orient or the Orient over the Occident" (Chattopadhyay & Shrivastava, 2012, p. 116). Enclosed within her house, her window becomes a literal opening to the outer world. Noemí Pereira-Ares points out

> Trapped inside her apartment for most of the novel, and particularly upon her arrival in London, Nazneen finds in the small window of her claustrophobic flat the first chance to come into contact with the external world. Nevertheless, the sight offered by this window is a limited one, restricting Nazneen's field of vision to "the dead grass and broken paving stones" as well as to the figure of the tattoo lady, an old white woman who, like Nazneen, also shares a place by a window, a window which in this case is curtainless. (Pereira-Ares, 2012, p. 73)

Television becomes another window to access the world outside the house. Her first encounter and astonishment occur when she watches an ice-skating tournament on TV and is absorbed by the couple gliding on the ice with their strange boots. As Cormack suggests "the female figure represents everything that Nazneen is not: she dominates nature, the opposite sex, and her own body" (Cormack, 2006, p. 709). Her mesmerisation with ice skating pervades the novel and becomes symbolic for her character development.

Considering the deeply rooted background and the enclosing conditions of her new life, identity shift and self-discovery for Nazneen are not easy and take some time. Mahler and Pessar draw attention to Nazneen's predicaments and relate them to the term "social location" and gender. They assert that social location is referred to as "persons' positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based, and other socially stratifying factors. We underscore 'gender' in the framework's title as gender organizes human actions such as migration yet is frequently ignored. For the most part, people are born into a social location that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages" (Mahler & Pessar, 2001, p. 446). In this respect, as already suppressed and othered,

finding their own voice in a host society for women becomes a double suppression. It necessitates great effort for a woman to leave the social location she belongs to. As Çelikel emphasises "women who find themselves not only in problematic situations caused by their postcolonial condition, but also in troubles caused by traumatic results of patriarchal cultural practices" (Çelikel, 2022, p. 170). Similarly, Nazneen is trapped in her house in a Bangladeshi community. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Spivak draws attention to the entrapment of women between the two cultures and states, "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation, the figure of woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernisation" (Spivak, 2010, p. 280) Thus, even a small step out of her circle brings her to the verge of self-realisation and a shift in her identity. Her first challenge in the outside world gives her a new vision and broadens her borders. After her first walk outside Brick Lane, she thinks, "*Anything is possible*. She wanted to shout it. Do you know what I did today? I went inside a pub. To use the toilet. Did you think I could do that?" (Ali, 2004, p. 63). Although it seems that she talks to Chanu in her mind, the real target of her questions is herself. She pushes the limits of her identity and tells herself, "See what I can do?" (Ali, 2004, p. 63).

Although it is an ordinary act, Nazneen's taking her son, Raqib, to the hospital is revolutionary in her position. Her action is a kind of rebellion against the paralysing connection to her "social location." In contrast with her mother, who left Nazneen to "her fate" when she was ill many years earlier, Nazneen ruptures the submissive, fatalistic woman role and acts. She recalls her mother's attitude and total submission to fate. Her mother claims her inaction and yield to fate made no difference: "See! It made no difference. Amma did nothing to save her. And she lived. It was in God's hands" (Ali, 2004, p. 94). Nazneen rejects this fatalistic attitude,

> A mother who did nothing to save her own child! If Nazneen (her husband's part she did not consider) had not brought the baby to hospital at once, he would have died. The doctors said it. It was no lie. Did she kick about at home wailing and wringing her hands? Did she draw attention to her plight with long sighs and ostentatiously hidden weeping? Did she call piously for God to take what he would and leave her with nothing? Did she act, in short, like her mother? (Ali, 2004, p. 95)

Nazneen internalizes herself as the passive object of her own life and does not wish for anything. Referring to Homi Bhabha's idea of people's being "historical objects," Cormack emphasizes Nazneen's struggle for a basic, simple act out of the deterministic enclosure of her mother's attitude and her placement in life and writes,

> Nazneen's origin is situated in a distant past. A factor that further comments on Bhabha's ideas is that this moment is characterized by pure fatalism, the story being renarrated until it becomes the fundamental "principle" that rules Nazneen's life. She is the object of this discourse, central yet entirely exterior to its enunciation. The nature of her passage to England is also reflected in this story: she is the object of a transaction between men -her father and her husband- and does not allow herself even to wish for a different life. (Cormack, 2006, p. 701)

At the beginning of the novel, six months after her arrival in London, the narrator describes Nazneen as not a wishing type: "Every morning before she opened her eyes she thought, *if I were the wishing type, I know what I would wish*" (Ali, 2004, p. 18). However, in her new environment, Nazneen gradually but bravely abandons the discourse of faith that shapes her life and gains a fluid transnational identity in the end.

Getting a job is the biggest challenge and, at the same time, the biggest gain for Nazneen in the process of her self-realisation. According to John Marx, she transformed from "a young girl taught to 'treat life with indifference,' the wife performing chores as 'life made its pattern around and beneath and through her,' or the lover her teenage paramour conceives of as the very essence of Bengali womanhood, . . . into the protagonist in a story about self-actualization through work" (Marx, 2006, p. 19). Making a decision

in the case of working is not so easy for a Bangladeshi woman who is still living in a Bangladeshi community as a microcosmic Bangladesh. In her community, the work of a woman is thought to be something that brings shame to the home and the husband. Mrs. Islam speaks of Jorina, another Bangladeshi woman in their community, having a job and bringing shame on her family, especially on her husband. She says, Jorina "started work, and everyone said, 'He cannot feed her.' Even though he was working himself he was shamed … So [she] has brought shame on them all" (Ali, 2004, p. 66). For the community, this shameful situation justifies her husband's having lovers after she gets a job.

Nazneen breaks through the restrictions of her society and fate by finally getting a job. Her identity shifts across boundaries and emerges as a free woman in a new country and culture. Like other women in Brick Lane, her real liberation occurs when she is released from the boundaries created by male dominance. When Chanu starts talking about his new "project," going back to Dhaka, she does not readily yield to his intentions. Nazneen breaks through the restrictions of her society and fate by finally getting a job. Her identity shifts across boundaries and emerges as a free woman in a new country and culture. Like other women in Brick Lane, her real liberation occurs when she is released from the boundaries created by male dominance. When Chanu starts talking about his new "project," going back to Dhaka, she does not readily yield to his intentions. While going through the situation, "*I will decide what to do*," she thinks, "*I will say what happens to me. I will be the one*" (Ali, 2004, p. 301). She is not a fatalistic migrant girl anymore. She can think of staying in London without Chanu. In the end, she has her say about her own life, and she does not go with Chanu to Dhaka. She does not even think of marrying her lover, Karim. She works with Razia in a clothing design business and provides for her daughters. As John Marx puts it forward, "Work liberates her to dance and sing along with the radio in the novel's final pages, to go ice-skating, and to endorse the possibilities available to her as an independent contractor'" (Marx, 2006, p. 19). Her transnational identity enables her to cross the restrictive boundaries in her life and build new bridges. For Chattopadhyay and Shrivastava, "[t]he bridging becomes a pragmatic act because home exists as a sublimated presence even in the unhomed space, thereby weakening the intensity of dislocation. This bridging allows the individual to move between the two spheres without having to station oneself in a particular spot. Such a situation not only allows the individual to be located across many sites but provides him or her the flexibility of exercising multiple subjectivities" (Chattopadyay & Shrivastava, 2012, p.116). As Cormack points out, Monica Ali "ends the novel within a self-authoring female community, about to go skating with her daughters and her honest friend Razia. Nazneen has confronted her oppression within the discourses of gender, race, and religion and won for herself an independent space" (Cormack, 2006, p.706). In the end, Nazneen frees herself from any kind of male oppression in her life and does not allow both Chanu and Karim to drag her into their futile ideals. She rejects going back to Bangladesh with Chanu or marrying Karim. The ending of the novel presents this bridge when Nazneen does ice-skating in her sari. She enjoys her fluid identity by shifting between transnational borders.

The transnational identity shift for Christine Manley in *Hot Water Man* by Deborah Moggach is a totally different story. She is a feminist woman married to Donald Manley who is working for a chemical company, and she comes to Karachi, Pakistan with him. As Nazneen is suppressed by the pressures of society on her life and womanhood, Christine is restricted both by the "civilised" norms of her own community from Britain and the traditions of the local people. In Karachi, she does not behave like other British "wives" with children who are ordering servants, going clubs, and living in a snobby community alienated from the locals. Christine claims that she is willing to have a new original experience and a "change," as she states later in the novel, "She thought: Why have I come? To be changed" (Moggach, 1982, p. 240). Unlike Nazneen's genuine integration into the host culture, Christine has a predetermined intention to be a part of the local community and an expectation to be changed by her experiences during

her stay in Karachi. However, her class and her position as the representative of the West are a strong barrier to her interaction with the local people.

From the beginning, she refuses to play the role of "memsahib." She wishes to leave the artificial British community and explore the mysterious East. She intends to fully experience the "orient" mingling with Pakistani people freely without a master-servant relationship. She does unconventional things for her status, like shopping alone. Going to a bazaar and shopping is unusual for a white woman who has the status and financial power to afford servants. As Mohammed, her servant, puts it, it is a shame for the servants. Regarding the expected behaviours of a memsahib Margaret Macmillan writes, "While the memsahib was not actually expected to do anything around the house herself – indeed the servants were embarrassed and annoyed if she did – she was expected to keep an eye on everything" (Macmillan, 2018, Chapter 9). However, Christine not only goes to the bazaar on her own but also chooses the notorious Juna bazaar, known as "bad place," instead of the popular Bohri Bazaar, as "Everyman went to Bohri Bazaar. It was full of tourist knick-knacks; European women sailed through, the crowds opening like waves. Shopkeepers spoke in hectoring mid-Atlantic" (Moggach, 1982, p. 37). Unlike Nazneen's claustrophobic, restricted life in Brick Lane, Christine has the opportunity to experience the new world and define her own limitations till the end. However, there is another kind of restriction here, in Karachi: because of her status, her acts are not acceptable for both the British and Pakistani communities in which she tries to fit in. In *Memsahibs: British Women in Colonial India*, Ipshita Nath refers to the daily routine of a memsahib, and states that

> the ordering of the household after breakfast could be done in half an hour, so ideally, in the morning, every good memsahib went into the storeroom, inspected the supplies, doled out the provisions for the day, ordered the meals, checked the cook's expenditures, inspected the kitchen, and chided the *ayah* all in quick succession. If they had trained their servants well, the work was done even quicker, and they retired to their bedrooms well before noon. Whit nothing else to do, they passed time somehow until evening when they ventured out for a walk around the bungalows or played "hot-weather badminton" (Nath, 2022, Chapter 3).

As a "memsahib," Christine is expected to order servants for shopping or be accompanied by them like the other British wives do. When she goes to the bazaar, as a European woman unaccompanied by a servant, she cannot fit in the crowd and faces sexual assault, she has to buy a "dupatta" and cover her head. Even her servant Mohammed despises her actions, comparing her to his previous mistress, Mrs. Smythe who demands absolute order at home. Mohammed cannot understand Christine's behaviour and expects her to behave like other British women. Her behaviour is regarded as inappropriate for her status and his position as her servant. Unlike Nazneen, who experiences transnational identity shifts naturally, Christine tries hard for a change, and her effort seems to be unauthentic. In this regard, her deliberate willingness causes the shifts in her fluid identity to be rapid but shallow.

Besides being rejected by the local community, she cannot fit the microcosmic European community in Karachi as well. She was expected to fill her predecessor, Mrs. Smythe's shoes, which are too big for her. Mrs. Smythe was the chairman of the British Wives' association and "she was most active in those spheres. Mrs. Manley, she belongs to the association?" (Moggach, 1982, p. 55). However, Christine is not interested in mingling with British women, Donald remembers her remark about the association and "Christine's vow never to set foot in the place. *I came to Pakistan*, she had said, *not Tunbridge Wells*" (Moggach, 1982, p. 55). As Nath puts it, "[T]he idea of an Englishwoman growing closer in custom or culture to Indian traditions was believed to compromise the very essence of Britishness. Memsahibs' ability to adhere to the strict rules, therefore, was seen as something that reflected their will and steadfastness in the face of constant temptation" (Nath, 2002, Chapter 3). For Christine, her desire to be a part of the host culture is more than a temptation but an aim of her being there. Donald sees her

persistence not to be friendly with British society in Pakistan as a refusal of adaptation, saying, "I wish you learn to adapt" (Moggach,1982, p. 196). But for Christine, "How little any of them had been changed by this place. The English were so closed, hemmed in by their fixed beliefs and their fear of germs" (Moggach, 1982, p. 196). Donald expects Christine to adapt to the British community in Karachi and be a part of the British Wives' association. Christine, on the other hand, believes that if she can stay out of the association, she can blend in with the local life. However, when a turbaned mullah glances at her coldly, she resembles him "a robed master who finds a pupil coming to the wrong school. How could you forget yourself in this country when all those eyed reminded you who you were?" (Moggach, 1982, p. 202). She is not accepted, neither by Pakistani culture nor by the British. With her fluid identity, which is shifting across borders, she cannot fit into any of them. She claims that British people "bring their cultural baggage with them . . . I want this place to change me through my bloodstream" (Moggach, 1982, p. 197). She cannot realise that she is also carrying cultural baggage with her, and although she cannot see it, both British and Pakistani society can. In this respect, when Christine takes part in an advertising agency, Donald states, "I don't really see what's so ethnic about working for an advertising agency" (Moggach, 1982, p. 197).

Being a "memsahib," in other words, doing nothing, is suffocating for Christine. She does not have a job, and at the same time, she cannot do even small household chores. She does not clean, cook, or do garden work, which she is yearning for as she has servants to do these things. For her, "it is odd, not having a job" but Donald says "foreign wives can't work. It's against government policy or something. They can only do voluntary things" (Moggach, 1982, p. 97). However, when she meets Sultan Rahim, a new phase in Pakistan starts for her. He assures her that he can do something about the working issue, and their relationship develops through their journeys in Pakistan into a romantic one. Her relationship with Sultan Rahim blurs the borderlines for Christine and enables her to gain a fluid identity towards the desire to explore the "unknown and mysterious orient" through Sultan Rahim. Thus, "[s]he must relax and slip into the tempo of this place" (Moggach, 1982, p. 97). For her, "it is the voyage, not the destination, that is important . . . these voyages with Sultan through the sprawling, centreless city were the nearest she had felt to some inner reshuffling" (Moggach, 1982, p. 200). Her remarks about the local culture display that it is difficult to be free from the discourse of her culture in her attitude towards Pakistan. As a Westerner, "mystery of the oriental" attracts her as she states that "[s]he had touched no Pakistani except to shake hands" (Moggach, 1982, p. 200). In this respect, her sexual intercourse with Sultan is also another voyage heading towards no destination; she continues her marriage with Donald. In the end, her identity flows through another boundary: motherhood. From the moment her pregnancy is revealed, she is accepted by both Pakistani and British society as "[h]er pregnancy gave her a place; overnight she was accepted by Europeans and Pakistanis, for the first time they knew what to talk to her about. At last, she had done the right thing. They included her" (Moggach, 1982, p. 245). After the birth of the baby, her place is fixed permanently. Her anxiety about having Sultan's child vanishes with the relief of having Donald's white child. As a result, a total identity shift for Christine proves to be impossible, and her identity as a white British wife becomes stronger. Indirectly, she accepts the role of a mother and a white woman in Pakistan.

Conclusion

People move across borders for a variety of reasons, including wars, social and economic instability, and the hope of leading a better life. Even after immigrating to a new nation and assimilating into a new community, transmigrants tend to maintain familial, social, economic, and political ties to their country of origin. Therefore, the migrant's background intersects with his or her interactions with the host country, resulting in a fluid transnational identity. In this sense, migrants are able to traverse the social,

economic and psychological barriers in the host country thanks to their flexible transnational identities. Identity shifts and adaptations are different and more challenging for migrant women than migrant men. Moreover, the extent of cultural clashes plays a crucial role in the development of transnational identities, especially if there is a significant cultural background gap between these two countries, such as between Pakistan, Bangladesh, and England, the impact will be greater.

The two immigrant women in this study have separate experiences in the host culture as the ex-coloniser and the colonised. Furthermore, because of the clash of gender roles in the countries they came from and migrated to, acquiring their fluid transnational identity presents unique challenges. Both Nazneen and Christine have unique experiences of cultural clashes in the target culture. Being a woman in their transnational experience is one point they have in common. Both women are constrained and suppressed by the cultures through which their identities flow. Mostly, they are seen as companions to men as migrants, and the decisions about their lives do not belong to them. On the other hand, this process takes place differently according to migrant women's cultural backgrounds. Transnational identity shifts for women in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali take place in a parallel way to gaining social freedom and liberation from husbands or male authority in their lives. Their new lives in London have a liberating effect on women and can unchain them from the domination of their husbands. However, for white women like Christine and other British wives in Pakistan in *Hot Water Man* the "civilised" background becomes the restricting element, chaining them to passivity. This time, they are pushed towards the domestic area. They are not accepted by society and are forced to choose to live according to the given roles: a decent wife with a child.

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