



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**THE MIGRANT WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MONICA ALI'S
BRICK LANE AND SELİM ÖZDOĞAN'S *THE ANATOLIAN BLUES TRILOGY***

Master's Thesis

Betül Sena Özer

Department of English Language and Literature

Master of Arts in English Language and Literature

August 2025



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**THE MIGRANT WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MONICA ALI'S
BRICK LANE AND SELİM ÖZDOĞAN'S *THE ANATOLIAN BLUES TRILOGY***

Master's Thesis

Betül Sena Özer

Asst. Prof. Dr. Erden EL

Department of English Language and Literature

Master of Arts in English Language and Literature

August 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Erden El, for his invaluable guidance, encouragement, and patience throughout the process of this thesis. His insightful feedback and unwavering support have been a constant source of inspiration. I am more than grateful for his support and understanding both on professional and personal matters.

I also wish to thank my thesis committee members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Victoria Bilge Yılmaz and Asst. Prof. Dr. Ersin Çetinkaya for their time and constructive suggestions, which have greatly contributed to the improvement and completion of this work.

I convey my sincere gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Beyazıt Hilmi Akman, whose guidance and helpful advice played a significant role in shaping and advancing this study, and whose support has been invaluable to my academic development.

I am profoundly thankful to my family for their unconditional love, encouragement, and sacrifices, which have made every step of my academic journey possible. I am especially indebted to my mother, whose unparalleled support and belief in me have been a constant source of strength and inspiration, enabling me to overcome every challenge.

Finally, I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my fiancé, whose support, understanding, and patience have been my anchor during this journey. His encouragement and faith in me have been a source of motivation in moments of doubt.

As someone who belongs to a family of migrants and has lived my own experience of navigating between cultures, this thesis became more than research- it became a mirror and a personal journey. In the lives of the women I studied, I recognized pieces of my own path: navigating unfamiliar landscapes, negotiating identity, the quiet courage of starting anew, and balancing the weight of what is left behind with the hope of what lies ahead. This work has not only expanded my understanding of migration in literature, but also deepened my understanding of my own story. Like the characters in the novels, I have learned that migration is not only about crossing distances, but also about finding a place that I can call home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
ABSTRACT	v
ÖZET	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter Overview	3
CHAPTER 1: DEFINING MIGRATION LITERATURE	4
1.1 Joanna Kosmalska	4
1.2 Paul White	9
1.3 Søren Frank.....	13
1.3.1 Postcolonialism and Migration Literature	15
1.4 Similarities between the Theories	16
1.5 <i>Brick Lane</i> and <i>The Anatolian Blues Trilogy</i> as Examples of Migration Literature	17
1.5.1 <i>Brick Lane</i>	17
1.5.2 <i>The Anatolian Blues Trilogy</i>	20
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	27
2.1 Stuart Hall.....	27
2.2 Consuela Wagner.....	28
2.2.1 The Native Foreigner.....	30
2.2.2 The Nostalgic.....	31
2.2.3 The Hybrid	31
2.2.4 The Cosmopolitan.....	32
2.3 Hybridity	34
2.3.1 Hybridity and the Third Space.....	35
2.3.2 Mimicry and Ambivalence	37
2.3.3 Unhomeliness.....	38
2.3.4 Criticisms	39
2.4 Sten Pultz Moslund.....	40
2.5 Double oppression faced by migrant women	42
CHAPTER 3: <i>BRICK LANE</i>	44
3.1 Nazneen’s Migratory Experience and Identity Formation Process.....	44
3.1.1 “How You Were Left To Your Fate”	44
3.1.2 Nazneen’s early experiences in London	45

3.1.3 Language.....	47
3.1.4 Internal Rebellions.....	48
3.1.5 Urban Experience	49
3.1.6 Raqib	50
3.1.7 Financial Freedom: Sewing.....	53
3.1.8 Karim	55
3.1.9 Clothing.....	63
3.1.10 Ice skating	64
3.1.11 Female Friendship: Razia	66
3.1.12 Moment of Awakening	67
3.1.13 Rejection of Fatalism	68
3.1.14 Standing up to Mrs Islam.....	70
3.1.15 Breakup with Karim.....	71
3.1.16 Return to Bangladesh	72
3.3 Wagner's Identity Reconstruction Strategies in <i>Brick Lane</i>	73
3.3.1 Nazneen.....	73
3.3.2 Chanu	74
3.3.3 Mrs Azad.....	80
3.3.4 Razia.....	81
3.3.5 Shahana.....	82
3.3.6 Karim	84
3.4 Hybridity	86
CHAPTER 4: <i>THE ANATOLIAN BLUES TRILOGY</i>	88
4. 1 Gül's Migratory Experience and Identity Formation.....	89
4.1.1 Marriage	89
4.1.2 First experiences in Germany	90
4.1.3 Language.....	91
4.1.4 Socializing	92
4.1.5 Working	94
4.1.6 Food.....	99
4.1.7 Migration Stories- Reality and Representation	100
4.1.8 Money	101
4.1.9 Longing and Guilt.....	102
4.1.10 Struggle of the Children	106
4.1.11 The Television.....	107

4.1.12 Fuat's treatment of Gül	108
4.1.13 Return to Türkiye	114
4.1.14 Fuat cheating	121
4.1.15 Can	122
4.1.16 Gül's internal awakening	125
4.2 Wagner's Identity Reconstruction Strategies in <i>The Anatolian Blues Trilogy</i>	127
4.2.1 Gül	127
4.2.2 Fuat.....	127
4.2.3 Saniye	128
4.2.4 Ceyda.....	129
4.2.5 Sevgi	130
4.3 Hybridity	131
4.4 A Comparative Analysis of Gül and Nazneen	132
4.4.1 Marriage	132
4.4.2 Historical context.....	132
4.4.3 Disorientation.....	133
4.4.4 The Mirror Scenes	133
4.4.5 Language	133
4.4.6 Work	134
4.4.7 Silence as Resistance.....	134
4.4.8 Motherhood.....	134
4.4.9 Karim and Can	135
4.4.10 Transformations: Drastic vs. Internal	135
5. CONCLUSION.....	136
WORKS CITED	140

THE MIGRANT WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE* AND SELIM ÖZDOĞAN'S *THE ANATOLIAN BLUES TRILOGY*

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, migration has played a crucial role and shaped societies, cultures, customs, and languages in different ways. Today, migration is still a relevant and topical issue, especially with recent outbreaks of migration waves as a result of economic, political, and environmental crises. One of the ways people deal with and process migration is through writing and authorship. As a distinct genre, migration literature offers insights into important topics related to migration, such as identity, race, language and class, and sheds light on the multifaceted challenges and experiences of migrants. In this study, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, consisting of the three novels *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, *52 Factory Lane*, and *A Light Still Burns*, as examples of Bangladeshi-British and Turkish-German migration literature, will be analyzed with a comparative approach. The focus of the analysis is on the female protagonists, Nazneen and Gül, and their identity formation, especially that of a hybrid identity, themes of belonging and their image of the self and the other. Both novels address migration and identity issues, portraying female characters who face not only the challenges of being migrants but also the burdens of patriarchy and the traditional gender roles imposed on them. This thesis argues that while the female protagonists struggle with their identities, these struggles ultimately lead to self-discovery and varying degrees of agency and freedom. This analysis explores how gender, patriarchal norms, cultural hybridity, and the migrant experience shape the protagonists' journeys and identities.

Keywords: Migration Literature, Hybridity, Turkish-German Literature, Bangladeshi-British Literature, Identity Formation

GÖÇ EDEBİYATINDA KADIN: MONİCA ALİ'NİN *BRICK LANE* ROMANININ VE SELİM ÖZDOĞAN'IN GÖÇ ÜÇLEMESİ'NDEKİ ROMANLARIN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI İNCELEMESİ

ÖZET

Tarih boyunca göç; toplumları, kültürleri, gelenekleri ve dilleri farklı şekillerde biçimlendirme ve dönüştürmede kritik bir rol oynamıştır. Günümüzde de göç, özellikle ekonomik, siyasi ve çevresel krizler sonucunda ortaya çıkan yeni göç dalgalarıyla birlikte güncelliğini koruyan önemli bir konudur. İnsanlar göç deneyimini anlamlandırma ve ifade etme yollarından biri olarak edebiyata başvururlar. Kendine özgü bir tür olarak göç edebiyatı; kimlik, ırk, dil ve sınıf konuları bağlamında, göçmenlerin yaşadığı çok yönlü zorlukları ve deneyimlerini konu alır. Bu çalışmada, Bangladeş-İngiliz ve Türk-Alman göç edebiyatının örnekleri olarak Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane* ve Selim Özdoğan'ın *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, *52 Factory Lane* ve *A Light Still Burns* adlı romanlarından oluşan “Göç Üçlemesi” karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşımla incelenecektir. Analizin odak noktası, kadın kahramanlar Nazneen ve Gül’ün kimlik oluşumu, özellikle melez kimlik, aidiyet temaları ve öz algılarıdır. Her iki eser, göçmen olmanın zorluklarıyla başa çıkmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda ataerkillik ve kendilerine dayatılan geleneksel cinsiyet rolleriyle de yüzleşen kadın kahramanlar aracılığıyla göç ve kimlik sorununu vurgulamaktadır. Kadın kahramanlar kimlikleriyle mücadele ederler, ancak nihayetinde bu mücadeleleri kendilerini keşfetmelerine ve farklı düzeylerde irade ve özgürlüğe ulaşmalarına yol açar. Bu analiz, toplumsal cinsiyet, ataerkil normlar, kültürel melezlik ve göç deneyiminin, başkarakterlerin yolculuklarını ve kimliklerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Göç Edebiyatı, Melezlik, Türk-Alman Edebiyatı, Bangladeş-İngiliz Edebiyatı, Kimlik Oluşumu

INTRODUCTION

All history is the history of migration.

-Moris Farhi

Migration is a phenomenon that has persisted for centuries, transforming civilizations and societies worldwide. Throughout history, humans have always migrated from one place to another, whether it be across borders to a different country (international migration) or within a country to a different region or city (internal migration) (Tataru 14). Several push and pull factors motivate people to relocate. Adverse conditions in migrants' countries of origin often drive their decision to resettle, while favorable conditions in host countries attract them (Keeley 36). Some people move across regions for work, education, adventure or personal relationships, while others flee unlivable conditions in their home country, such as wars, poverty, unemployment, economic instability, environmental disasters, terror, conflicts and persecutions based on ethnicity, race, political views, religion, and cultural differences (Tsegay 4; Tataru 22–23). Migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, is rarely the result of a single cause; rather, a range of interconnected factors that influence individuals' decisions to leave their home country (Frouws et al. 3) shapes it. Yet, the common factor among migrants and their decision to relocate is the search for improved living conditions.

Migration is not a novelty, but its significance has intensified in recent times. Frank highlights major historical events, such as world wars, numerous regional wars, decolonization, and the emergence of totalitarian regimes, as well as technological developments that facilitated traveling and communication, as key factors in shaping global migration patterns (1). Scholars characterize our era as *The Age of Migration* (Frank 1; Castles and Miller 3–4; King et al. 1), highlighting the migrant as its “main protagonist” (Frank 1). This trend is further illustrated by the fact that international migrants have almost doubled since 1990 (United Nations 2). Thus, migration has become a standard aspect of modern life, reshaping traditional understandings of notions such as identity, belonging and home (Frank 1).

Migration is not only the act of crossing borders; when people migrate, they carry their culture, traditions, values, language, and identity with them, shaping both their own self-perception and the societies of their home and host countries (Tataru 25). The challenges and transformations

of migration find representations in literature, which have long been a medium for sharing and processing experiences. Themes of cultural dislocation and migration have become central to contemporary literature.

As a distinct genre, migration literature explores key aspects of migration, including identity formation, the processes and challenges related to cultural adaptations, notions of hybridity, and the multifaceted experiences and difficulties faced by migrants. Migration literature fosters empathy, intercultural understanding and dialogue, thus nurturing a multicultural society (Ceylan 431). It gives voice to minorities and exposes the discrimination faced by them in their daily lives, while also displaying migrants' cultural values and customs (Ceylan 431). Ahmad argues that literature "renders migrant lives comprehensible and familiar", allowing readers to engage with perspectives they might not otherwise encounter and learn valuable insights about the unique challenges faced by migrants (Ahmad xv). The reader, immersed in the world of the migrant, learns about their experiences and traditions while being encouraged to challenge prejudices and think critically about their own assumptions. In this regard, migration literature acts as a bridge between people, countries, and cultures, promoting empathy and dialogue.

In this context, this study will examine Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, consisting of the three novels *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, *52 Factory Lane* and *A Light Still Burns*. As examples of Bangladeshi-English and Turkish-German migration literature, the novels will be analyzed with a comparative approach.

This study adopts comparative literature as its methodological framework. The comparative approach focuses on identifying and analyzing similarities and differences in the content of literary works produced by different nations. This makes it suitable for analyzing Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, as both foreground the theme of migration. The methodology offers a basis for examining similarities and differences regarding migration and identity formation in two novels from different national contexts. It also situates these themes within the specific socio-cultural and historical settings of Bangladeshi migration to Britain and Turkish guest-worker migration to Germany. The study employs close reading as its method of textual analysis, concentrating on key passages that depict the characters' experiences of migration.

The focus of the analysis is on the female protagonists, Nazneen and Gül, and their identity formation, especially that of a hybrid identity, themes of belonging, and their journey towards selfhood. Both novels address migration and identity issues, portraying female characters who

face not only the challenges of being migrants but also the burdens of patriarchy and the traditional gender roles imposed on them. This thesis argues that while the female protagonists struggle with their identities, these struggles ultimately lead to self-discovery and varying degrees of agency and freedom. This analysis explores how gender, patriarchal norms, cultural adaptation, and the migrant experience shape the protagonists' journeys and identities.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1, "Defining Migration Literature," explores how migration literature can be defined, categorized, and analyzed. Drawing on the works of Joanna Kosmalka, Paul White, and Søren Frank, the chapter outlines multiple approaches to identify migration literature, emphasizing that it does not need to be written by migrants to reflect migration experiences. It examines recurring themes such as identity shifts, hybridity, ambivalence, belonging, the myth of return, nationalism, globalization, and gendered experiences, alongside stylistic features like multilingualism, multiple perspectives and non-linear storytelling. Finally, it applies these theoretical frameworks to *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, demonstrating how both works embody the thematic and stylistic principles of migration literature.

In Chapter 2, the key analytical tools for comparing identity formation in *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* are drawn from the theories of Stuart Hall, Consuela Wagner, Homi K. Bhabha, Sten Pultz Moslund, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, encompassing concepts such as fluid and hybrid identities, migrant identity formation strategies, the Third Space, organic and intentional hybridity, and the double oppression faced by migrant women. Together, these frameworks provide a nuanced basis for analyzing how the novels' female protagonists navigate displacement, cultural negotiation, and the search for agency.

In Chapter 3 and 4, *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* are examined in detail, with each analysis applying the theoretical frameworks established in the earlier chapters. The close reading of the novels is structured around three key areas. First, it examines the identity transformation and migratory experiences of the female protagonists. Second, it applies Wagner's four identity construction strategies—the native foreigner, the nostalgic, the hybrid, and the cosmopolitan—to key characters in the narratives. Finally, it explores the characters' experiences of hybridity and creation of a Third Space, while also employing Moslund's distinction between organic and intentional hybridity.

All translations from German sources are my own.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING MIGRATION LITERATURE

Before delving into an in-depth analysis of the novels, this section will establish a definition of their genre -migration literature. Key questions and concepts will be explored, including how to define migration literature, criteria to classify a work as part of migration literature, the relevance of the author's personal migrant background and recurring common themes. The discussion will draw upon insights, interpretations and theories of prominent scholars in the field. Based on the contributions of Joanna Kosmalska, Paul White and Søren Frank, this chapter will establish the necessary foundation for understanding how *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* fit into the genre of migration literature.

1.1 Joanna Kosmalska

To begin, this study draws on researcher Joanna Kosmalska's definition of migration literature to understand the concept, its different forms and characteristics, recurring themes and motifs, as well as its potential for academic study. Kosmalska defines migration literature by employing theme, ethnic, and text-oriented approaches (Kosmalska 331). In her definition, migration literature encompasses all types of fictional and non-fictional writings published since the 90s (Kosmalska 331). She also specifies certain important characteristics of migrant writings:

- They are concerned with migration or stem from that experience.
- They do not have to be written by a migrant author.
- Include themes of cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, hybridity and globalization (Kosmalska 331).

Furthermore, she highlights the research potential of migration literature, emphasizing its ability to provide insightful knowledge about the migrant experience and shed light on both host and home cultures, while simultaneously uncovering the stereotypical depiction of migrants. Migration writings serve as a medium through which notions such as identity, nationality and belonging are questioned. They offer alternative knowledge about societal and cultural changes (Kosmalska 331). Additionally, they play a role in countering mainstream narratives regarding migration and highlighting realities that are dismissed from public

discourse (Kosmalska 331-332). This alternative perspective provided by migration writings serves as a valuable source for different academic fields such as sociology, politics, economics and cultural studies (Kosmalska 332).

She initially raises the question of whether terms like diasporic and migrant literature can be used interchangeably and contends that migration writing should be studied in relation to other genres (Kosmalska 332). The author notes that migration writing shares common traits with other genres. To exemplify, the mixing of reality and imagination is a quality that is also present in travel narratives. Additionally, migration writing has structural and stylistic similarities, such as a hybrid form with postcolonial texts. However, there are also significant distinctions; migration writing does not have to be autobiographical or set in a colonial context. Despite the differences, comparing migration writing with other literary forms aids in revealing the unique characteristics of this genre.

Kosmalska identifies three perspectives to examine migration writing. Firstly, the theme-oriented approach gives attention to the subject matter while the writer's origin is ignored. The author can be anyone who has been influenced by migration, whether it be the migrant themselves or members of their family, relatives, friends and even people who live where the migrant relocates. The important factor is that the work is influenced by the migratory experience and features the theme of migration. Conversely, the ethnic-oriented approach emphasizes the author's background rather than the topic of the work. As long as a text is written by a migrant and written as a result of diasporic experience, it counts as migration writing, whether the topic of migration is a central theme in the work, or mentioned in one sentence or as a motif, lens or framework through which the author views the world. In some cases, the theme of migration is not mentioned at all. Thus, the author's ethnic and cultural background is the main determinant in this perspective. The last angle is text-oriented, which questions what types of texts can be labelled as migration writing. Kosmalska debates whether maps, photographs, illustrations, graphic novels, or even social media posts by migrants should be categorized as migration writing. On one hand, scholars oppose including these works in the category of migration writing as this definition is too broad and would apply to an indefinite number of texts, making the term lose its meaning and value. But it is also noted that it can be justified to treat digital media similar to written texts such as novels, poems and reportages as their representations operate similarly in terms of method and effect. Consequently, applying the term migration writing to these novel forms may be appropriate in some contexts. To

conclude, the author states that migration literature has “fuzzy, flexible boundaries” as it can be used to label different types of writings (Kosmalska 334).

As a next stage in her discussion, Joanna Kosmalska explores the beginning point of migration writing. In the wide category of migration literature exist diverse literary strands, trends and movements which she categorizes into four groups. Overlaps are prevalent between these groups and they exhibit similarities as well as differences. In sum, they broaden and clarify the definition of migration writing.

In the first group, the focus is on the authors who are either foreigners, exiles, refugees, guest workers or “Kanakas” (German slur used to describe people with Middle Eastern roots, e.g. Turks, Arabs, Iranians, etc.) (Kosmalska 336). So, the authors are outsiders, marginalized because of their ethnic roots, even though they might be integrated in social, linguistic and economic terms. Some scholars reject such categorizations, highlighting their ethical and political limitations. Hence, migrant authors try to avoid this label, which does not see the true value of their work and turns it into political tools or sociological data (Kosmalska 336).

Terms such as minority and diasporic literature used as a categorization in the second group imply that the writers are not native to the country and live in an isolated, distinct community which marginalizes them. The author and their work get othered and positioned at the margins of society (Kosmalska 336-337). The emphasis on the foreignness and exotic aspects of the texts leads them to be treated as a distinct category that is not only separated from national literature, but also in contrast to it. Therefore, the terms applied to the second group highlight the distinction between the national and foreign.

Contrarily, the categorizations hyphenated, intercultural, and multicultural writings employed in the third group allude to a successful combination of foreign and national literature. The writers are more or less multicultural, bring the figure of the migrant closer to natives, combine their two cultures and explore issues related to identity. By doing so, they inspect and reshape personal and collective identities. Consequently, they invent new understandings of the concepts of home and belonging. Hyphenated, intercultural, and multicultural writings change the definition of national literature. The texts written by multicultural authors living in ethnically diverse societies are national and multicultural, and they remove the boundary

between national and foreign literature and expand the concept of national literature to a comprehensive and more inclusive definition (Kosmalska 337).

The fourth group consists of labels such as immigrant and migrant literature (Kosmalska 337). They have a distinct classification as they mark a new phase for migration literature. By centering the figure of the newcomer, they shed light on the various stages of the migrant's integration into the host society (Kosmalska 337).

Each category of migrants demonstrates varying attitudes towards both their host and home countries and cultures. Emigré writers recreate their homeland in the diaspora, so that their fellow emigrants remain participants of life in their home countries and do not lose ties to the native environment. They not only maintain connections to the homeland, but they are also involved in political and social matters of the native land. They are expected to provide commentary on national matters and to promote and sustain native knowledge among diaspora communities. Their writings are mostly in the native language as their audience is their fellow nationals, which address the elite class in both the native and foreign country (Kosmalska 338). Their texts center on the native culture rather than the new environment. The themes explored in émigré writing include displacement, trauma and hardships of migration (Kosmalska 338). Nostalgia and sentimentalism are also among the defining features of these texts.

In contrast to the émigré writer's position, the immigrant writer resists the role of a national bard, as they do not feel morally obligated to remain engaged in the politics of their homeland (Kosmalska 338). Their decision to relocate is not necessarily politically motivated. Thematically, such works are concerned more with assimilation into the new environment rather than the pain of longing and separation from their homes (Kosmalska 338). Other themes explored include identity loss, the feeling of in-betweenness, and the untranslatable nature of culture and language. Additionally, texts written by immigrants are mostly written in the local language, which can be the writer's second or third language, rather than in their mother tongue.

While emigration and immigration are often involuntary migrations, migration denotes a voluntary act which sets migrant literature apart from the other forms. As a result, in migrant writings, multiple migratory experiences are possible and it is observable that the figure of the migrant navigates two cultures with confidence. They gain proficiency in their home and host countries' languages and gain knowledge about both cultures which they regard as something positive (Kosmalska 340). The multicultural and multilingual nature of these texts catches the

attention of international audiences and unlike émigré literature that is written for elite audiences, migrant literature is inclusive as it includes high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow writings (Kosmalska 340). There is also a wide range of texts to be found in migrant writings including poetry, crime fiction, romance novels and memoirs.

When it comes to the literature of migration, what differentiates it from émigré, immigrant and migrant literature is its change in focus from the author of the text to its content and work. The term ‘literature of migration’ is inclusive as it encompasses all writings produced within a context of migration and are related to that topic, regardless of the author’s background (Kosmalska 340-341). What matters is that the work shows transnationalism, globalization and hybridity (Kosmalska 341). If a work can be categorized under this category depends on the topic and characteristics rather than the author’s nationality.

Kosmalska specifies certain characteristics of the genre:

- A realistic style (the story may be based on lived experiences and memories),
- The presence of creolization and multilingualism,
- References to multiple cultures and geographies,
- Influence of modernity on the text,
- Common topics and symbols. (Kosmalska 345)

In the last section of her essay, Kosmalska reveals the research potential of migration writings. She highlights that the authenticity and factuality can be questioned as the authors create “fictionalised rendering of migration” (Kosmalska 345). Migration works both convey information and entertain the reader, but the balance between these two functions varies across works. Some authors write in an informative, journalistic way, while others are more concerned with aesthetics and the enjoyment of the reader. Still, these texts contribute insightful perspectives to the discourse around migration as they offer information about the experience of migrants and their contemporary history (Kosmalska 346). The memories and reflections of migrant writers get included in world history, creating “a sort of socio-historical archive” (Kosmalska 346).

Reasons for studying migration literature are several, such as their ability to:

- provide a synthesis of fact and fiction
- offer the reader enjoyment, while presenting informative content
- depict an image of the native and host country of the migrant, influencing the perception of those places
- portray human interactions in daily life
- arouse interest in the other,
- promote intercultural exchange
- form novel traditions and shared customs
- explore the notion of belonging and identity and concepts such as local, foreign, migrant, etc.
- reconstructing the migrants' self-identity, group and national identity
- explore identity issues in an exceptional way
- highlight the influence of globalization on identity formation
- challenge stereotypes and prejudices about migration and migrants,
- encourage their readers to rethink their understandings of nationality, borders, belonging or home (Kosmalska 347).

Kosmalska also highlights the role of migration literature in contributing to different academic fields such as sociology, politics, economics and cultural studies (Kosmalska 347). Migration literature also represents and gives voice to the silenced members of society and exposes their depiction in a stereotypical manner (Kosmalska 347). The reader gets inspired to view topical issues from a global, wide perspective and is presented with new insights about changes in culture that arise because of migration (Kosmalska 347). These writings present an alternative to the mainstream discourse and include people in discussions they are normally excluded from (Kosmalska 347). Kosmalska adds that literature by itself does not have the potential to solve problems; for real change to occur, readers have to take action in real life (Kosmalska 347).

1.2 Paul White

Having discussed the definitions, categories and themes of migration writing and the reasons for studying it, this section engages with another influential book in the field: *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*.

In the preface of the book, the editors explain why they decided to write a book on migration literature. There is plenty of research on migration conducted in fields such as sociology,

anthropology, economics, history, etc., analyzing the phenomenon in social, demographic, cultural and economic terms, however, they mostly focus on statistical data and on specific features of migration and are not sufficient to relate the multifaceted experience of migrants. Important elements such as “nostalgia, anomie, exile, rootlessness, restlessness” that are part of the migratory experience are dismissed in these studies (King et al. x). Thus, literature that is concerned with migration, written by migrants or non-migrants, offers profound observations into the migration process and experience. The observations gained through literary accounts of migration are often more relevant and substantial than those provided by statistics or survey results (King et al. x). The authors suggest a model of migration literature tracing its forms and typologies.

The first stage, named as “pre-literatures”, includes newsletters or community newspapers written by ethnic migrants, as well as diaries, letters, songs and verbal accounts. Pre-literature was mostly produced by uneducated and in some cases illiterate migrants as a means of maintaining ties to their roots. These works are often dismissed as “rudimentary and naive” (King et al. xi), even though they are significant as they constitute authentic testimonials to the experiences of migrants in their respective countries. Pre-literatures were followed by literary pieces and articles produced in the native languages and printed in publications created by the diasporic group. These writings had a therapeutic function helping migrants to cope with their experiences and sharing it with people who can relate and understand them. These writings were heavily autobiographical and written in a simple manner; thus, similar to pre-literatures, they were not given much value. In the next phase of the evolution of migration literature, more creative literature pieces were produced, such as novels, drama and poetry (King et al. xii). These texts are written by professional writers who often have a migrant background and in the language of the receiving society. Their works not only portray migrant experiences, but they are also concerned with layered themes such as identity, ambivalence, cultural encounters and hybridity. In the last stage, an important shift takes place: Literature, which formerly illustrated the experiences of migrants, is now being changed by the migrant writers themselves as they influence and construct national and international literature.

Paul White, one of the editors of the book, also wrote the first chapter titled “Geography, Literature and Migration” in which he establishes a framework and highlights overlaps between social science and the study of literature that can be useful in the analysis of migration literature. He argues that migration transforms people and ways of thinking and creates new experiences and understandings of identity as a result of different cultures coming together. These changes influence literature and other markers of identity and culture (White 1).

There are two ways to study migration literature, as outlined by White: Firstly, the texts are studied on an individual level with a focus on specific authors and how they represent the experience of certain people within the context of migration. The second approach examines literature that is shaped by historical and societal experiences of migration, emphasizing the collective memory of communities impacted by large-scale movements (White 2).

Identity issues that arise through migration, whether at the individual level or within communities, are one of the topics that can be analyzed effectively through literature. The transformation of self can happen before or after relocating to a new country. People have multiple identities that they renegotiate throughout their lives. Key aspects of one's identity include:

- Gender (gender roles and gendered behavior)
- Developmental stage
- Culture
- Age
- Economic and occupational identity
- Linguistic identity
- Religion
- Ethnicity

When migration occurs, a questioning of one's personality and self-image takes place as migration brings about transformation (2). Additionally, migrants get exposed to new influences that challenge their self-image and identities (White 3). Many factors contribute to a reevaluation of identity. When individuals relocate, their attitude towards their ethnicities can shift and traditional gender roles can be challenged or reversed. Families can experience separation and economic status can change, which also leads to employment, income and wealth, and consumption patterns being altered. Migration also influences religious views; people can become secular or emphasize their religious identity to stay connected to their origins. Language use undergoes changes, with migrants gradually or completely shifting to the language of the host country. Personal aspirations, including migrants' plans, aims and ambitions in life, also experience transformation. Individuals who migrate may desire to recreate their former lives in their new environment, try to integrate or assimilate completely or formulate an entirely novel identity that is independent from both cultures. All of these transformations find representations in migration literature (White 3).

After having established identity issues as an important aspect of migration literature, White proceeds to introduce ambivalence as a concept of significance. Migrants hold mixed and

contradictory ideas about different aspects of their lives. White identifies multiple layers of ambivalence that migrants often experience: uncertainty about whether life was better in the past or the present. They can also be indecisive about whether to preserve the ideal of returning home or to commit fully to a new future. Migrants carry conflicting feelings toward the host society, ranging from admiration to discomfort and they navigate between maintaining traditional values and adopting new practices (White 4).

Depending on the choices and the condition of their situation, migrants' identities, attitudes and behaviors change accordingly, which highlights the ambiguous aspect of migration. Another important feature of migration also present in migration literature is time. Experiences of early and later migrants can be different from one another because of changed attitudes or economic, social and political factors. Over time, individual and group identities undergo changes as a result of their new experiences that can differ with respect to social class, generation and gender (White 4). White continues his chapter by identifying parallels between migration literature and modernist and postmodernist texts with fragmentation, dislocation, alienation, pluralism, movement, change, identity, and the celebration of differences being some of the common themes. He also identifies two common metaphors used for migration in literary writings which are death and awakening or rebirth (White 6; 7).

In the last section of his chapter, the author exemplifies how to analyze migration writings within the context of identity shifts. During his analysis, he touches upon common themes related to migration literature. He lists ambivalence and adjustment as one of these themes (White 12). Migration as an event consists of a "long-drawn-out (indeed, perhaps never completed) web of personal reflections, adjustments, reactions and repercussions" (White 12). Ambivalence is observable in the experiences of literary characters who are drawn between preserving their culture and adapting to their host country (White 12). Thematically, there is a focus particularly on the marginalization and struggles of migrant women and traditional gender roles. The roles of images and prejudices and of social networks for migrants are also present in literature of migration (White 11). The experiences of migrants who work low-status jobs are also portrayed in this genre, as well as the experiences of refugees and of dislocation and abandonment (White 13). Another theme frequently used is returning to the home country. This fantasy may come true or stay imagined. These themes are sometimes the main focus, but they can also be touched upon subtly (White 14). Still, migration novels continue to offer substantial insight into the complex connections between people and place, the meaning of territorial belonging, the negotiation of layered identities, and the tensions that migration introduces into both individual lives and broader society (White 14).

1.3 Søren Frank

Building upon these initial definitions and themes of migration literature, this section introduces Søren Frank's more detailed categorization and critical perspective.

The Danish Professor and comparatist Søren Frank is concerned with the thematic and stylistic categories of migration literature in his book.

Frank theorizes about migration literature, providing significant academic contributions to its understanding. He seeks to answer the question what stylistic features the genre has (Frank 5). He highlights the importance of migration in the current time, stating that migration has become standard and leads to a redefinition of what constitutes the self, belonging, and the notion of home (Frank 1). According to Frank, the notion of migration holds both artistic and sociological importance and links both concepts (3; 5). The developments in the globalized, fast-changing world not only transform society and humanity, they also have an impact on literature. An increase in authors with migrant backgrounds and their literary, sociological, and phenomenological significance is observable, which calls for a clarification of the thematic and formal features that distinguish migration literature from nonmigrant literature (Frank 2).

Frank's understanding of migration literature embraces the body of literature written during a period when migration happened (2). In alignment with Joanna Kosmalka, Frank asserts that the author does not have to be a migrant themselves. Thus, he prefers the term migration literature over migrant literature and argues that the focus should not be on the author's background, but rather on textual elements such as content and form and social influences. What identifies migration literature in terms of theme and style, not the author's ethnicity (Frank 7). Frank emphasizes that nonmigrant authors can also write migration literature and implies that works by migrant authors do not automatically fall into the category of migration literature.

Frank suggests that migration is evident not only in the author's personal background but also in the lived experiences of the fictional characters, the central themes explored in the novel, and the narrative strategies used to convey them (Frank 15).

Søren Frank introduces the eight subcategories that are relevant in migration literature. (Frank 16-17). These subcategories define the features of migration literature and delineate the characteristics that set it apart from other literary forms. He divides these subcategories into theme-related and style-related ones (Frank 17). It is important to note that the separations drawn between these subcategories are artificial and certain overlaps are possible as theme and

style are always related to some extent (Frank 17). Frank further distinguishes between two narrative logics: the first follows a “mimetic” approach, where the novel mirrors the external realities of migration; the second is shaped by a “constructivist logic”, whereby the formal and stylistic elements of the text themselves evoke a sense of migration within the narrative structure (Frank 17).

The first subcategory of the thematic category is the “authorial biography” (Frank 17). This category is concerned with the background of the author. This category is the most obvious one, but not the most important factor in determining if a work can be categorized as migration literature. The second subcategory is concerned with the biography of the characters. The criteria used in this category are similar to those in the first category; the difference is that this category is directly related to the content of the work. The primary focus of these first two subcategories is how the author and the characters navigate the experience of migration. Regardless of whether migration is depicted in a positive or negative manner, the novel is categorized as migration literature (Frank 18). In the third subcategory, the focus is on issues of nation and nationalism as significant topics of migration literature. The meaning of nation for people belonging to multiple nations (hybrid identities) or exiled people is questioned. The fourth subcategory is concerned with the notion of Europeanness and European literature (Frank 18). A key consideration is how to define Europeanness. Likewise, questions continue to exist about the classification of migration literature, particularly whether it should be defined by the place it was produced in, the language in which it is written, the author’s home country, or their host country. The theme of globalization is what makes up the fifth subcategory (Frank 18) which authors do not always refer to explicitly, but more between the lines (Frank 18). Points of discussion are how people are affected by and react to the process of globalization. Additionally, the unequal and diverse consequences of globalization on people are key thematic elements in migration literature.

The first category of the stylistic level is enunciation (Frank 19). Frank argues that these novels employ narrative techniques, such as shifting perspectives, fluid or wandering consciousnesses, and multiple narrators. Additionally, they blur the boundaries between narrative content and the way the story is told, creating internal crossings between story and discourse (Frank 19). The character of the migrant is often caught between two cultures, alternating between feeling familiar and foreign. This in-betweenness moves the character into new dimensions. The key question about how the novels are told is whether their storytelling can seek new perspectives. The second stylistic category is concerned with the composition and narrative structure of the work (Frank 19). It questions how narrative and stylistic elements in the novels are related to

each other and if a complex and multidimensional composition is employed, for example, through the mixing of different styles and narrative techniques. Migration literature employs a “stylistic hybridity” (Frank 20). The combination of multiple narrative styles and discourses challenges traditional linear storytelling and creates a more fluid, migratory character. Authors of migration literature combine different narrative forms, such as dream sequences, essays, song lyrics, and biographical elements, to disrupt common narrative structures and introduce alternative ways of storytelling. The last subcategory related to style is language, which is an integral part of migration literature that investigates the position of language (Frank 20). Reasons for that are that migrant writers often speak multiple languages; thus, migration literature is highly aware of the role of language (Frank 20). Authors can mix and use multiple languages and portray the diverse dialects of their characters, so they use an impure language. Overall, in migration literature, language destabilizes established beliefs and norms, constantly shifting, varying, and blending as a result of knowing multiple languages (Frank 20).

At last, Frank discloses that for a work to be labelled as migration literature, it does not have to fulfill all criteria listed; it is sufficient if some of the criteria are met. Also, the defining feature will be a mix of the mentioned principles. Thus, he ultimately concludes that migration literature cannot be defined in a narrow way as it has “blurred edges” (Frank 21).

1.3.1 Postcolonialism and Migration Literature

A great deal of migration literature arises from former colonies; thus scholarly research in this field is often linked to postcolonialism. Even though postcolonialism is an important attribute of the 20th century, it is not the only framework through which migration writings can be analyzed (Frank 11). He identifies two problems arising from such an approach.

The first problem is related to migration literature written in the English language or other colonial languages, such as French, but where an effective analysis through the postcolonial point of view is not possible. This is especially true for contemporary novels written by the second or third generation of migrants, where terms like center and periphery or foreigner and native do not apply anymore.

The second issue that arises is about literature that is written outside of the postcolonial context and positioned either outside or at the margins of the traditional British, French, and German frameworks, defined as “Weltliteratur” (Frank 12). Frank invites scholars to consider a

multicultural and multicontextual reading of migration literature and to explore literature distanced from national boundaries from a global and transcultural point of view.

Frank comments that “the concept of migration has been colonized by postcolonial studies” (34) in the study of literature, so in this book, he aspires to free it from this “entrapment” (4). Thus, he argues for a more hybrid, fluid and transcultural reading of migration literature distanced from the narrow postcolonial framework.

1.4 Similarities between the Theories

The first chapter of this thesis aims to introduce important theories and concepts related to migration literature. In order to achieve this objective, foundational texts by the theorists Joanna Kosmalka, Russell King, John Connell, Paul White, and Søren Frank are summarized. While their writings have different focuses and employ distinct terminologies, similar ideas concerning the genre exist. The importance of migration in modern times is highlighted by the theorists, as well as the role of literature in representing it. Literature goes beyond statistics and numbers and provides a deeper understanding of migration and its effects on people, cultures and countries. Literature uniquely captures the authentic experiences of migrants, particularly the emotional aspects often overlooked by sociological, historical, political or economic studies. Thus, migration literature gives a more human-centered outlook on migration. Another point that all authors highlight is that literary representations of migration do not have to be written by migrants; it is enough for the author to write about and be inspired by the theme of migration. They also agree on the idea that migration causes shifts in individual and collective identities, leading to changes in language, religion, and culture. Notions of home, belonging and nationality are also questioned. Thus, identity is understood as fluid and not fixed and literature highlights the search for identity. Binaries such as global and local, fluid and fixed, rooted and rootless are challenged in migration writings and such dichotomies are replaced with more hybrid, fluid understandings of the world and people. The mentioned scholars highlight the evolution of migration literature as a dynamic process reflecting movement and change. The importance of hybridity is also a common factor among the texts. The authors recognize the interconnectedness between postcolonialism and migration literature; however, they also note that postcolonial theory is not the only lens through which migration narratives can be analyzed. These shared ideas will guide the conceptualization of the theoretical framework that will follow in the next chapter.

1.5 *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* as Examples of Migration Literature

1.5.1 *Brick Lane*

This section examines how *Brick Lane* can be classified as migration literature based on the theories of Joanna Kosmalska, Paul White, and Søren Frank.

Published in 2003, *Brick Lane* fits into the temporal framework that Kosmalska sets for migration literature as she categorizes works that have been written since the 1990s as part of the genre. The novel centers on Nazneen's experiences in London, where she moves after marrying her husband Chanu.

Ali herself has a migrant background. When being asked about her origins, she answers: "I'd describe myself as British, of Bangladeshi and English heritage, and as a Londoner" (Ali monicaali.com). Her own background mirrors the characters in her novel and readers assume that it is autobiographical. Ali in her article "Where I'm coming from" details the sources of inspiration for *Brick Lane*: "My experience, for instance, of conflict between first- and second-generation immigrants. The stories that my father used to tell about village life. A book of case studies about Bangladeshi women garment workers in Dhaka and the East End of London, disparate lives drawn together by the common goal of self-empowerment" (Ali theguardian.com). Although she admits that the novel is influenced by her own and her family's experiences, she denies that it should be read as autobiographical, emphasizing that it does not recount her family history (Ali theguardian.com). What she wants to achieve through writing this novel is recognition. Her comments reflect the notion, discussed by scholars such as Kosmalska, that migration literature often emerges from real life experiences and personal encounters of authors, serving as a source of inspiration. In accordance with Kosmalska's ideas, the characters in *Brick Lane* question their identity, nationality, cultural hybridity and belonging. Reactions to their situation vary between the characters and they employ different strategies to negotiate their place in society and construct their identities.

When analyzed through Kosmalska's three approaches, it becomes clear that *Brick Lane* can be situated within the migration literature genre. Thematically, the novel deals with the migration of Nazneen. Throughout the novel, the reader follows her journey from rural Bangladesh to London, her adaptation process, feelings of ambivalence and alienation and the formation of a hybrid character at the end which are central concerns of the genre. In this approach, the author's background is irrelevant, so even without Ali's personal migration history, her work

would still be categorized as migration writing. Proceeding with the ethnic-oriented approach that focuses on the author's ethnic background, *Brick Lane* also falls into the category in line with the author Monica Ali's experience with migration. Consequently, in this approach, her work would count within the genre even if it did not actively thematize migration thanks to her identity as a Bangladeshi-British author. Finally, from the text-oriented perspective, which is concerned with the types of texts that can be categorized as migration writing, *Brick Lane* fits the type of texts that count as migration literature. This book even goes beyond the traditional novel, engaging with the multiplicity of languages with its use of occasional Bengali words and phrases, letters and dream sequences and the going back and forth between locations through the life story of Hasina. Thus, Ali's use of non-traditional forms and hybrid techniques characteristic of migration texts situate her writing within this category. Additionally, characteristics of migration literature defined by Kosmalka are also present in *Brick Lane*: the realistic style of the text, the fact that the novel is partly inspired by the experiences or memories of the author, the use of multilingualism and the reference to Bangladeshi as well as English culture and geographies. Themes present in this genre and the particular novel include the questioning and negotiation of belonging and identity. Nazneen's evolution from loneliness and alienation to an acceptance of London as her home, in contrast to Chanu's growing disillusionment and dissatisfaction, causing his decision to return to Bangladesh, illustrates the ambivalent characteristic of migrant narratives. There are also frequent comparisons between the home and host countries and their respective cultures that occur through Nazneen's reflections on her childhood and Hasina's regular letters from Bangladesh, who keeps her sister up to date on the native country. Life in a multicultural community is observable, especially in political tensions between the *Brick Lane* community and other English communities. Nazneen's character reflects elements of nostalgia and sentimental attachment to her homeland, which Kosmalka defines as features of migrant writings. In *Brick Lane*, gender dynamics are explored and Nazneen breaks free from patriarchal norms as she finds her agency at the end. She creates new traditions and combines her own heritage with the English one that is symbolized by her ice-skating in traditional clothes. The novel thereby embodies structural and thematic attributes of migration literature discussed by Joanna Kosmalka.

Paul White identifies shifts of transformations as a thematic concern of migration literature. He argues that identity is not fixed and that its elements, including language, culture, family status and religion are constantly renegotiated. This ongoing transformation is illustrated in Nazneen, who is a submissive daughter and wife acting in accordance with traditional rules and society's

expectations at the beginning of the novel, but challenges and breaks free from them over the course of the narrative. Each of White's aspects of identity, ranging from linguistic assimilation to religious negotiation to shifting gender expectations, is reflected in Nazneen's journey of finding and positioning herself in her new environment. Ambivalence is a key element in migration literature, also displayed in *Brick Lane*. Nazneen is ambivalent in different aspects of her life; she both respects and resents her husband Chanu, she is drawn to the freedoms of the Western style of living while forcing herself to be more religious and submissive and she has romantic feelings for Karim, but ultimately rejects him. When it comes to the idea of returning home, Chanu is the character who fantasizes and makes this myth come true, while Nazneen, as her big step towards agency, decides to stay in London. The narrative spans over years and the slow, uneven process of Nazneen's identity formation unravels that migration is not linear, but filled with moments of doubt, regression and progress. White highlights the role of gender in shaping migration narratives. *Brick Lane* also thematizes the marginalization and struggles of migrant women through the female protagonist. Nazneen's voice is suppressed first by her father, who arranges her marriage without asking for her opinion, and then by her husband, her lover and her community. Yet, she manages to challenge traditional gender norms and asserts her agency, freeing herself from the constraints of patriarchy. *Brick Lane* portrays Nazneen's relationship with her family and community, while simultaneously documenting how the Bangladeshi community in England navigates issues of nationality, race, religion, integration, cultural expectations and generational conflict.

In line with Søren Frank's eight subcategories that define migration literature, *Brick Lane* is an example of these types of writings. Monica Ali's identity as British-Bangladeshi aligns with the first subcategory, which is authorial biography. When examining the second subcategory concerned with the biography of the characters within the novel, it is observable that *Brick Lane* also fits this category, as it focuses on Nazneen's migration from Bangladesh to England. The theme of nation and nationalism, the focus of the third category, is present in the novel. Nazneen and her family negotiate their identities between two cultures and nations, illustrating the oscillatory identity processes Frank identifies. Their idea and understanding of home and nation change throughout the narrative. Proceeding with the stylistic categories, *Brick Lane* successfully employs enunciation, the creation of a migratory world within the text itself. Multiperspectivism is present in the novel. Even though the story primarily revolves around Nazneen, it shifts to Hasina from time to time through the letters that arrive from her. Additionally, the reader gets glimpses into the lives of other characters of Nazneen's family

and her community, creating additional layers of migrant voices. When analyzing the text through the second stylistic category that deals with narrative structure, *Brick Lane* exhibits stylistic hybridity by blending traditional third-person narration with epistolary forms, dream sequences, and embedded memories, thereby challenging linear storytelling and seeking new perspectives in storytelling. The novel starts with her childhood in the first chapter, and in the same chapter Nazneen turns eighteen and moves to England. Her childhood is narrated in fragments through her memories and a stream of consciousness technique (Golban and Benli 24). Finally, the novel's use of language is characteristic for migration literature with its use of Bengali words reflecting its culture, the mix of Bengali and English and the employment of "impure English" as spoken by some of the characters, which reflects heteroglossia and destabilizes established linguistic norms, an important feature of the genre according to Frank. While not every category has to be fulfilled, *Brick Lane* clearly embodies multiple thematic and stylistic principles outlined by Frank, situating it within the literature of migration.

1.5.2 *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*

This section will explore how Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* can be categorized as migration literature in light of the ideas of Joanna Kosmalska, Paul White, and Søren Frank.

Selim Özdoğan's trilogy consists of three novels: *The Blacksmith's Daughter* (2005), *52 Factory Lane* (2011) and *A Light Still Burns* (2017). As literary texts published after 1990, they all conform to the broad categorization of migration literature that Kosmalska proposes. The trilogy traces the life Gül, who relocates to Germany as a "guest worker" together with her husband Fuat in hopes of a more prosperous life. So, the novels are clearly concerned with and influenced by the topic of migration. In the novels, Gül questions her identity, nationality and belonging. She navigates the psychological, cultural and generational complexities of migration as she struggles to find her sense of belonging - neither feeling at home in Germany, nor in Türkiye. She is caught between two worlds: her past in the Anatolian village and her present in modern Germany. This in-betweenness is even more evident in her daughters, who are born in Türkiye, but raised in Germany. Nostalgia and sentimentalism are present in the novels, reflected in particular by Gül's character. Her emotional longing is so intense that she decides to move back to Türkiye in the second book of the trilogy titled *52 Factory Lane*.

The Anatolian Blues Trilogy can also be situated within the genre of migration literature when examined through Kosmalska's three approaches. Kosmalska's theme-oriented approach

focuses on works where migration is the main topic, regardless of the author's ethnic background. *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* is a clear example of this category, as migration and displacement are the core narrative drivers. Gül experiences cultural negotiation and shows the reader the emotional, social, cultural and political dimensions of being a foreigner. Her challenges with cultural adaptation, the German culture and language, economic struggles and raising children under these conditions are illustrated. Thus, the psychological cost that migrants pay when they decide to resettle is highlighted. The novels give voice to the everyday struggles of working-class migrants and to a marginalized female.

Viewed from the ethnic-oriented approach, which focuses on the author's identity, the trilogy falls under the genre of migration literature. Selim Özdoğan did not migrate from Türkiye to Germany himself, but he was born in Cologne, Germany to Turkish parents who migrated there, which makes him part of the migrant experience. Özdoğan's status as both an insider and outsider gives him the opportunity to authentically represent the experience and mindset of the first-generation migrants such as Gül and Fuat. Given his status as a second-generation migrant, he is also able to represent the generational tension experienced by those born in the diaspora, which can be seen in Gül's daughters, Ceyda and Ceren. So, theoretically, he may be categorized as a second-generation migration writer or a Turkish-German author. However, Özdoğan himself rejects such categorizations (Scheller nzz.ch). When asked in an interview about what he thinks of the categorization German-Turkish author that he is often described as and if it influences his writings, Özdoğan answers that it does influence his writings, which he cannot resist, but he adds that he finds "[t]he question of identity (...) completely overrated" (Özdoğan, "Interview" 374).

Here, it becomes clear that Özdoğan feels that he is forced to engage with labels such as German-Turkish or migrant author "by readers and critics alike" (Kaupp 371).

Similar to Monica Ali, he also highlights the fact that his works are fiction and not autobiographical, which is often assumed of authors with migrant backgrounds. He claims that he creates "the illusion of intimacy", but this does not mean that everything in his writings is real (Özdoğan, "Interview" 376). He only shows "a likeness of something" (Özdoğan, "Interview" 376). Furthermore, Özdoğan says that even if he were to narrate his own life, "it would still be fiction because I will leave things out on purpose". (Özdoğan, "Interview" 376)

In another interview, he claims that he was forced to become an expert without ever having read a book on subjects such as migration and integration: "I can place an article in any

newspaper that has to do with migration, integration or Islam, even though I have absolutely no idea about Islam, for example” (Süess woz.ch).

When Selim Özdoğan received the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize in 1999, a literary award given to authors who write in German but have a different first language, he hesitated to accept it as he did not want his writings to be seen as niche literature serving a special role (Hofmann 156; Carré 40). Back then, he also situated himself as a German author who had little to do with Turkish themes and language (Hofmann 156). At the beginning of his career, Özdoğan did not touch upon topics related to migration and Türkiye in his novels. But with the publication of the trilogy, this changed. When asked about the motives behind the change in his attitude, the author states: “At first there was an attitude of refusal, because I realized that with my name, these were exactly the topics that were expected of me (Süess woz.ch). But later he realized that his stance made him “unfree”, so he began to write about these topics (Süess woz.ch).

A similar sentiment is highlighted in his interview with Jana Hlavínová. She inquires why there is a six-year gap between his two works, *The Blacksmith's Daughter* and *52 Factory Lane*. The author states that he refused to write migration literature

because I always thought that's what everyone expected of me, and I don't want to do what everyone expects of me. But (...) you're still dependent on those expectations, and at some point I thought, I'll just free myself from them completely. I'll do what I feel like doing, and what I felt like doing was simply to see how Gül fared in Germany. And this process of freeing myself simply took so long. (Hlavínová 55)

For a long time, Özdoğan resisted the expectation to produce migration literature. Despite this resistance, his work inevitably engages with migration-related themes.

To summarize, even if some of Özdoğan's novels deal with migration, identity and integration, he does not want to be categorized as a migrant writer as he deems this a narrow classification. He wants to be appreciated as a writer and not for his ethnic and cultural background. However, he acknowledges that migration is a central theme in some of his novels, including *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, and that his own upbringing influences his storytelling. In this sense, even if he doesn't fully agree with being labelled as a migrant writer, he contributes to and participates in migration literature both thematically and contextually.

Proceeding with the text-oriented approach, the novel, as the genre of *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, is a type of text that can be classified as migrant writings. Multilingualism is another

feature of migration literature that Kosmalska touches upon present in all three novels with frequent uses of Turkish proverbs, idioms and expressions. The story takes place in Türkiye and Germany, thus there are references to multiple cultures and locations. Cross-cultural comparisons between the home and host countries are embedded within the narrative. Another characteristic of migration literature, which is the redefinition of gender roles, is a central theme in *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*. Even though Gül does not rebel and change radically as Nazneen does, she questions the role of women and the limits imposed on her gender. Within the course of the narrative, Gül becomes more autonomous and redefines her role as a submissive woman in a more subtle and introspective way than Nazneen. This topic is also illustrated through Gül's daughters, who, as the second generation, enjoy more freedom and autonomy than she does. To conclude, when viewed through Joanna Kosmalska's framework, it is evident that *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* represents an authentic example of contemporary migration literature.

The Anatolian Blues resonates with many ideas of Paul White, such as identity renegotiation, ambivalence, gendered experience, and migration as a nonlinear process.

White identifies ambivalence as an important element of migration literature. This element is evident in Gül's story. Like many migrants, Gül is caught between her past and present and her home and host country. She feels deep nostalgia for Türkiye while trying to adapt to Germany. Her fantasy of going home, which she fulfills together with one of her daughters, does not lead to fulfillment, but further disillusionment and alienation. Realizing that she does not fully belong and feel at home in Türkiye anymore, she goes back to Germany, a country that does not fully embrace her, either. This echoes White's comments that "ideas of return" that many migrants experience are "rarely fully satisfying" because of the change in identities, borders, and circumstances (14).

Identity issues, which can be explored through literature in an extraordinary way according to White, are thematized in the three novels (White 2). The reader gets to trace the identity formation of not just Gül, but all characters in the novels, in particular her husband and daughters. Through her daughters, who enjoy more autonomy and freedom than Gül and are more integrated into German society, intergenerational identity shifts can be traced. Gül's migration to Germany leads to a renegotiation of her identity as she undergoes slow changes while trying to navigate being a mother, wife and worker in Germany. She experiences cultural alienation and tries to navigate her responsibilities in a foreign environment, while staying

connected to her hometown and family. Gül's migration is neither the beginning nor the end of her transformation; throughout the novels that trace her entire life, her identity keeps evolving.

Gül takes on low-status jobs and is faced with difficulties of working as a migrant. She gets paid less than other workers at the factory, highlighting the everyday racism faced by migrants.

Gender issues, which are an emergent theme in migration literature, are also present in the novels. Gül was raised in a patriarchal society that expected her to obey and be a daughter or wife who fulfills her duties. When she comes to Germany, these expectations remain, but with time, Gül evaluates her roles and even if she does not rebel as overtly as Nazneen, she gains interior autonomy and subtly redefines the roles given to her.

Thus, *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* illustrates themes that lie at the heart of narratives about migration.

Søren Frank's conceptual framework also offers a lens through which to analyze Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* as a representative example of migration literature. This section will particularly focus on the eight subcategories that Frank defines.

To begin with, in the authorial biography, the first category of the theme-related categories, Frank notes that the background of the author can be, but does not have to be relevant in order to define a work as migration literature. In this case, the author is a second-generation migrant, so he is shaped and influenced by migration. Yet, in line with Frank's argument, it is not his experience as a migrant that matters, but the way the narrative deals with migration. Regarding the biography of the characters, the second subcategory, the characters in the novels are all part of or influenced by migration. The narrative describes protagonist Gül and her family and their experience with migration. First, Gül's husband Fuat comes to Germany, later Gül joins, him leaving behind her daughters. Later, the family is united in Germany and the children grow up there, visiting Türkiye in the summer. After their reunion, the family is separated again years later, when Gül and one of her daughters decide to resettle in Türkiye. After marrying off her daughter, Gül, suspicious of her husband's infidelity, moves to Germany. The migrants experience a pattern of departure, arrival and return, thus migration, in this case, is not linear, but part of "oscillatory and inconclusive processes", as Frank notes (8). So, the characters in the novels undergo migration and they all develop an attitude, positive or negative, towards it.

The theme of nation and nationalism is also present in the novel. With time, Fuat and Gül get used to Germany and question the notion of belonging to two nations. The characters feel in-

between, shaped by both feelings of partial belonging and alienation. For their daughters, these questions are even more significant and more difficult to answer as second-generation migrants in Germany. Özdoğan portrays the painful, but also productive, parts of this double belonging.

The question of Europeanness in Özdoğan's work is implicit. Germany is depicted not as a fully open, welcoming Europe but as a structured, bureaucratic, and cold space, especially in *52 Factory Lane*. Gül is excluded from German society both culturally and legally and faces discrimination because of her status as a migrant. However, in *A Light Still Burns*, the idea of a multiethnic Europe gains more visibility through characters like Tanja, a German woman who forms relationships with the migrants in her environment, embracing multicultural coexistence. Her character suggests an alternative version of Europeanness, one that embraces all races, cultures and religions.

Globalization as a subcategory of Frank's classification is an underlying theme in *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*. Globalization is reflected through the appearance and the gradual normalization of modern inventions such as radios, telephones, televisions and smartphones. Modern communication tools are especially important for migrants who use them to communicate with family abroad. Before telephones, this happened through letters, but with modern inventions, Gül and her family acquired telephones and mobile phones that facilitate maintaining ties with their family in Türkiye. Modern developments and transformations are touched upon in the novels, starting with the blacksmith having the only proper bed in their village and ending with Gül getting a smartphone and setting up a Facebook account.

When considering the stylistic categories present in *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, the narrative structure adopts a non-linear and episodic approach. In *52 Factory Lane*, Gül's experiences are presented as a series of daily routines, sudden flashbacks and emotionally charged memories, mimicking the unstable nature of migration. There are also frequent foreshadowing elements hinting at what is going to happen in Gül's life. In *A Light Still Burns*, past and present blend, letters are written but not always sent, and scenes move between internal monologue and external dialogue. This stylistic hybridity is a key element of migration literature, as noted by Frank. These structural choices perform migration not just thematically, but also formally. The trilogy, translated from German, reflects multilingualism. The original German text contains Turkish words and cultural references, highlighting Bakhtinian heteroglossia that Frank sees as part of migration literature. Language plays an important role in migrants' lives, that is also reflected in migration literature. In the given novels, Gül has difficulties learning the German

language, her daughters grow up bilingual and frequently code-switch between German and Turkish.



CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Having established the definition of migration literature and positioned *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* as works belonging to the genre, this chapter turns to the theoretical foundations that will guide the close reading of the texts. Focusing on concepts of identity formation, hybridity, and belonging, it aims to provide the analytical tools necessary for a comparative analysis of the protagonists' identity formations and journeys.

2.1 Stuart Hall

Stuart Hall, a prominent cultural theorist, has introduced many important concepts and ideas to the notion of identity, especially in postcolonial and diasporic contexts. In his influential essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Hall argues that identity is not something fixed, but is instead a fluid and continuous process of development and self-definition (Hall 222).

Hall distinguishes between two models of cultural identity. The first type of identity is rooted in a shared cultural origin which is seen as stable and unchanging (Hall 223). This shared history, culture and ancestry provide people with a sense of unity and belonging. Hall describes this as a “more superficial or artificially imposed” form of identity (223). In the second position, identity “is a matter of 'becoming' ” (Hall 225). Identity is not fixed, but rather formed through different influences, such as historical past, power structures and culture. It shifts throughout time and according to the context and positioning (225). Cultural identities are built within historical and cultural discourse, so identity formation is political because it is shaped by discourse, power, and the subject's positioning in the system (Hall 226).

Migrants' identity development does not follow a linear path. Hall describes two axes that simultaneously shape identities: similarity and change (Hall 226). In migrants' lives, elements such as language, values, and culture give the feeling of continuity, while migration is an event that introduces change. Migrants experience alienation, new ways of living and thinking, emotional changes and shifting gender roles in migratory contexts. The balance between keeping their heritage and adapting to the new environment becomes central to how they negotiate and build their identities. The coexistence of difference and continuity is experienced by migrants when they return home; they feel at home, surrounded by familiar people who

speak their language and share their traditions, yet they feel a change in this place and themselves as their new experiences and context have changed their perspective (Hall 227).

Identity is not just about cultural difference, but also about power and dominance. It is not possible to talk about identity and representation without acknowledging power structures that decide who defines, categorizes and represents others and in what way (Hall 232-233).

Stuart Hall challenges the notion that diasporic individuals must anchor their identity solely in connection to an idealized homeland (235). He criticizes this traditional understanding of ethnicity, which implies a fixed origin as the only valid source of cultural identity (Hall 235). Instead, Hall proposes a more fluid and transformative conception of identity within the diaspora. This model emphasizes multiplicity, variation, and ongoing reformation. Diasporic identities, in his view, are not based on purity or unchanging roots, but are continuously shaped through the interplay of different cultural, historical, and social forces. Hybridity emerges from the convergence of diverse experiences, allowing identities to evolve rather than conform to binary oppositions between home and host cultures (Hall 235-236). This process affirms the value of difference, enabling individuals to form identities that are multifaceted and responsive to change rather than defined by exclusion or singular origin (Hall 235).

In an interview, Hall highlights that cultural identities are hybrid and are influenced by different histories and cultures ("The Formation" 504). Yet, identity construction is not a random process; it is shaped by specific cultural backgrounds and historical events, which make up one's position. So, identities are influenced by the experiences of the migrant, the cultures they are a part of and how they relate to them. To sum up, identity is hybrid and contextual, an ongoing process and positioning,

Hall's theory provides a critical framework for analyzing how the characters in *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* construct their identities through the experience of migration and change.

2.2 Consuela Wagner

In her article, Consuela Wagner addresses the complex relationship between migration and identity. When people resettle in a new country and meet different cultures, this automatically leads to change and a restructuring of one's identity. This process of reconfiguring identity, whether intentional or involuntary, is shaped by a range of variables, including the individual's skills, the reasons driving their decision to migrate, as well as the cultural divide between their

homeland and the society they move into. Their available financial, social, and temporal resources, and personal characteristics are also of influence (Wagner 237). These factors determine the different strategies migrants use when it comes to building their new identity. Postmodernity has replaced the continuity and predictability of the modern age with fragmentation, discontinuity and constant changes (Wagner 238). Thus, identity is not a stable concept anymore; it has to be adjusted continuously according to internal and external influences, which may even contradict themselves. Wagner distinguishes between two types of identity: narrative or personal identity and collective identity based on philosopher Paul Ricoeur's concepts. Narrative identity reflects the personal life story and how an individual tells and constructs it. This story, which makes up one's identity, shifts and undergoes transformations with time; it is not a fixed, but an ongoing story. People develop their sense of self through the experiences they gain in life and the way they interpret these events. In the context of narrative identity, various cultural frameworks become significant at different stages of an individual's life, contributing to the situated and ever-evolving nature of identity (Wagner 238). The second categorization laid out by Ricoeur is collective identity which focuses on belonging to a larger social group based on ethnicity, skin color, language, tradition, religion, etc. This categorization is based on common experiences, norms and social behaviors of a group. While collective identity emphasizes similarities within a group, personal identity highlights differences and individuality.

Having a stable identity is important for developing a strong, healthy personality. People build their identities through overcoming challenges they face. When they are successful in this regard, they feel more integrated, accepted and valued, which influences the process of identity development in a positive way. Tackling hardships makes people feel independent and gives them a sense of autonomy. In return, this contributes to a reflected self-image and forms identity.

Identity formation can be compared to a patchwork quilt; people have to combine different pieces of their existence and fit them together as one piece. This creates coherence in the individual's life and to achieve that, they have to attain certain skills such as self-organization, the ability to balance dreams and reality and find meaning in life. The success of identity attainment can be evaluated in two ways: internally by assessing how authentic someone feels and externally by the criterion of social acceptance and appreciation. These processes are even harder for migrants since moving to a new country does not just change their physical location, but also deeply affects who they are, causing changes in their identities (Wagner 241). Thus,

migrants develop hybrid identities. Hybridity is an identity construction process that people who belong to multiple cultures frequently use (Wagner 241). Wagner specifies the elements of a hybrid identity as having diverse cultural backgrounds, adjusting internal and external expectations and constantly negotiating one's identity (Wagner 241-242).

Belonging is an important aspect of hybridity. While some migrants, the first-generation in particular, can feel like they only belong to their home country, some adapt to the multicultural context they live in and develop a more or less hybrid identity through reflecting and finding compromises (Wagner 242). The sense of multiple belonging is frequently observable in the second generation as a result of more social contact. They refuse to give up their own culture, so hybridity provides a compromise (Wagner 242). When migrants leave their home country, part of their identity, their cultural identity in particular, gets lost. They also experience a sense of uprootedness, which gets intensified by the unexpected reactions of their new environment to the migrants' familiar behaviors. The migrant keeps living the way they used to in their home country, but is met with unexpected reactions from outside which causes a destabilization of the self. The individual, in search of stability, tries to form a stable being by employing different strategies of identity construction. Wagner, building on Vordermeyer's ideas, outlines four typical strategies that migrants employ in this process:

- “the native foreigner”,
- “the nostalgic”,
- “the hybrid”,
- and “the cosmopolitan” (Wagner 243).

2.2.1 The Native Foreigner

The native foreigner's identity construction is based on total assimilation (Wagner 243). The migrant distances himself from his own culture and fully adopts the host country's culture. They may even appear as “more native than the natives” (Han cited in Wagner 243). People who were unappreciated in their home country and had negative experiences there frequently employ this strategy, giving up the negative as well as the positive parts of their culture. The “native foreigner” recognizes the emerging possibilities and wants to benefit from them. He has high expectations and heavy responsibilities while trying to construct his new life and home. He wishes to adapt and internalizes the way of living in the receiving country, while simultaneously suppressing his own norms, traditions and language. The challenge with this

strategy is the tendency of the migrant to completely deny his origins in order to fully assimilate and be accepted in the new environment, especially if his efforts to integrate stay unnoticed or unappreciated. In consequence, this leads to denial and self-hatred. Despite his attempts to assimilate, he is not entirely accepted by the natives as they do not have a shared history (Wagner 243). Subsequently, using this strategy creates an unstable identity and the migrant struggles to be authentic.

2.2.2 The Nostalgic

The second type of migrant is “the nostalgic” whose aim is to stay true to his own roots (Wagner 244). He is filled with nostalgia for his home country, its culture and past and considers himself an exile, while rejecting the culture and norms of the host country (Wagner 244). The nostalgic refuses new influences and his main focus is on maintaining his traditional way of living. Still, with their strong connection to their origins and ties with their own ethnic community, he is able to construct a stable, lasting identity (Wagner 244). Their cultural attachment may even offer social, emotional and financial support. An opportunity for the nostalgic to gain acceptance and acknowledgement is if he, instead of focusing only on the past, looks to the future and actively promotes his culture in the host society. Otherwise, persisting in the past can lead to a decline in opportunities and limited space for activity. The migrant risks being faced with uncertainty, loneliness and economic hardships. Ultimately, the nostalgic type finds himself unable to develop and disconnected from both host and home country as they both continue to evolve.

2.2.3 The Hybrid

The next type of strategy is a model that merges elements of the native foreigner and the nostalgic. Defined as “the hybrid”, this strategy attempts to combine loyalty to the home country, while also actively participating in the host society (Wagner 244). Using this strategy allows migrants to benefit from the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures, giving them confidence and acceptance in each culture. A benefit of this strategy is the ability to negotiate between cultures and to understand and combine elements of each custom and tradition (Wagner 244). However, a drawback is that the migrant does not feel complete loyalty towards one culture, which can create problems, especially when conflicts between the cultural groups arise. The hybrid does not feel true belonging anywhere and is being regarded as part insider and part outsider in either cultural setting (Wagner 245). This lack of affinity, combined with

frequent changes in perspective and the pressure to adapt subject this type of migrant to internal struggles, anxiety, and instability.

2.2.4 The Cosmopolitan

The cosmopolitan is a refined version of the hybrid model. The fourth strategy emphasizes a sense of ethical obligation and regard toward individuals from all cultural backgrounds and illustrates the idea that humans do not just live in one culture, but beyond and outside of it, too (Wagner 245). The cosmopolitan is not concerned with cultural identity or dialogue; he is open to new influences (Wagner 245). This type of migrant feels at home everywhere, nonetheless, he does have a place where that is his “home”, where his cultural roots lie and his personal memories are tied to. This place holds subjective significance for the cosmopolitan. Having family and ethnic roots also contributes positively to his psychological stability as well as to developing the openness and responsibility that constitute cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan migrant acknowledges his own roots, which frees him from biases and external pressures (Wagner 246) and he is in search of a home, which is not a specific physical location, it is where he feels understood and connected. He feels a sense of responsibility for the human race and tries to make a positive impact wherever he is. Nonetheless, the idea of this “ideal” migrant faces criticism for being elitist and unrealistic (Wagner 251). Most migrants do not have the time and resources to examine and construct their personal identity as they are faced with the daily survival and are not familiar with the complex way of thinking and reasoning required to build the cosmopolitan mindset (Wagner 251).

The native foreigner, the nostalgic, and the hybrid all face challenges as they try to become something that they are not (Wagner 245). The way they all deal with the past also differs: the native foreigner denies it, the nostalgic attempts to preserve it and the hybrid transforms it. In contrast, the cosmopolitan acknowledges the past, present, and the future. He has cultural origins, but does not idealize them and balances them with his new environment. The hybrid tries to be part of two different cultures; the cosmopolitan dismisses the need to pledge loyalty to any culture and keeps a healthy distance from both. The process of identity construction is a challenge for the hybrid and the cosmopolitan type as they have to put the fragmented parts of their being together in a meaningful way, despite their lack of fixed cultural belonging. The cosmopolitan examines his personal history in a critical way “with all its pieces, contradictions and ambivalences”, trying to find answers to what he lived, why and where this led to (Wagner

246). This strengthens his critical reflection, capacity for decision-making and sense of responsibility. Both hybrid and cosmopolitan identities can be regarded as ambiguous and undefined from an outside perspective, which prevents them from being easily categorized. They live in an in-between space, rejecting the either/or logic of belonging, embracing instead a both/and position. This challenges traditional views of affiliation and may confuse and even cause hostility in people who expect fixed categorizations (Wagner 247).

Creating a stable identity is challenging for anyone, but especially for migrants who have to construct a new self-image (Wagner 247). There are certain conditions that, when fulfilled, can make this process easier for migrants and are essential for its success. Wagner defines the first condition as deep confidence in life that stems from having a support system that consists of trustworthy people (Wagner 248). Having such a circle gives migrants a sense of stability, but unfortunately, many migrants do not have such a system in place as they are separated from their friends and family. In this regard, responsibility falls on the host society to foster a supportive environment for migrants (Wagner 248). Secondly, Migrants have to strike a balance between autonomy and being able to rely on others. Thirdly, having a sense of coherence when navigating through life facilitates migrants' identity configuration (Wagner 248). This can be achieved through learning cultural values and norms to rely on when making decisions. Having a sense of direction and meaning in life is difficult for migrants in particular, who often come from traditional societies with strict rules and cultural norms to follow, while in Western societies, there are multiple value systems to reflect on and choose from (Wagner 248). But choosing the right one is not an easy task; it requires personal skills such as decision-making, critical thinking, and self-awareness.

Another important factor to build identity is social capital (Wagner 248). Having a network of social connections and the ability to build and maintain these relationships is essential for migrants. However, disadvantaged groups such as migrants often lack networks as social capital is closely tied to economic resources, which are scarce for migrants. Thus, migrants face difficulties in this significant category. Thus, economic capital is also needed for identity formation. In order to have material resources, migrants have to have access to the labour market to be able to find a job and meet their needs (Wagner 249). Another essential skill is the ability to make independent decisions (Wagner 249). In Western societies, people are expected to actively take part in decision-making processes and social life and be able to solve issues. Additionally, civic competences are expected, which develop the ability to consider the interests of the wider community.

The strategies (native foreigner, nostalgic, hybrid, cosmopolitan) that migrants employ in their identity formation process offer a lens to analyze how the characters in *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* navigate cultural displacement. Wagner's framework offers an opportunity to explore how Nazneen, Gül, Chanu, Fuat and their children manage migration, belonging, identity and how they balance cultural expectations. In this way, identity as a fluid, ongoing process is highlighted that is shaped by different strategies migrants make use of to manage their multiple homes and cultural belongings.

2.3 Hybridity

Globalization, modernization and large-scale movements of people, cultures, traditions and ideas have resulted in an exchange and interaction of cultural practices.

In cultural and literary contexts, the concept of hybridity describes the formation of new cultural forms that emerge from the interaction between diverse cultural groups. This process involves the blending of traditions, values, and expressions from different backgrounds, giving rise to innovative and mixed cultural identities. Migrants, in particular, often experience this dynamic as they move between the traditions of their country of origin and the cultural norms of the society they now live in. The result is a dual identity that reflects both continuity and change.

Hybridity is widely recognized as a defining feature of contemporary cultural life, reflecting an era that emphasizes cultural diversity and interconnectedness (Kraidy 1). Rather than promoting assimilation into a dominant culture, hybridity values the coexistence of differences and fosters cultural exchange. It directly challenges notions of cultural or racial purity and essentialist understandings of identity (Guignery 4). Instead, it emphasizes mixture, multiplicity, and the acceptance of cultural plurality. In this way, hybridity undermines binary oppositions and offers a framework for thinking about identity as fluid, relational, and shaped through ongoing negotiation.

Hybridity was primarily employed in postcolonial studies, but it is also used widely in cultural, sociological, and literary fields to discuss notions of migration, imperialism, and globalisation. According to Moslund, cultural hybridity is a prominent stylistic characteristic and widely explored theme within migration literature (Moslund 23). It is a valuable tool for analyzing migration literature and understanding the identity formation of its characters. Migration literature and hybridity focus on similar themes such as displacement, encounters between cultures, power relations, and identity formation. Bhabha's theory is engaged with cultural in-

betweenness and the Third Space which applies directly to the position of migrants who occupy a space between their home and host country and culture, speak multiple languages, frequently code-switch and who try to navigate two different societal expectations. Thus, the notion of hybridity provides an opportunity to explore how migrants create fluid identities, resist domination, as well as fixed categorizations.

2.3.1 Hybridity and the Third Space

The widely recognized theorist in postcolonial and cultural studies Homi K. Bhabha has put forward several key notions, such as hybridity, unhomeliness, ambivalence, the Third Space, and mimicry, which form the basis of his theoretical framework. In the context of migration literature, Bhabha's understanding of hybridity offers valuable insights. He conceptualizes hybridity as a consequence of colonial influence—an expression of power that is not static but constantly shifting. This process challenges dominant ideologies by destabilizing fixed identities and revealing the constructed nature of so-called cultural purity and authority (Bhabha 112). Through hybridity, the authority of the dominant culture is subverted, allowing space for alternative, mixed identities to emerge.

He argues that hybridity can subvert colonial power by erasing binaries such as us/ them or civilized/uncivilized, which colonizers employ to feel superior. Through hybridity, cultures mix and thus, the idea of a pure and original culture is undermined. In this way, the colonizer's power can be turned against him, which weakens his position and control.

Hybridity also challenges colonial identity through reevaluating and exposing the stereotypes they use to define the cultural “other” (Bhabha 112). It reveals that systems of oppression and domination, like laws, racism, and cultural dominance, are not stable and consistent, they can be deformed, displaced, and challenged through the interaction of different cultures (Bhabha 112). These systems are not fixed, they undergo transformation and may lose their authority when faced with hybrid identities.

Hybridity “unsettles the (...) demands of colonial power” (Bhabha 112). Colonizers want to be imitated by the colonized and impose their language, culture and values on them. They also desire to be admired to feel a sense of superiority. Hybridity disturbs this by producing imitations or mimicry that is not exactly like the colonizer and that can be ironic, mocking and imperfect. Instead of being flattered, the colonizer is confused and displeased. The colonizer's tools are used against them. Thus, the colonized gain power and start to observe and judge the

colonizer and its systems, which results in a reversal of power. Although Bhabha originally situates hybridity within postcolonial discourse, the concept is also closely associated with questions of identity formation among multicultural individuals, migrants, and diasporic groups (Guignery 5).

Bhabha emphasizes that cultural hybridity generates something fundamentally new, an unfamiliar space where new meanings and representations emerge (Bhabha “The Third Space” 211). This conceptual space, which he terms the Third Space, emerges at the intersection of different cultural contexts, enabling the development of alternative identities and ways of seeing. Within this zone, cultural meanings are not absolute or unchanging; rather, they are constantly reshaped and reinterpreted depending on their context (Bhabha 37). Even familiar cultural signs can acquire new significance as they are translated and historicized in different environments. As a result, identity and culture are not stable or pure but are instead marked by continual transformation. However, this in-between space is not simply a harmonious blend of cultures. For migrants, it often embodies a site of complexity, marked by tension, contradiction, and ambivalence, as they navigate between inherited traditions and newly encountered cultural realities (Bhabha 312). It is also a space in which new meanings, identities, authorities, and social arrangements can emerge. Additionally, binaries and dominant narratives get disrupted, challenging the power of the colonizer.

The author contends that these liminal spaces serve as crucial areas where individuals and communities can negotiate and articulate new forms of identity. Within these in-between zones, novel forms of interaction, resistance, and collective self-definition emerge, playing a key role in shaping how society is understood and constructed (Bhabha 1–2).

Thus, this zone where cultures meet and blend creates new meanings and identities. Individuals, as well as whole communities, can redefine their identity and images which opens new ways to collaborate or challenge each other. Ultimately, the Third Space with its “productive capacities” shapes and defines society (Bhabha 38). By highlighting the performative nature of identity, the Third Space provides a framework through which one can understand the in-between, liminal and hybrid identities of migrants. Their identities respond to their new environment, not with confusion and loss, but with creativity and productivity. Thus, Bhabha showcases how fluid belongings and expressions emerge through cultural contact.

Cultural hybridity and the creation of the Third Space are not to be regarded as a passive blending and mixture of cultures; they are creative processes that celebrate difference. For

migrants, this is a form of resistance to assimilation attempts of the host culture. It counters the idea that colonized people passively accept an imposed culture. Through hybridity, migrants are able to preserve and promote parts of their culture, traditions, language and values. By doing so, they exercise their right to be part of multiple cultural domains without having to choose one side. As Bhabha argues, it is possible for hybridity to emerge without hierarchies between the cultures (Bhabha 5).

2.3.2 Mimicry and Ambivalence

The colonial hybrid, a figure shaped by multiple cultures, lives in an in-between, ambivalent state. He is neither colonizer nor colonized, nor foreign or familiar. He lives in a space where the power imposed by the colonizers through laws, authority, etc., and the desire of the colonized to belong meet. So, the hybrid is both controlled by and longing for that power. While he is shaped and controlled by that power, he also has the power to transform and disrupt it by mixing cultures and creating something new.

Bhabha describes mimicry as a colonial strategy that seeks to produce a recognizable and reformed Other “that is almost the same, but not quite” (86). The colonizers want their subjects to imitate and be like them, but still, they want a sense of difference between themselves and the colonized. So there has to be an “excess” and “difference” (Bhabha 86). This creates a contradiction which Bhabha labels as “ambivalence”. The colonizer expects the colonized to be similar to him, yet he does not want him to be “quite” the same. Mimicry can turn into mockery when the practices of the colonized are being ridiculed and exaggerated, which challenges their authority. So, while mimicry can be a tool to maintain but also subvert power. The colonized adapt to new cultural and linguistic codes, but they do not imitate it perfectly. Instead, they change it in unpredictable ways. These deviations reveal that the other can never be fully controlled which shows the insecure and unstable nature of colonial power. Even if they try to impose a dominant culture, the interplay of different cultures creates a hybrid domain. So, the colonized do not simply assimilate, they go through an identity negotiation process which challenges and undermines the authority of the colonizer. The colonizer wants to appear as authoritative and powerful, but it is torn between its image of control and superiority and the flip side of the coin, characterized by instability, displacement and psychological defense. This ambivalence illustrates that colonial authority is not stable and it is being shaped by the differences it tries to dominate. The colonized people’s attitude towards the dominating power is also marked by ambivalence as they feel both attracted to and repulsed

by the colonizer. While they desire to conform to the values of the colonizer, they try to resist domination and assimilation. The binaries between colonizer and colonized are erased and both groups are involved in complex relations of power, longing, and resistance.

2.3.3 Unhomeliness

Homi Bhabha introduces the term “unhomeliness” to describe the feeling and attitude of migrants towards home in the multicultural and transcultural environment they live in. He derives it from the German “unheimlich”, the opposite of “heimlich” meaning homely (Akçeşme 16; 22). Unhomeliness shows “the dual nature” of hybridity where the “homely and unhomely coexist” (Akçeşme 22). Unhomeliness refers to the disrupted sense of belonging that arises when an individual can no longer sustain a consistent or secure connection to a specific place they consider home (Akçeşme 17). Migrants who are culturally hybrid can feel at home and simultaneously feel unfamiliar in the setting they live in. They struggle to feel part of one culture and nation. The alienation experienced by migrants is the unhomely moment and while this feeling can be negative and painful, it can also inspire change, especially in terms of reevaluating one’s identity and understanding of home (Rostami and Parvaneh 157).

Bhabha draws a distinction between being homeless and unhomeliness. Unhomeliness “is not just about lacking physical shelter; it is about feeling a deeper sense of disconnection or displacement that cannot be categorized into the usual social distinctions between private and public life” (Bibi et al. 273). The notion is not about homelessness in the literal sense, but about feeling a deep sense of detachment and estrangement that migrants experience when the boundary between personal and public spheres collapses.

Bhabha argues that when people experience displacement, “the border between home and world becomes confused” (Bhabha 141). Displacement blurs the boundaries between home, which is normally a private, intimate space, and the world, which refers to society, politics and history. For migrants, these areas do not stay separate and the political space invades the personal space which creates an uncanny moment in which “the private and the public become part of each other” (Bhabha 141). When people migrate, they have to redefine their understanding of identity and home and adapt to new cultures. By doing so, they may internalize certain ideas that are foreign to them and make their old ideas and home feel foreign (Bhabha 141). They experience a shock upon realizing, “the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world” (141), capturing the unsettling blend of familiarity and foreignness. This shock relates to the

recognition that forces such as migration and colonization invade the safe space of home. This merging creates a confused and fragmented sense of reality, home and identity.

The author explains that unhomeliness is portrayed in literary works that engage with the dynamics of cultural difference across diverse historical and social contexts (Bhabha 142). He employs the metaphor of the “House of Fiction” to suggest that literature serves as a platform for exploring and articulating the experience of unhomeliness (Bhabha 141). Through fragmented identities, the ongoing search for belonging, and the disorienting effects of displacement, narratives express the emotional and psychological complexities associated with migration. Contemporary literature, in this view, often engages with the global movements of migrants, formerly colonized populations, and political exiles, addressing themes of otherness and the impact of historical trauma and national conflict (Bhabha 146). These narratives reflect the realities of hybrid, dislocated identities that exist in liminal spaces (Bhabha 148). As such, literature becomes a site where the unhomely condition can be voiced—situated at the intersection of historical forces and literary imagination, linking the private sphere of the home with the broader world (Bhabha 148).

2.3.4 Criticisms

Although hybridity is a widely used concept in academic discourse, it has also attracted significant criticism. Scholars have pointed to its conceptual vagueness and the lack of consensus surrounding its meaning and implications (Kraidy 65; 70). Moslund observes that hybridity and similar terms have become overused in cultural and literary studies, turning into academic clichés that often lack depth and nuance (12). When such concepts are accepted as unquestionable truths, they may hinder critical examination and scholarly debate. Pieterse categorizes these criticisms as part of a broader reaction against the hybridity discourse, while Guignery highlights a central concern: that hybridity is perceived as superficial, disconnected from lived experience, and primarily applied to privileged diasporic individuals, thereby excluding more marginalized voices such as the subaltern (6).

Another critique revolves around the conceptual contradictions associated with hybridity—it is described as simultaneously resistant and mainstream, marginal and dominant, extraordinary and commonplace (Kraidy 65). This duality points to the tension within the theory: while hybridity is celebrated for its subversive capacity to challenge dominant structures and colonial legacies, it has also become a normalized feature of global cultural life, losing the critical edge it once held (Moslund 12).

Kraidy further notes that hybridity's openness to diverse interpretations can become a liability. Its conceptual flexibility may result in arbitrary applications and exclusionary practices that undermine its clarity (65). When a theoretical term is employed across numerous disciplines and in conflicting ways, it risks becoming so diffuse that it loses its analytical usefulness (Kraidy 66).

Kraidy identifies three key reasons why some scholars view hybridity as problematic. First, it is often dismissed as lacking theoretical rigor due to its overly broad and abstract nature, making it difficult to apply in systematic research (Kraidy 66). Second, there is skepticism directed toward the prominent theorists of hybridity, particularly those who are Western-based or hold elite academic positions. Critics argue that such figures are removed from the real-world conditions faced by migrants and postcolonial subjects, and therefore disconnected from the negative dimensions of hybridity (Kraidy 66). Third, hybridity is seen by some as complicit with the ideology of global capitalism. It can be interpreted as supporting a neoliberal narrative that equates cultural blending with progress, while obscuring persistent structural inequalities (Kraidy 66). Related objections include the concern that the hybridity framework downplays power imbalances, and that its emphasis on fusion may distract from the ongoing struggle against colonial and neocolonial systems (Pieterse 6).

Despite these critiques, Bhabha's contributions remain influential in scholarly discussions on colonialism, globalization, migration, and identity. While the backlash against hybridity surfaces valid concerns, much of it lacks constructive depth (66). He maintains that the concept remains valuable for its capacity to challenge rigid notions of power, culture, and identity by showing how these elements are continuously reshaped through interaction. Bhabha's theoretical approach offers valuable insights into how cultural negotiation and identity are shaped. Moslund emphasizes that, despite the critiques it has received, cultural hybridity remains an important framework within migration literature studies. ("Cultural Hybridity" 23).

2.4 Sten Pultz Moslund

Building on earlier critiques directed at Homi Bhabha's theorization of hybridity, Professor Sten Pultz Moslund presents a more grounded perspective on hybridity and migration literature. He challenges the often romanticized and widespread application of hybridity within the field, arguing instead for a more complex and measured understanding of cultural transformation. Central to his contribution is the distinction between organic and intentional hybridity which allow for greater nuance when analyzing the effects of migration and cultural interaction.

Moslund critiques overly celebratory readings of hybridity that prioritize cultural movement, mixture, and fluidity, while marginalizing more static or enduring aspects such as rootedness, continuity, and sameness. He contends that hybridity should not be seen as an inherently radical or transgressive force; rather, it has in many cases evolved into a dominant and even normative discourse within cultural and literary studies (Moslund 11). Rather than dissolving binary oppositions, Moslund argues that the discourse of hybridity can itself reproduce new centralizations and dualisms—for example, between mobility and stillness, hybrid and pure, or multilingualism and monolingualism (Moslund 11). Furthermore, he warns that treating hybridity as a normative cultural condition can unintentionally depoliticize the discourse, shifting attention away from anti-colonial struggles and reinforcing the existing social order. While hybridity can indeed capture diverse and dynamic identities, it also carries the risk of sustaining dominant ideologies and oversimplifying the complex lived experiences of migrants.

From Moslund's perspective, the assumed transformative power of migration literature to dismantle binaries and hierarchies is sometimes overstated (Moslund 11). He questions the extent to which hybridity genuinely functions as a liberatory force, especially when terms like hybridity, diaspora, and heteroglossia are used so frequently and uncritically that they become buzzwords—unquestioned and detached from their critical potential (Moslund 12).

Scholars who adopt a critical stance toward hybridity have pointed out that the concept has become fashionable, even formulaic, in its application. They argue that the frequent and unreflective use of hybridity reflects a routinized academic trend that may, paradoxically, support rather than challenge state-sanctioned ideologies (Moslund 12). In addition, hybridity is often viewed as an elitist discourse, primarily circulated by intellectuals and cultural critics who may be far removed from the everyday realities of migration and displacement (Moslund 12).

Despite these concerns, Moslund clarifies that his aim is not to completely reject hybridity, but rather to approach it with a more critical and balanced lens. He calls for an end to the privileging of any single set of concepts—whether that be hybridity, difference, and fluidity, or purity, sameness, and stability—as all of these frameworks can become ideologically loaded if left unexamined (Moslund 13). His goal is to resist the creation of new binaries within hybridity discourse and to challenge the idea that any of these concepts can be treated as universally valid or inherently progressive. He emphasizes the importance of seeing oppositional categories not as fixed or absolute, but as dynamic and unevenly interacting forces (Moslund 14).

Moslund also critiques the assumption that hybridity results in immediate and profound cultural change. He questions the dominant narrative that portrays migrant and hybrid identities as products of accelerated, rhizomatic transformation. Instead, he advocates for recognizing varying “speeds of becoming,” noting that some cultural shifts may occur rapidly, while others evolve gradually over time (Moslund 19).

To better capture these differing rhythms of change, Moslund introduces organic and intentional hybridity. Drawing on Bakhtin’s theoretical foundation, organic hybridity refers to the slow, unconscious integration of cultural differences that gradually reshape a culture, such as the absorption of foreign elements into language or tradition. Intentional hybridity, by contrast, is a deliberate and conscious emphasis on cultural fusion, often articulated explicitly in theoretical discourse or in migration literature that foregrounds hybridity as a central theme. While organic hybridity reflects long-term, incremental change, intentional hybridity is associated with more immediate and overt transformations in identity and cultural perspective (Moslund 21–22).

By distinguishing between these two forms, Moslund calls attention to the limitations of viewing hybridity as a universal or singular force. His framework invites a more critical and flexible approach to analyzing migration literature—one that acknowledges hybridity’s potential while remaining alert to its risks, contradictions, and varying temporalities.

Thus, according to Moslund, organic hybridity is an unconscious, natural and slow change that happens over a long period of time, while intentional hybridity is a conscious process that actively highlights and foregrounds hybridity and aims for a fast transformation. The analysis of *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* will engage critically with the notion of hybridity by avoiding overly celebratory readings and showcase the use of organic and intentional hybridity as employed by the authors.

2.5 Double oppression faced by migrant women

The protagonists of the chosen novels are both women. As it will be discussed in the analysis, in the context of migration, women “face a ‘double disadvantage’, which relates to being both a woman and a migrant” (Stapleton et al. 8 v). They are subjected to the oppression of two different systems, namely patriarchy and the structural inequalities of migration, which present a “dual challenge” for female migrants (International Organization for Migration 8).

In her pivotal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explores the question of whether marginalized voices are represented within dominant discourses. She ultimately

concludes that the subaltern is structurally silenced and lacks the means to be heard within hegemonic frameworks (Spivak 308). Spivak further emphasizes that gender compounds this marginalization, arguing that patriarchal systems ensure male dominance and that women within subaltern positions are rendered even more invisible and voiceless (Spivak 287). Migrant women, who are marginalized because of their gender, race, and class, are often denied a voice in the existing power structures and mainstream discourse and thus, they occupy a subaltern position. This places them in a liminal space where they have to negotiate their identity and gain their agency. The struggle of the female migrant competing against both cultural and political oppression and forces is depicted in *Brick Lane* and Özdoğan`s trilogy.



CHAPTER 3: *BRICK LANE*

Brick Lane by Monica Ali tells the story of Nazneen who moves from Bangladesh to London as a bride to a man who is twenty years her senior. In England, she is faced with the difficulty of both being a woman and a migrant, but she gradually finds her own voice and independence. The novel explores themes of migration, identity, gender roles, and the clash between tradition and modernity. Throughout the novel, the reader follows Nazneen's process of identity formation and her development from a passive, obedient, submissive character to a woman with a strong identity, agency, and freedom.

3.1 Nazneen's Migratory Experience and Identity Formation Process

During her identity transformation, Nazneen passes through multiple phases: first, internal rebellion; then passive-aggressive behavior; and finally, full self-assertion. There are also several events that influence this process, such as her having a baby and later losing him, starting to work as a seamstress from home, her friendship with Razia, her relationship with Karim and their breakup, and finally, Chanu's decision to move back to Bangladesh, which she refuses. These steps and Nazneen's transformation as a woman with a strong identity and agency will be explored in this section.

3.1.1 "How You Were Left To Your Fate"

Nazneen's birth is a difficult one; she is born prematurely in the seventh month and is declared dead shortly after her birth. When it becomes clear that Nazneen is alive, but weak, her mother Rupban is presented with two options: either to bring her to a hospital in the city where she will receive proper treatment, which is going to be expensive, or she can wait and "see what Fate will do" (Ali 16). Even though Mumtaz, Nazneen's aunt, wants to bring the baby to a hospital, her mother decides against it: "No," she said, "we must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger" (Ali 16). When Nazneen refuses to eat, Rupban, again, relates this to her fate: stating "[p]robably it is her Fate to starve to death" (Ali 16). This is the story of "How You Were Left To Your Fate" which is retold multiple times in the narrative and makes up a big part of Nazneen's belief system. She is deeply influenced by the belief that her mother instilled

in her that one has to surrender to fate and not fight against it: “Fate will decide everything in the end, whatever route you follow” (Ali 16). Viewing her mother as “naturally a saint” and admiring her “quiet courage, her tearful stoicism”, Nazneen never challenged the reasoning of the story told to her throughout her childhood (Ali 17).

Nazneen’s “mantra” and “principle” that ruled her early life is “What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne” (Ali 18). This showcases that her worldview is one of passive acceptance and endurance; when faced with difficulty, she has no other option than to be patient and obedient. Her mother also “advised her to be still in her heart and mind, to accept the Grace of God, to treat life with the same indifference with which it would treat her” (Ali 17). These sentiments govern her life before she constructs her own identity and gains agency. Nazneen has been made to believe that she has no free will and agency over her life. As a migrant woman, Nazneen faces layers of constraints and powerlessness through her being a woman in Bangladeshi society and being a migrant and a woman in England. However, she begins to question the principles that were taught to her and goes from passive acceptance to being the active decision-maker over her life. The change Nazneen will go through is hinted at early in the story:

when, at the age of thirtyfour, after she had been given three children and had one taken away, when she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover, when for the first time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but had to make it for herself, she was as startled by her own agency as an infant who waves a clenched fist and strikes itself upon the eye. (Ali 18)

3.1.2 Nazneen’s early experiences in London

In Chapter One, the reader is introduced to Nazneen’s birth, childhood, and her background. She is positioned as a submissive, passive, obedient figure without a self-identity, governed by the decisions of others and fate. It is her father who chooses who she marries, a decision she accepts with grace: “Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma” (Ali 18). When asked if she wants to see a photograph of her soon-to-be husband, she declines, yet, when she sees it accidentally, she is displeased: “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” (Ali 19). In line with what is expected from her, she does not voice her opinion and Nazneen gets “sent away to London” (Ali 20). In contrast, Hasina, who is her sister, runs off with the saw-mill owner's nephew Khulna, a man

that she falls in love with. Nazneen thinks that her sister “kicked against fate” and “[n]o good could come of it” (Ali 24). Her father, feeling betrayed and angry, waits for her return with an axe for sixteen days to kill “his whore-pig daughter (...) the moment she came crawling back” (Ali 18).

Nazneen is now in London and has new identities as a wife and a migrant. She is physically distant from Bangladesh, but her mind is still there. She has flashbacks and memories of her life and frequently wonders where Hasina is and what she does. The only thing keeping her busy is housework, performing her religious duties such as reading the Quran and praying and making up interactions in her head. She is deeply isolated from society and experiences loneliness:

In all her eighteen years, she could scarcely remember a moment that she had spent alone. Until she married. And came to London to sit day after day in this large box with the furniture to dust, and the muffled sound of private lives sealed away above, below and around her. (Ali 26)

Nazneen fantasizes about human connection, especially with “the tattoo lady” that she sees across her block, always sitting on her balcony drinking and smoking (Ali 20):

Nazneen thought sometimes of going downstairs, crossing the yard and climbing the Rosemead stairwell to the fourth floor. She might have to knock on a few doors before the tattoo lady answered. She would take something, an offering of samosas or bhajis, and the tattoo lady would smile and Nazneen would smile and perhaps they would sit together by the window and let the time pass more easily. (Ali 21)

Even though she “has never spoken to the tattoo lady, she becomes part of Nazneen's imagined community, as she fantasizes a friendship with this proximal, yet culturally remote figure” (Chakravorty 521). But she quickly dismisses such thoughts as she “could say two things in English: sorry and thank you” (Ali 21). She admits to herself that she feels lonely and misses human connection. “What she missed most was people. Not any people in particular (apart, of course, from Hasina) but just people (Ali 26). This disconnection she feels is a part of the migratory experience. Nazneen is longing for a social life, meaningful interactions, and a sense of community that she is used to from Bangladesh.

Subconsciously, Nazneen, repressed by tradition, duty and isolation, recognizes her unhappiness with her current condition, but she does not dare to question fate: “if I were the

wishing type, I know what I would wish” (Ali 20), Nazneen thinks to herself. Yet, she quickly dismisses and regrets such thoughts: “Was it cheating? To think, I know what I would wish? Was it not the same as making the wish? If she knew what the wish would be, then somewhere in her heart she had already made it” (Ali 20). In this instance, Nazneen showcases an internal philosophical questioning on desire, thought, and action. She realizes that even her unspoken words and thoughts carry power. This is one of the early, subtle instances of her awakening and her emerging agency. She demonstrates self-awareness, which will later influence her transformation. Nazneen senses a will that contradicts her role as an obedient, submissive wife and daughter, but at this stage, she prefers to deny these novel ideas. Still, it shows a disruption of silent endurance that is expected of her.

3.1.3 Language

Language is a barrier that hinders her integration into English society and slows down her identity transformation process. When Razia, a friend and neighbor of Nazneen, decides to attend an English course, Nazneen tells her husbands that she too desires to learn the language. This request of hers is denied because Chanu thinks having a baby will keep her occupied:

'You're going to be a mother.' (...) '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.' (Ali 79)

This shows how limitations are imposed on Nazneen because she is a woman. She is denied a crucial step towards self-development, which would ease her process of integration into the host country. As a woman, she is expected to conform to traditional maternal roles and remain confined within the domestic sphere. Chanu is the one making decisions for her and instead of hearing her out and trying to find a solution, he denies her request in a patronizing manner.

Telling a woman to focus on having children instead of pursuing education is a typical male reaction that is not just a problem in immigrant families, but also shows how men's way of thinking shapes society (Çelikel 174). Education and motherhood are mutually exclusive in Chanu's worldview. His reaction showcases how patriarchal norms within the migrant community can hinder women's development and integration into society. Nazneen is not only kept separate from the host culture, but she is also denied the opportunity to reach her potential and explore herself outside of the roles assigned to her.

All these limiting factors affect Nazneen's psychological state in a negative way. She has negative thoughts that can even be seen as suicidal and silent cries for help. She dreams that "the wardrobe had fallen on her, crushing her on the mattress. Sometimes she dreamed she was locked inside it and hammered and hammered but nobody heard" (Ali 26). Upon cutting her finger with a knife while preparing dinner, she asks herself: "How long would it take to empty her finger of blood, drop by drop? How long for the arm? And for the body, an entire body?" (Ali 26). These show Nazneen's inner world and the extent of her emotional pain.

3.1.4 Internal Rebellions

At the beginning of the novel, Nazneen acts as the obedient wife who performs her duties and is respectful towards her husband Chanu. But there are several instances where she revolts against her husband. Even if she does not get into discussions with him or voice her opinions directly, she does so in her mind. An instance where she shows a silent, internal act of disobedience is when she overhears a phone call in which Chanu talks about her. He describes her as

an unspoilt girl. From the village. (...) Not beautiful, but not so ugly either. The face is broad, big forehead. Eyes are a bit too close together. (...) All things considered, I am satisfied". (Ali 24-25)

Chanu comments that "a blind uncle is better than no uncle. I waited too long to get a wife" (Ali 25), suggesting that having Nazneen is better than having no wife at all. He also states that "she is a good worker. Cleaning and cooking and all that" (Ali 25). Thus, Nazneen's worth is measured by her ability to bear children and do domestic labor. Upon hearing Chanu's comments about her appearance, she mocks Chanu by thinking that she could "tuck all your hundred pens and pencils under those rolls", referencing the fat rolls on his belly (Ali 25). This inner monologue demonstrates a shift in Nazneen; she begins to rebel privately and does not let herself be objectified.

After some time, these internal rebellions take the form of passive-aggressive behavior. She does small things that may displease Chanu, but still, in a subtle way:

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. (Ali 65)

Nazneen is able to rebel and sabotage Chanu, even if she is still confined in the domestic space. She rejects a life where she is expected to serve and sacrifice herself. In small steps at first, she is able to disrupt Chanu's authority. These minor acts of resistance empower Nazneen and will lead her to make significant decisions later in the narrative.

3.1.5 Urban Experience

Nazneen is in London but "[s]he did not often go out" (Ali 47). This is mainly related to the Bangladeshi culture and her husband's concern that when she goes out, "ten people will say, 'I saw her walking on the street.'" which will make him "look like a fool" (Ali 47). Chanu claims that he is "westernized now" and Nazneen should consider herself lucky because he is educated (Ali 47). He believes that he is offering her freedom and access to everything she needs, but ultimately, he monitors and restricts her autonomy. Nazneen, however, decides to explore *Brick Lane*, which is the region they live in:

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. (Ali 58)

Nazneen wanders through the streets, observing the architecture and people of London. She feels fear and excitement, which is related to the ambivalence migrants experience while they try to navigate life after migration. She senses a growing self-awareness and freedom, mixed with fear and excitement. Nazneen is also aware of her alien, marginal status in her new environment, but still, she chooses to explore London alone as a woman of color who does not know the English language. This tension she perceives is the unhomely moment Bhabha theorizes; it is in these in-between spaces, where transformation happens. Nazneen, through her act of exploration, goes against the societal norms and the wishes of her husband. By taking such a risk, she begins to actively build an identity for herself in this uncertain, in-between space.

At first, Nazneen feels invisible and out of place on the streets of London, but after a woman smiles at her, these feeling fades as she gets acknowledged and is "[n]o longer invisible" (Ali 59). She has another encounter where she says "sorry" to a man, which makes her "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” (Ali 63). This may seem like a small encounter for other people, but it is a meaningful milestone for Nazneen. Her speaking in English to an unknown person in public marks her transformation from isolation, loneliness and silence, which characterizes her being as a migrant woman, to a growing confidence and gradual step towards integration. This is a realistic portrayal of migration as her change does not happen suddenly and through grand gestures, but through small, meaningful actions. Nazneen is spoken to and she speaks for herself, which is symbolic of her identity development.

Yet, when she comes home, she is faced with her reality as a housewife who has to perform housework and obey her husband. She wants to tell Chanu about her experience:

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? I walked mile upon mile, probably around the whole of London, although I did not see the edge of it. And to get home again I went to a restaurant. I found a Bangladeshi restaurant and asked directions. See what I can do!. (Ali 64-65)

Nazneen knows that Chanu underestimates her and her abilities, but she begins to recognize her power. Gradually, she sees herself as capable and independent and celebrates her capabilities. This marks her redefinition of her self-image and another step towards agency. But still, “this experience (...) remains silent, not verbalized, and occurs in her mind” (Golban and Benli 33).

3.1.6 Raqib

In Chapter Four, Nazneen brings her baby Raqib, or Ruku as Chanu calls him, to life. The birth of her son marks an important step in Nazneen’s development, which strengthens her identity. She has a deep emotional attachment to her son and admires his beauty. She describes him as “astonishing” with “ears, floppy as cats” (Ali 83). Raqib “smelled like a sacred flower” to her and she never wanted to be separated from him (Ali 83).

This illustrates how Raqib becomes a source of happiness for the mother. The role of a caregiver also gives her a sense of purpose. Raqib’s life seems “more real to her than her own” (Ali 85). While Raqib is “full of needs: actual and urgent needs, which she could supply”, her own life is characterized as “a series of gnawings, ill-defined and impossible to satisfy?” (Ali 85). While her life is characterized by an emotional void, ambivalence and disillusionment, the baby has clear needs. Having the ability to fulfill them empowers Nazneen.

Moreover, she begins to draw strict boundaries for the first time in the narrative after having Raqib. She finds her power and voices her desires without being afraid of confrontation. Being his mother, she knows what is best for the baby, which gives her self-confidence. This can be seen in this dialogue where Mrs. Islam comes to visit Nazneen and wants to take the baby to her place:

'I'll take him back with me this afternoon,' said Mrs Islam. 'Let you catch up on some housework.' (...) 'My niece is coming. She loves to play with babies.' (...). 'He's so small,' said Nazneen. 'Send your niece to me.' 'Nonsense. I'll take him. (...) 'You can collect him in a couple of hours. Give him a feed now, and we'll go'. (Ali 88)

Nazneen does not give in to Mrs Islam's desire to take the baby: "He's staying here," said Nazneen. "With me." (Ali 90).

Mrs. Islam is shocked by that answer, and Nazneen, too:

Nazneen trembled, but the warmth of Raqib's body against her chest fired her resolve. 'He's staying here.' She could have added something to soothe. Something to show her respect. She could have said, I'll bring him later. He's not well today. Another day, I'll bring him. He'll be in good hands with you. All she said was, 'He's staying here.'. (Ali 90)

This is one of the first instances in which she stands her ground and does not obey societal expectations. In her culture, elderly people are always respected and have to be obeyed. Normally, Nazneen would do what Mrs. Islam expects of her, but in this case, she draws a boundary and firmly states her opinion.

This scene is also in contrast with a visiting scene from Chapter One, where Razia and Mrs. Islam come to visit Nazneen after hearing about the news of a suicide. While the two women are conversing, Nazneen wants to contribute to the conversation, but she overthinks and is not able to speak. Nazneen "formed some questions in her mind, phrased and rephrased them" (Ali 29), yet she remains silent, convinced that it is now too late to ask about the woman who fell from floor 16 (Ali 31). She is also waiting for another guest and has to prepare dinner, but she is too anxious to tell her unannounced guests that they have to leave (Ali 32).

Her way of acting in this scene and after she has a baby shows the evolution Nazneen goes through, especially in terms of self-assertion and agency. In the first visiting scene, her inner world and her behaviors do not align; she is acting in accordance with the hospitality and

politeness that is expected of her, but internally, she wants her guests to leave, but cannot voice this as it is against social etiquette. Thus, she restrains herself and stays silent. In the second visiting scene, there is a shift. When Mrs. Islam wants to take Raqib against her will, she refuses her directly without any socially accepted excuses. This is uncharacteristic for Nazneen who, before, stayed silent instead of showing resistance. Even though it scares her to give such a reaction at first, feeling Raqib's warm body gives her emotional support and empowers her (Ali 90). Nazneen, through her new role as a mother, reclaims her voice and agency, beginning to make her own choices and transitioning from passivity to autonomy.

Eventually, Raqib gets sick and is rushed to the hospital, an event that destroys Nazneen's psychological state:

The city shattered. Everything was in pieces. She knew it straight away, glimpsed it from the painful-white insides of the ambulance. Frantic neon signs. Headlights chasing the dark. An office block, cracked with light. These shards of the broken city. (Ali 119)

She experiences her surroundings in fragments and her perception is distorted after this traumatic event. She is shocked and goes through an emotional rupture, losing her life purpose as well as her sense of safety and control.

For Nazneen, "[h]e was the centre. The world had rearranged itself around this new core. It had to. Without him, life would not be possible" (Ali 119). Raqib is the source of her sense of self and stability and without him, her emotional state is on the verge of collapse. Her identity is based on her maternal duty and her role as a wife, but losing Raqib shows Nazneen that she has to develop an identity that is not dependent on others and how she can serve them. This trauma shapes Nazneen's journey toward a more stable, independent identity and helps her to come to the realization that her own life and identity have to be based on terms beyond motherhood.

When Nazneen brings her son to the hospital, she begins to question her mother's actions and the story of "How You Were Left To Your Fate". Her mother's passive acceptance and abandonment of her child awakens an anger in her:

At once she was enraged. 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? A saint?. (Ali 137-138)

Nazneen confronts the beliefs that she was taught throughout her childhood and ultimately rejects the submission to fate. Rather than crying passively and waiting for a miracle, she takes action. This constructs her new identity as a woman with agency who does not simply sacrifice herself and surrender.

In a letter to Hasina, she describes her situation:

Raqib was very ill but better now. We took him to hospital. A strange thing happened. I sat beside him and felt happy. Not happy for him to be ill, but happy about something inside myself. (Ali 144)

Then, she reflects on that and tries to understand what made her happy:

She tried to think it through. What had made her so happy? She drew a face and made it smile. I fought for him. She added a matchstick body. Not accepting. Fighting. She drew a flower and gave it a long stem. Fate!.. (Ali 144)

This marks a milestone in her transformation and the building of her selfhood. She has an awakening and understands that she is happy because, in contrast to her mother, she fought and took action for her child. So, she rejects suffering passively and enduring situations, an attitude that was presented to her as being saintly. Such moments echo Stuart Hall's concept of fluid identities that are constantly in process. Through rethinking and questioning her culture, she disrupts the identity she inherited from her mother and Bangladeshi society. This awakening moment signals the emergence of her new identity and her rejection of "the submissive, fatalistic woman role" (Kılıç 1265). Through abandoning her old beliefs, she begins to create an in-between, third space for herself.

3.1.7 Financial Freedom: Sewing

Nazneen gains her financial freedom through sewing. Making her own money is an important step for gaining agency. While "[a]dding financial responsibilities to the other responsibilities that women have, such as child-rearing, can lead to stress but can also provide women the opportunity of gaining autonomy and experience in decision-making" (un.org 28).

Before she gets a job, she thinks about it:

If she had a job, she would be able to save. And if she saved then they would have enough money to go to Dhaka. Or if they didn't go to Dhaka, she would save enough to send money to Hasina. Chanu would not know how many linings she had sewn or how many jackets she had button-holed. He would not know how much money there should be, and she would be able to put some aside. (Ali 189)

She also asks herself: “How much could she save? How much could she send? How would she hide it from Chanu?” (Ali 207). When Nazneen actually starts making money, her husband acts as if her money was theirs. Chanu, who did not get the promotion he wanted at work and is unemployed now, has decided that it is time to go to Bangladesh: “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”. (Ali 210). So, Chanu became “the middleman, a role which he viewed as Official and in which he exerted himself. For a couple of weeks he puzzled feverishly over calculations, trying to work out the most profitable type of garment assignment” (Ali 209). He starts taking care of finance related matters of her work. He even downplays the difficulty of her work by saying “All you have to do (...) is sit there.” (Ali 210). Chanu sees the money Nazneen makes as his and acts as if he is doing her a favor: “‘We're making good money this week.’ He pulled at his lower lip, working it out. ‘Don't worry. I'll take care of everything.’” (Ali 210). In the first months of her starting to work “she did not even know how much she had earned” (Ali 210). Nazneen realizes that she has to hide how much she makes from her husband and she begins securing her money in “hidey holes” to send back to her sister Hasina and to spend it on her daughters needs (Ali 266):

She reminded herself of the money in an envelope on the high shelf, near the Qur'an, and decided it was haram and would have to be removed. She counted the money pushed into the foot of a pair of tights, wound up in a ball at the back of her underwear drawer. Another five pounds put away today. Fifteen more pounds wrapped in clingfilm, inside a sandwich bag, pushed into the hole in the wall next to the boiler. She would take it to the Sonali Bank in the morning. Hasina would have it before the end of the month. Some she would give to Shahana for the things she coveted, shampoo and lotion and slides for her hair. (Ali 215-216)

3.1.8 Karim

Becoming a home tailor introduces Nazneen to Karim, an important character who shapes her identity formation. After “Chanu became a taxi man and ceased to be a middleman”, “Karim, with a bale of jeans over his broad shoulder (...) came into her life” (Ali 211).

Karim shapes Nazneen in three ways: He introduces her to societal and political issues, the local Muslim community and they eventually have a sexual affair.

Karim’s uncle owns the factory Nazneen works for, so he comes to visit her frequently to bring the clothes that she sews. During these visits, Nazneen observes him:

The way he stood with his legs wide and his arms folded. His hair. Cut so close to the skull. The way it came to a triangle at the front, and the little bit which stood up straight at the centre of his forehead. He wore his jeans tight and his shirtsleeves rolled up to the elbow. (...). They looked strong, those arms. His hair. Razored short against the skull. It was odd, that the shape of a skull could be pleasing. (Ali 212)

She is drawn to him physically which signals her shift from domesticity and obedience to a self with desires. With time, the two begin to get to know each other more closely. They sit together and drink tea, while Karim tells her about his life and family. He also begins to pray at her house and watching him pray makes her feel “dizzy” (Ali 237). At one point, she even forgets to cover her hair (Ali 214).

Karim is politically active and fights for the rights of Muslims. He teaches Nazneen about the hardships faced by their fellow believers:

He began to talk to her about the world. She encouraged him. 'Is it?' she said. His knowledge shamed her. She learned about her Muslim brothers and sisters. She learned how many they were, how scattered, and how tortured. She discovered Bosnia. 'When that was?' she said. He could not have been more than fourteen or fifteen at the time. He shamed her. And he excited her. (Ali 245)

Karim also tells her “about Palestine. He told her, 'They go to the streets protesting a child has been killed. They go home carrying the body of another.' It gave her pain” (...) and she read in the night of occupiers and orphans, of Intifada and Hamas (Ali 245-246). These topics broaden Nazneen’s horizon and she starts to see the world differently. She gets introduced to the wider Muslim community which awakens an awareness and empathy in her. Through this new

knowledge she acquires, she realizes the “smallness” of her own problems (Ali 246). Karim becomes a vehicle through which she gains an ideological position and becomes a more engaged, aware and active person. He also invites Nazneen to a meeting where a Muslim group called The Bengal Tigers is going to be founded. Nazneen is supposed to represent the “older women”:

'I want to ask you to come to something. A meeting.' He ran a hand over his hair. 'Please ask your husband. It's for all Muslims. We want everyone to be represented. And we don't have any older women.' (Ali 237)

Nazneen, at first hesitant, decides to join the meeting. Here, she gets to know the Muslim community, especially the second generation. By voting for Karim, Nazneen feels empowered:

Karim and the Questioner stood for Chairman. It was close. Nine votes for the Questioner and ten for Karim. I have given him victory, thought Nazneen. She felt it a momentous thing. By raising her hand, or not raising it, she could alter the course of events, of affairs in the world of which she knew nothing. (Ali 244)

The protagonist has an existential awakening as she becomes aware that her decisions can influence the world. Even though this vote may be a minor event, she describes it as “momentous” because it marks the first instance where she gets politically active and realizes that she is capable of agency outside the domestic, private sphere, even if this is a completely unknown world to her. Her vote signifies that she has a position and a voice in her community. Instead of being a passive, silent observer of decisions made by men, she is a participant who has an opinion and whose choices matter. These instances begin to shape her hybrid identity, an identity where she has the right to act and choose. Her participation in these community meetings influences her journey from internalized marginalization and separation to active engagement with her surroundings. This signals Nazneen’s shift from being shaped by others to shaping and creating her own world.

Nazneen starts to develop feelings for him and she cannot get him out of her head:

She thought about his forearms and she rejoiced that they were not thin. She thought about the small flat mole on the left ridge of his jaw and how stunned she had been to discover it only this week. She thought about his certainty, how he walked a straight line while others turned and stumbled. (Ali 266)

This passage shows how attracted she feels towards Karim and how she admires his sense of purpose. He becomes a symbol of direction in her world filled with disorientation, confusion and uncertainty. She compares her husband to Karim. While Chanu was “mired in words” and “talk[ed] until he was no longer certain of anything”, Karim “was a man and he spoke as a man” (Ali 263). She thinks of “Chanu with all his books. He read too much and it did him no good. (...) Chanu and all his books. How much he knew and how baffled he seemed” (264). Karim educates Nazneen, but unlike Chanu, he does not make her feel inferior: “He left Bengali newsletters for her. One was called *The Light*; another was simply titled *Ummah*. Chanu had never given her anything to read. And what good were his books anyway? All that ancient history” (Ali 245).

She observes that “when Chanu fidgeted he showed his unease. When Karim could not be still, he showed his energy” (Ali 264). She perceives Karim as a more masculine, confident figure, while Chanu is insecure and indecisive.

When Chanu and Nazneen have a conversation, “[h]e 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” (Ali 44). In her marriage, she does not feel desire and love, but emotional detachment. But with Karim, she feels seen and heard: “This was something he did: made her feel as if she had said a weighty piece, as if she had stated a new truth” (Ali 264).

Nazneen is proud of the knowledge she acquires through her interactions and conversations with Karim. She wants her husband, who always asserts intellectual superiority, to see that she also has a capacity for learning: “She put the newsletters on the table for her husband to see. You are not the only one who knows things” (Ali 245). However, she hesitates and “when she heard him coming she hid them” (Ali 245). She keeps her new knowledge to herself and reading becomes an intimate act of self-assertion and a way to connect to Karim: “Those next few days reading became a sweet and melancholy secret, caressing the phrases with her eyes, feeling Karim floating there, just beyond the words” (Ali 245). This suggests an emotional and intellectual awakening in Nazneen, but still, in an introspective, subtle way.

Furthermore, Nazneen comments that “Chanu also knew many things but they only left him bewildered. If knowledge was food then while Karim grew strong on his intake, Chanu became only bloated, bilious and pained. The way Karim made you feel was . . .” (Ali 379-380). These contrasts between her lover and her husband illustrate that Nazneen is becoming emotionally distant from Chanu while her attraction towards Karim grows.

Nazneen admits that Karim “excited her” (Ali 245). When “the tips of their fingers found each other”, “she smelled the crisp smell of his shirt. The smell of limes” (Ali 246). She is emotionally and physically attracted to him: “Nazneen felt an electric current run from her nipples to her big toes. (...) Her skin was attached to thousands of fine silk threads, all of them pulling, pricking at the point of tension” (Ali 263). When he is around, “[h]er fingers trembled and she could not work. (...) For a few moments she drifted helplessly on a tide of longing. Her mouth became loose and her eyes unfocused” (Ali 264). During the meetings, Karim is assertive and dominant: “It’s my group. I’m the Chairman.’ (...) ‘I say what is radical and what is not” (Ali 263). She is used to “Chanu’s dream worlds and indecisiveness, so “Karim’s display of action and authority (...) brings Nazneen to the point of sexual excitement” (Golban and Benli 51).

The sexual tension between them eventually leads to a physical affair. After one of the meetings, Karim follows Nazneen home and they consummate their relationship:

He kissed her on the mouth and he led her into the bedroom. Get undressed, he said, and get into bed. He left the room. She got changed into her nightdress and lay beneath the sheets. (...) She turned her face into the pillow and moaned and when he kissed the back of her neck she moaned again. (Ali 290)

Through Nazneen’s relationship with Karim, “her life had become bloated with meaning and each small movement electrified” and it “had cast a special light on everything, a dawn light after a life lived in twilight. It was as if she had been born deficient and only now been gifted the missing sense” (Ali 301; 303). Nazneen knows that what she is doing is a sin and against societal and religious norms. So, occasionally she “fell into a state of bottomless anxiety. She spent the night eating leftovers in the kitchen as if layer on layer of food inside her would push out the anxiety, displace it like water from a bath. And at the end of these sessions she felt nauseous and tired, too tired to care what would happen and certain that in any case nothing could be helped” (Ali 300). She also tortures herself by “reminding herself. *You are nothing. You are nothing*” (Ali 301).

Nazneen is aware that

[t]hey committed a crime. It was a crime and the sentence was death. In between the sheets, in between his arms, she took her pleasure desperately, as if the executioner waited behind the door. Beyond death was the eternal fire of hell and from every touch of flesh on flesh she wrought the strength to endure it. (Ali 301)

She is stuck in a moral dilemma, torn between desire and guilt. She feels the psychological weight of going against the teachings of her religion. Still, for Nazneen, this relationship becomes an act of survival and feeling alive. Nazneen's statement, "But much of the time she felt good", shows that the good sides of her relationship are enough to forget about her shame and guilt (Ali 303). She seeks the pleasure to assert her existence, reclaim her body and she is ready to pay for the consequences in the afterlife.

For her identity transformation, this means that Nazneen transforms from a passive, dutiful wife and mother to a self that has passions and desires. She thinks that she is achieving self-actualization, but she only claims power for that moment and this "independence" is mixed with fear and anxiety. Still, instead of being at the mercy of fate, she begins to feel, choose for herself and risk consequences.

The more time the two lovers spend together, the more Nazneen develops feelings for him: "She smelled disaster, and for the first time it occurred to her that it was not only Shahana she would have to worry about if they ever went to Dhaka" (Ali 258). The desire to stay in London and not go back with her husband starts to grow in Nazneen. Thus, Karim and her desire to be with him are the beginning of her asserting agency and starting to put her own needs first.

The following passage reveals a significant moment in Nazneen's journey of identity construction:

If ever her life was out of her hands, it was now. She had submitted to her father and married her husband; she had submitted to her husband. And now she gave herself up to a power greater than these two, and she felt herself helpless before it. When the thought crept into her mind that the power was inside her, that she was its creator, she dismissed it as conceited. (Ali 301-302)

Nazneen questions her life which was always controlled externally and her submission to the notion of fate, but now she has found her inner voice and power. The important realization here is that she begins to recognize that she might be the "creator" of this power (Ali 302). She comes to a point where self-realization could be achieved, but she dismisses these ideas, which reveals her patriarchal conditioning. She has been denied agency and suppresses her desire to claim it. At this stage, she does not believe in her power because she sees herself from the point of view of others, "a weak woman" who could not "unleash a force so strong" (Ali 302). Even though she does not claim her power yet, an awakening has clearly begun. Her struggle between her traditional beliefs and her emerging agency is also linked to the notion of hybridity. Nazneen

realizes the possibilities that she has and this passage foreshadows Nazneen's shift towards her strong identity and the creation of her own third space.

Even though Karim plays a significant, formative role for Nazneen, his role is not final. Rather, Karim is another obstacle she has to overcome for her to become self-determined and develop a hybrid identity that is not defined by patriarchal norms, tradition, or ideology.

In one instance, after their physical relationship, Nazneen and Karim go into the living room and Karim starts to give her commands:

“ 'I fancy a bit of chanachur,' he said. And Nazneen went to get his snack.

'A glass of water.'

'I left my magazine over there.'

'Could you pass my phone?'

'Leave that sewing now, for God's sake'.” (Ali 302)

Nazneen “danced attendance” (Ali 302). For her, “[i]t was a thrill, this playing house. But she knew she was playing, and she sensed for Karim it was a serious business” (Ali 302).

This scene shows that gendered roles exist in Nazneen's relationship with Karim. Similar to her marriage, Karim expects her to serve him and acts as an authoritative figure giving commands. So, even if the relationship gives her a sense of meaning and excitement at first, with time, this relationship displays the same patriarchal structures that are present in her marriage. Nazneen, once again, has to be the dutiful, obedient partner similar to her role in the domestic sphere. However, she is aware that for her, this was “playing house” instead of “serious business” (Ali 302), so she does not accept this role imposed on her. Her self-awareness is growing and she begins to resist gendered expectations. This moment illustrates a turning point in her hybrid identity formation: she begins to realize that her act of rebellion with Karim will not offer her the freedom she desires, so she questions this relationship and knows that she has to construct a new space where she will be allowed true agency on her own terms.

Karim begins to become a radical in the course of the narrative, changing his clothing into “panjabi-pyjama and a skullcap” (Ali 378). When he is at Nazneen's house, “Karim was intent on his work at the computer. Magazines, he had explained, could be radical. But the internet was where things got really radical” (Ali 383).

The changes in Karim's character inspire an awakening in Nazneen. She starts to gain clarity about their incompatibility and detaches from Karim. Nazneen knows that this affair would only hinder her agency.

While she could not wait to spend time with Karim, Nazneen now thinks that "it would be better if Karim left soon", so she slowly distances herself from him and their relationship. She also decides to "never write about him to Hasina", which shows that she wants this part of her identity and journey to remain hidden (Ali 383). This could be due to the shame that she feels or the desire to erase it from her narrative.

While Chanu and Karim were contrasting characters for her, now she comments that "only my husband and this boy are thinking all the time about New York and terrorists and bombs. Everybody else just living their lives" (Ali 384). Nazneen has had enough of the obsessive political concerns and discussions of both Chanu and Karim. She simply wants to live in the present, free from ideological burdens, constant discussion and lectures. She realizes that this relationship is a romantic fantasy, so by detaching, she will be able to re-focus on building her true identity.

So, she begins to question how to end the relationship:

How could she tell him not to come any more? What would it mean? That she had taken her pleasure and had enough? That what was between them was within her power to stop? That, controlling it, she need never have begun it?. (Ali 385)

At first, she draws a boundary:

She would not let him pray at her home again. Maybe it was not, officially, a sin. But it was not right. It was something she could stop, and if she could stop that then maybe she could end the rest of it too. (Ali 385)

The crucial point in this passage is that Nazneen believes that she has the power to stop what she had begun, which is a turning point in her character development. She realizes that fate is not external, but internal and rather than being a passive receiver of fate, she can change its course and her life by actively choosing and defining her own identity and personality.

While spending time together once again, Nazneen asks Karim why he likes him and he answers:

Well, basically you've got two types. Make your choice. There's your westernized girl, wears what she likes, all the make-up going on, short skirts and that soon as she's out of her father's sight. She's into going out, getting good jobs, having a laugh. Then there's your religious girl, wears the scarf or even the burkha. You'd think, right, they'd be good wife material. But they ain't. Because all they want to do is argue. And they always think they know best because they've been off to all these summer camps for Muslim sisters. (Ali 386-387)

But for him, Nazneen is unlike these girls; she is “the real thing” (Ali 387). This answer disappoints Nazneen:

I am the real thing?' A conversation overheard in the early days of her marriage came to her mind. She stood in her nightdress in the hallway while Chanu was on the telephone. An unspoilt girl. From the village. All things considered, I am satisfied. (Ali 387)

She realizes that both Chanu and Karim see an image in her that she tries to resist: “she was not the girl from the village any more. She was not the real thing” (Ali 387).

Nazneen realizes that she “had seen what she wanted to see. She had looked at him and seen only his possibilities. Now she looked again and saw that the disappointments of his life, which would shape him, had yet to happen. It gave her pain” (Ali 451). While she admired Karim for having a sense of belonging, it becomes obvious that this is not the case and both she and Karim have made each other up:

He knew about the world and his place in the world. That was how she liked to remember him. It was never so. Apart from where it mattered, in her head. He was who he was. Question and answer. The same as her. Maybe not even that. Karim had never even been to Bangladesh. Nazneen felt a stab of pity. Karim was born a foreigner. (Ali 450)

Thus, she decides to end this affair and while Karim makes plans for her to divorce her husband and then marry him, she simply says: “I don't want to marry you” (Ali 453). The reason for that is how Karim perceived her: “She was his real thing. A Bengali wife. A Bengali mother. An idea of home. An idea of himself that he found in her” (Ali 456). When Karim asks why she does not want to marry him, she answers:” 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” (Ali

456-457). Coming to this realization “represents for Nazneen another important epiphanic experience leading to identity formation” (Golban and Benli 23).

3.1.9 Clothing

Clothing is an important marker of identity and cultural belonging. In *Brick Lane*, clothing gives clues about the characters' identities and cultural transformation.

An example of this is Shahana, who “wanted to wear jeans” and “hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them” (Ali 182). Her character highlights generational conflicts and the in-between experience of second-generation migrants. Her not wanting to dress in traditional attire shows that she rejects Bangladeshi culture and desires to assimilate into British culture.

Contrarily, Karim goes from modern clothing, wearing tight jeans, sneakers and gold necklaces to adopting religious clothing wearing “panjabi-pyjama and skullcaps”, signaling a shift in his identity toward religious commitment (Ali 378). He is driven by nostalgia for his origins and tries to recreate the culture in Britain. Instead of hybridizing the two cultures, he distances himself from the West and everything it stands for, which he signals through his clothing.

In terms of clothing, Razia undergoes the most drastic transformation. Al Mamun observes that Razia slowly takes on traits traditionally associated with men, abandoning her femininity as she begins wearing male clothing, using strong language, and adopting increasingly masculine behavior (513).

She starts “wearing a garment she called a tracksuit. She would never, so she said, wear a sari again” (Ali 97). Razia, “since gaining her British passport (...) had acquired a sweatshirt with a large Union Jack printed on the front” (Ali 190). So, Razia shows her adaptation and integration into British society and asserts her independence through her clothing. After the death of her husband, she also starts to work and becomes the breadwinner of the family, so she chooses her clothing suitable for this new role.

Nazneen`s relationship with clothing mirrors her journey toward identity construction and the formation of a strong selfhood. In Chapter Thirteen, Nazneen wears her “red and gold silk sari” with “little gold leaves” that “demanded to be looked at” (Ali 279). While playing with her sari, she gets “seized by panic and clawed the silk away as if it were strangling her. She could not breathe. The table trapped her legs. The sari, which seconds ago had felt light as air, became

heavy chains” (Ali 279). Initially, she enjoys wearing the sari and its beauty gives her joy. She moves in it “like a jatra girl” (Ali 279), but then the sari begins to suffocate her as it embodies the cultural and traditional expectations imposed on her. Her physical reaction mirrors her internal struggles, torn between duty and desire and tradition and adaptation. Nazneen has one of her epiphanies in the moments after:

Suddenly, she was gripped by the idea that if she changed her clothes her entire life would change as well. If she wore a skirt and a jacket and a pair of high heels then what else would she do but walk around the glass palaces on Bishopsgate, and talk into a slim phone and eat lunch out of a paper bag? If she wore trousers and underwear, like the girl with the big camera on Brick Lane, then she would roam the streets fearless and proud. And if she had a tiny tiny skirt with knickers to match and a tight bright top, then she would – how could she not? – skate through life with a sparkling smile and a handsome man who took her hand and made her spin, spin, spin. (Ali 279-280)

This passage deepens the symbolic value of clothing in the novel. Nazneen thinks that clothing has a transformative power and that by changing her outfit, she could reshape her life and identity. She expresses her desire for more independence and liberation through her fantasy of changing her clothing attire. For Nazneen, clothing is more than just fabric; it is tied to her identity struggles and transformation and symbolizes her desire for change. To conclude, in the novel, clothing is not just aesthetic, but deeply political and personal, signifying shifts in belonging, identity, and empowerment as summarized in this statement: “You think that a clothing is just a clothing. But as a matter of fact it is not. In a place like this it is a serious thing” (Ali 379).

3.1.10 Ice skating

Ice skating is a recurring symbol in *Brick Lane*, representing Nazneen’s journey toward asserting her identity and her inner transformation. When Nazneen watches ice-skating for the first time on television, she is astonished:

Every move they made was urgent, intense, a declaration. The woman raised one leg and rested her boot (...) on the other thigh, making a triangular flag of her legs, and spun around until she would surely fall but didn't. She did not slow down. She stopped dead and flung her arms above her head with a look so triumphant that you knew she had

conquered everything: her body, the laws of nature, and the heart of the tight-suited man who slid over on his knees, vowing to lay down his life for her. (Ali 38)

Nazneen is impressed by the way the ice skater has her body under control and moves in a confident manner, characteristics that she also seeks for herself. After discovering the magic and beauty of ice skating, she begins to watch it regularly and it becomes an opportunity to escape her domestic reality:

Sometimes she switched on the television and flicked through the channels, looking for ice skating. For a whole week it was on every afternoon while Nazneen sat cross-legged on the floor. (Ali 43)

When she watches the choreography, “she was no longer a collection of the hopes, random thoughts, petty anxieties and selfish wants that made her, but was whole and pure. The old Nazneen was sublimated and the new Nazneen was filled with white light, glory. But when it ended and she switched off the television, the old Nazneen returned” (Ali 43). Ice skating becomes a symbol of freedom and control for Nazneen, which are out of reach for her in her current reality. As Golban and Benli state, it signals Nazneen’s “emerging desire for personal emergence and formation, the metaphor of her existence: to be able to skate would mean to stay on her own legs, to live on her own, to possess her own identity” (30).

During her nervous exhaustion, she regards ice skating, and thus, everything that it stands for, as an illusion: “Nazneen looked at the couple on the television screen, the false smiles, the made-up faces, the demented illusion of freedom chasing around their enclosure. Turn it off, she said” (Ali 366). This signals her disillusionment; while ice skating represented the possibility of self-definition for her, she now regards this as unrealistic and artificial.

In the last scene, Nazneen goes ice skating in her sari, which demonstrates her shift from passive daydreaming to taking real-world action. Through experiencing skating herself, she is able to sense liberation firsthand. This scene becomes a metaphor for Nazneen’s rebirth, she lets go of her old personality and reclaims her identity while embodying agency and liberation that she once considered inaccessible.

3.1.11 Female Friendship: Razia

Nazneen's friendship with Razia plays an important role in her identity formation. Nazneen is surrounded by people who adhere to traditional and patriarchal expectations, with the exception of Razia. She represents a new type of migrant women who have agency and independence.

At the beginning of the story, Razia is a traditional Bangladeshi housewife faced with the common struggles of Bangladeshi women. Her husband "keeps [her] locked up inside", he "was mean" and "[i]t was getting worse" (Ali 125-126). Razia complains that she does not have money to buy her children the things they desire, but if she gets a job her "husband will come to the factory and slaughter [her] like a lamb" (Ali 125). His violent character is once again highlighted when Razia tells that if she gets a job, "he will kill me. He will kill me kindly, just one slit across here. That's the sort of man he is" (Ali 125).

She is not allowed to work, yet her husband also does not provide for his family:

After much brooding in the kitchen, sorting through the shelves and cupboards, he denounced his wife as a wanton housekeeper. Too many jars, too many packets, too many tins. All shouting abundance, luxury, waste. There would be no more money until every last thing on the shelves was eaten. Now they were down to Sun Maid raisins and Sainsbury's Wheat Bisks. For three days the children had eaten only Wheat Bisks in water and handfuls of raisins. This will teach you, said the husband. (Ali 126)

He uses frugality as a means to punish his family and assert control. So, when he dies, this presents the possibility for freedom without male dominance for her: "He is dead. (...)The work has killed him. (...) I can get that job now. No slaughter man to slaughter me now" (Ali 141). She has to provide for her family now and steps into her agency by earning her own money. She learns English, starts to work and provides for her children, cuts her hair short and wears modern clothing. She transforms into a self-reliant, integrated and progressive character, which shows Nazneen that there are alternative ways of living. She does not care to act in the way society expects of her: Razia "sprawled over her chair in a manner unbecoming to a Bengali wife" (Ali 129), so when the community gossips about her, she does not listen to it and takes her life into her own hands. She also denounces gossiping: "Spreading rumours is our national pastime," said Razia. "That's not to say it is a good thing. Most of the time there's not a shred of truth in it" (Ali 28). Rumours are often used as a weapon against women who step outside the expected gender roles and Razia who is aware of this criticizes this toxic behavior.

Razia is also the person who introduces Nazneen to other women in their neighborhood, thus widening her social circle and being a cure to the loneliness that she feels: “Sometimes they would call and drink tea with her” (Ali 49).

Nazneen enjoys her company:

She enjoyed seeing Razia the most. Razia always had stories to tell. She was a mimic, a big bony clown. And there was no harm in her. She looked funny and she looked at you funny too but really she was kind-hearted (Ali 49).

Thus, Razia’s companionship “was a good distraction” from the hardships of her life and her reality that she wants to escape (Ali 50). Her support, advice and friendship offer a space for Nazneen to explore herself and her desires. Through having a role model like Razia in her life, Nazneen begins to question the norms she was taught and she internalized. She pushes Nazneen toward being a person with more autonomy and empowerment. Razia becomes a real-life example for migrant women on how to navigate cultural expectations, stand on their own feet and assert agency. She represents the possibility of change, which is inspiring for Nazneen, because she is someone from within her own community, facing the same hardships as her and overcoming them. At the end of the novel, Razia has her own clothing line and employs Nazneen as her employee. She becomes a mirror through which Nazneen evaluates her life and sees that she has a choice to reclaim her identity. Thus, “Razia is one of the most positive figures and who makes Ali aware of the infinite possibilities for South Asian British women” (Feng 22).

Additionally, Razia’s importance for the course of the narrative can be seen in the fact that she utters the last sentence in the novel, which holds symbolic significance: “This is England,’ she said. ‘You can do whatever you like” (Ali 494). Considering Razia’s journey toward self-determination, Ali’s decision to end the novel with her words is both deliberate and meaningful (Feng 22).

3.1.12 Moment of Awakening

When Chanu starts to talk about going to Bangladesh, Nazneen’s mind is filled with questions and worries:

The worst thing was she did not know what would happen. What was the point in fearing this and that, if only this and not that would happen? If Chanu filled more suitcases and

bought the tickets and bid her leave, then would that determine the end? Would Karim, set on his course, prevent her from going? What if going home turned out to be just another one of Chanu's projects? A short while ago it seemed certain, but how could she be sure?. (Ali 406)

So, she did what she always does and “reminded herself: she had only to wait for everything to be revealed” (Ali 406). But, as Nazneen has begun to grow and develop her consciousness, she starts to reject passive endurance and realizes that “[i]nstead of appeasing her as usual, this thought rankled. Why should she wait?”. (Ali 406)

She questions her passivity and the fatalistic worldview that she has been taught since childhood. Through her experiences, she knows that there are alternative ways for her. She realizes that she does not have to endure life, but can actively shape it. This leads to another awakening:

Suddenly her entire being lit up with anger. I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one. A charge ran through her body and she cried out again, this time out of sheer exhilaration. (Ali 407)

Nazneen asserts her agency with these statements. She rejects both Karim and Chanu’s plans for her future and breaks free from submission and the expectation of others. She is now determined to make her own decisions. This scene illustrates an important moment in her personal revolution.

3.1.13 Rejection of Fatalism

Nazneen’s mother Rupban plays a paradoxical role in her journey to find her true self. She is someone who is respected in her community as an obedient, deeply religious, and god-fearing person. Her philosophy in life is one of endurance, passivity and total submission to fate. When something happened, her motto was “Just wait and see, that's all we can do” (Ali 48) and her only reaction was to cry “because crying was called for, but she accepted it, whatever it was” (Ali 48). Rupban also believes that “If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men” (Ali 82), which reveals that she internalizes patriarchal ideas, denies herself and her daughters’ self-expression and submits to the gender hierarchy.

Consequently, it is Rupban who instills in Nazneen the philosophy of passive acceptance, endurance and fatalism. In the early stages of her development, Nazneen adheres to the beliefs

she adopted from her mother as she accepts her arranged marriage even though she does not want to. During her marriage, she performs the role of a loyal spouse and self-sacrificing mother in line with cultural norms and the example her mother has set for her. However, with time, she starts to question the actions of her mother, first starting when Nazneen brings her son to the hospital and wonders how her mother did not fight for her to live when she was faced with death as a child.

Nazneen dreams of her mother, who speaks to her:

'You modern girls. You'll do what you like.' (...) 'But you should remember one thing at least.' (...) 'Your son. You seem to have forgotten him.' (...) 'All those things you said to yourself, I heard every one of them.' (...) 'Don't think I wasn't watching you,' Amma snapped. (...) 'You thought it was you who had the power. You thought you would keep him alive. You decided you would be the one to choose.' She began to spit the words out and drops of red flew with them. 'When you stood between your son and his Fate, you robbed him of any chance.' Amma walked towards her. She held her hands over her chest. The red spurted from between them. 'Now say this to yourself, and say it out loud, "I killed my son. I killed my son."' (Ali 433-434)

In this dream sequence, Rupban blames Nazneen for going against fate by trying to change the destiny of her son. By rejecting traditional ideas, Rupban believes that Nazneen has killed her son and she wants her to accept it, which Nazneen rejects, screaming "No. No. No!" (Ali 434). By doing so, she rejects the belief of total submission to fate and breaks free from her mother's way of thinking, asserting her own will.

In Chapter Nineteen, a letter from Hasina arrives in which she writes:

Amma always say we are women what can we do? If she here now I know what she say I know it too well. But I am not like her. Waiting around. Suffering around. She wrong. So many ways. At the end only she act. She who think all path is closed for her. She take the only one forbidden.

She tells Nazneen that she must tell her a secret she held to herself for too long and starts recalling what she witnessed the day of her mother's death:

"I follow her but I keep from sight. She walk very quick and she not looking around only in front the nose. (...) She take spear and test on the finger. She take another and put it back. And third one she take before is happy". (Ali 436)

Later that day she is found “leaning low over the sacks of rice in the store hut, staked through the heart by a spear. 'She had fallen,' said Mumtaz, 'and the spear was the only thing holding her up. It looked . . . It looked as if she was still falling.' ” (Ali 48). In another letter Hasina writes: “He go to other women. He want to take other wife but she give threat to kill own self. My husband tell me. Everyone know it but us. Tears will come but I tell the truth” (Ali 158). Nazneen’s mother had warned that she would end her life if her husband took a second wife, and ultimately, she committed suicide, a serious sin in Islam. This act of hers contradicts her image of a pious woman who submits to fate. Thus, Rupban goes against her fate at the end. This shatters Nazneen’s old beliefs and she is inspired by her mother’s quiet rebellion, which helps Nazneen to solve contradictions in her own identity and empowers her to choose action over submission. Nazneen is now freed from the burden of fatalistic thinking.

3.1.14 Standing up to Mrs Islam

After coming to the realization that her mother is not a saint and rejecting fatalism, Nazneen is now ready to live as a self-determined, independent woman. In order to enjoy her new mode of living, there are three issues she has to settle. She has to achieve three things to finish her identity formation: Stand up to Mrs Islam and her sons who want money from them, break up with Karim, and tell Chanu that she is not coming with him.

The first one is standing up to Mrs Islam and ending the debt spiral. Chanu took out a loan from Mrs Islam and when she heard the family was returning to Bangladesh, she came to Nazneen’s house to collect it, together with her two sons. She wants two hundred pounds, Nazneen, however, answers back: “unless I made a mistake, then we've paid it all back.' (...) and some more as well” (Ali 445). She is well aware that Mrs Islam wants more money back than what she has lend them and she will not passively accept this injustice. When Nazneen stands up for herself, Mrs Islam’s son tries to intimidate her by breaking objects in her house (Ali 446).

Still, Nazneen does not cave in: “‘No.' (..) 'We paid what we owed,' (...) I am not going to pay” (Ali 446). She knows that she is in the right and is not going to passively do what is expected of her. Therefore, she refuses to pay and challenges her sons: “‘My arm,' shouted Nazneen. 'Break my arm. Break them both” (Ali 447).

When this intimidation tactic does not work, Mrs Islam’s attempts to blackmail her by hinting at her relationship with Karim and telling Nazneen that “‘There are some things a wife does not want a husband to know.' (...) 'Fresh start, (...) 'New life, back home. You don't want anything

to spoil it” (Ali 447). Nazneen answers her fiercely: “My husband (...) knows everything. He'll come soon. Why don't you ask him?” (Ali 447).

Mrs Islam has not yet registered the “new” Nazneen, so “[t]he impossible happened. Mrs Islam looked surprised” (Ali 447).

After Nazneen has successfully stood her ground and wins the confrontation against Mrs Islam and her sons, she cleans the mess they have left behind and comes to an important realization:

Nazneen fetched the dustpan and brush. She wrapped the large pieces of glass in newspaper and began to sweep up the rest. Nothing at all came to her mind. 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. (Ali 448)

In this scene, she has another epiphany, realizing that she is not helpless. It empowers her to go through with her decision to stay because she believes that God will guide her just as he did in this instance.

3.1.15 Breakup with Karim

After her confrontation with Mrs Islam, Nazneen goes to find Karim and break up with him. She goes to their meeting with great excitement and a sense of urgency: “What she had to say to him could not wait” (Ali 449). This signals her desire to get rid of all things that hold her back in life. Now that Karim has become a radical, she does not risk making an unhappy marriage and being a servant figure again. She relates her decision to him in the following way:

'We can't get married.'

'Not straight away,' said Karim. (...)

'Not ever.'

'What do you mean "not ever"?' He sounded irritated. He kicked his boot against the ground.

'I don't want to marry you,' (...) 'That's what I mean.'. (Ali 453)

This is a crucial dialogue where Nazneen decides about the future of their relationship, showing her emotional independence and the assertion of her agency. She firmly declares her desire,

even changing the wording from “cannot” to “do not want to” (Ali 453). Her choice of words reveals the transformation she goes through. The passive phrasing “cannot” suggests limitations outside of her control, such as her daughters or social pressures preventing their marriage. This places the responsibility on external factors. In contrast, when she says that she does not want to marry him, she asserts herself confidently. In a clear and unapologetic way, she states that it is her desire and conscious decision not to marry Karim. By doing so, she shifts the focus from possibilities to active choices. Thus, Nazneen claims ownership over her future and desires, transforming into a person with autonomy free from cultural constraints and the expectation of others.

3.1.16 Return to Bangladesh

Chanu, after failing in his attempt to be successful, decides that the family will return to Bangladesh. He conveys the message to his daughters as follows: 'You see, the things I had to fight: racism, ignorance, poverty, all of that – I don't want you to go through it.' So that's why your mother and I have decided . . . (...) to go back home (Ali 322-323). He highlights that he made this decision and his family has to obey: “We are going there. I have decided. And when I decide something, it is done” (Ali 186).

But Nazneen, having overcome many hardships, has finally found her power and voice. She understands that staying in London is the best choice for herself and her daughters, so she confidently makes the decision and follows through with it. She asserts that “[h]e would go and the girls would stay with her” (Ali 459). She sets an example for her daughters and shows them that their wishes matter: “We'll talk about it tomorrow, or later, and we'll decide what to do. Staying or going, it's up to us three” (Ali 482).

When Chanu asks: “You're coming with me, then? You'll come?”, she simply answers 'No, (...) I can't go with you” (Ali 480).

Chanu, still acting in a patriarchal manner, acts as if this were his decision:

Chanu had called his daughters. 'There has been a change of plan.' He rubbed his face with his palms, getting the blood to flow again. 'I have suggested, and your mother has agreed, that the three of you come later.' (Ali 481)

In the last scenes in the novel, Nazneen has formed her identity and takes control over her life. After overcoming all the challenges she faced, Nazneen has transformed into an independent

woman. Her decision to stay in England is the final stage in her identity formation. She has become a strong woman with agency who is an active figure that shapes her life.

In the final stages of the novel, Nazneen has overcome the barriers that once restricted her independence and freedom. Through this act, she is able to build her identity on her own terms.

The identity transformation that Nazneen goes through in the course of the novel is her journey towards freedom and female agency. She starts to make her own decisions, which is seen in her choice to stay in England and by breaking up with Karim. She also gains financial freedom through sewing. Nazneen starts interacting with her environment and builds connections outside the domestic sphere. She stands up for herself and her daughters, as seen in the fact that she does not let herself be intimidated by Mrs. Islam and her sons. In the last scene, when she skates in her sari, Nazneen begins embracing cultural hybridity and her new identity. She is able to connect her past and her present and create an in-between, Third Space for herself.

3.3 Wagner's Identity Reconstruction Strategies in *Brick Lane*

In her article "Migration and the Creation of Hybrid Identity: Chances and Challenges", Wagner identifies four identity reconstruction strategies, namely the native foreigner, the nostalgic, the hybrid and the cosmopolitan. In this section, it will be explored what kind of strategy Nazneen, Chanu, Shahana, and Razia employ and how they navigate the experience of being a migrant.

3.3.1 Nazneen

At the beginning of the story Nazneen, can be characterized as a nostalgic type who has a strong connection to her origin culture and stays true to that culture even after arriving in the host country. This attitude of hers has multiple reasons. Firstly, her husband, because of cultural expectations, does not want her to go outside, because people will see her and talk about her. He also does not let her go to an English course to learn the language, which hinders her communication with people outside of her own culture. Moreover, Chanu wants her to only be friends with people whom he deems "respectable" (Ali 30), so she is not able, or allowed, to socialize with everyone and interacts mostly with other female Bengali immigrants. She is deeply religious and believes in fate at this stage of her development. But, after her affair with Karim, her going to community meetings, the influence of her daughters and her friend Razia, Nazneen slowly gets to know the host culture and starts negotiating between her home and host culture. She begins to build an identity that does not fully agree with her upbringing and the

expectations set on her. By rejecting Karim and his extremist tendencies and Chanu's decision to return to Bangladesh, she begins to reclaim her agency and assert her independence. Thus, she starts to combine elements of her host and origin culture and build her hybrid identity. She does not fully assimilate, but finds a balance between staying loyal to her past and building a strong, empowered self. Through this approach, she is able to benefit from the strengths of both cultures. Even if she experiences alienation and ambivalence, she is able to form a new, in-between identity for herself. Thus, at the end of the narrative, the "new" Nazneen can be categorized as the hybrid type who goes ice skating in her sari because in England, "[y]ou can do whatever you like" (Ali 494).

3.3.2 Chanu

Nazneen's husband Chanu clearly aligns with the nostalgic type who is filled with longing for his native country and refuses new influences of the host country. He is always trying to educate his children about Bangladeshi history and culture:

'You see,' said Chanu, still supine, holding his book above his face, 'all these people here who look down at us as peasants know nothing of history.' He sat up a little and cleared his throat. 'In the sixteenth century, Bengal was called the Paradise of Nations. These are our roots. Do they teach these things in the school here? Does Shahana know about the Paradise of Nations? All she knows about is flood and famine. Whole bloody country is just a bloody basket case to her.' (...) '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.' (Ali 187)

He gets frustrated when his daughter Shahana shows disinterest in these topics. He thinks that his daughters are missing "[a] sense of history" (Ali 187). So, Chanu tries to recreate Bangladeshi values at home, through teaching them about their roots and banning the use of English.

During a conversation with Mrs. Azad, Chanu speaks of "a deeper tragedy" behind every immigration success (Ali 115). When asked to elaborate on what he means, he answers:

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. (Ali 114)

Chanu highlights that migrants pay a big price for what others perceive as success. They are faced with struggles of adaptation and risk losing their identity and cultural ties. So, migrants have to carry the burden of negotiation between two cultures and countries. Even if they try to integrate, they may face exclusion and alienation because of the racist system in the country. Trying to navigate all these factors is a huge load of emotional labor for the person who migrated.

Chanu tells that he has promised himself two things: “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” (Ali 36-37). So, during the narrative, the reader follows Chanu’s struggle and eventual failure to do so. He came to England with big hopes and dreams:

When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big dreams. When I got off the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a red carpet laid out for me. I was going to join the Civil Service and become Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.'. (Ali 36)

During a visit by Dr Azad, Chanu and he talk about a “disease that afflicts” their people.

'I call it Going Home Syndrome’ (...) 'It is natural,' said Chanu. 'These people are basically peasants and they miss the land. The pull of the land is stronger even than the pull of blood.' (...) 'They don't ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here.'. (Ali 34)

Chanu criticizes this behavior in the early stages of the novel and does not see himself as one of these people, because he counts on his promotion: “The thing is, with the promotion coming up, things are beginning to go well for me now. If I just get the promotion confirmed then many things are possible” (Ali 34).

But, after being faced with the realities of being a migrant, he “found things were a bit different”:

These people here didn't know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate, and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only the lice on their heads. (Ali 36)

So, Chanu worked hard and wanted to get integrated, but he realized that racism is deeply ingrained in the system. He also regards himself as superior to other migrants who are less educated. Chanu believes that he deserves better because of his diploma “So much hard work, so little reward” summarizes his experience. Chanu does not get the promotion he wants. Thus, when his dreams get shattered, he gets disillusioned and realizes that his expectations are unrealistic. Towards the end of the narrative, he understands that he will not find what he is looking for in England:

Sometimes I look back and I am shocked. Every day of my life I have prepared for success, worked for it, waited for it, and you don't notice how the days pass until nearly a lifetime has finished. Then it hits you—the thing you have been waiting for has already gone by. And it was going in the other direction. It's like I've been waiting on the wrong side of the road for a bus that was already full. (Ali 322)

When he does not get the promotion, he becomes a taxi driver: “I have today become an employee at Kempton Kars, driver number one-six-one-nine” (Ali 210-211). While delivering the news, he also declares: “We are going home” (Ali 210).

For Chanu, not getting the promotion he wanted and becoming “driver number one-six one nine” is his ultimate failure (Ali 211). Thus, he thinks that by going back home, he can restore his dignity and live a life with pride.

Chanu also distances himself from the Bangladeshi community and sees himself as better than them. He defines them as “dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan” and “peasants” “[u]neducated” “[i]lliterate” “[c]loseminded” “[w]ithout ambition” (Ali 30). He claims not to look down on them, but comments: “If a man has only ever driven a rickshaw and never in his life held a book in his hand, then what can you expect from him?” (Ali 30). These comments show that Chanu looks at his landspeople in the same way that colonizers once did. This attitude of his makes it even harder for him to form relationships and develop a sense of belonging in England because he also isolates himself from his own people and wants to be accepted by the ones who do not consider him. When forming relationships, his first condition is that the people should be respectable, so he only has one friend who is Dr. Azad who he deems respectable enough to socialize with.

Chanu's relationship with his host country is marked by ambivalence. He aspires to be like the British and is proud of his education:

'I have a degree in English Literature from Dhaka University. I have studied at a British university – philosophy, sociology, history, economics. I do not claim to be a learned gentleman. But I can tell you truthfully, madam, that I am always learning.' (Ali 114)

He also claims that Dhaka University “is one of the best in the world” to show pride in his educational background (Ali 40-41). He has aspirations such as the work promotion and finishing his Open University course and he is proud of his many certificates that he frames and puts on the walls. Chanu shows a desire to connect with British culture and gain their acceptance: “I'm returning to my first love.' He held up his book. 'English literature at its finest.” (Ali 93). Yet, he feels rejected and treated unfairly by British society, so he feels disillusioned. While he sees himself as superior to other Bengali people, society treats them all the same. Chanu does not succeed at work in the way he wants to, for which he blames racism and cultural bias, so he tries to make sense of what he experiences:

'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. (Ali 40)

At one point, Chanu cites Warren Hastings, the first British governor-general of India, and his comments on Bengalis:

'Do you know what Warren Hastings said about our people?' He purred and exercised his face as he prepared the quotation. "'They are gentle, benevolent . . ." So many good qualities he finds. In short, he finds us "as exempt from the worst properties of human passion as any people on the face of the earth".' He waved the book in triumph. 'Do you think they teach this in the English schools?'. (Ali 188)

This again highlights his ambivalent attitude as he tries to draw validation about his own people from the same people he claims look down on them and are racist against them. He uses colonial praise to show his pride in his roots and to realize his wish for dignity in a society that marginalizes him. In Chanu's character, the burden of postcolonial migration can be observed.

Chanu uses this knowledge to show his daughters that they will be happy in Bangladesh and in line with his nostalgic character, he idealizes his home country: 'You see, when we go there, what will you lose? Burgers and chips and' – he waved at her legs – 'tight jeans. And what will you gain? Happiness' (Ali 352).

Chanu displays signs of mimicry. He imitates the colonizer and wants to gain their acceptance and thus, a superior status. He believes in the superiority of the English and thinks that if he is educated like them, he will be integrated and regarded as an equal. This is why he always emphasizes his degree in English literature and the fact that he is educated. But even if he tries to mimic the culture, he realizes that he will not be accepted in the way he wants, so he can be “almost the same, but not quite”, as Bhabha comments (86). There will always be some kind of difference between him and an English person and he will be placed inferior to him.

While he blamed the host country for his failure, there are also instances where he shows awareness of his own faults that hindered his progress:

All this time they thought I was rich. Why should I stay here 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 . . .' The smile vanished. 'I could be big. Big Man. That's how it happened.' He sighed and placed his hands atop his stomach. 'So when the begging letters come and I blame left and I blame right, what I should be blaming is this, right here.' He moved his hands up over his chest, to show how his heart, his pride, had betrayed him. (Ali 134-135)

In this passage, he talks about what he let his relatives think about him, which does not reflect the truth. Chanu's understanding of success is tied to how he is viewed in Bangladesh, showcasing his nostalgic tendencies. For him, London is just a temporary place to find success, to ultimately enjoy it in Bangladesh. But this introspection also shows that he realizes that his pride ultimately leads him to failure. Chanu is so fixated on his home country that he forgets to live life in London. One day, he gathers his family to explore London outside of his neighborhood and go on “the first holiday for twenty or thirty years” (Ali 293). After “[t]hirty or so years after he arrived in London, Chanu decided that it was time to see the sights” (Ali 291). His nostalgia causes him to be emotionally distant from his environment which leads him to be isolated and miss experiences he could have had in England. He admits that he has not made the best of his time in the host country: “I've spent more than half my life here,” said

Chanu, 'but I hardly left these few streets.' (...) 'All this time I have been struggling and struggling, and I barely had time to lift my head and look around'" (Ali 291). Thus, his migrant experience is marked by a disconnection from his environment. Instead of engaging with British society and culture, he remains fixated on Bangladesh. He realizes that he worked hard, trying to provide for his family while facing cultural dislocation and trying to preserve his and his family's roots to their origin, but he has failed to integrate, get the success he desired and achieve personal growth. Being so preoccupied with his home country prevents him from constructing an identity in the host society.

After having failed in England and deciding to go back to Bangladesh to search for success and restore his dignity, Chanu comes to a realization:

All these years I dreamed of going home a Big Man. Only now, when it's nearly finished for me, I realized what is important. As long as I have my family with me, my wife, my daughters, I am as strong as any man alive.'. (Ali 479)

He realizes that he has searched for happiness in the wrong places and ignored the important matters of life, such as his family. When Nazneen tells him she will not be going with him, he answers:

'I can't stay,' said Chanu, and they clung to each other inside a sadness that went beyond words and tears, beyond that place, those causes and consequences, and became a part of their breath, their marrow, to travel with them from now to wherever they went. (Ali 480)

This moment illustrates the sorrow that Nazneen and Chanu share and how their relationship is shaped by migration. At the end, Chanu's nostalgic dreams have collapsed and he realizes that a place in the world is not tied to physical locations, but the presence of his loved ones.

To sum up, Chanu is unsuccessful in England because he fails to combine English and Bangladeshi culture and does not think that he can form an in-between space for himself. He feels unhomely and so, he decides to return. He is "[u]nable to attain that in-between space of hybridity", as a result, he "yearns to return [to] his homeland, to his ties and bonds from which separation has not been possible" (Pourjafari and Vahidpour 689). Thus, even though Chanu realizes the drawbacks of the nostalgic strategy, he still cannot shift to being a hybrid and succeed like Nazneen.

3.3.3 Mrs Azad

Mrs Azad, the wife of doctor Azad, who is Chanu's friend, embodies the hybrid strategy of identity formation.

When Chanu talks about the tragedy of the immigrants, she answers:

'Why do you make it so complicated?' (...) '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. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes!'. (Ali 115).

Mrs Azad does not see their children adapting to Western society as a problem; she encourages it, as it can be observed in the way she raises her daughter. During Nazneen and Chanu's visit to the Azad family,

[a] girl walked in and stood with her hands on her hips in the middle of the room. She had inherited her mother's sturdy legs, but her skirt was shorter by a good few inches. She spoke in English. Nazneen caught the words pub and money. (Ali 113)

Even though she allows her daughter to act freely, Mrs Azad does not assimilate and reject her own culture:

'Listen, when I'm in Bangladesh I put on a sari and cover my head and all that. But here I go out 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.' She looked at Nazneen who focused on Raqib. '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,' she said, stabbing the air, 'is the tragedy.'. (Ali 116)

She code-switches between her two cultural belongings and knows how to negotiate and blend aspects of both home and host country. So, she occasionally wears a sari and eats curry, but she also refuses the sexist parts of her culture. She works and learns English; thus, she is an active member of British society. But she does not forget her roots and maintains elements of her

heritage. She also criticizes migrant women who do not learn the language and show no signs of integration. She rejects the tendency among migrants to blame society for being racist and attribute all difficulties they face to this. For Mrs Azad, hybridity is an empowering way to navigate migration. She regards the ability to adapt to a new culture as a strength and not something to be feared. Through her hybrid character, she is able to construct an identity where she has agency and the freedom to choose.

3.3.4 Razia

Razia, Nazneen's closest friend, is another character in the novel who employs the hybrid strategy to build her identity in a diasporic context. She is an important figure who shapes Nazneen and she is one of the most integrated and self-aware characters.

Similar to Mrs Azad, Razia displays cultural code-switching and a blending of both cultures.

She is pictured wearing "a Union Jack top over salwaar pants" two pieces of clothing that one would not picture together (Ali 230). Her style of clothing symbolizes a visual and symbolic combination of British and Bangladeshi culture.

Razia acquires a British passport, learns English and starts to work. Her own community gossips about her: "I hear what they are saying. Razia is a little touched. Crazy, crazy.' She clucked a little and made some crooning noises. ' "Razia is so English. She is getting like the Queen herself." "(Ali 231). She is aware of the criticisms she faces, but she ignores it and "[l]et[s] them talk" (Ali 231). She knows that people will gossip because she works, but she has a responsibility to be there for her children: "Will the community feed me? Will it buy footballs for my son? Let the community say what it will. I say this to the community.' And she flicked her fingers" (Ali 99). Even if people gossip about her and mock her, she shows confidence in owning her hybrid being and she does not submit to the pressures of her community.

She starts going to English classes and states her reason for learning the language as follows:

"Do you know why I'm going to learn English?' said Razia as she was leaving. 'So that when my children start telling dirty jokes behind my back, I'll be able to whip their backsides'" (Ali 76). This humorous explanation shows that Razia wants to stay connected to her children who grow up in a different environment than she did. Instead of fearing this, she adapts to the situation.

Razia is a practical person who does not romanticize her homeland and sees things for what they are “Tell me this,' she said with her oblique smile. 'If everything back home is so damn wonderful, what are all these crazy people doing queuing up for visa?’” (Ali 429). Nazneen observes that “[s]he never talked about going home” (Ali 429), while the other migrants around them are afflicted with the Going Home Syndrome as diagnosed by Mr Azad.

She comments on Chanu calling everything discrimination: “Ask him this, then. Is it better than our own country, or is it worse? If it is worse, then why is he here? If it is better, why does he complain?” (Ali 74). Razia is not living in the past like a nostalgic and questions such tendencies. She tells Nazneen that “[t]here are good ones, and bad ones. Just like us. And some of them you can be friendly with. Some aren't so friendly. But they leave us alone, and we leave them alone. That's enough for me” (Ali 75). Razia is also aware and values the advantages of living in England: “if you don't have a job here, they give you money. Did you know that? You can have somewhere to live, without any rent. Your children can go to school. And on top of that, they give you money. What would happen at home? Can you eat without working? Can you have a roof above your head?” (Ali 75). She knows that these opportunities are not present in Bangladesh, so instead of focusing only on the negative aspects, she is able to see the opportunities and positive sides of her host country.

Thus, Razia is a good example of the hybrid type as she can navigate two cultures and adapt to new forms of living while maintaining her heritage. This attitude of hers gives her wisdom and personal agency.

3.3.5 Shahana

Shahana, the teenage daughter of Chanu and Nazneen, is an example of a second-generation immigrant. She can be regarded as a native foreigner even though she was born in Britain because she refuses her Bangladeshi heritage. Her character development is marked by resistance and rebellion and a desire to integrate into the host society even at the cost of denying her origins, rather than a balance between cultures as shown by Nazneen and Razia.

While Chanu tries hard to teach his daughters about Bangladeshi culture, music and literature, Shahana resists this:

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 a face. She did not know and would not learn that Tagore was more than poet and Nobel laureate, and no less than the true father of her nation. Shahana did not care. (Ali 182)

It is clear that Shahana wants to distance herself from her culture and does not want to carry signs of her ethnic identity. She thinks that in order to be accepted, she has to abandon her roots. She has also internalized stereotypes about her culture (Töngür 563). This is shown in the scene where she is on the bus together with her family and says: “You'll stink the bus out,(...) 'I'm not sitting with you” (Ali 292).

This attitude of hers is alarming for Chanu: “She is only a child, and already the rot is beginning. That is why we must go” (Ali 184). But, “Shahana did not want to go back home” and she clearly shows this by running away from home the day they are supposed to go back to Bangladesh (Ali 182).

Chanu and Shahana illustrate the clash between the first and the second generation of migrants. While the first generation tries hard to cling to their cultural roots, the attitude of the second generation, who are born in the host country, differs. Torn between two cultures, the second generation tries to form an identity and find their place in the world, which may look different from their parents' expectations. Being born in England, Shahana does not have an emotional bond to Bangladesh and does not desire to learn and appreciate anything about the country. Chanu reacts to her behavior by cursing her and using violence: “Chanu called her the little memsahib and wore himself out with threats before launching a flogging with anything to hand. Newspaper, a ruler, a notebook, a threadbare slipper and once, disastrously, a banana skin” (Ali 182) and by threatening her: “Tell the little memsahib that I am going to break every bone in her body.' (...) 'I'll dip her head in boiling fat and throw her out of that window” (Ali 182). Chanu's nickname for Shahana, “memsahib”, is a term that was used in colonial India to refer to upper-class European women, so he sees her as trying to act like Westerners. When Chanu tries to use the computer, he realizes that Shahana knows more about it than him which frustrates him. She also corrects his English: “What is the wrong with you?” shouted Chanu, speaking in English. 'Do you mean,' said Shahana, ' "What is wrong with you?"' She blew at her fringe. 'Not "the wrong"' (Ali 203). Their relationship is filled with tension, so that Shahana declares: “I hate him. I hate him” (Ali 196). The UN Report on Women and International Migration states that “[w]hen the entire family migrates, mobility can lead to gender and intergenerational tensions. This is particularly the case when children adapt more quickly than

their parents to a new language and social system” (IV) which summarizes the relationship and cause of dispute between Shahana and Chanu.

Chanu forbids his daughters from speaking English at home, which Shahana regards as “his stupid rule” (Ali 195). But “[w]hen Chanu went out the girls frequently switched languages. Nazneen let it pass. Perhaps even encouraged it” (Ali 196). So, Nazneen lets her daughters enjoy more freedom and while Chanu hinders Nazneen’s and her daughter’s integration, she quietly facilitates their adaptation. When Shahana “begun to use moisturizer”, “refused to wash her hair with Fairy Liquid” and “wanted shampoo now”, it is Nazneen who hides money from Chanu to buy them for her daughter (Ali 209).

The quote “Shahana was only half-child now. Or rather she was sometimes all child, and sometimes something else. The most startling thing possible: another person” showcases her gradual transformation and maturity (Ali 184). She is in an in-between stage in her development in terms of age and cultural belonging. Her identity is in a transitional space and she is caught between her parents’ expectations and her desire to conform to British culture and form her own self. For Chanu, Shahana being “another person” with her own identity who refuses to conform to cultural norms is a big shock. This shows how migration creates distance within families and reshapes family dynamics and relationships.

Shahana’s declaration, “I didn’t ask to be born here” summarizes the struggles of many second-generation immigrants (Ali 183). Shanana is aware that she is stuck in a liminal, in-between space with expectations imposed on her from both sides. She struggles to find true belonging as she is regarded as too westernized for Bangladesh and the native community, but she is also seen as a foreigner and denied full acceptance in Britain. Shahana and her sister Bibi grew up in a cultural reality different from that of their parents, which Chanu in particular fails to see and accept.

3.3.6 Karim

Karim is another second-generation immigrant who struggles to construct his identity. He was born and raised in Britain and he “had never even been to Bangladesh. (...) Karim was born a foreigner. When he spoke in Bengali, he stammered” (Ali 450). At the beginning of the novel, he can be categorized within the hybrid type as his Western-style appearance indicates: “He wore his jeans tight and his shirtsleeves rolled up to the elbow”, [h]is hair. Razored short

against the skull” and he had a “gold chain around his neck” (Ali 212). But after experiencing racism, especially after 9/11, and getting politically active,

Karim had a new style. The gold necklace vanished; the jeans, shirts and trainers went as well. (...) Karim put on panjabi-pyjama and a skullcap. He wore a sleeveless fleece and big boots with the laces left undone at the top. (Ali 378)

He also “had begun to grow a beard soon after they became lovers. Now the hair on his face was the same length as the hair on his head. And he began to take religious instruction from the Spiritual Leader, the imported imam with the women's shoes” (Ali 302).

Karim, even though he never went to Bangladesh and does not speak Bengali, starts to display a performative ethnicity. He grows a beard and starts to wear traditional clothing, thus distancing himself from British culture. His hybridity starts to vanish. Karim, similar to other immigrants, feels stuck in an in-between state and tries to escape it by clinging to an imagined form of his ethnic identity. He starts to long for his origins, which shows elements of the nostalgic in his character. What Karim experiences is a “dual exclusion” from English culture and his Bangladeshi heritage, as he did not grow up there and cannot speak the language properly (Hoque 2). So, he searches for a different identity which is a spiritually oriented one. Hoque argues that Islam has become a significant unifying force, inspiring younger members of the Muslim diaspora to increasingly adopt religiously based identities (3). However, Karim is not authentic, because he tries to appear in a certain way even though his actions do not align, for example, he wants to be perceived as religious, while he engages in an affair with a married Muslim woman.

At the end of the novel, Karim gets disillusioned and experiences an identity crisis after his relationship with Nazneen ends and he does not achieve his political goals. So, Karim becomes radical, he decides to go to Bangladesh “[o]r he joined the caravan. That's what some people say” (Ali 487). Upon hearing these news, Nazneen has a vision which showcases the change in his way of living: “Karim in his jeans and white shirt, a thin gold chain at his neck and a bale of dresses over his shoulder; Karim in a mountain cave, surrounded by men in turbans wielding machine-guns” (Ali 488).

When Nazneen first meets Karim, she thinks that he has something “she and Hasina and Chanu sought but could not find. The thing that he had and inhabited so easily. A place in the world” (Ali 266).

But after getting to know him and seeing the sudden changes in his identity, it becomes clear that “Karim did not have his place in the world. That was why he defended it” (Ali 450-451).

In his character, the instability and internal conflicts common to hybrid identities can be observed. Wagner states what Karim experiences as follows:

The migrant “hybrid” won’t feel anywhere at home and he won’t be accepted as fully native, but will have mixed feelings in both cultures: of native and of foreigner. Due to the lack of a complete affiliation, not feeling anywhere fully understood, and due to the often change of perspective, and of (...) the pressure of adapting, this type of migrant is risking to develop interior conflicts, anxiousness and instability. (245)

3.4 Hybridity

The notion of hybridity is an important element of migration literature present in *Brick Lane*. Nazneen, with the influence of her new environment, experiences an identity shift throughout the narrative. The adaptation process and creation of a mixed, fluid identity that Nazneen undergoes are core concerns of migration writings. In *Brick Lane*, elements of both organic and intentional hybridity can be detected. Her transformation happens gradually, she goes through different stages, including her domestic struggles, internal questionings, her interactions with her environment and community, the experience of motherhood and her relationship with Karim, until a hybrid character is formed. This gradual, realistic shift aligns with Moslund’s understanding of organic hybridity. However, there are also traces of intentional hybridity and what Moslund calls “celebratory readings” as *Brick Lane* actively and consciously foregrounds hybridity as a central theme and symbol. Nazneen’s inner and cultural conflicts and thus, her in-betweenness, are highlighted. Language, dress, food and religion as markers of one’s identity and culture are also questioned and hybridized, observable in second-generation characters such as Shahana and in the end, when Nazneen goes ice-skating in her sari.

The ending scene of the novel paints an image of hybridity. Nazneen is brought ice skating, but thinks that “you can’t skate in a sari”, to which Razia answers: “This is England,’ she said. ‘You can do whatever you like’” (Ali 494). The ending that is supposed to illustrate the possibility of multicultural, hybrid being in England for Nazneen is criticized by Chakravorty who labels it as a “vision of a hybrid utopia” and “deeply escapist” (506; 524). Moreover, she comments that “[t]he irony of the novel’s ending is that, in the final moment, it seems to leave aside the biopolitics of race and enforced domesticity that it otherwise highlights as impediments to

Nazneen's easy acculturation to England" (Chakravorty 506). Thus, the hybridity portrayed at the end is seen as superficial and ignorant of social realities. Thus, "a Bangladeshi woman skating in a sari can only be seen as a parody of migrant assimilation" (Chakravorty 506).

Her final decision to stay in London while Chanu moves back to Bangladesh is a key moment in asserting her hybrid being. Her rejection of Karim and starting to work, which makes her financially independent, are also affirmations of her hybrid identity. While she does not obey her husband and moves back "home", she also does not simply assimilate into British society. Instead, she positions herself in-between. Even if her transformation happens in an organic, gradual way, the narrative frames this decision as a powerful act of hybrid becoming, which aligns with intentional hybridity.

To conclude, Nazneen's experience with migration is one of empowerment: "In the process of international migration, women may move away from situations where they live under traditional, patriarchal authority to situations where they are empowered to exercise greater autonomy over their own lives" (United Nations III), which is exactly what her story narrates.

CHAPTER 4: THE ANATOLIAN BLUES TRILOGY

The *Anatolian Blues Trilogy* consists of the three novels *The Blacksmith's Daughter* (2005; trans. 2021), *52 Factory Lane* (2011; trans. 2022), and *A Light Still Burns* (2017; trans. 2023). The story traces the life of Gül, a woman born in a village in Anatolia who marries and moves to Germany together with her husband Fuat. Their motives for migrating are “work and money and opportunities” and “[s]o we can buy more things, so we can have our own bit of this world” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 64).

Through writing a story about a Turkish migrant and her family, Özdoğan saves the story of a generation that came to Germany in the 1960s in order to improve their economic situation and build a better life, from being forgotten and preserves it in the collective memory of humanity (Hofmann 157). His narrative also invites the reader to reflect on the gains and losses that arise with the change of country and culture (Hofmann 157). Özdoğan's novel is free from “the clichés of conventional orientalism” and he “does not show the Turkish culture of origin of the migrants as problematic, backward or inhuman, but as a specific manifestation of a life oriented towards traditions and communities” (157). Thus, the author “‘normalizes’ the image of the Turkish woman” and “he brings the foreign Muslim-Turkish woman closer to German readers” (159). The author also illustrates the “double isolation” faced by migrants: “on the one hand, a distancing from the collective that contributed to the creation of the individual's identity in the ‘homeland’, and on the other, a foreignness of memories and traditions that take on a constitutive character for the host society” (Hofmann 159). The portrayal of this struggle gives German readers the chance to get to know the experience of minorities in their country and leads to a “‘normalization’ of the novel's realm of experience, which is foreign to the German recipients” (Hofmann 160). While “Gül's world may be foreign to German readers, (...) Gül's search for a life worth living certainly isn't”, so this novel shows the creation of a “new identity and a new collective memory for German society in the twenty-first century” (Hofmann 168).

4. 1 Gül's Migratory Experience and Identity Formation

Fuat's decision to move to Germany is tied to economic necessity:

'I'm going to go to Germany. There's good money to be made there.' (...) I'll save what I make there and when I come back, I'll open my own business here.' (...) But you've got to have capital; you've got to spend money to make money. And we've got none.' (Özdoğan, "The Blacksmith's" 271)

After he moves, he convinces Gül to come there for one year so that they can save more money. But, the narrator foreshadows that this will not be the case and their lives will change forever because of their move:

They won't have saved enough for a very long time, not for years – and when he does have his own house built in the end, one with European toilets, a bathtub and central heating, in the middle of the town where he grew up, they will almost have forgotten they wanted to move back to Turkey. They will have taken their daughters over to Germany years earlier, only for them to grow up there, go to school there, get married and have children. They will have postponed their return to an undetermined future date so often that they themselves no longer believe in it, until they finally admit they will probably always stay in Germany, close to their children and grandchildren. (Özdoğan, "The Blacksmith's" 274)

Both Gül and Nazneen's decision to migrate is tied to their husbands, which is the norm for women who "often migrate officially as dependent family members of other migrants or as a future spouse of someone in another country" (United Nations III).

4.1.1 Marriage

The female protagonists' decisions to marry are tied to the expectations imposed on them. Nazneen has no say in the decision process of her marriage and accepts the partner her father chooses for her, even though she finds him unattractive and old. Gül is given the opportunity to choose her husband. Her father tells her that she does not have to accept marriage proposals: "You don't have to. Even if they come another 100 times, you can say no a 100 times more" (Özdoğan, "The Blacksmith's" 184). Fuat comes to ask for her hand twice. At first, she rejects him, but the second time she accepts, saying:

‘Maybe it’s my destiny.’ ‘He’s certainly not a bad man. He has a job, he’d be able to feed you, he’s capable. Then again, he walks on the backs of his shoes.’ There is a pause. ‘Do you really want to?’ the blacksmith asks. ‘Yes.’ ‘Really?’ ‘Yes.’ When Gül wakes up the next morning, she still wants to. Maybe it’s preordained. That’s why Fuat came twice. (Özdoğan, “The Blacksmith’s” 184)

She justifies her decision by thinking:

And what is there for her at home? She makes no money. Even if there’s enough for soup every morning in winter, there’s not enough money to support that many children. Melike wants to go to high school. And Gül wouldn’t be far from home; Fuat isn’t a stranger, he’s already family. She will have to marry sooner or later. What else is she supposed to do? Sooner or later, everyone gets married. Or they wither at home and get funny looks in the street. Fate. She said yes for some reason, last night she said yes for some reason. And it felt right. Didn’t it?. (Özdoğan, “The Blacksmith’s” 184)

So, Gül “wanted to leave her father’s house to make it easier for her sisters, so that there would be one less mouth to feed. Fuat is her stepmother’s younger brother. She knew him and thought it would be easier for her to be with someone who wasn’t a stranger”. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 44). Her decision is not made out of love or desire, but because she feels obligated to say yes to him. Gül “has never learned to demand anything for herself” (Hofmann 160). Even when she is given the opportunity to choose, she puts other people’s needs before herself. This altruistic behavior of hers leads her to live a life that is directed by others. Her decision to marry him also shows her submission to fate and her fatalistic worldview (Gögebakan 182). Nazneen has the same attitude towards life which changes in the course of the narrative. Gül agrees to marry Fuat to make life easier for her family. Instead of prioritizing her happiness and exercising free will, she gives up her freedom and is willing to suffer so that others can have it better than her. Her sister Melike has recognized this character trait of her sister: “You always do what other people want and then you’re sad”, she says to Gül (Özdoğan, “The Blacksmith’s” 112). She interprets her decision to marry her husband as fate and even if she has other alternatives, she does not consider them (Elste 242).

4.1.2 First experiences in Germany

In the beginning of *52 Factory Lane*, Gül arrives in Germany. The first impression of Germany is that “[i]t’s quiet. Much quieter than Gül had imagined”, in contrast to

Istanbul, a noisy city where everyone seemed to have something to do, where the voices of street vendors mingled with screeching train brakes, the braying of a donkey with the rattle of a carriage overtaken by a car. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 5)

Gül feels disoriented when she is at the train station: “At the stations where she’d had to change, she’d been afraid of not finding the right train and getting lost in some unfamiliar place” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 5). This fear reflects her broader fear of losing direction in her life and having to navigate unfamiliar social and cultural systems in a country foreign to her. The train station is a liminal space; she is in Germany, but only physically, she has not arrived there mentally yet. Gül is positioned between Türkiye, her place of origin that symbolizes familiarity, belonging and tradition, and Germany, which is her destination marked by modernity, newness, and unfamiliarity. According to Bhabha, hybridity begins to emerge in such moments filled with disorientation and ambivalence.

When she arrives at home, Gül “pulls her feet up on the stool and leans against the wall; there’s a small mirror above the sink. Gül gets up to look at herself. She still looks exactly like she did in Turkey, but she doesn’t feel the same. The feeling inside her is bigger than the image in the mirror. Perhaps that’s why she feels like such a stranger” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 7). Gül is experiencing alienation and the feeling of unhomeliness in this scene. She is in her new home, but instead of giving her comfort and a sense of familiarity, it becomes a place of estrangement. She feels uncanny as she looks the same, but feels different. She experiences the hardships of migration, having to define one’s selfhood in a new environment.

This scene mirrors a scene in *Brick Lane*, where Nazneen looks at herself in the mirror and questions her self-image: “But she went to the mirror and stared hard at her serious face, the wide cheeks and big forehead and the stubby-lashed, close-set eyes, and wondered for a while about what she saw” (Ali 418). Both question the image they see in the mirror and register a change in themselves.

4.1.3 Language

While Nazneen is not allowed to go to an English course and learn the language of her host society, Gül attempts to learn German on her own: “She takes out the newspaper clippings she collected over the past few weeks and puts them on the table. She’s been using these clippings to learn the German words for door, day, week, time, street, apple, house, key, breakfast, lunch, bed, chair, table, trousers and skirt” which were “[w]ords she found difficult to remember”

(Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 8). Learning the host country's language is a significant step towards integration. The International Organization for Migration states that “[t]o ease their integration, women migrants need recognition and support. Their first challenge is to overcome the language barrier: the second is to win acceptance in their country of destination (8). Nazneen is denied overcoming the first barrier, and Gül tries to overcome it on her own. She befriends Rafa, the son of her Spanish neighbors: “Rafa teaches her German words. The words for stick and stone, for skin and bone, for head and heart, for pen and paper, and many more” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 9). But, this is short-lived, because [a]fter five days or so, Gül realises Rafa has passed on all the words he knows” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 9).

Gül thinks that “eyes and real life helped where language was not enough” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 8) acknowledging that even if she does not know and understand the language fully, she can still manage to connect with the people around her and make herself understood through eye contact, gestures and interaction. So, she does not confine herself to total isolation because she does not know the language, but understands that she can build connections to some extent without knowing German.

Her struggles with the language are portrayed in a scene where she buys a game for her children, but they cannot play the game properly because of the language barrier:

she tries to make sense of the German instructions. There are instructions in Spanish – Rafa could have read those – and in Italian – for Suzan to read – but none in Turkish. The German is too complicated for Gül, and she thinks: It’s for children – can’t they write it in a way that children will understand? But it’s probably her fault; she still can’t speak enough German to understand a simple game. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 64)

While instructions are available for Spanish and Italian, there are none for Turkish. Gül blames herself for not learning the language and her inability to teach her kids the game leads to a moment of internalized failure.

4.1.4 Socializing

When it comes to socializing, Gül and her husband Fuat stay within the Turkish community living in Germany: “Fuat and Gül do go out on Saturdays and Sundays, to meet up with others who have come from Turkey. There aren’t any Turks living on their street, but there are a good fifty of them in the area. They’re often young men, like Fuat; some are unmarried, others have left their wives and children behind in Turkey” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 10). When the

couple move to Factory Lane, they have regular meetings with other Turkish families like them where “they’re all together like they were back then in Turkey” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 47). A similar sentiment is observable in *Brick Lane* where Chanu and Nazneen befriend Bangladeshi people in their area. This pattern is widespread in diasporic communities that feel isolated both geographically and socially. So, they seek out familiarity by socializing with people who share the same cultural origin and the same diasporic experience as them. These meetings provide a moment free from feeling alien and out of place. Migrants find comfort and emotional relief in these gatherings and through connection, their loneliness eases and they are provided with a sense of belonging. However, only forming relationships with people from the same home country can separate them from their host society.

Migrants are seeking connections with people who share the same struggles as them:

Gül is glad of the woman’s words, partly because they’re distracting her from her own thoughts, and partly because the woman is in the same boat as her. Not feeling alone, knowing there are others forced to see the world from the same standpoint as you: that’s what makes you feel alive. Decades later, Gül will say: ‘This internet thing is a good invention. You can always find fellow sufferers.’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 53)

Gül feels empowered when she hears that other people have similar experiences to her. Thus, shared experience has a healing power for migrants.

Socializing with other female migrants contributes to Gül’s identity transformation as she learns about the lives and experiences of other people and she also learns the art of reading people:

It’s at the gatherings on Factory Lane that Gül first really grasps what Fuat meant when he said her time here was her version of military service. She meets women from different regions in Turkey and hears about their unfamiliar customs, which astound and sometimes even horrify her. She becomes well versed in telling the different accents apart, and it’s here that she learns to properly recognise envy and resentment, treachery and deceit. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 47-48)

Thus, Gül’s migration is not just a change in locality; it is a rite of passage for her where she acquires knowledge about real life, herself, and others.

4.1.5 Working

Gül's motive for coming to Germany is to work, earn money and build a better future. But her reality is one of isolation and separation from her children, which dissatisfies her. So, she tells Fuat that she wants to work: 'I came here to work,' Gül says. 'That was the reason. Not to spend all my time sitting here in the kitchen, so far away from my children. We wanted to earn money.' (...) 'I want a proper job,' Gül says" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 14-15). By working, she wants to reshape her reality and make the sacrifice and emotional pain of being far away from her children worth it. Without working, she is facing all these hardships, but with no return, so by earning money, her struggles will have meaning. She asserts her desire in a direct way which shows early signs of agency. Fuat, who "knows his wife is a hard worker" (...) already has an idea of what Gül could do" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 15). Hence, "[t]wo days later, Gül finds herself at the conveyor belt of a chicken factory, plucking chickens for eight hours a day" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 15).

Nazneen and Gül's first acts of empowerment and freedom are related to working, so for them, working is a way to gain independence and achieve self-assertion. Thus, having a job becomes a path to having a voice, agency and independence, not just a way to make money.

Both characters feel obligated to take care of their sisters back home, even if their situation is not better than theirs. This shows that they take their role as a sister seriously and show female solidarity. While Nazneen is working from home, Gül works outside, which makes it easier for her to mix with German society. Both know how to sew and it becomes their source of income.

In the article *Sewing in the Lives of Immigrant Women*, the role of sewing in shaping identity among migrant women is emphasized. It is argued that this activity often supports women during transitional periods of immigration by helping them adapt to new environments (Boerema et al. 78). Research findings further indicate that sewing can create a meaningful sense of place and home, connecting the migrants' former and current residences while also preserving cultural traditions (Boerema et al. 79). This connection becomes visible in Gül's story, particularly when she begins sewing bras at the factory and recalls her early experience with a sewing machine back in Türkiye: "Gül thought of her first ever time at a sewing machine. She was thirteen years old and had left school early, and her father had sent her to Esra the dressmaker to help out" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 22). Sewing, according to the study, is often perceived by immigrant women not merely as employment but as an activity that allows them to navigate their new surroundings, re-establish stability, and preserve a sense of self

(Boerema et al. 83). This observation resonates with the journeys of both Gül and Nazneen, who pursue work opportunities as a form of agency. While Nazneen depends solely on sewing for financial independence, Gül expands her efforts by taking on multiple forms of employment.

During her work, Gül gets called: “ ‘Quick, quick, quick, an inspection!’ Herr Mehl says, dragging Gül away” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 17) and “Gül has to hide in a big box that she only fits into if she draws her knees up to her chin. She’s curled up so tightly that she can’t even see how many hands are covering her with plucked chickens” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 17). In this passage, the dehumanizing parts of Gül’s experience as a migrant are depicted. As an undocumented worker, she is forced to hide during a raid, which leaves an emotional toll on her: “‘About twenty minutes I spent there, hardly daring to breathe, worrying they might see the steam coming out of my mouth’” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 18). Spivak asks if the subaltern can speak. In this scene, the answer is no; Gül is being pushed and degraded without being given a chance to speak. But Gül does speak and stands up for herself when she tells Fuat that she is not going back: “‘I don’t want to go back there,’ (...) ‘Who knows when the next raid will be, and I don’t want to get pushed around police stations and courtrooms half-frozen to death. I’m not going back there!’” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 18). Fuat answers that she does not have a work permit and can’t choose where she works, but after seeing how serious she is “Fuat nods. Perhaps her last words sounded determined enough” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 18). Here, Gül does not submit to the will of her husband and firmly states her wishes. So, she shows resistance and asserts her agency. Fuat’s acknowledgment showcases that Gül is beginning to reshape the power dynamic in their relationship by voicing her desires.

Gül’s second job is at the dressmaking factory, where she arrives late because she could not find the way:

She had been walking along the same road for twenty minutes before she decided to turn back. She felt hot and her breathing was going faster than she was. She was confused; she couldn’t explain what had happened. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 21)

She is constantly haunted by the fear of getting lost, so she does not want to use the toilet, because “she might not find her way back to the hall or she might get lost on the way there” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 23). These instances depict the everyday struggles of migrants who have to navigate life in a country unfamiliar to them.

Despite the hardships, Gül tries to stay positive:

if it weren't for the noise of over a hundred machines, if it weren't for her worrying dream, if it weren't for her shame at arriving late, her fear of perhaps not finding her way home – it might almost have been pleasant. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 22)

Working is not just a means of earning money, it also introduces Gül to the German society and culture:

Standing outside the toilet stalls, Sonja made two sounds at once: a low *Aaah* from her mouth and a loud *Pff* from her guts. Gül stared at her in shock. She'd never heard an adult fart with such lack of inhibition. It was one of those things that simply weren't done. You weren't supposed to cross your legs in the presence of elders, smoke in front of them, or return borrowed plates and bowls empty to friends and neighbours. Women weren't to curse, at least in mixed company, or go out in the street half-naked, and you weren't supposed to break wind in public. Sonja laughed when she saw the face Gül was pulling. 'Luft,' she said, slapping her abdomen, 'It's just air, you have to let it out.' (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 23)

Gül experiences a cultural shock and understands that the cultural codes she has learned in Türkiye do not apply in Germany. Modes of behavior that are seen as taboo or impolite back home are normal in her host country.

The protagonist had learned to sew when she was young, so with her experience, she is the fastest worker which pleases her boss: “We do piecework here, which means you can earn a lot of money. Sonja's very pleased with you, she told me to say so. We can always use good workers like you” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 24). But on payday, Gül realizes that she is being paid less than everyone else:

Once they've been paid, the women stand around chatting and counting their pay. 'There are four other Turkish women working in this hall,' Nermin had explained to her. Now Gül compares her wages with theirs. And though she thought she would get the most money because she'd sewn the most bras, it turns out she has the least. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 26)

First, she doubts herself: “Maybe I've miscounted, she tells herself, even though she's counted three times. Perhaps you need to have worked here for longer first, or perhaps there's something else I've missed” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 26). But then, Gül reluctantly decides to ask

for the reason she got paid less, even though she “feels uneasy, like she’s demanding something that’s not rightfully hers” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 27). The answer she gets is as follows:

You’re working here off the books. You don’t have a contract like the others, you don’t have a work permit. He says they can’t pay you like they do the other workers. They’re taking a risk by having you work here. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 27)

Again, Gül is being exploited and underpaid because of her legal status. She is also excluded from rights such as labor protection, she cannot demand equal pay or report abuse without risking unemployment or even deportation. So, she is unprotected and paid unfairly, but still, her boss frames it as if they were doing her a favor by letting her work there and “taking a risk”.

At home, she tells Fuat that she does not want to work there:

They’re paying me less because I don’t have a work permit. I spent four days sewing more bras than anyone else in the factory, and I got the least money. I’m not a mug. (...) ‘They’re just using me, I don’t want to go back.’ (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 28)

Fuat, however, is satisfied with the money: “But that’s good money,” says Fuat, counting the notes and coins, then slipping them in his pocket” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 28). Fuat makes it clear that she has to work and that he does not care about her feelings:

‘Oh I see, using you, are they? What else are they supposed to do with you? Night after night I work at that factory, I never get any proper sleep, all of us here are grinding away like oxen. It’s not like it is in Turkey, where you can coast along and have a natter and a glass of tea. It’s not a funfair here – you have to work.’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 28)

Even if Fuat does not take her seriously, Gül shows that she will not be passive, but seek her rights and voice her dissatisfaction.

When it comes to employment, Gül and Nazneen are both working, but their husbands are taking their money and counting it as theirs. When Gül’s sister asks if they can support her financially until she finishes university, she promises to do so: “ ‘Of course,’ Gül says, wondering how she’ll pull it off’ ” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 57). Even though she also contributes to the home fund and is even more careful than Fuat, who is overspending and gambling, she knows that he will resist this request of hers: “Fuat manages the money and he’ll say, ‘Don’t we have enough to worry about without funding your sister’s slovenly student lifestyle in Istanbul? She probably spends her time cavorting in the streets, getting into fights

with the police, that charming little sister of yours. That's what you get with these left-wing ideas: they make people lazy. And you're expecting us to support that, are you? You want us to encourage these people, do you?' " (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 57). Fuat is controlling Gül financially and dismisses her right to spend her own money in the way she wants. So, back in Germany, Gül sticks "to a tight budget to make sure there's a bit left over for Melike at the end of the month" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 61). Fuat and Gül argue about the housekeeping budget she is given:

She and Fuat have spent hours discussing how much money she needs for food, clothes, two children, school things for Ceyda, washing-up liquid, cleaning cloths, and all the other things she reeled off to persuade her husband to give her more. Most he dismissed with a wave of his hand: 'Those odds and ends don't cost anything.' (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 61)

Fuat ignores Gül's needs, which frustrates her: "But everything costs something, especially in a country where you can hardly get anything on tick, let alone haggle for it. If something costs ten marks and Gül only has nine left or even nine marks eighty, she can't buy it" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 61). While she hesitates to ask Fuat for twenty pfennings which "might start a row", Fuat is reckless with his spendings: "Fuat would happily drink or gamble away twenty pfennings faster than Gül could say 'Just twenty pfennings.'" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 61). "Fuat insists on Gül getting by with the amount they've agreed", but "he's constantly treating his friends and had nothing better to do in Turkey than draw attention to himself with generous rounds of food and drink" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 61-62).

When they were in Türkiye and Gül earned a small amount of money by sewing, she "gives [it] to her husband, who sometimes simply pockets it and sometimes sticks in the cardboard box, which will never be full again. As the man of the family, Fuat manages the money, investing it in games of chance or alcohol. But he makes sure there's always enough to eat, enough for clothes and shoes, soap and razors for the shop." (Özdoğan, "The Blacksmith's" 268). When the mother of Yunus, a friend of the family, gets sick, he has to go to Türkiye immediately, but he does not have the money to buy a plane ticket. So, the community sticks together and they raise money to buy it for him and "Gül put some money in too" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 69). Gül, who has a strict budget, had to figure out how to help out her friend in need:

My husband's turned me into a calculator, she thought to herself. He's so stingy at home that I have to go back and forth over the numbers in my head, just like he does. But once

she's contributed her little sum, she discovers that Fuat handed over 100 marks without a moment's hesitation. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 69)

This scene shows the solidarity of the Turkish diaspora in Germany. However, it also reveals the unequal power dynamics in Gül's relationship. While she has to calculate and stress over the money she will give to her friend, Fuat has authority over their money and can contribute 100 marks without thinking about it. So, while both partners earn money, Gül has a subordinate role when it comes to financial matters. While Fuat controls the money and spends it recklessly, Gül has to perform the mental labor of budgeting. Fuat likes to brag and show off, but "he's a real scrooge inside his own four walls" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 62).

4.1.6 Food

When people migrate, their "culinary practices and food habits travel with them" (Oussedik 55). Food also serves as an important symbol of ethnic identity, allowing migrants to maintain a sense of belonging and reinforce their connection to their homeland (Abbotts 1; 3). So, food plays an important role for Fuat and Gül. They still try to get used to the cultural differences, but experience difficulty in adapting to German food:

Gül can't help that Fuat doesn't like the food, but she feels guilty all the same. She's not that keen on it either, but she doesn't know what to do about it. She came here with a cardboard suitcase because they have everything here, and yet there are lots of things she can't buy. Where they live, there's not a single butcher who sells lamb, let alone garlic sausage like sucuk. She seldom finds garlic anyway, and she gets the feeling it's sold by the clove, not the kilo. She rarely finds fresh chillies, and the grocer has weights as small as 100 grammes by his scales. There's no pepper paste, but they do have tomato paste in the kind of tubes used for shaving cream or toothpaste in Turkey. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 28)

At the beginning of the story, Gül was told, "You can get everything there, they'd said – her mother-in-law, her stepmother, the neighbours – and it's all much better than here" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 5), but this turns out to be an idealized perception of Germany. Especially in terms of food, Gül is not able to find what she is looking for, so whenever she visits Türkiye, she fills her bags with ingredients she cannot find in Germany:

This time, Gül won't fly back with a cardboard suitcase, having let those around her cluelessly insist that they'll have everything she needs in Germany. She'll take back

some köfter, pepper paste, red lentils, bulgur, and some tarhana – a seasoned, dried dough used to make soup. She'll be twenty kilos over the baggage limit, and Fuat will make a fuss. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 60)

On vacation, she and Fuat also eat all the food they longed for in Germany:

"Gül eats walnuts and köfter, chewy treats made from thickened grape juice. She can't get enough: she eats and eats from morning to night, all the things she's been missing for so long. (...) Fuat has filled out too, spending every evening after dinner sitting with a lavish platter of cold dishes, treating himself to several rakıs and happily waxing lyrical about whisky and Coke, never tiring of mentioning that he'd usually be at work in Germany at this hour. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 59)

4.1.7 Migration Stories- Reality and Representation

When she is back in Türkiye, people are curious about their new life:

Everyone asks Gül what life's like over there and whether it suits her. Gül doesn't lie. She tells them what she's seen and experienced, but she leaves out the hours spent in the kitchen and the many tears she's cried; the pain and homesickness are all but forgotten now. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 56)

Her private experience and what she tells publicly differ from one another. She tries to conform to the narrative that is expected of her and leaves out the hardships people do not want to hear about. She tells stories about Germany, such as details about fruit pricing and tidiness of the streets:

'It's all a bit confusing,' she says. 'The money, the prices of things. When they sell pears, there's a sign that says how much they cost. And then you buy a kilo, but you pay double that. In time, I realised they were weighing them in half kilos, and they put the price for half a kilo on the sign.' People love hearing these kinds of stories, and the stories about how clean the streets are. They like to picture tarmac and tidiness when they think of Germany. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 56).

But, Gül and Fuat also hide some truths regarding the exhaustion they face at work:

Gül neglects to mention the state of Factory Lane, and a few other things too, and even Fuat doesn't warn them: *Folks, stay here! They'll have you bent over 'til your back's*

crooked; they time your breaks to the minute, and they've no time for excuses or leisurely chit-chat. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 57).

Gül talks about the clean streets of Germany, but “Factory Lane, where they now live, isn’t tarmacked and has no pavement or paving stones” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 41). So, “[t]he water pools into brown puddles when it rains” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 41). Gül is aware of the disconnection between reality and the narrated version of Germany: “The neighbours listen to her when she talks about Germany, and it sounds better in her stories than what she sees when she’s really there, but she doesn’t know how else to tell the stories” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 73).

The narrator says that “Fuat much prefers to take his old friends along to look for a plot of land, enthusing about all the creature comforts he’ll have in his new home” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 57). Like Chanu, who presents himself as a ‘Big Man’ with wealth to his relatives back home, Fuat boasts to his friends about his materialistic success. Both characters construct their identity based on a future vision where they become rich and own land in their home countries. While facing racism and inequality in their host cultures, they leave this out as a way to preserve their masculine pride. Publicly, they perform as successful men, even though they are marginalized workers in their respective countries.

4.1.8 Money

Gül and Fuat have opposing views when it comes to money. Fuat has big ambitions and wants to get rich and he thinks winning the lottery is the way to getting there:

Fuat believes in future good fortune, in winning the lottery or having a long lucky streak at cards. He believes in dividend payouts and interest. He often sits at the kitchen table, adding things up out loud. ‘If I won this or that amount at the weekend, then invested part of the money, bought a car, a plot of land in Turkey, laid foundations for a house, got on the property ladder... I could get whisky delivered by the crate. I could charter planes and arrange flights to Turkey – no trouble at all with a bit of capital – and in the summer holidays I could multiply that money by investing such-and-such an amount, budget in this or that much for expenses, such-and-such a percentage as a profit margin...’ . (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 25-26)

Fuat desires status and a luxurious life and his daydreams about the future are an escape from his current reality. But his aspirations are not only tied to materialism as Fuat wants to reclaim

his masculinity and power in a system where he feels invisible, objectified and like an outsider. His dreams are also tied to Türkiye, showing that he does not regard Germany as his home, but a temporary place to earn money at this point in the narrative.

Fuat describes his plans to become rich as follows:

‘I’m going to do a fifth one as well. It improves our odds. The more you play, the better your chances of winning big. It’s as simple as that. It’s not like poker. And money – money’s not something you can keep on hoarding, hoarding, hoarding; it doesn’t multiply like that. How do you think this country got so rich?’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 52)

In her mind, Gül answers his rhetorical question:

“Because people work hard, Gül could say. Because they don’t spend their time gambling, drinking whisky and Coke, and getting their moped fixed after crashing into the chicken coop and stopping the chickens from laying for four days in a row now. She could speak, but if she’s that clever she might as well write a book. Or keep her mouth shut”. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 52)

While Fuat thinks he will get rich by winning the lottery, Gül is more realistic. Gül’s worldview is shaped by hard and disciplined work and responsibility, in contrast to Fuat, who fantasizes about easy and instant success. Still, she does not speak her mind. Her internalized silencing is a result of her being undervalued and not listened to. Despite her awareness and rational thinking, she decides to stay silent in order not to challenge the male ego and avoid conflict.

Nazneen displays a similar attitude towards her husband. Chanu is constantly giving her lectures, talking about history, the promotion, and the problems of society, while Nazneen remains quiet most of the time. The female migrants silently observe their husbands and their delusions and seem more aware of social and economic realities that their husbands fail to see. Their internal responses are kept to themselves and they only rebel internally. Their silence is also a survival strategy in a place where they are dependent on their husbands.

4.1.9 Longing and Guilt

Gül’s migratory experience is filled with longing and feelings of guilt. When she first leaves her daughters in Türkiye and goes to Germany, she misses them and cannot wait to be united:

Five months to go, just five more months, then they'll fly to Turkey, and she'll see and hear her daughters, taste them and feel them – at last she'll have the scent of her children all around her. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 43).

She is always waiting for a letter from them: "Soon she won't have to prop herself up on the fence and wait full of yearning for the postman, like so many times in the past few months". (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 41).

When Gül is back in Türkiye, "[t]he browns of the plains soothe her tired eyes. Oh, how I've missed this, she thinks. Germany's brightest green isn't as warm as the dullest brown here" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 52). Even if the journey is tiring, "every time they arrive, their joy will outweigh the exhaustion" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 109).

Being in Turkey surrounded by family is Gül's definition of happiness:

For Gül, happiness is here right now, not somewhere up ahead. She spends time with her sisters and brother, chatting away; she can talk to her father every day again like she did as a newlywed; and her daughters are close by, roaming through the gardens of the summer houses all day with other children. Her life feels rich. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 72-73)

Gül has a strong connection to her home country and feels truly alive when she is there. While Germany appears cold to her, she finds emotional warmth in Türkiye.

Gül had to leave her two daughters, Ceyda and Ceren, in Türkiye before she came to Germany, so that she and Fuat could settle in before bringing their children. As a female migrant, Gül is plagued with guilt for being separated from her children: "The guilt is heavy and hot; it sits on top of Gül, like it's trying to crush her" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 58). Ward and Styles observe that migrant women often experience a deep sense of guilt resulting from their departure from their home country, particularly due to leaving behind parents and family. This emotional burden can significantly affect their overall well-being, as is evident in Gül's experience (Ward and Styles 11).

When Gül is united with her daughters at the airport, she hears Ceyda screaming: Mummy. But what she hears behind these words shows the depths of her guilt:

I've been here all alone, please don't ever leave me behind again, I need you, they don't look after me well enough here, I'm scared, Mummy. What did I do to make you go

away? Mummy, please never go away again. Mummy. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 55)

In that moment, “the world opens up, and she can’t find her footing” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 55). Gül has maternal responsibilities, but as a migrant who lives far away from her children, she feels as if she does not fulfill her role as a mother. She blames herself for not being present for her daughters and has an internal questioning:

There are so many kinds of longing. How could Gül tell which kind was in her little girl’s handwriting? There are so many kinds of longing. How could Gül not have heard which kind was in her daughter’s voice?. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 55)

Gül knows that her daughters have suffered in her absence and she tries to justify her decision to move away: “ ‘We went to that country for you, for your futures,’ she says. ‘We didn’t want you to suffer. We didn’t want to suffer either’ ” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 58). Even if Gül blames herself, it was Fuat who migrated in the first place and later convinced her to come, too:

‘Come,’ her husband had urged her. ‘Come to Germany and leave the children with my mum; they’ll be well looked after there. Come, we’ll work and earn money so our children will be better off than we were.’ What else could she have done? Did her heart not bleed that year and a half in Germany? Did it not bleed all the more when she heard those words? Did she do something no other mother would have done?. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 58)

The psychological and emotional cost of migration is high for Gül. Her role as a mother is fragmented: she is expected to care for her children by leaving them, and in doing so, she feels guilty for not being there for them. Even if Fuat asks her if she wants to come, the dynamics of their relationship do not allow her to refuse him. So, Gül follows him to Germany, but she is torn between being a mother who nurtures and takes care of her children and a migrant who has to work and earn money. Her roles are incompatible; she cannot be present for her children while being productive at work and contributing to the home budget. Thus, Gül experiences identity fragmentation under the pressures she is faced with.

Gül’s feelings of guilt are not solely linked to her separation from her daughters; she also carries a strong sense of remorse for leaving her father behind. According to Ward and Styles, such emotional distress is often shaped by cultural expectations that daughters, even in adulthood,

should maintain strong emotional connections with their families and take on caregiving responsibilities—often more so than sons. When migration disrupts this obligation, women may feel that they have failed in their duty, particularly when they are unable to care for aging parents or when their children grow up disconnected from grandparents. This sense of failure can lead to long-lasting guilt that continues to burden the migrant woman's conscience (Ward and Styles 10).

So, Gül has an emotional outburst when seeing her father, the blacksmith Timur (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 56). Her father represents comfort, stability and a non-patriarchal male figure in her life, so she deeply cares about him and is attached to him. Through migration, she is also cut off from the emotional strength and support her father gives her. Gül's embrace of him is not only a reunion, for a moment, she can let her emotions run freely and let go of her struggles with migration, motherhood and survival.

Even after Ceren and Ceyda join their family in Germany, Gül's longing does not stop:

Now she has her daughters with her, Gül's feelings of longing take a new direction. Almost all of their neighbours have framed black and white photographs in their sitting rooms, family photos of everyone together. (...) If only Gül had a photo like that, a photo like the ones other families have, a photo like a wide gateway onto all their memories, so she could believe she might once have lived in paradise (...) – just one photo, maybe that would quench the longing in her eyes. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 66-67)

Gül's longing does not stop when she is reunited with her daughters, because this time she misses the rest of her family in Türkiye. Her desire to have a photograph shows that she wants to be near them, to feel continuity and belonging. It is not just an image she longs for, but a version of reality where her family is not shaped by migration and rupture, but where everyone is close to each other. The absence of such a picture symbolizes her fractured belonging and displacement. Such an image would also serve as evidence to her memory and past.

Gül is always missing something. Even though she's finally been reunited with her daughters; even though the postman is glad she doesn't feel such pain when she doesn't get a letter; even though she has a job; even though the houses in their road belong to the woollen mill, which means the rent is low and they can save plenty of money; even though her father sometimes goes to the petition-writers outside the town hall to dictate long letters to her; and even though her father's typed words fill Gül's heart with joy, she's always missing something. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 63)

Looking at Gül's life from an outside perspective, everything seems to be going well; the family is reunited, they have a job, they are able to save money, and they are in contact with their relatives back home. Still, internally, Gül's self is fragmented and she lacks emotional fulfillment. This illustrates the condition of the migrant who never feels fully present, settled and at home.

Gül comes to the conclusion that "[s]he's missing those eighteen months with Ceyda and Ceren. And though she senses it's impossible, she tries her best to fill that gap (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 63). Having been separated from her daughters is an emotional cost that is irreversible for her. She knows that she cannot bring back the lost time and moments, still, she tries to fill that void through quality time, presence and care.

Gül's feeling of displacement relates to the unhomely moment where the domestic space that is supposed to provide intimacy, comfort and belonging becomes a place of anxiety as a result of the migratory experience. Even if her rent is low, she is surrounded by Turkish families and her own family is united, she still does not think of Germany as her home. The realities of her migrant status invade her private domain and she feels alienated and dislocated. When the familiar becomes unfamiliar and the borders between public and private life get blurred, the unhomely moment emerges which is what Gül experiences.

4.1.10 Struggle of the Children

It is not just the parents who struggle; the children also face the hardships of migration:

Ceyda comes home from school every day, sits down at the kitchen table, and looks out at the garden. There's a pen in her hand but she doesn't do any writing. 'What am I supposed to do?' she asks her mother. 'They write their letters differently, I don't understand a word, I sit there bored all day long.' (...) Of course Ceyda is disappointed. She has gone from being one of the first to learn to read and write, writing her own letters to her mother, to the bottom of her class. She can't even remember the teacher's name. But all the same, she has to go to school every morning. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 62)

This passage conveys the struggles that migrant children experience when transitioning into a new country and culture. Ceyda feels alienated at school because she cannot speak the language or even pronounce her teacher's name. This leads to a crisis in her identity and a questioning of her self-worth, particularly when contrasting her failure with her academic success in her

Turkish school. She feels out of place in a country where she is not able to communicate and that does not recognize her competence.

Nonetheless, Ceyda is glad that “she can be with her mother the rest of the time”, but “[s]till, she can’t help but worry that her mother might send her back at any moment” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 62). This showcases that even if Ceyda is reunited with her mother, she still feels insecurity and a fear of abandonment, which is caused by their earlier separation. Her anxieties reveal that the emotional trust and bond between mother and daughter is still not restored.

4.1.11 The Television

The television becomes a window to German society and language for the whole family: “Fuat, Gül, Ceren and Ceyda sit in front of the screen, and in the weeks that follow, they learn more German than they did in all the months before then” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 70).

While the family is physically in Germany, their interactions with the German society are limited because they mostly stay within Factory Lane and socialize with other Turkish families there. So, the television becomes their first exposure to the German language, culture and happenings in the country:

Before this, they had been a little trapped in their world, in the little sections of Germany that they’d come to know, but this big, heavy TV set opens a window onto an entire language and culture, right from their very own living room, albeit in black and white. The newsreaders tell them all about what’s happening across the country. And though they don’t always understand it all, sitting in the living room and watching TV takes them deeper into Germany than simply going out and participating in everyday public life. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 70)

The family creates a tradition where they watch a 20-minute Turkish programme that comes on Saturday afternoon called “Türkiye’den mektup, Letters from Turkey”. This is an important time for them and Gül “enjoys these moments when the television seems to be speaking just to them, and it’s only partly to do with the language being spoken” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 121). So, the television has a dual function for them: it connects them to both their home and host country. The German programmes facilitate their integration, while the Turkish programme links them to their origin and creates a sense of home:

Gül

simply sits there and breathes in the peace, the quiet that settles at the sound of the words. It's as though the rhythm and melody of her ancestors' language bring love into her living room, a love and connection to the rich soil of Anatolia; as though its brown earth is transported into the room along with the sounds, the scent of acacia trees and burnt cow manure, even if they only show pictures of Ankara and Istanbul, pictures of concrete and suits and uniforms worn by men you can hardly tell apart. To Gül, it's like spending twenty minutes on an island of her childhood, a country that is lost forever to all of us but that will never disappear. Life seems lighter once the twenty minutes are over, and though the mountain of work towers over them, it's just a hill on an island they can never be banished from. For these twenty minutes on a Saturday afternoon, the whole family is one; they belong together. It's a time of harmony. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 121-122).

Watching the programme creates a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere in Gül's home. The language on TV invokes a feeling of belonging and becomes a time where they can temporarily reclaim their Turkish identity. It also brings the family together: "If there's been a fight beforehand, there'll be a truce; no one manages to stay grumpy for the duration of the programme" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 121).

Watching television also has a symbolic meaning for Nazneen in *Brick Lane*. Ice-skating serves as a symbolic representation of the freedom she desires. The figure skaters represent a version of femininity and freedom of movement that is not accessible to Nazneen. So, for her, the television highlights her dislocation and alienation. She is made aware of the limitations imposed on her and sees the difference between her reality and her desires.

4.1.12 Fuat's treatment of Gül

Fuat and Gül's relationship is filled with tensions because of his temperament and patriarchal attitude.

He does not shy away from yelling at Gül and degrading her, even in front of the kids. One time Gül is playing with her daughters and forgets about the time. She is supposed to wake up Fuat from his nap and send him to work, but when she fails to do so, Fuat shouts at her:

‘What did I tell you? You’re supposed to wake me! And what are you doing? Pretending to be not much older than your daughter. Is it too much to ask for you to keep your eye on the clock for five minutes?’ (...) ‘What am I supposed to tell my foreman now if I’m late? That my stupid wife was playing with my daughter and lost track of time? (...)Any man would go mad in a house like this; no man could stay normal. You wanted the children here, and now they’re here you go and forget your husband. What’s next, eh? Are you going to throw me out, poison me?’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 64-65)

Fuat frequently makes comments about her physical appearance telling her that he likes slim women, calling her fat and suggesting that she go on a diet: “I don’t like fat women. I like the look of slim women, like the ones who tell you what’s up next on TV. Modern women, a little bit sporty, nice and slender like your sister Melike” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 71). In another instance, he says: “Once a week I watch a lovely slim presenter, not like my wife who’s so fat (...). Why don’t you try dieting?” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 124).

Yet again, he does not refrain from reminding that he would prefer a woman who weighs less than Gül: “You know, I really prefer slim women,” he says, ‘I mean, I’m not one of these country bumpkins who thinks a plump wife is a sign of wealth’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 100).

Gül does not voice her thoughts and “doesn’t react” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 100). When they have a fight, Gül does not express her emotions but suppresses them. Her real thoughts remain unarticulated and the only reaction to her dissatisfaction is the silent treatment she gives Fuat: “Gül would very much like to scream at him, tell him to shut his mouth once and for all. Tell him she has no desire to hear about his little sums, and that he can go ahead and buy his damn car; she’s not interested in the slightest. But she’s not talking to him. She doesn’t say a word to him, not once” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 80).

When Gül is angry at him and they do not speak to each other, Fuat’s only concern is his sexual need and he “wonders why he bothered with the pills when he never gets any” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 80). Fuat’s frustration is about his unmet expectations and he is unwilling to connect to Gül on an emotional level and find out the reason behind her silence. Gül is being objectified and ignored. One night when Fuat comes home drunk, “he repeats those words that hurt Gül, words he should really keep to himself (...): ‘I really prefer slim women, if I’m honest.’” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 81). Again, Gül does not assert herself, she only reacts

passively: “Gül pushes him away, takes her blanket and her pillow without a word, and goes down to the kitchen”. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 81).

When the family returns to Germany from one of their vacations, they are faced with struggles because Ceyda’s residency permit is invalid and she is not allowed to travel. Gül does not want Ceyda to stay behind and travel alone, because she had promised her daughters “I’ll never, ever leave you on your own again” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 58). So, she tells Fuat that he has to stay with Ceyda:

Although the sound of her voice seems to come from far away, Gül hears how firm and determined she sounds when she leans in close to Fuat’s ear so the man can’t hear her. ‘You’re staying here with Ceyda, even if it costs you your job,’ she says. ‘You’re staying here with her. We won’t leave her alone again. I promised her that and I’m keeping that promise.’ To Gül’s surprise, Fuat nods. ‘We’ll find a way,’ he says. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 74-75)

This is again a turning point for Gül, who subverts the power dynamics in their relationship. While Fuat commands and Gül obeys in line with traditional norms, here, Gül reverses this and asserts her voice and her values, showing that keeping her promise is important to her, even more than Fuat’s job. However, Fuat does not respect her demand and he leaves Ceyda in Türkiye. This is a traumatic experience for Gül:

All of a sudden, she sees Fuat. He’s on his own. She flushes as if someone had put a hot blanket over her, a blanket of lead pressing her into her seat. She feels like she’s falling, and now panic arrives too, a guest that was missing from the party. Now something is happening to lend weight to the emptiness of before. ‘Where’s Ceyda?’ Gül asks. Her voice is weak now and she’s dizzy. She feels like she might fall out of her seat. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 75)

So, even if Gül tries to assert agency, her voice and power remain fragile because she is not able to influence Fuat’s actions and her demands get disregarded and ignored. The female subaltern speaks, but the male authority does not listen. Again, Gül’s final reaction is to not “say a word to each other for the next ten hours” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 76). She is only able to protest quietly as her autonomy is limited and her acts of speaking out remain without consequence. She thinks to herself: “I’d kill this man with my bare hands” and “[t]he thought is a comfort to her” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 76). As her words do not produce the desired outcome, Gül now resists internally in her mind. Her thoughts give her relief and her imagination becomes a form of resistance, but in a passive way.

During Gül's preparation for their vacation to Türkiye, Fuat scolds her for bringing so much stuff in their car:

'What's all this?' Fuat asks. 'How am I supposed to get it in the car? It beggars belief, all this stuff you've bought. We're not going to a war zone. It's not enough that you're so fat, now you want me to load up the car with everything the German shops have on offer too. The car will be scraping the ground. What is all this? What's in the suitcases?'. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 108)

He continues body-shaming Gül and disregards her choices, deeming her preparations as irrational and excessive. But, Gül asserts her place, undermines Fuat's authority and does not let him intrude into her sphere. He tells her that the car will collapse under the weight of their luggage and Gül answers:

"When you bought the Mercedes, you were boasting about what a great car it is. Not an old banger like before; proper quality workmanship, not like what you get in Turkey. You were going on about how many horsepower it's got, how it hugs the road. And now you're trying to tell me the car will collapse because of three jars of Nutella? Are you saying the Mercedes wasn't worth the money?' ". (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 109)

She challenges Fuat and he replies in a sexist manner: "'Hold your tongue, stop pretending you're a mechanic. I'd like to see you repair the car with your woman's intuition if the axle breaks.'" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 109). Again, he tries to silence and dominate her by highlighting his role and abilities as a man, but Gül answers: "I don't meddle with your car stuff, do I? And this here, this is domestic stuff, this is my business, and I say we're taking these bags and cases with us. Why else did we get a roof rack?" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 109).

Gül claims her territory and asserts her identity in the domestic sphere where she does not want Fuat's intervention. She makes a decision and Fuat has to follow. This is an early instance where Gül finds her voice and power. Still, he does not withhold his sarcastic comments: "'Women,' Fuat says, 'women, nothing but dead weight. Even on their own hips' " (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 109).

An important moment for Gül's identity transformation is when she finally talks back to Fuat. Gül's daughters break the aerial and she takes the blame, so Fuat degrades her for hours.

“It’s been like this all afternoon. Gül lets him moan as much as he likes, thinking up answers that go unsaid and smiling to herself because she knows Ceyda and Ceren are playing outside out of harm’s way”. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 125)

This is her normal reaction to Fuat’s behavior, “[b]ut after a while she’s had enough” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 125) and answers him:

It’s your fault I’m so fat.’ Fuat stares at her, amazed that she’s suddenly answering back. He’s even more amazed by her accusation, which he’s never heard before. Before he can come up with a response, Gül tells him: ‘It was you who came along with the pill, “Here you go, I’ve got something for you, so we don’t have to be careful any more.” Without me going to see a doctor. It’s those pills that have made me swell up, those hormones or whatever they are. Who knows where you got them. And anyway, maybe you don’t like fat women, maybe you do want a slim blonde wife. But shall I tell you something for a change? I like men with hair on their heads, not baldies. You can’t always pick and choose what you get. You hear me? Men with a full head of hair!’ Fuat jerks his glass upwards, but he doesn’t pull back to hit her. Gül stands in front of him and looks him in the eye, and before the defeat she sees there turns into disaster, she leaves the room. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 125)

This is a rare moment where Gül expresses herself. In this instance, the female subaltern suppressed by patriarchal norms disturbs the silence that is expected of her. Gül highlights the fact that she is aware of the negative health consequences of the pill, which Fuat disregards, focusing only on his own pleasure. Instead of being the one constantly critiqued and measured against Western beauty standards, she reverses their roles and comments on Fuat’s physique. Just as Fuat prefers slim women, she asserts her preferences and shows that she is capable of judgment, too. This parallels Nazneen’s gradual self-assertion. Both protagonists speak out to reclaim their identity. After this occurrence, “Fuat will never say anything about Gül’s figure again. Nor Gül about his bald head” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 125). By voicing her thoughts, Gül has reclaimed her dignity and successfully drawn a boundary with Fuat.

So, Gül matures and after a while, she is not afraid of articulating her desires: “She would say it; it’s not that she doesn’t dare. That might have been the case in the old days, but now she has the courage” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 160). She finds her voice, transforms into a more confident woman and overcomes the socially conditioned silence. Her act of giving commands and speaking in a confident, decisive manner shows her gradual transformation.

She has also gained insights about her husband and realizes that it will not matter how much she speaks if the listener is unable to understand:

Yet she also has the certainty that he wouldn't understand. She doesn't know, with the best will in the world, whether that's because he can't understand it or because he doesn't want to. *He has limited horizons*, she will say of her husband in later years. *I've never really understood him, but I do know he sees the world through a very small window*. And he only uses one eye. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 160-161)

She has accepted the fact that her husband has a limited worldview and is not able to grow emotionally. This reveals her isolation in marriage, where she is not able to communicate with her partner due to his attitude.

Gül might be unhappy in her marriage, but she does not dare to get a divorce to preserve the unity and well-being of her family. She is unhappy in her marriage, yet traditional ideas of family unity and economic dependence prevent her from divorcing and prioritizing her happiness:

This man might drink, he might gamble and wish he had a slimmer wife, but we're a family and we have a home – who would destroy a home of their own free will? You can't destroy a good home. So say the ancestors. In this unpredictable world, it's important to have a roof over your head, one you can retreat into, be it only on the sofa, in front of the TV. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 122)

The same attitude can be seen in Nazneen, who, at the beginning of the novel, married Chanu to make her father happy and prioritized her roles within the family over her own satisfaction in life. Nazneen and Gül's marriages are not shaped by love and desire, but by social expectations and material necessities. Nazneen's life changed through her relationship with Karim and her starting to earn money, but for Gül, such a change is not in sight. While Nazneen develops a strong identity and character so that she does not even need Chanu to live in England, Gül does not achieve such freedom. Gül thinks about the possibility of divorce, but she is financially dependent on Fuat:

How would Gül cope if she could no longer withdraw money from the bank every month? What security does she have? The couple of gold bracelets she owns and a few gold coins, that's all. How far would that get her? And who would she have to fall back

on?. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 241)

She also has two children to take care of:

Gül can’t kick Fuat out like Mevlüde did Serter. They didn’t have any children, and Serter is genuinely mad. How could she throw Fuat out? And what if it had been her who left – where would she have gone then? With two children? How would she pay the rent, who would look after the girls, and what would she say to her father and her sisters? And if she just went back to Turkey, what would she do there? How would she live?. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 100)

Even if Gül starts to become a more assertive and strong character, she cannot find her true power because of her financial situation. Unlike her friend Mevlüde, who has no kids, Gül’s status as a mother and immigrant without her own money traps her in her relationship with Fuat. Her silence and understanding towards him are not just signs of submission, but a strategic method to keep the family together, because Gül knows that she and her daughters do not have many alternatives to a better life.

4.1.13 Return to Türkiye

As is the case for many migrants, Gül dreams of going back home. She loses her job after the factory closes and is not able to find new employment, which Fuat constantly shames her for. After seeing that “[a] few families from Factory Lane have taken the government’s repatriation grant and moved back to Turkey”, Gül thinks that “[m]aybe they ought to do the same” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 170). Through her return to Türkiye, Gül confronts the unresolved questions of who she is, where she belongs, and how migration has reshaped her. Her decision to return is not just a physical relocation, but a confrontation with her self-image, past and most importantly, the idea of home.

She discusses the matter with Fuat:

We’ve been here so long now. We’ve got a finished house in Turkey, we’ve got fields and a plot of land. Why should we go on working our fingers to the bone here, when we’ve got everything we need there? Maybe we should apply for that return money as well. It’s a lot of money, we could.... (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 170)

But Fuat has other plans:

I'm not stupid, I'm not quitting a job at Mercedes just because my wife can't find work in Germany and wants to go back home with her tail between her legs! You can forget that. You women, the ideas you have. Me, leave a good job to go and twiddle my thumbs back home in Turkey? Does that make sense to you, does it? You're welcome to go if you like.'. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 170)

So, Gül decides to go and Fuat tells her that he will join her later. When Gül asks her daughter Ceren if she would like to move with her, she accepts: " 'Yes,' she says, not hesitating. 'Yes, Mum.' " (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 170). So, after 15 years of living in Germany, Gül and Ceren decide to move back to Türkiye, while Fuat and her daughter Ceyda, who is married by then, stay in Germany.

When she is finally back in Türkiye, she is optimistic about her future there:

Gül is calm. (...) She'll make this house a home, she'll see her father every day, she'll send Ceren to school every morning, Fuat will become a voice on the telephone, it'll be up to her to fill this house with joy. A task she looks forward to with confidence. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 178)

Returning to Türkiye revives her memories and cultural roots, but it also confronts her with how much she has changed. This demonstrates Stuart Hall's idea of identity as being fluid in migration contexts, where migrants continuously have to renegotiate themselves.

Gül, just like in Germany, begins to feel disoriented and she "has almost no sense of direction" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 178):

She remembers getting lost in Germany, how strange everything had seemed at first, how she didn't know enough German to ask the way. But now, here, where she could ask for help? She feels embarrassed to have lost her way in a small town where there are no buses or trains, just a few taxis and not one traffic light, in the town where she grew up. The streets looked different back then, she thinks, and the shopping bags in her hands feel heavier with every step. Why did she decide to try a shortcut, what reason did she have to turn off into this maze of side streets?. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 178)

So, instead of giving her a sense of familiarity and belonging, Gül feels displaced and estranged from her place of origin. The protagonist is not able to reenter her former life because her identity and experiences have changed her.

She hesitates to ask her neighbors, who would comment:

“She comes here all the way from big old Germany and ends up getting lost in a side street not eighty yards from her house. She’s probably so out of touch that everywhere looks the same to her”. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 179).

Ceren is faced with hardships, too. For her, it is even more difficult to adapt to her new life as a second-generation migrant born in Germany. At school, she does not fit in and she is made fun of:

The others are always laughing at me. I look completely stupid because there’s so much I don’t know,’ Ceren says. ‘They know all the sultans and when they lived off by heart, and all we learned about in history was the Second World War and the Weimar Republic. Today I didn’t know the word for “ruler”, I’d never heard it in Turkish.’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 179)

Too often over the past few weeks she’s been a source of hilarity – when she didn’t know what the word for ‘ruler’ was, when she briefly forgot that a ‘one’ wasn’t a good grade like in Germany, when she fluffed the words to the national anthem, forgot to stand up when a teacher entered the classroom, couldn’t rotate her pen between her fingers, didn’t understand innuendos, and a thousand reasons more. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 184)

Ceren feels out of place in Türkiye and judged for not being like her other classmates. She experiences cultural shock even though she is in the country of her ancestors. She shares the same ethnicity as the others, but is different because of her migration background. She speaks a different language and has been educated in the German education system, so even if her body is in Türkiye, her cultural codes are rooted in Germany. Her experiences expose the hardships that migrants face when they fulfill their fantasy of going “home”. Migration is not something that Gül and Ceren can simply leave behind; it continues to shape and influence them.

Gül becomes aware that the people in the village treat her differently. The shopkeeper Hayri had collected a deposit from her and when Gül went back to return the bottles and get back her money, he claimed that he never collected a deposit and would not pay her. Gül cannot argue with him because

[s]he knows what Hayri would say: ‘Here comes that fancy-pants Gül, all the way from Germany. She builds herself a big house complete with a Bosch fridge and a Grundig

TV, a Sony video recorder, and crystal glasses in her living room cabinets, and God knows what else – and she’s so stingy and mean that she demands a deposit from a poor shopkeeper who she never paid in the first place. It’s always these wannabe rich types who chase every penny; they’re shameless.’. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 188).

Gül is also “conscious of the looks some of the neighbours give her. She senses the envy and yet she can’t convince them that hasn’t just returned from paradise; the kind of paradise she can recreate here too, because she has the means to do so” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 188). Gül is stereotyped by her neighbors and resented for her lifestyle and wealth. She blames herself for how people perceive her:

But isn’t it her fault they think these things? Didn’t she used to turn up each summer with the car loaded up with everything the shops had to offer? Didn’t she spend every summer smiling with happiness and contentment? How were people to know the reason for her good mood was right here and not there, where neither milk nor honey flows? (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 188).

She thinks that she contributed to this false narrative. When she was in Türkiye, she brought gifts to everyone and was happy. Her happiness stemmed from the fact that she was together with her family in her home country, yet, people interpreted this as bragging and attributed her joy to her new life of abundance.

When Ceren’s grades get “worse than they were in Germany” and “she finds herself wondering if she’ll pass the school year”, Gül “blames herself for having brought her daughter with her” (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 190). She feels remorse, which is typical for migrants who return and are caught between two worlds. She tries to justify her choice and see the positive aspects of her decision:

She’s doing fine herself. Or is she? She sees her father every day, she sees her sister Sibel regularly, she’s no longer constantly afraid of not understanding something, and she can get everywhere on foot and doesn’t get lost any more. When she leaves the house, it feels like she’s stepping into a world where she truly exists and isn’t just present; where she’s more than just a name on a filing card in a factory, another case at the job centre, another recipient of troubled glances because she looks different. When she goes out in the streets, she feels like she’s more real than she was in Germany. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 190)

Yet, she cannot dismiss the negative experiences she had:

But she still goes to Hayri's every day; she sees the looks she gets in the neighbourhood; sees her visitors surreptitiously feeling the sofa upholstery, inspecting the knick-knacks in her cabinet, the porcelain figurines you can't get here, crystal vases that look more expensive than they are. She notices people eyeing the video recorder, which she never uses when she's by herself. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 190)

Being a migrant becomes a source of alienation for Gül and people react to her with envy and suspicion. She wants to reconnect to her village and combine her two worlds, but her acts are perceived as showing off. Her return turns into a painful experience for her making her realize that her belonging and idea of familiarity have changed. People also misinterpret it when she talks about Germany:

'Germany.' 'Germany, Germany! Oh, Auntie Gül, enough about Germany!' İlkay says. 'That was then; you live here now. Maybe you were Deutschlânders to begin with, but now you're just Turkish – stop comparing everything. When Uncle Fuat comes back and settles in properly, you'll forget all about Germany, like we've forgotten the village we first came from. When I think back, all I can remember is a few colours, nothing else.'. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 206).

People demand that she focus on the present, yet she cannot deny her lived experience and reality. Gül knows that it is not easy for her and her children to just forget about Germany and fully integrate into Turkish society. Their identities are permanently shaped by their migratory experience and there is no total return to their former selves. Gül is also being silenced and made to believe that her conversations about Germany are irrelevant and annoying.

Now that Gül is in Türkiye, she has become the one who stays after everyone has left after their summer vacation, which leaves her feeling empty.

But now the summers are short. Even though it's hot for much longer, even though Ceren has three months of school holidays, even though she can savour the whole of them and doesn't have to leave at the end. Fuat comes for a few weeks; Ceyda, Nalan, Melike, Mert, Emin, the children, they're all there for a while. But it seems to be just a couple of days, a diversion, a breath of relief, a break. Now it seems to Gül as though it's not a garden being planted, but a hole being dug. As soon as the others are gone, she falls into a vacuum that makes the summers feel shorter. So that's what it was always

like for Sibel and my father, Gül thinks. That's how they must have felt all those years. They stayed behind with a kind of blues, not with a garden full of memories that might help them face the pain of separation. I thought life here froze to a standstill when I wasn't here, but it was just them getting cold in winter. I enjoyed the summer like I was a raisin, and now I know what it's like to have all the cake around me. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 226-227).

She has a shift in perspective and experiences the emotional void that arises after all visitors have left. She empathizes with her father and sisters, who had to go through these feelings when she left for Germany.

The myth of return is debunked by Gül as she comes to the realization that she has an idealized version of Türkiye. She slowly questions her choice as she understands that it is not easy to return and create a stable life in her homeland. The physical environment is the same, but she has changed.

She comments that "Our life wasn't necessarily easy on Factory Lane, but staying behind's not easy either. Not easy at all" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 227). She is plagued by feelings of emptiness and experiences the unhomely moment, this time in a place that is supposed to be home and familiar: "She sits in the kitchen, cooks and eats to fight off something she's not sure is grief, boredom, emptiness, melancholy or fear" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 236). Gül is back home, but she does not feel like it, as this place gives her no sense of belonging. These negative emotions heighten when she marries off Ceren and after she has left the house, "loneliness echoes off the walls and mingles with worries" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 236).

Having gone through all these experiences, Gül thinks, "Maybe I never should have moved away" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 226). She compares Germany to a magnet whose pull she cannot resist:

As if the country were a magnet with still enough pull, even when the call of money has long since fallen silent and the Germans' murmurings of discontent can barely be ignored any more. As though the country were a drug you can never kick. A curse you can't shake. A promise you don't want to forget. Or a comfort you wouldn't want to go without. Perhaps a home, too, where you value the orderly calm, even though you long for exuberance and warm chaos. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 235).

As a migrant, she has ambivalent feelings towards Germany. It embodies a Third Space for her where she is caught between attachment and alienation as well as desire and resistance. While she enjoys Germany's order, she longs for the chaos of Türkiye. Germany has an addictive effect on Gül and her relationship to the country is multi-layered. Thus, Gül's situation captures the in-betweenness and partial belonging many migrants experience. She no longer belongs fully to the village of her childhood, but Germany is also not a place where she feels at home.

After trying to convince Fuat to join her in Türkiye and failing, Gül decides to go back to Germany and asks Ceyda "Actually, could you try and find out if there's a way to bring me back to Germany?" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 241). To her surprise, Fuat "doesn't want her there, and that hurts Gül – how could it not?" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 242). Staying is not an option for her anymore, but going back is not easy either:

Leaving isn't easy for Gül. It's not easy for her to leave everything behind again, without seeing her new-born granddaughter in Erzurum, to go to a man who claimed for months on end that he couldn't find a flat big enough for both of them. It's not easy, but what other choice does she have? She asks herself the same things over and over. Where else could I have turned? Which other path could I have walked with my head held high?. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 245).

Gül's inner questioning reveals that she does not really choose to go back to Germany, but had to because of her limited options. This, for her, is the prideful thing to do. Again, she does not act with agency, but according to social expectations and the assumption that women have to adapt and sacrifice for their families. She is torn between her role as a mother and grandmother and her duty as a wife. Fuat acts as if he does not want her back in Germany, making her feel unhomey and as if she does not fully belong anywhere. Gül is trying to preserve her dignity even if it comes at the cost of personal loss.

At the end of *52 Factory Lane*, Gül is back in Germany:

It's spring again by the time she steps off the plane in Hamburg. The city Saniye didn't like. She has a new passport in her bag. Her stomach cramps up as if she might never eat again, her heart seems to have slid up to her throat, she's sweating all over and she feels like she might burst into tears at any moment. How much stranger this country was to her the last time she came, and how much calmer she was back then. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 245)

Gül shows a physical reaction upon her arrival, signalling her exhaustion, displacement and feeling of unhomeliness. She is not in the country for the first time, yet she feels more as if she does not belong. Gül's identity has changed and become fragmented, making her feel alien in both her home and host country. Her feelings of anxiety and fear are an awareness of the fact that she is not going back home to a space that will provide her comfort, but to a place where she has to demonstrate resilience and endurance.

In Germany, her longing and rootlessness do not stop:

She wanted to return to Germany because she'd felt lost in her hometown when Ceren moved away and Fuat still hadn't come back to protect her from other men and their lewd remarks. She wanted to return to Germany so that she could live with Fuat and be there for Ceyda, but now she misses her father, misses her sister Sibel, misses the summer house, misses the distance from Germany. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 7-8)

Just as Gül changes, the places she calls home also undergo transformation, so each time she changes countries, she has to adapt to her new environment:

Germany has changed. She didn't notice it while she was living on Factory Lane, she was too close up; but now she sees that the country she originally came to no longer exists. Just as Turkey is not the same country she once left. Those who leave can never return, because the places they knew disappear. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 30)

The statement "Leave home, no returning; come home, forever yearning" summarizes Gül's experience after migration (Özdoğan, "A Light" 30).

4.1.14 Fuat cheating

Gül discovers that Fuat has been cheating on her while she was away. She finds a postcard in his flat: "Sweetie pie, it says, welcome home. I'm so glad you're back on your feet. Karen – Kiss, kiss, kiss". (Özdoğan, "A Light" 30). Upon discovering his betrayal, she starts to spiral and her head is filled with questions she has no answers for:

Is this why he kept putting off joining her in Turkey? How could he do something like this to her? Do his friends know? Who knows about it? What did she do to deserve it? Didn't she do everything to make a home for him? And with a German! The woman who came out of his hospital room looked like a German. What's he doing with a German woman? Isn't it enough, all the separation and longing this country has brought

her? Does it have to take her husband away from her as well? Has Ceyda guessed? Why doesn't he make more of an effort to hide it? Does he think she's stupid? How does he imagine things are going to go from here? How could he betray her like this? How could he abuse her trust like this? Why does it hurt so much? Why did she shut her eyes to it for so long?. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 25)

She sacrificed her life to create a home for her family and keep its unity, but Fuat has shattered this ideal of hers. She is now also unhomed in her marriage and their relationship has become a site of betrayal and uncertainty. Gül has endured longing, displacement and isolation to make Fuat happy, but her efforts are not valued by him and he takes her for granted.

She cannot be the submissive, silent wife anymore and shows her anger: "'Shut your mouth,' says Gül, 'or who knows what will happen. Just shut your bloody mouth.'" Fuat is so shocked, he falls silent". (Özdoğan, "A Light" 30).

The power dynamic in their relationship changes and Gül demands her voice to be heard and respected. Having experienced many difficulties, she is not able to forgive Fuat's cheating. She starts to dissociate and detach from reality as a coping mechanism:

She pulls herself together, but later on she barely even knows how the evening went, what they talked about, or what she had to add to the conversation. Perhaps that's how drugs work, she thinks. You only notice half of what's going on, and that makes life seem more bearable. Gül feels like she's not really there. She's living her life like someone waiting at a bus stop for things to start moving at last. Every day that passes makes it harder for her to care about anything, and she notices she's distancing herself from everything, even from herself. It feels like she's not really there, even when she's asleep at night. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 49)

This passage shows that she has become emotionally numb. Her sacrifices and the hardships of migration have taken a toll on her. She has become a stranger to herself and is absent from her environment. Her sadness is rooted in her habit of putting others first, never truly being seen, and losing her sense of home wherever she goes.

4.1.15 Can

An important character that emerges in *A Light Still Burns* is Can. Can is a second-generation Turkish migrant and he is involved in illegal activities such as selling drugs. Can and Gül begin

to get to know each other and have conversations when they encounter each other on the street, becoming friends over time. Gül and Can's secret friendship is a way to assert agency for Gül, who is constrained by her traditional role of a wife and mother. When he invites her to the café inside the department store Karstadt, where they "can talk in peace" and "have a coffee" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 60), Gül is hesitant at first:

She can't invite him up to her flat; someone might see them, and then what would they say? There's plenty of time before Fuat gets back from work, and she'd like to talk to Can, but she'd be keeping a secret and that would be a betrayal. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 60-61)

But when remembering Fuat's cheating, her consciousness shifts and she shows an internal rebellion to the double standards she is faced with:

Or would it? What does she owe her husband? She notices rage simmering inside her because she can't just say yes. All the things he's allowed himself and all the things she doesn't allow herself, just because it's not proper to have a coffee in public with a man who's young enough to be her son. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 61)

She feels rage because she denies herself many things because of traditional obligations, while Fuat can cheat on her, drink, gamble and belittle her all the time. Can symbolizes connection and a moment of selfhood outside of her domestic sphere.

So, the two begin to meet at the café and talk

about Gül's grandchildren, Can's new girlfriend, his mother, the promise he made to her never to go to prison again. They talk, and at some point Gül realises she has to dash off because she needs to make dinner before Fuat gets home. She feels guilty as she unlocks the front door, knowing she can't tell anyone. She feels guilty, but in the coming weeks and months she'll often go to that department store café to meet Can; she'll feel guilty each time she meets him, and she'll wonder why she keeps going and what it is she likes so much about the boy. Something that felt for years like firm ground has suddenly become soft earth, and Gül is trying not to lose her footing. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 62-63)

Having this secret friendship makes Gül feel guilty because of her patriarchal conditioning that does not allow her to form emotional connections with men other than her husband:

Gül feels guilty about these meetings at the cafe. She tries to convince herself that she's not doing anything wrong. She's not going behind anyone's back, she's not tricking or deceiving anyone, but she knows that's a lie. She can't tell anyone about her chats with Can. Not Fuat, not Ceyda, not Ceren, not Saniye, not Yılmaz, and not her sisters. She's been meeting up with a criminal, and she has to keep it a secret. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 94)

But she enjoys the connection and conversations they have and feels seen and valued in this friendship. That is why she continues to meet Can and something within her starts shifting as she puts her desires over the expectations of others, thus asserting agency and selfhood.

She compares her urge to meet up with him to smoking:

She knows it's not a good idea, but she can't stop. Perhaps it's because he's so different to me, she thinks sometimes. He's more different than the Germans, but he speaks my language. He's not a bad person, even if he lies and steals and tricks, even if he makes money pimping, even if he rejects everything that Gül believes. Something about this young man endears him to her. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 94-95)

Can opens a new world for her and widens her horizon. Through him, she gets to know the lifestyle and point of view of the second-generation Turkish migrants living in Germany. Gül notes that "Can has German, Tunisian, Lebanese, Albanian, Italian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Russian friends – it doesn't make any difference to him as long as they're people who move in his circles" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 86). She also finds him so interesting because "[h]is truths and hers are poles apart; the world looks so different for Can to how it looks to her". While Gül has strong ties to her origins, she realizes that this is not the case for the generation that was born and raised in Germany. Can explains the reasons why he wants a German passport as follows:

You know how I do business. If they've had enough of it, they'll just deport me. It doesn't matter that I was born here and never spent more than six weeks in a row in Turkey – they don't want us here, no matter what. But if you've got a German passport, they can't touch you – it's your right to stay, Turk or not. They have to accept us. We're everywhere now and they can't get rid of us. They'll have to live with it. (...) 'What good will a Turkish passport do me if I have to go abroad in a rush? My parents come from a village near Zonguldak. The place is half empty and falling down because

everyone's moved here for work. What would I want there? I work here. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 84)

In *Brick Lane*, the character of Karim serves a similar function. He is also a second-generation immigrant who teaches Nazneen about life. Like Gül, Nazneen struggles with feelings of remorse about her relationship with Karim, but they also question the limitations imposed on them. Can and Karim serve as a way to explore their independence and reflect on their own needs. However, Can and Gül's relationship is a friendship, while Nazneen has a sexual affair with Karim.

4.1.16 Gül's internal awakening

Through all the experiences Gül has had over the years, she has become a wise, mature and spiritually evolved woman:

These days, Gül can read a lot of people; she can predict what they'll do next, guess their thoughts and motivations, including those they'd never dare say out loud. She's no longer the young woman who came from Anatolia to Factory Lane, amazed at how different people are, how they lie and tie themselves up in knots, how two-faced and deceitful they can be, how they put on an act as if life were a stage with nothing behind it. (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 161)

In her old age, Gül looks back at her life and has moments of self-reflection:

She (...) sees that her father showed her such great affection because she rarely voiced any desire of her own. When he did scold her, which was rare, it was because she lost track of time or her chores while playing. As a child, she sees, she did everything for her father's love after her mother's love vanished so suddenly. She sees how she denied herself, how life and a desire for love have bent her this way and that. She sees that she still follows this strategy today, decades on from her childhood. How she's always put her own needs last, how she has hardly dared to take up space, to desire things for herself, how she has imposed boundaries on herself. The more at peace she is in the evenings, the deeper she dips into the pain, and the more clearly she can see what happened. How the little child inside her still believes that all she has to do is take responsibility, be a good girl, and she'll be rewarded with love. How that explains why she has never left Fuat. Why she never could. She's only ever learnt how to make sacrifices. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 279)

This passage reveals how Gül's character has been shaped by her childhood and the losses she faced such as the early death of her mother. She internalized the belief that she has to sacrifice herself and prioritize others to be worthy of love, a belief that has shaped her role of mother, daughter, wife and migrant. Even if Gül's awakening is an internal one made in old age; she comes to realizations about herself and the life she lived. She also remembers the positive moments of her life:

But when she pursues these images, she sometimes comes to a point where everything softens, where every ache seems to come with its own balm. She sees that many slights have opened old wounds over the course of her life, but these wounds are from the same time the light comes from, the light that has streamed through her life. Sometimes she follows this light. She sees herself with her daughters, sees the smiles on their faces, the happiness there; she sees how she might help them, how she might reach out a hand to them. She sees herself with her grandchildren, hugging them to her chest; she remembers conversations and how words have bound her to other people. She remembers the trust that people have granted her, the respect they have shown her. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 279)

Just as there is pain in her life, there are also moments of joy and healing. She has positive memories of her daughters and grandchildren, which gave her a sense of purpose.

Gül's identity formation is not a drastic one; it is an internal process. She is not able to free herself from the constraints on her life, such as her marriage to Fuat, but she gains an awareness that grants her a form of freedom. In the context of her migration story, she has undergone a psychological transformation as much as a geographical one. Her development is shaped not just by the German context but by the memories of her childhood in Türkiye. Gül undergoes a quiet, inner transformation that makes her character so compelling and human.

In contrast to *Brick Lane*, where Nazneen undergoes a drastic transformation, Gül's story "lacks spectacular moments of action such as rebellion or brutal oppression" (Hofmann 156). Özdoğan conveys "the completely average life of its protagonist" in a " 'normal' and completely unspectacular" manner (Hofmann 156; 157). Gül is also not a rebel like Nazneen; she "largely accepts the traditional gender roles of her society" (Hofmann 157).

4.2 Wagner's Identity Reconstruction Strategies in *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*

In this section, it will be explored what kind of identity reconstruction Gül, Fuat, Saniye and Ceyda employ and how they navigate the experience of being a migrant in line with Wagner's four strategies.

4.2.1 Gül

Throughout the narrative, Gül displays nostalgic traits. She is in a constant state of longing for her hometown and family in Türkiye. She values her origins and culture but with time, she gets used to Germany and starts to see it as a home, too, especially after her failed return to Türkiye. Yet, she cannot be classified as a total hybrid character, because she never learns the language and integrates into German society. Living in Germany does change her, she begins to question traditional roles and speaks up for herself. She gains self-awareness and starts questioning the expectations of sacrifice and obedience placed on women. Gül starts to become an in-between character that does not fully belong to one culture and country, yet, she remains rooted in the past and cannot focus on her present reality, making her the nostalgic type.

4.2.2 Fuat

Similar to Gül, Fuat displays characteristics of the nostalgic type when he first moves to the host country. Mentally, he is in Türkiye and all his plans and motivations are tied to his home country. He is resistant to change and holds patriarchal values, which can be observed in his relationship with his wife. He views Germany as a temporary place to live while he collects the wealth, he so desperately desires.

But, after living there for years, Fuat gets used to Germany and starts to compare his home and host country, seeing mostly the negative sides of Türkiye. This attitude of his is foreshadowed in *52 Factory Lane* when Gül and Fuat visit Türkiye for vacation. Gül thinks that "coming home is making him go soft", but the narrator foreshadows that this will not be the case in their later visits: "Who could ever guess that in a few years' time, the opposite will happen when he comes to Turkey". (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 54). He starts to distance himself from his homeland and his nostalgia fades. This attitude of his can be seen in the fact that he does not return to his Turkish village together with Gül and Ceren and insists on staying in Germany.

When he builds his house in Türkiye, he compares it to German craftsmanship, commenting that the quality is not as good as in Germany:

‘The lads have done a good job,’ he says. ‘It’s really looking good. Not as polished as the Germans, who’d have it finished on time too, but what can you do? This is Turkey after all, but they’ve not half-arsed it. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 117)

The house he builds also has hybrid qualities with a traditional and a Western-type toilet:

Here’s the toilet, alaturka, like we’re used to, but over here we’ve got another one, a proper European water closet. So anyone can go just as he pleases. You can sit down on this one and read the paper in peace. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 117)

His comparison between Turkish and German politics shows that he is not the nostalgic type anymore:

The whole country is in uproar, and Fuat has no faith in the way things are going. There are leftists in Germany too, a fair few of them, and the terrorists among them have sought to strike fear and horror into people, but the state is strong; it’ll make short work of them. The men in power are not the sort whose aim is to bag themselves villas and yachts; in Germany, politicians are honest men of principle. (Özdoğan, “52 Factory Lane” 118)

He praises the political system in Germany while criticizing Türkiye for being chaotic and corrupt. Thus, Fuat begins to use the hybrid strategy to construct an identity for himself. His identity, habits and way of thinking are influenced by his host country. Yet, he does not integrate fully and is still connected to Turkish customs and culture.

His affair with a German woman is a betrayal of his Turkish values, especially in terms of family and honor. Through this affair, he is connected to Germany in an emotional and intimate way. He allows himself such freedoms, but enforces control over Gül, showing that he still holds a double standard. This affair can also be seen as a way to seek validation of the host country. Ultimately, he stays with Gül, which highlights the instability in his character. So, even if he changes in some ways, Fuat never fully transforms into a hybrid, open-minded person.

4.2.3 Saniye

Gül’s friend Saniye aligns with the hybrid identity strategy. Saniye comes to Germany on her own, learns the language, drives a car and works in the same factory as Gül. Gül is inspired by

Saniye's positive, strong and adaptive character: "Saniye hasn't been here as long as she has, but already she seems to know her way around better. She doesn't seem to be afraid, either" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 33). Gül "always admired her friend Saniye, who did a lot of the driving when their two families made the long trip to Turkey together. To Gül, driving seems like freedom, but even in the passenger's seat she's scared; she can't imagine ever having the courage to drive herself" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 10-11). Saniye has courage, which most migrant women like Gül lack.

Saniye is curious, open to new influences and has a desire to integrate: 'They're not bad people, the Germans,' Saniye says later, on the bus. 'She could have taken your bracelet and run off with it. We couldn't have done a thing about it. I'm going to learn their language.' (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 36). She is willing to actively participate in German society and not just exist and survive there. Gül "wishes she could be like her friend: someone who isn't scared of anything except water and dogs, someone who can speak good German because she likes to join in wherever she can, someone who only says good things when she talks about Germany" (Özdoğan, "52 Factory Lane" 86). She can see the positive aspects of migration and achieves confidence and stability in her new environment, something that Gül cannot do. She has agency and is able to see the opportunities Germany has to offer. Yet, Saniye does not assimilate or forget about her origins and successfully constructs a hybrid identity that draws from both her heritage and her current environment.

4.2.4 Ceyda

Gül's daughter Ceyda is an example of the second-generation migrant. She embodies the hybrid type who is part of both cultures. In contrast to her mother, Ceyda is able to live her freedom and decide over her life with autonomy and confidence. She works first as a barber, then at the post office, so she has financial independence. She is a part of society and has "German friends she meets for coffee, and she's friends with the parents from Duygu's and Timur's classes" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 86). She also knows how to drive, which symbolizes independence in the novel. Gül is proud of her daughter: "It's the first time Gül has seen Ceyda drive, and she's pleased for her daughter. She wanted her children to get a better education than she did, wanted them to be independent" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 10-11). In contrast to her mother, who often feels ambivalent and fearful in public life, Ceyda steps into German society with confidence and ease. Ceyda, who is unhappy in her marriage to Adem, decides to divorce, which signals her rejection of submission and obedience to fate and traditional expectations.

Gül knows that people will gossip, but she supports her decision:

Neighbours and friends will gossip, they'll badmouth her, she'll be the talk of the town. But this is Germany, this country is freer. Ceyda lives here – why shouldn't she enjoy a bit of that freedom? Why should she continue to suffer with a husband like Adem? Times are changing. (...) Why shouldn't Ceyda be able to live freely too, now she's fulfilled all her obligations? These are new generations – the world seems to turn faster with each day that passes, and everything is changing. *I'll stand by her this time*, Gül tells herself, *whatever happens*. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 159-160)

4.2.5 Sevgi

Saniye's daughter Sevgi is part of the third generation in Germany. She exemplifies the cosmopolitan identity construction strategy as she does not try to combine two cultures, but embraces a transcultural openness. She is born and raised in Germany, speaks German for the most time, and has German friends:

Sevgi has been given everything, but in the past few years her Turkish has increasingly deteriorated – because almost all her friends are German, because she never watches Turkish TV, because she spent last summer with friends in Spain instead of going to Turkey with her parents. Spain is a good deal further away than Göttingen. Gül wonders if Sevgi can still feel the strength of those that came before her, if she can hear the song she carries with her, if she can recognise the melody in her blood. (Özdoğan, "A Light" 132)

She doesn't express longing for Turkey and does not construct her identity through a nostalgic or hybrid struggle. Instead, she feels at home in Germany and has a place in society. She studies, becomes a paediatrician and opens her own practice. She also starts to live on her own instead of moving back in with her parents after finishing university. She "wears make-up these days. The girl always has a subtle scent of expensive perfume and has started talking back to adults" and she "has grown into a confident young woman" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 83). She rejects patriarchal norms, telling Fuat "What's wrong with women driving? (...) Anyone can drive a car" and that "[t]he days when husbands had the say are over" (Özdoğan, "A Light" 105-106). Still, Sevgi does not deny her cultural roots and shows an effort to learn the language: "she's started reading Turkish books, watching Turkish films and learning vocab to improve her Turkish. 'Auntie Gül,' she says, 'it's so wonderful to come back to the language.'" (Özdoğan,

“A Light” 166). So, she does not simply assimilate and forget her Turkish identity. By adopting a global mindset beyond hybridity, she embodies a migrant identity rooted in a broader, more inclusive sense of belonging.

There are no barriers in Germany these days, we can move freely. Your generation were all workers when you came over, and look where your children are now: doctors, lawyers, politicians, actors, hairdressers, estate agents, filmmakers, telephone salespeople – we’ve spread out of the factories all around the country. No one talks about repatriation any more; we’re here, we’re part of society. All of us. And I mean all of us. Even the criminals and the ones who have to marry someone their parents bring over from Turkey, the ones who don’t want to learn German and the ones who win big movie awards, go into politics or TV. It’s not about good or bad foreigners now, about enrichment or burden... We’ve spread out across society; we’ve left the factories and the ghettos behind us. (Özdoğan, “A Light” 166)

Sevgi illustrates the transformation of migration across generations, from feeling displaced and in-between to being a part of society and contributing to it as a full member.

4.3 Hybridity

The hybridity portrayed in *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* aligns with what Moslund calls organic hybridity, a gradual and slow cultural blending. Gül adapts slowly to German society, but also never fully belongs there as she does not learn the language or navigate life there without help from others. She does not achieve a hybrid identity; her story shows how the process of integration and adaptation can be painful, non-linear and unresolved. Hybridity becomes more visible in her children and grandchildren who are born in Germany and feel like a part of German society. This represents a more realistic form of hybridity that develops throughout generations, in contrast to the intentional hybridity seen in the character of Nazneen. Özdoğan does not deliberately craft hybrid characters or romanticizes and celebrates hybridity as a way towards freedom, thus challenging simplistic portrayals of the migratory experience. He showcases the hardships and the painful sides of living between two cultures and countries, illustrating the slow, uneven processes of cultural change.

4.4 A Comparative Analysis of Gül and Nazneen

Both *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* explore the emotional and psychological hardships faced by migrant women who navigate life in a new environment. Through the characters of Nazneen and Gül, the authors Monica Ali and Selim Özdoğan offer nuanced portrayals of migration, gender roles, and identity formation. Even though the two characters emerge from different cultural and geographic contexts, their migratory experiences reveal parallels as well as points of divergence.

4.4.1 Marriage

Nazneen and Gül both begin their migratory journeys through marriage. Nazneen does not choose her husband and her marriage is arranged by her father. She has to obey her father's decision, even though she finds Chanu unattractive and old. Gül, by contrast, is given a choice; her father tells her she can deny the marriage proposal of Fuat. Yet, Gül accepts it, not because of love and desire, but because she thinks it is fate and to relieve her family from financial burden. Both characters are introduced as women who have limited agency because of patriarchy, traditional beliefs, lack of economic resources and internalized submission to fate. Gül's actions reveal her fatalistic worldview, similar to Nazneen's early belief that one must endure what life delivers.

4.4.2 Historical context

In regard to the historical contexts of *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, differences exist that shape the migrant experiences portrayed in each narrative. Both women's act of migration is motivated by their husbands, who decide to resettle because of socio-economic factors. While *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* unfolds only within a socio-economic context, *Brick Lane* also has a postcolonial background (Cormack 695). The migration depicted in the novel reflects South Asian migration to Britain, which began in 1947 and was closely connected to Britain's colonial legacy and the need for labor in the post-war period. The novel addresses how former colonial subjects negotiate belonging in a country that once ruled them. Nazneen's transformation from a submissive wife to an independent woman mirrors the decolonization of the self. Özdoğan portrays Turkish migration to Germany in the 1960s–70s through labor agreements rather than colonial relationships. Gül's migration is driven by economic necessity

rather than imperial history, as she is faced with poverty in her homeland and Germany promises wealth and security.

4.4.3 Disorientation

Both characters get lost in their new environment and fear disorientation, which reflects the migrant experience. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen's displacement results in cultural and linguistic alienation, confining her to the domestic sphere without a place in British society. But, Nazneen gradually transforms her sense of rootlessness into agency, redefining herself within the host country. Similar to Nazneen, Gül fears getting lost because she does not know the country and the language. For Gül, being mobile is even more important than for Nazneen, as she works and has to find her place to work. Her return to Türkiye deepens rather than resolves her alienation, as she experiences disorientation in her village and realizes she no longer fully belongs in either place. While *Brick Lane* frames disorientation as a challenge that can be overcome through personal empowerment, *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* presents it as a lasting condition of in-betweenness, showcasing that migration transforms people in irreversible ways.

4.4.4 The Mirror Scenes

In both novels, a mirror scene is present which symbolizes their unhomeliness and the protagonists' questioning of their selfhood. Nazneen examines her reflection, questioning the face she sees and the life she lives. Gül similarly stares at herself in a mirror upon arriving in Germany and notes that she looks the same, yet feels like a stranger. These scenes portray their unhomely experiences. Caught between two worlds, they struggle to reconcile who they were and who they are becoming. As Bhabha's notion of "unhomeliness" suggests, the private space of the home becomes unfamiliar, a site of anxiety rather than comfort. In both novels, these scenes are early indicators of change, suggesting that the migratory experience will destabilize their sense of self.

4.4.5 Language

Language serves as a marker of both exclusion and empowerment. Nazneen is discouraged from learning English by her husband and is confined to domestic life. Gül makes some attempts to learn German through newspapers and interactions with her neighbors. Their desire and attempt to learn the language of their receiving societies shows that they long for connection, belonging and integration. But, despite living in their respective host countries for

years, they are unable to speak the dominant language fluently. This symbolizes their partial integration and isolation from wider society. They are still outsiders whose connection is limited to the diasporic community in their countries.

4.4.6 Work

In both narratives, work becomes the turning point. Nazneen starts earning money through sewing, eventually gaining economic and emotional independence. Gül works in different jobs, including sewing. She seeks work not just for financial gain but to justify the emotional cost of migration which is the separation from her children. Both characters' first acts of empowerment come through labor, and both encounter exploitation and gendered control over their earnings. Chanu and Fuat take away their money and spend it as their. Both characters show female solidarity after they start making money by sending money back home to support their sisters.

4.4.7 Silence as Resistance

A common theme in both novels is the use of silence. Nazneen and Gül frequently choose not to speak as a means of avoiding conflict and preserving family unity. As Spivak states, they cannot speak for themselves because of their subaltern position. Yet, their silence is not passive but a form of internal rebellion. Throughout the story, Nazneen learns to vocalize her desires and speaks up for herself. Gül's transformation is more gradual; her rebellion happens later and often remains internalized, as seen in her unspoken responses to Fuat's remarks and aggressions. However, Gül does display moments of assertion, for example, when she refuses to return to work where she is underpaid or when she finally confronts Fuat's comments on her body.

4.4.8 Motherhood

Both women are faced with difficulties of motherhood in the context of migration. Nazneen loses one child and later questions her ability to be a good mother while adapting to a new world. Gül is separated from her children for eighteen months. Having to leave her daughters behind in Türkiye plagues her with guilt. Nazneen and Gül's roles as mothers become a motivation for change. Nazneen's desire to set an example for her daughters inspires her independence and Gül's longing to care for her daughters shapes her decisions.

4.4.9 Karim and Can

In *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*, Karim and Can initiate change in the lives of the protagonists. Karim influences Nazneen drastically by awakening romantic desire in her and introducing her to political activism. She questions her marriage, position in society and identity through this relationship and demonstrates autonomy and agency by ultimately rejecting him. On the other hand, Gül and Can's relationship is not of a romantic nature. Their friendship provides empathy, emotional support, and a different perspective on the world. Through the regular meetings with Can that she keeps secret, Gül constructs a world for herself outside of her role as a wife and mother. Karim and Can also serve as ways for the protagonists to learn about the second-generation members of their respective migrant communities, which broadens their understanding of identity and belonging. While Karim inspires Nazneen's shift from passivity to action, Can nurtures Gül's gradual empowerment, reflecting how different forms of connection can shape migrant women's personal development.

4.4.10 Transformations: Drastic vs. Internal

Nazneen's transformation is more drastic and visible from the outside. She goes against Chanu, denies Karim and decides to remain in London. Gül, however, experiences a change that is from within. Instead of a dramatic act, her major change of identity is highlighted as she gains insight and becomes aware of her patterns, beliefs and way of acting. She reflects on her childhood, her sacrifices, and the gender roles that shaped her. As Moslund's theory of organic hybridity suggests, Gül's change is slow and unresolved, whereas Nazneen undergoes a more intentional self-liberation.

Both Gül and Nazneen represent women who slowly challenge the gendered and cultural expectations imposed upon them. Their stories illustrate that migration is not just a physical change of location, but also a psychological journey. Migrants have to navigate the tension between tradition and autonomy, past and present, freedom and dependence, and silence and voice. While Nazneen embodies a more intentional hybridity, Gül represents a slow, organic change. Together, their narratives broaden our understanding of the female migrant experience and identity.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis has undertaken a comparative exploration of migration, identity, and female agency in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Selim Özdoğan's *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy*.

In Chapter 1, migration literature as a genre is defined based on the ideas and theories of Joanna Kosmalska, Paul White, and Søren Frank. The scholars highlight migration literature's importance in capturing and representing the unique experience of migrants in a human-centred and authentic way. In this way, readers gain an understanding of migration and the consequences it has for people. The emotional and psychological cost of migration is highlighted, an often-overlooked aspect in academic studies. Migration literature deals with changes in identity, language, religion, and culture, questions the understanding of home and belonging, challenges binaries, and portrays hybridity. *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* are situated within the genre of migration literature, as they engage with the genre's central thematic concerns such as displacement, identity negotiation, the fantasy of return, generational conflicts and cultural hybridity and also employ its stylistic characteristic narrative strategies, including multilingual expression, shifting perspectives, and hybrid storytelling forms.

Chapter 2 provides the analytical lens for the comparative study. Stuart Hall defines identity as a fluid process of "becoming" and positioning. Consuela Wagner's four identity construction strategies (native foreigner, nostalgic, hybrid, and cosmopolitan) are essential tools to identify the characters' approaches to cultural adaptation. Homi Bhabha's theories of hybridity, the Third Space, mimicry, ambivalence, and unhomeliness offer an understanding of the in-between positions of migrants. Sten Pultz Moslund introduces organic and intentional hybridity and shows the difference between gradual transformation and adaptation and deliberate, fast change. Finally, Spivak's concept of the subaltern highlights the structural silencing and double oppression experienced by migrant women.

The close reading of *Brick Lane* in Chapter 3 reveals that Nazneen's migration story begins in a position of passivity and cultural nostalgia, consistent with Wagner's nostalgic strategy. Her life in London, initially dominated by isolation and obedience to cultural expectations, exposes her to new social environments and relationships. By the end of the novel, Nazneen overcomes

the barriers that limit her freedom and she constructs an identity on her own terms. Her journey toward freedom and female agency is marked by her decision to remain in England, end her affair with Karim, and gain financial independence through sewing. She engages more actively with her environment, distances herself from fatalistic thinking and makes decisions that benefit her and her daughters. In the final scene, she skates in her sari, symbolically embracing cultural hybridity and creating a “Third Space” that unites her past and present.

The analysis also examines how Nazneen, Chanu, Mrs. Azad, Razia, Shahana, and Karim construct their identities based on Wagner’s four strategies.

Nazneen begins as a nostalgic type, tied to her origin culture due to restrictions from her husband and limited social interaction. Through her affair with Karim, community engagement, and influence from her daughters and Razia, she transitions into a hybrid identity, balancing home and host cultures, reclaiming agency, and accepting ambivalence.

Chanu remains a nostalgic type, idealizing Bangladesh, clinging to cultural roots, and failing to adapt or achieve his aspirations in England. When he is not given the promotion he desires, he becomes disillusioned and loses hope for a good life in England. Chanu faces racism and inequality because of his social positioning as a migrant. His ambivalence, mimicry of British culture, and isolation from both communities prevent him from forming a hybrid identity. He fails to integrate and find his place in society, so he returns to Bangladesh.

Mrs. Azad exemplifies hybridity, code-switching between cultures, rejecting restrictive traditions and integrating into British society while retaining her heritage. She regards cultural blending as positive and rejects the idea of the “tragedy of the migrant”.

Razia also embodies hybridity, blending British and Bangladeshi elements in lifestyle, clothing and values. She resists community pressures, embraces opportunities in the host country, and maintains her cultural roots.

Shahana, as a second-generation migrant, fits the native foreigner type. She rejects her Bangladeshi heritage, resists cultural traditions, and seeks full integration into British society, creating tension with her nostalgic father.

Karim starts as a hybrid but shifts toward a nostalgic performance of ethnic identity after experiencing racism and political radicalization. He reflects instability and internal conflict typical of the hybrid type when lacking full belonging in either culture.

Nazneen's transformation in *Brick Lane* embodies both organic hybridity shaped by domestic struggles, self-questioning, community engagement, motherhood, and her relationship with Karim. However, there are also traces of intentional hybridity, as the novel deliberately foregrounds hybridity as a central theme. Markers of culture, such as language, dress, food and religion, are questioned and hybridized, also visible in characters like Shahana. The ice-skating scene symbolizes a hybrid possibility, but critics like Chakravorty view it as an escapist, superficial representation of hybridity that ignores structural inequalities.

Chapter 4's analysis of *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* demonstrates a different kind of identity formation. Gül's migration from Türkiye to Germany illustrates a less dramatic transformation and is marked by Moslund's organic hybridity, a slow blending of cultures that occurs over time. While she is strongly attached to her Turkish identity initially, she gradually adopts elements of German life, moving toward a hybrid position without distancing herself from her heritage. Gül's identity formation is influenced by gendered expectations and limited opportunities for economic and social mobility. The analysis also highlights the constraints of her subaltern position, showing how patriarchy and structural inequalities limit her agency. While Nazneen actively redefines her life and identity, Gül's identity changes emerge more subtly and her awakening is internal.

The textual analysis demonstrates the approaches that Gül, Fuat, Saniye, and Ceyda make use of to build their identity.

Gül is primarily a nostalgic type, deeply tied to her hometown and culture in Türkiye. Although she gains self-awareness and begins questioning traditional gender roles, she never learns German or integrates fully into German society, remaining rooted in the past.

Fuat also begins as nostalgic, viewing Germany only as a temporary stop while his ambitions remain tied to Türkiye. Over time, however, he adopts certain aspects of hybridity, integrating some German habits and perspectives while still holding onto Turkish customs.

Saniye exemplifies the hybrid strategy. She learns German, works, drives, and participates actively in German society while preserving her cultural heritage. Her courage and openness inspire Gül to reflect on her own limitations.

Ceyda, Gül's daughter, represents the second-generation hybrid identity. She is confident, financially independent, and socially integrated into German society. She rejects traditional

constraints, such as staying in an unhappy marriage, while still being supported by her mother in her pursuit of freedom and autonomy.

Sevgi, Saniye's daughter, is an example of the cosmopolitan type. She transcends the struggle between two cultures and embraces a global perspective, participating fully in German society without abandoning her Turkish roots. She actively works to improve her Turkish language skills while pursuing a professional career and living independently.

The progression from nostalgic (Gül, Fuat) to hybrid (Saniye, Ceyda) to cosmopolitan (Sevgi) reflects generational shifts in belonging, integration, and identity formation within the Turkish-German diaspora.

This thesis demonstrates that migration is not a singular event but an ongoing process of negotiation between past and present, heritage and adaptation. Both *Brick Lane* and *The Anatolian Blues Trilogy* challenge binary understandings by portraying women whose identities are created in liminal spaces marked by tension, ambivalence, resilience, and compromise.

The study reveals that hybridity is multifaceted: it can be slow or rapid, conscious or unconscious, empowering or destabilizing. Female agency in these narratives is shaped by the interplay of individual choices, relationships, and structural conditions.

Ultimately, these two works capture the diverse ways migrant women navigate identity and belonging. Both Nazneen and Gül embody the ongoing, dynamic process of identity formation in a transnational world, one that resists closure and remains open to transformation.

WORKS CITED

- Abbots, Emma-Jayne. "Approaches to Food and Migration: Rootedness, Being and Belonging." *The Handbook of Food and Anthropology*, edited by Jakob A. Klein and James L. Watson, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016, pp. 115–32.
- Ahmad, Dohra. *The Penguin Book of Migration Literature: Departures, Arrivals, Generations, Returns*. Penguin Books, 2019.
- Akçeşme, Banu. "Exploring Un/homely Lives in Mohsin Hamid's Novel the Reluctant Fundamentalist." *KARE*, no. 12, 2021, pp. 16–44. <https://doi.org/10.38060/kare.1031072>.
- Al Mamun, Hossain. "Brick Lane: Mirroring Nazneen's Metamorphosis." *European Scientific Journal*, 2014, pp. 509–17.
- Ali, Monica. "FAQs." monicaali.com, www.monicaali.com/faqs. Accessed 13 July 2025.
- . "Where I'm Coming from." *The Guardian*, 17 June 2003, www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/17/artsfeatures.fiction. Accessed 13 July 2025.
- Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane*. Black Swan, 2004.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "The World and the Home." *Social Text*, 31/32, 1992, pp. 141–53.
- . *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bibi, Maria, et al. "Sense of Loss and Desire for Homeland: A Postcolonial Perspective of Salt and Saffron." *International Journal of Human and Society*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2024, pp. 269–80.
- Boerema, Christina, et al. "Sewing in the Lives of Immigrant Women." *Journal of Occupational Science*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2010, pp. 78–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2010.9686678>.
- Carré, Valérie. "Schwierigkeiten Der Kulturellen Hybridisierung Bei Selim Özdoğan Und Thomas Arslan." *Recherches germaniques-Hors-série*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2006, pp. 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.3406/reger.2006.1309>.
- Castles, Stephen, and Mark J. Miller. *The Age of Migration*. 2nd ed. Macmillan Education UK, 1998.

- Çelikel, Mehmet Ali. "Traumatized Immigrant: Monica Ali's Brick Lane." *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2022, pp. 169–80. <https://doi.org/10.47777/cankujhss.1160709>.
- Ceylan, Mevlüt. "Göç Ve Edebiyat: Londra'nın Türk Göçmenleri." *Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları/Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, vol. 23, 2021, pp. 427–61. <https://doi.org/10.30767/diledeara.851646>.
- Chakravorty, Mrinalini. "Brick Lane Blockades: The Bioculturalism of Migrant Domesticity." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2012, pp. 503–28. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2012.0053>.
- Chen, Kuan-Hsing. "The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An Interview with Stuart Hall by Kuan-Hsing Chen." *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, Routledge, 2005, pp. 486–505. Comedia.
- Connell, John, et al., editors. *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*. Routledge, 1995.
- Cormack, Alistair. "Migration and the Politics of Narrative Form: Realism and the Postcolonial Subject in Brick Lane." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2006, pp. 695–721. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4489184>.
- Elste, Nico. *Von der Migration zur Integration Literarische Konstruktionen von Kultur und Kulturkonflikt in der deutsch-türkischen Literatur nach '89*. 2012, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, PhD thesis.
- Feng, Pin-chia. "Out of Brick Lane: The Novel of Awakening and Monica Ali's Brick Lane". *Tamkang Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2009, pp. 15-28.
- Frank, Søren. *Migration and Literature: Günter Grass, Milan Kundera, Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjærstad*. 1st ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- . "The Emergence of a Literature of Migration (In Europe): When, Why, What, Where (Not)." *Contemporary Developments in Emergent Literatures and the New Europe*, edited by César Domínguez and Manus O'Dwyer, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, 2014, pp. 37–54.
- Frouws, Bram, et al. *Why People Migrate: Insights and Key Messages Drawn from a Decade of MMC Research and 4Mi Data Collection*. Mixed Migration Centre, 2022.

- Golban, Petru, and Derya Benli. "The Bildungsroman and Building a Hybrid Identity in the Postcolonial Context: Migration as Formative Experience in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*." *Culture, Literature and Migration*, edited by Ali Tilbe and Rania M. Rafik Khalil, Transnational Press London, 2019, pp. 7–56.
- Göğebakan, Meryem. "The Motif Of Fate in Selim Özdoğan's Novel „Die Tochter des Schmieds”". *ZfWT*, vol 14, no.1 , 2022, pp. 173- 182.
- Guignery, Vanessa, editor. *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1998, pp. 222–37.
- Hlavínová, Jana. Selim Özdoğan „Die Tochter Des Schmieds“ Und „Heimstraße 52“. Diploma thesis, Masaryk University Brno, 2013.
- Hofmann, Michael. "Gül's Welt Erzählen Und Modernisierung in Selim Özdoğan's: Die Tochter Des Schmieds." *Studien Zur Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, vol. 19, 2012, pp. 155–68.
- Hoque, Aminul. *British-Islamic Identity: Third-generation Bangladeshis from East London*. A Trentham Book Institute of Education Press, 2015.
- International Organization for Migration. *Female Migrants: Bridging the Gaps Throughout the Life Cycle: Selected Papers of the UNFPA-IOM Expert Group Meeting*. UNFPA; IOM, 2006.
- Kaupp, Steffen. "Interview Mit Selim Özdoğan." Donahue et al., *andererseits*, pp. 375–85.
- Keeley, Brian, editor. *International Migration: The Human Face of Globalisation*. 2009.
- Kılıç, Demir Ayşen. "Woman, Here and There: Transnational Struggles of Nazneen in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and Christine in *Hot Water Man* by Deborah Moggach." *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 37, 2023, pp. 1261–70. <https://doi.org/10.29000/rumelide.1406008>.
- King, Russell, et al. Preface. *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, pp. IX–XVI.
- Kosmalska, Joanna. "Defining Migration Writing." *Journal of Literary Theory*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2022, pp. 331–50. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jlt-2022-2028>.

- Kraidy, Marwan M. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Temple University Press, 2005.
- Moslund, Sten Pultz. *Migration Literature and Hybridity: The Different Speeds of Transcultural Change*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Oussedik, Sylvia. "Food and Cuisine: Part of the Migration Process." *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, vol. 17, 2012, pp. 55–60.
- Özdoğan, Selim. "Interview Mit Selim Özdoğan." Donahue et al., *andererseits*, pp. 375–85.
- . *The Blacksmith's Daughter*. Verlag Voland & Quist, 2021.
- . *52 Factory Lane*. Verlag Voland & Quist, 2022.
- . *A Light Still Burns*. Verlag Voland & Quist, 2023.
- Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. "Hybridity, so What? The Anti-Hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition." *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2001, pp. 219–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632760122051715>.
- Pourjafari, Fatemeh, and Abdolali Vahidpour. "Migration Literature: A Theoretical Perspective." *The Drawn Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2014, pp. 679–92.
- Rostami, Ali Akbar Moghaddasi, and Farid Parvaneh. "The Notion of Unhomeliness in the Pickup: Homi Bhabha Revisited." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2016, pp. 157–60. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.7n.1p.157>.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. Granta in association with Penguin, 1991.
- Scheller, Jörg. "Man Muss Die Heimat Nicht Den Rechten Überlassen." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 17 Feb. 2020, www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/selim-oezdoan-hat-etwas-gegen-den-migrationshintergrund-ld.1540344. Accessed 14 July 2025.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 66–111.
- Stapleton, Amy, et al. The Integration of Non-EU Migrant Women in Ireland. *ESRI*, 2022. ESRI Research Series 148.

- Süess, Silvia. "Wenn Du Es Nicht Einmal Als Nudel Schaffst ...". *Die Wochenzeitung*, 16 June 2016.
- Tataru, Georgiana Florentina. "Migration – an Overview on Terminology, Causes and Effects." *Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Law*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2020, pp. 10–29. <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumenlaw/24>.
- Töngür, Nejat A. "Rebellion: Second Generation Bangladeshi Immigrants in Brick Lane by Monica Ali." *0*, vol. 6, no. 26, 2013, pp. 561–67.
- Tsegay, Samson Maekele. "International Migration: Definition, Causes and Effects." *Genealogy*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2023, pp. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy7030061>.
- United Nations. Women and International Migration. 2004, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2004-Women&Migration.pdf. Accessed 15 July 2025.
- . Women and International Migration. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women. 2004, www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/3/docs/P01_DAW.pdf. Accessed 15 July 2025.
- . International Migrant Stock 2024: Key Facts and Figures. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024. UN DESA/POP/2024/DC/NO. 13.
- Wagner, Consuela. "Migration and the Creation of Hybrid Identity: Chances and Challenges." *Proceedings of the Harvard Square Symposium, Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2016.
- Ward, Catherine, and Irene Styles. "Guilt as a Consequence of Migration." *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2012, pp. 330–43. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aps.321>.
- White, Paul E. "Geography, Literature and Migration." *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, Edited by Connell et al., pp. 1–19.