

From Arranged Marriage to Self-determination: An Interdisciplinary Reading of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003)

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Abstract

Based on the assumptions of Self-determination Theory (SDT) with reference to Islamic feminist ideas, this paper investigates Bangladeshi women's quest for psychological growth and agency in Monica Ali's debut novel *Brick Lane* (2003). According to the psychological perspective of SDT, the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy reinforces intrinsic motivation and internalisation, leading to psychological well-being. Applying the SDT perspective to Ali's novel, the paper focuses on analysing the types of motivation triggering Bangladeshi women's actions and the relationship between these types of motivation and their psychological growth. SDT seeks to empower people by foregrounding motivation and internalization. Therefore, it is critically illuminating to wed SDT ideas with the feminist perspective since woman's empowerment and agency are pivotal tenets in feminism. In particular, this paper refers to Islamic feminist ideas since the novel's main subject is the status of Bangladeshi Muslim women. This research discusses how a Bangladeshi woman's life is dominated by extrinsic factors like fate, arranged marriage, and other patriarchal conditions that thwart her basic psychological needs. However, the novel offers an optimistic vision of the possibility of achieving psychological growth and empowerment for Bangladeshi women through processes of intrinsic motivation and internalisation.

Keywords:

Brick Lane; Monica Ali; self-determination theory; Islamic feminism; Bangladeshi woman; psychological needs

This paper aims to employ an interdisciplinary approach to study British-Bangladeshi writer Monica Ali's debut novel *Brick Lane* (2003). Set in both Bangladesh and Brick Lane area in London, the novel foregrounds how socio-cultural and environmental conditions as well as personal motivation affect the psychological growth and well-being of Bangladeshi women. Based on the critical views of SDT and the feminist perspective, the current study argues that extrinsic factors like fate, arranged marriage, and other patriarchal ideas dominating the Bangladeshi socio-cultural context thwart basic psychological need satisfaction, leading to the psychological ill-being, lack of motivation, and objectification of Bangladeshi women. However, the novel gives us an optimistic vision of the possibility of achieving psychological growth and agency among Bangladeshi women through processes of intrinsic motivation and internalisation. This movement from extrinsic motivation in which the main character is helpless to intrinsic motivation which marks psychological growth and empowerment is represented in the narrative structure as well as the language of Ali's novel.

A psychological theory of human motivation, SDT was first established by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the 1970s. Since then, it has been elaborated by many other researchers and applied to many fields. As noted by Deci and Ryan, self-determination refers to the freedom of choice (112). A key tenet of SDT is that human beings across cultures have three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Satisfying these needs leads to the enhancement of psychological growth and well-being, whereas frustrating these needs triggers psychological ill-being (Ryan and Deci 3, 10, 242, 259, 263; Vansteenkiste and Ryan 264; Vansteenkiste et al. 1-2, 10). In SDT, autonomy means that one's behaviour is self-endorsed; it stems from one's own volition or choice. When one's actions are authentic, they produce a sense of integrity and wellness. On the other hand, lack of autonomy causes depression, conflict, and pressure. The second psychological need, competence, refers to one's ability to make use of one's creative skills and expertise to feel effective. Positive feedback, praise, and solving difficult problems all satisfy the need for competence. If this need is not satisfied, one may feel helpless, impotent, and worthless. The third basic need, namely relatedness, refers to the feeling of connectedness, belonging, and significance to others. When satisfied, this need creates a sense of warmth, vitality, and bonding. When frustrated, however, it makes one feel alienated, lonely, and rejected (Deci and Ryan 5-6; Gagné and Deci 1-2; Ryan and Deci 10-14, 262-63; Vansteenkiste et al. 3-4). When basic psychological needs are satisfied inevitably, people become happy, integral, vital, motivated, and self-

determined. The frustration of these needs, on the other hand, causes people to be vulnerable, and depressed.

As a predictor of self-determination, human motivation is classified into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as an innate human tendency to seek challenges, explore novelty, and do things for their own sake out of pure interest, excitement, and enjoyment. An intrinsically motivated person does not seek to get any external reward for his/her behaviour. Rather, the reward is intrinsic, represented in the development of the emotions of enjoyment, excitement, and interest (Deci 23, 61-65; Deci and Ryan 32-34, 232; Gagné and Deci 1; Ryan and Deci 14). It also entails that the individual's basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence are satisfied. Thus, it seems that when one is engaged in intrinsically motivated behaviours, one is more likely to experience greater levels of vitality and creativity. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation means to do something for external reasons. These reasons may be tolerable like social position, job, salary, etc., or intolerable such as avoiding punishment or overcoming threats. This means that extrinsically motivated behaviours are not voluntary or volitional; when one is pressured to do things, intrinsic motivation is decreased, and one's basic psychological needs are not satisfied (Deci and Ryan 49-55). SDT psychologists argue that extrinsic factors like threats, rewards, orders, surveillance, and imposed goals hinder autonomy and competence, reduce intrinsic motivation, and lead to ill-being. On the contrary, giving choices reinforces autonomy and competence, enhances intrinsic motivation, and optimises well-being. (Deci et al., 1981; Gagné and Deci 2014; Greguras et al., 2014)

Although extrinsic motivation is not as valuable as intrinsic motivation, people need to learn to cope up with it in order to achieve psychological growth and well-being. A human being is a social creature who cannot afford to live in isolation. To live in a human society, one has to deal with external factors. For their integrity and well-being, individuals have to learn how to assimilate these factors rather than feel that they are imposed on them. This leads to the psychological process of internalisation. SDT defines internalisation as "the process of taking in values, beliefs, or behavioral regulations from external sources and transforming them into one's own [...] the processes through which extrinsic behaviors become an established aspect of people's minds and motives" (Ryan and Deci 180). In other words, internalisation transforms extrinsic factors into intrinsic motivation, allowing one to accept them willingly. One reason for internalising external factors is that one needs to be connected to others. After all,

relatedness is a basic psychological need without which one's psychological growth and well-being cannot be realised. Individuals often endorse group norms and cultural codes because they make them feel connected and related to others (183). Feeling that values and regulations come from within rather than being imposed by an external force, "individuals can experience more or less autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation" (Greguras et al. 144). Accordingly, internalisation reinforces autonomy as another basic psychological need. Furthermore, when one's needs for autonomy and relatedness are satisfied through internalisation, one's sense of vitality, creativity, and competence can be enhanced. (Ryan and Deci 97)

Since human beings have to deal with external factors, it is obvious that human motivation and psychological growth are greatly affected by environmental factors. SDT assumes that people of different cultural contexts are basically oriented towards ambition, achievement, motivation, learning, and self-improvement. One's socio-cultural environment, however, supports or diminishes this orientation. A supportive environment could help an individual to satisfy his/her basic psychological needs, leading him/her to feel more self-determined and motivated to achieve personal and psychological growth and well-being. On the contrary, an unsupportive environment thwarts such psychological needs and leads to ill-being, causing an individual to lack motivation and be less self-determined (Hennessey 294; Ryan and Deci 8-10, 16-21; Vansteenkiste and Ryan 263-65; Vansteenkiste et al. 1-2). Several studies have connected between need-thwarting environments and indicators of ill-being. For example, excessive controlling and negative practices by parents such as divorce, separation, physical punishment and other forms of maltreatment have been found to trigger dishonesty, lying, and aggressive behaviour among children (Vansteenkiste and Ryan 265-69). Other experimental studies have reported depressive symptoms with children whose parents resort to pressuring policies like "guilt-induction, shaming, and love withdrawal have been found to report more depressive symptoms" (269-270). People who suffer from psychological need thwarting may also resort to compensatory behaviours such as alcohol abuse, smoking, and binge eating (270-71). Those people whose psychological needs are not satisfied do not have the energy to have self-control, so they become prone to vulnerabilities.

The feminist ideas of agency and empowerment are closely related to the SDT views on motivation, well-being, and psychological growth. Empowerment is "a method of social transformation and achieving gender equality [...] a broad development process that enables people to gain self-confidence and self-esteem"

(Momsen 14). When applied to women, the term empowerment entails that power relations need to be changed because women are thought to be underestimated. Empowering women helps them to acquire “the ability to make strategic life choices,” thus enjoying the agency they have been denied (Cornwall and Edwards 9). Agency is an important concept in feminism; it is defined as “the capacity to act” and make decisions (Aguiar 37). For a woman to enjoy agency is a step forward towards full empowerment. Most Islamic feminists such as Assia Djebar, Fatima Mernissi, Riffat Hasan, Zaynab al-Ghazali, and Asma Barlas argue that woman’s agency and empowerment should stem from within the Islamic religion itself (Cooke 61). Sticking to the true principles and instructions of religion is woman’s key for agency and empowerment, a view endorsed by the female protagonist in *Brick Lane*. That is because, as Islamic feminists believe, Islam is not against woman’s rights:

If women’s rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Koran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite. The elite faction is trying to convince us that their egotistical, highly subjective, and mediocre view of culture and society has a sacred basis. (Mernissi ix)

True Islam guarantees women full citizenship and agency. As Mernissi puts it, woman’s dignity, equality, and political rights are “a true part of the Muslim tradition” (viii). In the same vein, other scholars maintain that gender equality is fully guaranteed in Islam, and that the circulation of patriarchal practices is not caused by the Quran and Hadith themselves, but the result of the misinterpretation of these texts. Therefore, Islamic feminists call for resorting to religion when attempting to empower woman and outline gender roles. (Kynsilehto 9-10; Ahmed-Ghosh, “Introduction” 4; Zia 200; Cooke 61-63)

Brick Lane has been interpreted by many critics. The majority of critical studies have analysed the novel from a postcolonial perspective. In particular, they have tackled the socio-historical contexts of immigration, dislocation, multiculturalism, hybridity, the Asian-British family, self-knowledge, and the construction of identity (Campbell- Hall, 2009; Cormack, 2006; Poon, 2009; Rezaie, 2014; Upstone, 2007; Yousef, 2019). Based on feminist lenses, a considerable number of critical studies has seen the novel as a representation of gender, economic liberation of women, and woman’s agency. Some of these studies have argued that *Brick Lane* is the first novel to highlight the issues of Bangladeshi women in London (Brouillette, 2009; Marx, 2006; Sinha, 2008; Ziegler, 2007). Employing the same feminist perspective, several studies have

discussed controversial issues related to the hijab and the Muslim woman's identity and emancipation (Germanà, 2011; Pereira-Ares, 2018; Pereira-Ares, 2013). Other studies have dealt with the issues of ethnicity and racial tension in London especially at the outset of the 21st century (Chakravorty, 2012; Perfect, 2014; Procter, 2006). Several critics such as Margarita Estévez-Saá and Noemí Pereira-Ares (2016) and Shakir Mustafa (2009) discuss the novel within the context of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath as well as the issue of religious fundamentalism. On the other hand, psychological studies on *Brick Lane* have not yet received considerable critical attention. The impact of migration, increased mobility, and new geographies on the migrant's psyche have been the focus of two studies by Françoise Kral and Hassan Bin Zubair et al. Apart from these two articles, no major study has applied psychological theories to Ali's text.

Set mainly between 1985 and 2002 in both Bangladesh and Brick Lane area in East London, UK, Ali's *Brick Lane* tells the story of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who, at the age of 18, was sent to UK in an arranged marriage bargain. Her Bangladeshi husband, Chanu, is more than double her age. He is another father-figure for her with patriarchal ideas concerning the roles of woman and the necessity of restricting her mobility. Whether in Bangladesh or in UK, Nazneen's actions are motivated by extrinsic factors that diminish her autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Consequently, her psychological growth and agency are hampered, and she suffers from frustration, depression, lack of motivation, and objectification. Nazneen's thwarting environment, however, fails to stifle her desire for self-determination and agency. Employing the third-person omniscient narrative technique, which is optimal for delving deeply into the psychological make-up and motivation of her protagonist, Ali focuses on fathoming Nazneen's journey of psychological growth and empowerment.

Ali employs narrative techniques in a way that ascertains the impact of one's background and social milieu on one's psychological growth. Employing flashback and narrative overlapping throughout the novel, the author demonstrates that environmental factors cause Nazneen's basic psychological needs to be diminished and force her to accept extrinsic motivation that inhibit her autonomy and competence. Nazneen's early life in Bangladesh is controlled by the traditional belief in the necessity of total submission to one's fate. Being "so starkly at the mercy of fate and poverty," Bangladesh, as Ali's novel demonstrates, is unlikely "to provide an alternative place for Nazneen to imagine her emotional development and indeed her desire to be free" (Chakravorty 521). Nazneen's propensity for development is undermined owing to the lack of social and

environmental support. Her actions reflect the impact of her mother's teachings about fate and submission to masculine domination. Nazneen's very existence is closely connected to the work of fate. She was thought to be a stillborn baby; she needed medical help, but her mother insisted on leaving her baby to her fate: "[W]e must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it" (3). From her environment, Nazneen comes to learn the principle that "[w]hat could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne" (5). When a person's actions are not based on free choice but rather the result of extrinsic motivation imposed on him/her, he/she is not expected to have pleasure or happiness. Nazneen's goal is merely to avoid punishment or to obey the dictates of her family as well as fate. Her mother has taught her that a woman is fated to lack agency: "If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men." (60)

Arranged marriage is a manifestation of patriarchal practices imposed on Nazneen. From Bangladesh, where she was born, to Tower Hamlets in London, where she was transported as an arranged wife, Nazneen is exposed to the same patriarchal and need-thwarting practices which hinder her psychological growth. Marian Aguiar defines arranged marriage as "the displacement of agency from the individual" (5). This means that the arrangement of marriage is carried out, not by the woman involved, but by other members of her family particularly her father, brother, or uncle. Thus, arranged marriage is seen "as antagonistic to women's agency" (34). Early in the novel, Nazneen learns that love marriage is not accepted when her sister Hasina is relentlessly punished for aspiring to have a married life based on love. Marriage for her becomes an indication of the work of fate and traditions rather than her personal choice. While Nazneen was still 18 years old, her father married her to a 40-year-old Bangladeshi man living in Brick Lane. Nazneen's marriage as well as her departure to London is completely devoid of intrinsic motivation or agency: "She was in this country because that was what had happened to her" (*Brick Lane* 53). In feminist terms, Nazneen's agency is entirely displaced in so far as her marriage arrangements are concerned.

The novelist highlights the significance of language in the process of psychological growth. Unable to speak English in UK, Nazneen lacks one of the essential mechanisms of satisfying the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Crippled by the lack of language, she cannot express herself nor connect to others around her: "Not knowing English, and discouraged from learning it, she is culturally trapped in her apartment" (Wall 357). For Nazneen, her apartment is a "large box" where she is trapped and isolated from

the world outside (*Brick Lane* 12). Ironically, even if Nazneen goes out of the box, she will still be isolated because she does not possess the essential tools of communication. Longing for connectedness with others, Nazneen thinks of making contact with a white lady, “the tattoo lady” who spends all her time looking from her window, like Nazneen. However, Nazneen is frustrated by the fact that she “could [only] say two things in English: sorry and thank you” (7). Language here impedes relatedness as an essential psychological need. Indeed, Nazneen desires to improve her English; she begs her husband to allow her to go to English lessons with Razia, another Bangladeshi woman, but he refuses. When Nazneen steps out of her box-like apartment for the first time to explore her surroundings, she does not only get lost, but she also feels unrelated and invisible because she does not possess the basic tool of connectedness, namely language. Unable to speak with fellow pedestrians or read the signs to know where she is, she becomes socially invisible, a ghostly figure without real presence or influence (40). It is here that Nazneen’s autonomy and relatedness are undermined. Without linguistic tools, she can hardly be self-regulated or related to others.

Labour is another space for empowering women and obtaining agency. According to Nazia Hussein, the socio-economic structures in Bangladesh are generally “discriminatory towards women, denying women any agency or autonomy” (3). Not only does labour yield financial benefits, but it can also empower an individual and generate a sense of competence and relatedness. In 1976, Bangladeshi Grameen Bank, a microfinance organization, attempted to help to empower women by giving them small loans to finance their small businesses (Momsen 212). In so doing, the bank enabled poor women to have a source of income and attend group meetings (216). One aspect of woman’s empowerment has to do with “the acquisition of material means through which women empower themselves as individuals” (Cornwall and Edwards 8). Nazneen desires to go out for work to help her family and feel connected to the world around her. Work would allow her to be part of the dynamics of the economic and public life of the region as a mechanism of her empowerment. Moreover, work would give her the chance to test her competence and skills and see to what extent she can succeed in a competitive society. In accordance with most Bangladeshi men’s point of view in diaspora, however, Chanu disapproves of his wife’s work outside the house. Several scholars have stated that, unlike other ethnic minorities, Bangladeshi women are generally absent from the workplace in UK (Ziegler 150). When Bangladeshi women are allowed to work, it is mostly done from home. According to Naila Kabeer, Bangladeshi women in both Dhaka and London are

“overwhelmingly concentrated in the homeworking sector” (viii). She also notices that in UK, “Bangladeshi women [are] found working from home, in apparent conformity with purdah norms” (228). Chanu sticks to his Bangladeshi patriarchal traditions which restrict woman’s mobility: “If you go out, ten people will say, ‘I saw her walking on the street.’ And I will look like a fool” (*Brick Lane* 30). Chanu transforms UK into another Bangladesh where purdah norms should be applied.

According to SDT, the deprivation of the basic psychological needs leads to various behavioural outcomes. Research in human motivation show that environments which thwart basic psychological needs cause individuals to become irresponsible, defensive, self-centred, and even aggressive (Ryan and Deci 9; Vansteenkiste and Ryan 263). Moreover, it is proved that people who suffer from depression, rejection, and disappointment often experience lack of motivation (Ryan and Deci 257). It is further postulated that negative parenting practices and maltreatment are forms of psychological need frustration factors that inevitably trigger negative symptoms. One of these symptoms is the tendency to binge eating, an eating disorder in which one consumes large quantities of food in a short time (Vansteenkiste and Ryan 265, 271). In this respect, Nazneen is a typical case of the repercussions of psychological need frustration. Owing to the denial of her basic psychological needs, she becomes vulnerable to different forms of psychological disorders. For example, she suffers from lack of intrinsic motivation, a psychological state indicating that her actions are devoid of vitality, which is pivotal for personal and psychological growth. She has become entirely passive as a result of “the influence of an extremely fatalistic mother in rural Bangladesh” (Rezaie 5). In London, Nazneen becomes depressed, losing interest in life itself. Responses such as “It does not matter,” “I don’t mind,” and “If you say so” characterise her conversations with her husband (36, 76-77). Binge eating as a symptom of psychological need frustration is also traced in Nazneen’s behaviour; whenever she is upset or frustrated, she resorts to binge eating at night while her husband and children are asleep (58). Although Nazneen is mostly passive, she is sometimes aggressive owing to the frustration of her psychological needs. For example, when she is displeased with Chanu, she mixes up his files, puts his dirty socks back in the drawer unwashed, and lets the razor blade hurt his little toe, causing it to bleed, when she cuts his corns (45). This aggressive behaviour, however, never leads to any significant outcomes, and her husband never notices them. Such moments of revolt provide clues about Nazneen’s repressed dreams of agency that have not been completely relinquished.

Nazneen's need-thwarting environment and patriarchal practices fail to completely stifle her desire for self-determination and agency. Jung's model of psychological growth demonstrates that one's fantasies are signs that "there are things in the psyche [that] have their own life" and need to be produced (183). In other words, even if a person's actions show lack of motivation and anergia, there may be repressed fantasies that work against such apparent tranquillity. In time, such repressed fantasies may pour out, surprising one of one's own hidden productive power. Jung's ideas here recall the SDT proponents' emphasis on the significance of intrinsic motivation as a form of stimulation. These fantasies and 'things in the psyche' refer to one's inner motivation which is essential for one's psychological growth and well-being. Intrinsic motivation means that "one follows one's interests" which stem from within (Deci and Ryan 12). Throughout the novel, Nazneen has hidden fantasies appearing in her dreams as well as daydreams that indicate her yearning for freedom and self-determination. These fantasies intrinsically motivate her to strive for satisfying her psychological needs and hunger for agency.

The employment of third-person omniscient narrative technique helps to bring to light the main character's hidden fantasies of self-determination and desire for empowerment. Shortly after her marriage, Nazneen's internal yearning for self-determination is ignited when she watches ice-skating on TV. Although she has never seen or practised ice-skating, she is drawn to the scene and feels identified with the ice-skating woman. This is a form of internalisation in which Nazneen turns an external factor into intrinsic motivation. The woman's agency, autonomy, and competence recall Nazneen's fantasies. She grows curious about how the woman is skilful; she is fond of how she can regulate her own movements. It is this sense of freedom, joy, and autonomy that Nazneen longs for. Captivated, she asks her husband to provide her with more information about ice-skating. She also makes watching ice-skating on TV her daily routine. While watching ice-skating, 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" (*Brick Lane* 27). Nazneen is haunted by this motif of ice-skating for many years. Her fantasies take shape when she begins to try on clothes, climb on the bed, move her body, and imagine herself an ice-skater accompanied and spun by a handsome male skater.

The narrative dramatizes Nazneen's hunger for psychological growth and quest for agency and empowerment. This desire is expressed in her attempt to

relate to others and show her competence and autonomy. When Hasina is lost in Dhaka, Nazneen decides to go out, wandering all alone through the streets of London in a symbolic support of her sister (*Brick Lane* 41). At the end of that journey, Nazneen's sense of relatedness, competence, and autonomy is optimised. This experience opens for her new empowering avenues for personal and psychological growth:

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!
(45)

It is here that some of the characteristic features of both third-person and first-person narrative styles are mixed together. In so doing, the author combines “the realism of assessment that belongs to third-person narration with the realism of presentation that comes from first-person narration” (Lodge 45). With this sort of narrative synthesis, the author is able to represent the quest for psychological growth in the novel in an objective way while at the same time takes into consideration individual consciousness. This experience provides Nazneen with all the prerequisites of self-determination, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For one thing, she entirely regulates herself depending on her own ability to initiate dialogue with others. She begins to relate to others and feel her worth. When a stranger approaches Nazneen and tries to speak to her, she replies: “Sorry” (*Brick Lane* 43). When the man understands her, she feels empowered; she is finally able to relate to others: “She had spoken, in English, to a stranger, and she had been understood and acknowledged. It was very little. But it was something” (43). Being able to assert herself in English, Nazneen “becomes visible again” (Poon 432). Psychologically speaking, this social visibility marks the satisfaction of relatedness as a basic need. From a feminist perspective, too, this scene marks Nazneen's growing empowerment and agency.

Seethed by her dreams of agency and empowerment, Nazneen begins to question things around her, relying on her own inner factors of growth, namely her intrinsic motivation. For SDT proponents, intrinsic motivation indicates that the individual is ready for “taking interest, seeking challenges, and striving for voice and connection” (Ryan and Deci 9). Being intrinsically motivated now, Nazneen seeks to ascertain her worth and satisfy her psychological needs. The outcome of her experience of going out alone ignites her desire for relatedness

and autonomy. She eventually persuades her husband to allow her to work from home. Nazneen's participation in the public and economic life of her community takes shape when she starts mending clothes for a factory through the medium of a young British-born Bangladeshi man, Karim.

Nazneen's acquaintance with Karim represents a turning point in her journey of psychological growth. Not only does he provide her with income with which to help her family and her sister, but he also empowers her by widening the scope of her relatedness. Unlike the limited world of her husband, Karim's world extends her horizon and connects her to a larger community of fellow Muslims everywhere. A leader of a fundamentalist Islamic group, Karim tells Nazneen about the suffering of Muslims in Palestine, Bosnia, and other places. He "excited her" with his knowledge of a world which is inaccessible to her (*Brick Lane* 198). Unlike Chanu for whom she is just a receptive spectator, Karim positively reacts to her responses, and he even lets her attend political meetings with him. Karim thus contributes to empowering Nazneen; he helps her to "project herself beyond the confines of the stifling atmosphere of domestic life" (Kral 68). Feeling related to a larger Muslim community beyond Tower Hamlets where she lives, she decides to donate money to relieve the suffering of other Muslims. Nazneen's desire for relatedness even leads her to develop a love relationship with Karim. For Ryan and Deci, falling in love is an example of the experiences which lead to relatedness satisfaction (258). Nazneen's relationship with Karim is not purely sexual, but rather a part of her quest for relatedness and recognition. Moreover, through her secret encounters with Karim, she comes to express her agency and recognise the worth of herself. Nazneen's intrinsic motivation here is augmented owing to the satisfaction of her need for relatedness. Contrary to Campbell-Hall's argument that Nazneen's sexual affair with Karim "indicate[s] a crucial change in [her] thinking, from an emphasis on communal considerations to a preference for the well-being of the individual," the current paper argues that Nazneen's revolting action reflects her longing for relatedness (Campbell-Hall 178). She has never been related to her husband, and she has always been confined to her narrow space with a little window from which she can look at, but not communicate with, the surrounding world.

In addition to relatedness satisfaction, Nazneen's intrinsic motivation is triggered by satisfying her need for competence and autonomy. The feeling of autonomy and competence drawn from her work as well as her participation in social and political life makes her satisfied with her life; she even comes to internalise extrinsic factors like house work. Nazneen finds out that "work in

itself, performed with a desire for perfection, was capable of giving satisfaction” (*Brick Lane* 248). Researchers have found that when individuals are intrinsically motivated, they become “extremely interested in what they are doing and experience a sense of flow” (Deci and Ryan 29). Feeling intrinsically motivated and pleased, Nazneen no longer feels that serving her husband as well as cleaning the house is a boring thing (*Brick Lane* 248). Intrinsic motivation is capable of invigorating the individual, extracting new meanings from his/her otherwise meaningless life.

The satisfaction of Nazneen’s basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence finds expression in the development of her decision-making capacity which is another sign of her empowerment and agency. The positive energy generated from her relationship with Karim feeds her hunger for self-regulation. A decisive moment for developing her autonomy takes place when she is faced by her husband’s decision to go back to Bangladesh. At the same time, Karim wants her to ask for divorce and marry him. Distracted by her critical situation while chopping chillies, Nazneen rubs her eye, causing her eyeball to explode with pain. The pain in her eyeball incites the conflict inside her concerning whether to stay in UK or go back to Bangladesh with her husband. In an enlightening moment and out of physical and psychological suffering, Nazneen’s metamorphosis is born. Ali employs again the narrative synthesis of third-person and first-person narration to show the beginning of Nazneen’s metamorphosis and how she decides to speak out: “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” (*Brick Lane* 339). Nazneen’s statements here usher in a future full of possibilities, a future in which she is, self-determined and self-motivated, heading towards empowerment, thus reinforcing her personal and psychological growth. According to Elora Halim Chowdhury (2015), speaking out “serves as the privilege signifier of empowerment within development discourse and global feminism” (222). The new Nazneen is no longer guided by the dictates of others. Now that she is energised by subjectivity and agency through her relationship with Karim as well as through work, Nazneen becomes enthusiastically self-determined.

This new insight motivates Nazneen to take the two most significant decisions in her journey for psychological growth: staying in London with her daughters and leaving Karim. The psychologically matured and empowered Nazneen is able to evaluate her situation and come up with the best solutions for herself and her family. It is here that the author returns to the first-person narrative

technique, allowing Nazneen to speak out her own thoughts. Using her critical and analytical skills, she recognises the truth about her relationship with Karim. Self-regulated now, Nazneen travels all alone to Covent Garden to tell Karim her decision: "I wasn't me, and you weren't you. From the very beginning we didn't see things" (*Brick Lane* 382). She realises that Karim wants to marry her for the very thing she is trying to leave behind, namely lack of subjectivity. Although she loves Karim for giving her a sense of relatedness she misses, she discovers that her relationship with him will eventually cripple her. Nazneen concludes that Karim wants her to be a mere unspoiled woman, by which he means a woman without autonomy or agency. For him, she is "his real thing. A Bengali wife. A Bengali mother. An idea of home. An idea of himself that he found in her" (382). For both her husband and Karim, Nazneen is a woman with limited agency and social possibilities. Nazneen's psychological growth is also reflected in accepting responsibility for her mistakes. It is noticed that Karim tries to convince Nazneen that committing adultery, a mortal sin in Islam, is the work of fate, and that one is destined to have his/her share of adultery (*Brick Lane* 288). In this way, Karim escapes responsibility for his actions. Having experienced psychological growth, Nazneen comes to believe in self-determination. Committing adultery is just a choice for which she has to accept responsibility as a first step towards self-reconstruction. For that end, she decides to leave all these crippling sources including her husband and Karim.

Disappointed in both Chanu and Karim, Nazneen eventually stands up for her own well-being. For feminist writers, "empowerment is not something that is 'done to' women but is done by them for themselves" (Cornwall and Edwards 7). Autonomy reinforces competence; when Nazneen becomes fully responsible for herself and her daughters after the departure of her husband, she becomes in full control of her life. This feeling of responsibility, self-regulation, and autonomous motivation makes her feel the worth of herself and causes her to optimise her skills and abilities to grow personally and psychologically. Nazneen's decision-making skill leads her to become a fashion designer and establish a garment design company with Razia (*Brick Lane* 405). In so doing, she becomes a successful autonomous Bangladeshi woman who contributes to the economic life of her community. In addition, she starts taking lessons to improve her English. Consequently, Nazneen is able to follow "a trajectory away from her passive resignation to fate as dictated by patriarchal authority, and towards responsible engagement both with those intimately related to her and with her British locality." (Roupakia 655)

Now that her behaviour is based on intrinsic motivation, Nazneen can turn her long-held fantasies into reality. Turning on the radio, she begins to listen to a song and dance to Lulu in a sari. Furthermore, ice-skating becomes a possibility that she can finally achieve through her self-determination. When Nazneen eventually gets into the ice-skating field, she is not surprised because she has been ice-skating for a long time in her fantasies, and now it is time to turn these fantasies into action. The last sentence of the novel ascertains the significance of choice and self-determination in one's psychological growth. Razia tells Nazneen that "[t]his is England [...] You can do whatever you like" (*Brick Lane* 415). This statement is an epitome of the main tenet of SDT that environmental supportive conditions are pre-requisite of satisfying the basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

An indication of Nazneen's personal and psychological growth is that she is eventually able to internalise some aspects of extrinsic motivation so that she can maintain the need for relatedness. The process of internalisation entails that "human beings must learn to sometimes relinquish their personal urges to do behaviors they do not find enjoyable but are presumably for their own good and are also for the good of the collective" (Gagné and Deci 3). Nazneen internalises her culture's emphasis on family as well as morality. Lydia Roupakia argues that Nazneen "gradually develops a more nuanced appreciation of her situatedness and her responsibility towards her daughters" (655-56). This means that she internalises such extrinsic factors as part of her own motivation. Nazneen manages to achieve psychological growth without violating the ethics of her culture. For example, although Dhaka stands for restricted mobility, it is the place where her dear sister lives. Throughout the novel, Dhaka remains vivid in her imagination through the letters sent by Hasina. Through Hasina's letters she is often informed of the socio-political changes in Bangladesh. Nazneen never severs ties with Dhaka, valuing the significance of relatedness. After all, relatedness is one basic psychological need.

The final scene in which Nazneen goes ice-skating wearing her traditional sari symbolises her intention to make balance between autonomy and relatedness by internalising the rules of her community. As Sara Upstone puts it, Ali's novel "oscillates between expressions of agency and their tempering by religious dictate" (175). The scene indicates that she can stick to her Islamic identity while achieving her dreams of freedom and self-regulation. Nazneen realises that her well-being relies not only on her autonomy, but also on her being related to her Muslim community, a view emphasised by many Islamic feminists. For the

proponents of both SDT and Islamic feminism, autonomy and relatedness are complementary rather than antagonistic (Wichmann 17; Gagné and Deci 4). Nazneen tries to attain her well-being in accordance with her cultural and religious background.

In conclusion, *Brick Lane* celebrates woman's empowerment, self-determination, and quest for psychological growth and agency. Between the beginning of the novel with Nazneen being victimized by patriarchal ideas and the last scene in which she is ice-skating, there is a long journey of empowerment. Yet, these two parts of the narrative overlap throughout the text in order to remind the reader of the value of internalisation and intrinsic factors in one's ultimate growth. Applying the concepts of SDT and referring to the feminist ideas on patriarchy, agency, and empowerment, the paper proves that Nazneen is able to move from full submission to the belief in self-determination. Her psychological growth is, therefore, complete. However, it should be noted that Nazneen's is not a journey of sheer independence and mere rebellion against her cultural background; rather, it is a journey of growth and better understanding of her position within the boundaries of her religion and culture. Nazneen's is a journey of illumination in which she comes to discover that Islam is not against woman's rights to develop her competence and autonomy without losing her connection to her Muslim community and traditions. Nazneen can eventually dance to Lulu and ice-skate in her sari not only because she is in England, as Razia tells her, but also because she comes to better understand that her religion, as Islamic feminists proclaim, encourages autonomy, agency, and psychological growth. Hence, the final message of the novel is that it is woman's potential to grow that eventually leads her to well-being. Nazneen's metamorphosis ascertains the universality of the desire for psychological need satisfaction, psychological growth, and agency.

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من الزواج المُرتَّب إلى تقرير المصير: قراءة متعددة الجوانب لرواية شارع بريك لين للكاتبة
مونيكا علي (2003)

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المستخلص:

استنادًا إلى افتراضات نظرية تقرير المصير (SDT)، وبالإشارة إلى الآراء النسوية الإسلامية، يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة سعي المرأة البنجلاديشية لتحقيق التطور النفسي والقوة في رواية شارع بريك لين (2003)، وهي باكورة الأعمال الأدبية للكاتبة مونيكا علي. وفقًا لنظرية تقرير المصير، فإن تلبية الحاجات النفسية الأساسية للكفاءة، والانتماء، والاستقلالية تعزز الدافعية الجوهرية والاستيعاب، مما يؤدي إلى السلامة النفسية. من ناحية أخرى، يؤدي الحرمان من هذه الحاجات إلى الشعور بعدم الدافعية وعدم السلامة النفسية. من خلال تطبيق نظرية (SDT) على رواية علي، يركز البحث على تحليل أنواع الدوافع التي تحفز تصرفات النساء البنجلاديشيات والعلاقة بين هذه الأنواع من التحفيز ونموهن النفسي. تسعى نظرية (SDT) إلى تمكين الناس من خلال إعطاء الأولوية للتحفيز، والاستيعاب، والنمو النفسي. ولذلك فمن المفيد لهذه الدراسة أن تربط هذه الأفكار الخاصة بنظرية (SDT) بالمنظور النسوي نظرًا لأن تمكين المرأة وقوتها من المبادئ الأساسية في المدرسة النسوية. تشير الورقة على وجه الخصوص إلى الأفكار النسوية الإسلامية لأن موضوع الرواية الرئيسي هو وضع المرأة المسلمة البنجلاديشية. يناقش البحث كيف تهيمن على حياة المرأة البنجلاديشية عوامل خارجية مثل القدر والزواج المُرتَّب، وغير ذلك من الظروف الذكورية والبيئية التي تحبط احتياجاتها النفسية الأساسية. ومع ذلك، تعطينا الرواية رؤية متفائلة لإمكانية تحقيق النمو النفسي والتمكين بين البنجلاديشيات من خلال التحفيز الداخلي والاستيعاب.

الكلمات الدالة:

بريك لين، مونيكا علي، نظرية تقرير المصير، النسوية الإسلامية، المرأة البنجلاديشية، الاحتياجات النفسية