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Transnationalism and Global Cultural Dynamics in *Brick Lane* and *Exit West*

This paper examines and explores two texts – Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) and Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) – where characters migrate from two Asian countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan, to the West. The two authors Mohsin Hamid from Pakistan and Monica Ali from Bangladesh are settled in England now.

The title of the novel *Brick Lane* is borrowed from the actual hub of Bangladeshi migrants in England where Nazneen has come by way of her marriage. Nazneen tries to balance the old native traditions with the new possibilities she finds in her dialogue with culture of the host country. The novelist raises several issues of identity and hybridity of cultures and tongues related to transnationalism.

Exit West, as the title suggests, is a story of two refugees – Sayeed and Nadia – who migrate from an unnamed city where they have to follow the societal norms. Due to the war conditions and stifling religious norms they escape through magical doors to the island of Mykonos and from there to London and later to Marin in California to find their separate ways.

Immigrant identity and acculturation has been discussed and debated frequently in the literature of diaspora writers. Integration with the host culture is a dream of the migrants but non – acceptance and discrimination and 'going back' home are the reality of the day. In the present situation, the immigrants are believed to be a threat to the host country's culture. However, they are also agents of cultural diffusion.

Both the writers examine how migration affects individuals and cultural change in the host and the home countries. These texts have many similarities but there are stark differences too. Mohsin in *Exit West* exposes perpetual mobility and porous borders and predicts the rise of nativist paranoia and racial intolerance. Monica Ali divulges effects of cultural exchange in the host and the home countries and also envisages the 'going home' syndrome.

This paper proposes to take up issues of ethnic identity, migrant identity, cultural disparity, and urbanization. And explore the dynamics of cultural diversity to see if there is cultural convergence or cultural polarization? Are the migrants happy with their new found diversity and hybrid identity? Do they wish to reclaim their lost identity? How do Refugee/migrants adapt to the culture of their host country? How are they different from earlier generation? The paper will also discuss the differences in adaptability to the host culture by the male and female characters.