

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

There are many well-known Asian British novelists and Monica Ali is one of them who have contributed her works to the world of literature. Asian British literature is British literature written by British people of Asian descent who have Asian blood but live in Britain. In publishing her first book she has already received the best young British Novelist 2003 Booker Prize (<http://www.highbridgeaudio.com/bricklane.html>).

I am interested in analyzing Brick Lane because the story captures the lives of immigrants, in this case the Bangladeshi in London. Ali's idea for Brick Lane partly came from Ali's experience of observing family and friends, and also from her father's story telling. There are also similar points between the experiences of the protagonist and the novelist. ([http://www.anovelview.com / chats/monica_ali_brick_lane.htm](http://www.anovelview.com/chats/monica_ali_brick_lane.htm)). Ali is successful in depicting the lives of Bangladeshi people in London because the portrayal of her protagonist is so vivid that she represents an Asian character living in the western world.

I would like to highlight the protagonist's characteristics because throughout the story her character changes, mostly caused by the social condition of the place where she lives. The protagonist is 'the central figure of a story, and often referred to as the story's main character.' (<http://www.answer.com/topic/protagonist>). In Dictionary of Literary Terms, Harry Shaw states that a protagonist is 'the leading character in drama, novel, or other literary work.' (Shaw, 1972: 305). A protagonist plays an important role in a literary work because he or she determines the flow of the events of a story. Without a protagonist, a story will neither be interesting to read nor develop into a good story. Monica Ali created the Bangladeshi characters in her book because she wants to show how the immigrants manage to survive among the diverse community as well as showing the dream of those immigrants who are longing for going back home.

In How To Analyze Fiction, William Kenney says that 'character is obviously relevant to us and to our experience if he is like ourselves or like others whom we know. Lifelikeness, then, is properly understood as one form of relevance. A character is relevant if there are a lot of people who are like him in the world.' (Kenney, 1972:27). Ali's characters in Brick Lane show relevance to the real condition of Bangladeshi people in London, in accordance with Kenney's definition, therefore I am interested in analyzing the protagonist's character.

In doing the analysis, I will put an attempt to reveal the characteristics of the protagonist and whether there are some development in the character throughout the story. I also hope to gain a better understanding about the lives of immigrants in England and their intriguing lives.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I would like to state the problem as follows:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist?
2. How do the characteristics of the protagonist develop throughout the story?
3. What are the author's purposes in creating the protagonist?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the portrayal of the protagonist.
2. To analyze how the character of the protagonist develops throughout the story.
3. To show how the author uses the portrayal of the protagonist characteristics to suit her purposes.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method of research in this thesis is library research. First, I read the novel thoroughly to understand the content well. Next, I learn the related theories from some reference books and internet websites. Then, I analyze the portrayal of the protagonist in the novel and what the purposes of the author are in creating such characteristics of the protagonist. Finally, I conclude the result of the analysis and write the thesis.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide my thesis into three chapters, which are preceded by the Preface and the Abstract. The first chapter presents the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter contains the analysis of the portrayal of the protagonist in Monica Ali's Brick Lane. The third chapter contains the conclusion of the analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography, which contains the list of sources of the theories, and then the Appendices, in which I present the synopsis of the novel and the biography of the author.