



## Negotiating Identity and Cultural Hybridity in Monica Ali's Brick Lane

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### Abstract

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* explores the complexities of identity and cultural hybridity, focusing on the experience of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi immigrant living in London. The novel delves into themes of assimilation, belonging, and the tensions between traditional cultural values and the influences of modern, Western society. This paper examines how Ali navigates these issues through the protagonist's personal journey and the cultural dynamics within her community. It also analyzes how the intersection of gender, race, and class shapes Nazneen's identity as she negotiates her place in a society that demands cultural adaptation. The study draws upon postcolonial theory and cultural hybridity to highlight how *Brick Lane* serves as a critique of the immigrant experience in the contemporary globalized world.

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### Objectives of the Research

1. To explore the concept of identity and how it is negotiated in the context of immigration.
2. To analyze the concept of cultural hybridity in *Brick Lane*, focusing on how different cultural influences shape Nazneen's self-perception and her relationships.
3. To examine the ways in which Monica Ali presents the challenges faced by immigrants in the UK, particularly concerning gender roles, family expectations, and societal pressures.
4. To discuss how postcolonial theory can be applied to understand the dynamics of identity in the novel.

### Research Problem

The core problem addressed by this research is how Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* explores the negotiation of identity and cultural hybridity, particularly in the context of a Bangladeshi immigrant woman's experience in a foreign land. How do Nazneen's interactions with her family, community, and the larger society illustrate the complexities of cultural assimilation, the struggle for individual autonomy, and the search for belonging? Moreover, what role do gender and class play in shaping her identity and her navigation through these cultural spaces?

### Literature Review

The concept of cultural hybridity, often discussed in postcolonial studies, is central to understanding the immigrant experience in contemporary literature. Authors like Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall have offered key insights into the negotiation of identity within the context of cultural conflict and adaptation. Bhabha's notion of the "third space" and Hall's work on cultural identity provide a framework for analyzing how *Brick Lane* illustrates the intersection of tradition and modernity.

Scholarly works on Monica Ali's novel often focus on its portrayal of the immigrant experience, gender dynamics, and cultural tensions. Critics such as Sara Upstone and Gina Wisker have noted Ali's treatment of women's agency and the novel's critique of the cultural constraints imposed by both traditional Bangladeshi society and Western norms.

### Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, literary analysis approach, examining the text of *Brick Lane* through the lens of postcolonial theory and cultural studies. The research will focus on the protagonist's development and interactions with key characters, as well as the depiction of London as a space of both opportunity and alienation. The study will also draw comparisons with other postcolonial works dealing with issues of cultural hybridity and identity, such as Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.

### Introduction

Migration from former British colonies to the West, particularly the UK, began as early as the mid-20th century and increased significantly in recent decades. Even by the late 19th century, Britain encouraged its colonial subjects—regardless of ethnicity or religion—to see themselves as British. This was part of a broader imperial strategy to disseminate British culture, mainly through education and literature, with British poetry, novels, and histories used to instill British values (Loomba 75).

Following decolonization around the mid-20th century, many individuals from newly independent former colonies migrated to the UK for reasons such as education, economic improvement, and asylum. However, this wave of migration led to tensions over British identity. Initially, white Britons paid little attention to how colonial subjects identified themselves, but the growing number of migrants eventually challenged traditional notions of "Britishness" (Snider 1).

Despite their aspirations, many immigrants faced racism, discrimination, and alienation in British society, often shattering their idealized vision of Britain. For many, the contradiction of being "Black and British" revealed the persistence of systemic racism in post-war Britain (Snider 1). Immigrants not only had to navigate hostile environments but also adapt to new cultures, languages, and norms. Yet, in a globalized, transnational world, cultural exchange might eventually help bridge such divides.

Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* explores the diasporic experiences of both first- and second-generation immigrants through the Bengali family of Chanu, his wife Nazneen, and their daughters Shahana and Bibi. These characters face various identity struggles. Nazneen, for example, contends with gendered oppression and cultural dislocation, ultimately forging a hybrid identity. Meanwhile, her daughters face difficulties integrating into British society, embodying the tensions of dual belonging (Özdemir 1).

The novel highlights shared psychological struggles among immigrants, such as divided identities and feelings of alienation. Therefore, this chapter examines the themes of identity, hybridity, and multiculturalism in *Brick Lane*, using the experiences of both generations to understand the complexities of immigration and belonging in a postcolonial Britain.

Immigrants often face identity conflicts due to their dual cultural affiliations and racial differences. This struggle results in a fragmented sense of self, as they are caught between their native culture and the culture of the host country. The lack of acceptance from the host society intensifies their sense of alienation, making them cling to their original cultural identity. This identity crisis affects both first- and second-generation immigrants, who often retain their native names, customs, and traditions, despite being born or raised in the new country. As Bosri notes, immigrants are "inwardly bearing the hidden seed of nostalgic emotion for their respective native culture" (Bosri, p. 56).

To navigate this cultural dislocation, immigrants develop hybrid identities by blending aspects of both cultures. According to Ashcroft, this leads them to "re-territorialize their practices as well as their identities" in an effort to adapt to the new environment (Ashcroft, p. 70). For example, Asian immigrants in Britain may celebrate local holidays using traditional customs from their home countries, aiming to merge and transform the host culture to suit their own identities.

This process, known as *cultural assimilation*, involves adopting the host culture's norms while integrating them with native traditions. However, even when immigrants seemingly achieve full assimilation, they remain marginalized by both their native and host communities. Members of both societies often question their loyalty and authenticity, leading to continued alienation. Second-generation immigrants, in particular, may reject their parents' traditions to assimilate fully, but still face skepticism and exclusion from both cultural groups.

In *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali explores the experiences of second-generation immigrants through characters such as Shahana and Bibi, daughters of the protagonist Nazneen. These characters exemplify how the younger generation, unlike their parents, embraces Western lifestyles, often rejecting their native Bangladeshi traditions. Other characters like Razia's children, Tariq and Shefali, and Karim also represent this generational shift.

The novel illustrates how second-generation immigrants adapt more swiftly to British society, culturally assimilate more easily, and develop identities shaped by their current environment. However, despite their integration, these individuals still face exclusion and discrimination. They are perceived by British society much like their parents, resulting in a persistent identity conflict and difficulty achieving full cultural assimilation.

Ali's narrative situates these characters within a specific cultural and social context, emphasizing the psychological and emotional consequences of displacement. This dual cultural identity creates what Homi Bhabha describes as an "in-between space," where immigrants attempt to reconcile two distinct worlds (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 2). The novel also critiques the broader issue of cultural assimilation in Britain, particularly for immigrants from South Asia and the Arab world. Immigrants are often pressured to abandon their native identities, which leads to a state of cultural confusion and fractured identity. This condition is echoed by Bosri, who notes that identity is shaped by external forces aiming to historicize human experiences (Bosri, p. 56).

Ultimately, *Brick Lane* examines the multifaceted struggles of Bangladeshi immigrants—both first and second generation—against a backdrop of cultural displacement, identity formation, and social marginalization. The novel calls attention to the complex realities of Englishness and the persistent issue of "double identities" among immigrant communities in Britain.

In *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali, the protagonist Nazneen, a young Bangladeshi Muslim woman, grapples with the challenges of immigration, identity, and cultural displacement after moving to London. Her initial experiences in Brick Lane are marked by alienation and fear, highlighting the cultural shock she endures. The unfamiliar streets, loud traffic, and indifferent passersby intensify her sense of being an outsider (Ali, 2003, p. 5) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Nazneen's struggles are not only environmental but also internal. Culturally and religiously traditional, she finds it difficult to navigate public spaces and even simple tasks, such as asking strangers for help, due to her conservative upbringing. Despite this, she is not a strictly practicing Muslim, much like her husband Chanu, though both maintain cultural ties to their faith (Zumara, 2012, p. 77).

Throughout the novel, Nazneen faces the dual burden of being both a woman and a Muslim in a Western context. She recalls her mother's words— "If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men" (Ali, 2003, p. 60) <sup>[1]</sup>—which reflects the deeply ingrained gender norms she is expected to uphold.

However, as the narrative progresses, Nazneen evolves. She begins to assert herself, symbolized when she enters a pub to use the toilet and later confronts Chanu, testing his conservatism and her own courage:

See what I can do!" (Ali, 2003, p. 5) <sup>[1]</sup>.

This incident marks her growing independence and desire for self-exploration. Over time, she learns about loneliness, privacy, and community in her new setting, ultimately realizing her identity is hybrid—neither wholly English nor fully Bengali (Ali, 2003, p. 182) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Yousef (2012) notes that Nazneen's identity is "constructed and contingent," not fixed or predefined (p. 76). By the end of the novel, she embodies a balanced, self-aware identity that blends elements of both cultures, showcasing the immigrant experience as one of ongoing negotiation and growth.

In *Brick Lane*, Monica Ali presents Nazneen as a symbolic figure representing the broader struggles and experiences of Bangladeshi immigrant women in Britain. Through Nazneen's life, readers are exposed to the emotional, social, and cultural challenges of migration, including racism, dislocation, isolation, and a fragmented identity (Bosri 57; Yousef 76; Hower 197).

Initially confined to domestic life and burdened by language barriers, Nazneen experiences alienation and solitude in London. Her husband Chanu offers little support, reflecting patriarchal traditions that shaped her arranged marriage and early submissiveness (Ali 37; Shevchenko 883). Despite these limitations, television and walking through Brick Lane become catalysts for Nazneen's growing desire for independence (Ali 41, 44).

Over time, Nazneen's inner transformation is symbolized by her engagement in sewing, which provides both financial independence and a path toward self-realization (Yousef 77).

Her immigrant journey evolves into a quest for autonomy, during which she navigates complex emotions tied to her native and adopted cultures.

Her affair with Karim, a second-generation British Bangladeshi, furthers this development. Unlike Chanu, Karim offers her recognition, respect, and a sense of empowerment, exposing her to new political and cultural ideas (Mutlu 44; Dutta 2). However, Nazneen ultimately realizes that neither Chanu nor Karim can define her. She chooses self-reliance, ending both relationships and establishing her own business, thereby constructing an independent identity.

Nazneen's evolution in *Brick Lane* reflects a broader narrative of female empowerment within the context of migration, where personal growth is tied to cultural negotiation, resilience, and the pursuit of self-worth (Dutta 5).

In Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, the arrival of Karim in Nazneen's life becomes a pivotal point in her journey towards empowerment and independence. Karim introduces Nazneen to a broader public sphere and political activism, offering her exposure to new experiences that ultimately contribute to her personal growth and transformation. Through her affair with Karim, she begins to experience a newfound autonomy that allows her to question and eventually reject her husband Chanu's controlling behavior and his decision to return to Bangladesh.

Though Karim offers Nazneen emotional and physical intimacy, along with a sense of respect and protection in a foreign land, her relationship with him also creates internal moral and religious conflicts. As a Muslim woman, engaging in an extramarital affair challenges her faith and cultural values. Despite the conflict, Nazneen initially embraces the relationship, describing her experience with Karim as awakening a sense of vitality and completeness previously unknown to her (Ali 5).

Over time, however, Nazneen's growing awareness and emotional maturity lead her to reject both men—Chanu and Karim—choosing instead to build an independent life for herself and her daughters in London. She emerges as a self-sufficient woman who navigates her immigrant identity with resilience, ultimately carving out a "third space" of cultural hybridity and empowerment (Yousef 83).

Nazneen's transformation reflects a broader immigrant experience characterized by displacement, identity fragmentation, and eventual adaptation. As she begins to reconcile her Bangladeshi roots with her life in Britain, she forges a hybrid identity and forms her own community, realizing that full assimilation into either culture is not entirely possible.

Similarly, Karim, though a second-generation immigrant raised in Britain, struggles with dual identity and fails to fully integrate into British society. Despite perceiving himself as English, his ethnic background and cultural obligations keep him from achieving complete assimilation. Eventually, he leaves London for Bosnia and Chechnya in pursuit of a jihadi cause, exemplifying the failed integration and internal conflict of many immigrants (Ali 243).

In contrast, female characters like Nazneen, Razia, and Mrs. Azad represent successful cases of adaptation. Mrs. Azad embraces Western culture, while Razia promotes independence and education. These women demonstrate the

potential for immigrant women to integrate and thrive, despite systemic challenges and cultural barriers (Yousef 82). Chanu, another central figure, is portrayed as an educated yet conflicted immigrant who fails to assimilate. Despite spending years in London, he remains nostalgic for Bangladesh and fears the Western influence on his family. His critical view of other Bengali immigrants, combined with his inability to recognize his own struggles with identity, underscores the psychological complexities of the immigrant experience (Mutlu 48–49; Shevchenko 884).

Ultimately, *Brick Lane* presents a nuanced exploration of immigrant life, identity, and cultural hybridity. While male characters like Chanu and Karim fail to reconcile their dual identities, female characters, especially Nazneen, emerge empowered by navigating and negotiating their place in a complex, multicultural society.

Chanu, a central character in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali, epitomizes the struggles of first-generation Muslim immigrants in Britain. He experiences a deep cultural and psychological conflict between his Bengali heritage and the expectations of British society. Despite his educational qualifications and desire to integrate, Chanu faces persistent racial discrimination and social alienation. This tension leads him to suffer from an identity crisis, recognizing not only his own internal conflict but also that his children may grow up confused about their cultural identity (Ali 88).

Chanu's attempt to balance assimilation with the preservation of his cultural values results in contradictions. While he claims to be "westernized" (Ali 5), he upholds traditional patriarchal norms and resists fully engaging with British culture. His ambiguous stance is evident when he opposes his wife's learning English and restricts his daughter's activities, all while drinking alcohol and claiming openness to Western values (Ali 86). These contradictions expose his failure to construct a coherent identity or achieve genuine belonging.

The novel contrasts Chanu with Mrs. Azad, who accepts the hybrid nature of immigrant identity and argues for the necessity of cultural interaction rather than opposition (Ali 88–89; Mutlu 49). Unlike Chanu, she embraces her reality and advocates for a more adaptive and realistic immigrant experience.

Chanu's personal crisis reflects broader issues faced by immigrants—alienation, marginalization, and the impossibility of full acceptance within British society. He is caught in a state of "colonial ambivalence" (Mutlu 50), admiring Western ideals while simultaneously clinging to nationalist pride. His portrayal critiques the illusion of assimilation and illustrates the internal fragmentation of immigrant identity.

Ultimately, Chanu symbolizes the dilemma of many immigrants: he is neither fully accepted as British nor comfortably rooted in his native culture. This duality underscores the novel's exploration of identity, belonging, and the psychological costs of migration (Zumara 81; Özdemir 80).

### Hybridity and Multicultural Identity in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*:

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* explores the complex themes of hybridity, multiculturalism, and immigrant identity, primarily through its protagonist, Nazneen. Initially a traditional Bengali woman, Nazneen evolves into a hybrid individual who navigates between her native Bangladeshi culture and British society. Unlike her husband Chanu and

lover Karim—both of whom struggle with assimilation—Nazneen gradually accepts her dual identity and forges a space of independence.

Drawing on Homi Bhabha's theory of the *third space*, Nazneen embodies the concept of a hybrid identity. This third space allows her to combine aspects of both cultures, enabling transformation and personal growth. As Bhabha asserts, it is "a place where we construct our identities in relation to varied and often contradictory systems of meaning" (*The Location of Culture*, p. 38). In this space, Nazneen neither fully abandons her Bengali roots nor wholly adopts British norms; instead, she develops a balanced identity rooted in cultural negotiation and coexistence.

Nazneen and Mrs. Azad represent successful cases of immigrant integration. Both women show an openness to British society while retaining elements of their heritage, demonstrating what Sterrett terms "authentic engagement" as essential to identity development (Sterrett, p. 657). This contrasts with characters like Chanu and Karim, whose inability to reconcile their cultural duality leads to stagnation or failure.

The novel emphasizes the power dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized. According to Yousef, *Brick Lane* focuses on a space "which brings together the two opposing sides without infringing upon their potential powers" (Yousef, p. 76). This reflects a broader colonial framework where identity formation is shaped by historical and social forces.

Nazneen's transformation into an independent woman is gradual. She confronts personal loss, societal pressure, and cultural conflict, but through these challenges, she grows into a confident individual who decides to remain in London, forging a new "home" for herself and her daughters. This act signifies her successful negotiation of identity in a multicultural society. As Mutlu observes, Nazneen "chose to be neither 'white' nor 'black'... she had the strength to stay in London... and succeeded to create a 'third space' both for herself and the daughters" (Mutlu, p. 48).

Yet, Nazneen is not portrayed as flawless. Her journey is marked by mistakes, confusion, and hesitation, which reflect the broader immigrant experience. According to Bauman, identity in modernity is "perhaps the most common, most acute, most deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence" (*Identity*, p. 32). Nazneen's eventual clarity and individuation reflect her overcoming this ambivalence.

The novel also juxtaposes Nazneen's success with the struggles of her sister Hasina, whose life in Dhaka is marked by hardship and marginalization. While Nazneen adapts and evolves, Hasina fails to transform her reality, highlighting the role of opportunity and personal resilience in identity formation (Zumara, p. 76).

In conclusion, *Brick Lane* is not merely a narrative of immigration but a detailed examination of identity reconstruction in a multicultural context. It reflects the internal and external conflicts faced by immigrants and affirms the possibility of forming a hybrid, multicultural identity. Through characters like Nazneen and Mrs. Azad, Monica Ali articulates the challenges and rewards of cultural negotiation in the postcolonial world.

Therefore, it has—with reference to the novel under discussion—been shown and discussed how Nazneen has started to consider investing her energy in finding and developing an ultimate and independent identity that is closer to and longing for a Bengali background. Yet, after isolating

herself and experiencing nostalgia for her native home, culture and traditions, Nazneen has opted for change and development and thus decided to go out and participate with the public. Still, even along with her transformation and public participation, Nazneen has principally looked for familiarity and participation with immigrant people like her, more particularly Bengali immigrants. Respectively, Nazneen has met Karim, got involved with him in an extramarital affair and even engaged with his fundamental activities.

In that order, though Karim has played the greatest role in the transformation and development Nazneen has experienced, he has at the same time symbolized her attachment to and longing for her native home and affiliation. Karim has, on one hand, offered Nazneen the love and respect she has long desired; he has also encouraged Nazneen and provided her with the opportunity to change, develop and achieve her independence. However, Karim has opened Nazneen's eyes to the new realities of the world for an immigrant and as such has motivated her to accomplish authentic and radical changes that have eventually led to Nazneen's decision to settle in London and to desert him, too.

Therefore, it could be said that Karim has represented Nazneen's dilemma of vacillation, double identity and uncertainty as an immigrant as well. Besides, Karim has also played a role in helping Nazneen reach the realization of her hybrid, double and multicultural reality as an immigrant and to come to terms with it. In addition to Karim—as mentioned above, Mrs. Azad and Razia have—through adopting a western lifestyle contributed to Nazneen's change and development. Through their and Karim's help, Nazneen has been dissuaded not to return to Bangladesh, but rather accept her realities as an immigrant and settle in Britain permanently. Through such realizations, Nazneen has not only discovered, accepted and built her hybrid, double and independent immigrant identity, but has also found her true home and chosen her freedom.

In addition to Nazneen, it has been demonstrated how Chanu and Karim have—though experiencing immigration differently and belonging to different generations of immigrants; first and second respectively—also suffered from similar predicaments and undergone the same ambivalence. Both men have abandoned their native culture and traditions; at least attempted to in the case of Chanu. Both have also done their best assimilating the English culture and blending in with its people; with Karim, as a second-generation immigrant, doing it with more ease and spontaneity though.

Nonetheless, both Chanu and Karim have neither been completely accepted by the English community nor have they achieved full Englishness. Similarly, it has been demonstrated that those Bengali immigrants—both of first and second generation—in Britain have also been subjected to social prejudices, racial discrimination and not been accepted by the English people as members of the English community. They are perceived and treated as strange aliens and stereotypical exemplifications of a third world eastern retards or previous colonial subjects. As such, those immigrants exhibit and suffer an identity problem and never achieve complete Englishness.

Besides, despite the fact that second generation immigrants like Nazneen's teenage daughters Shahana and Bibi and her lover Karim have lesser or no difficulty assimilating the English culture and blending in with its people, they, too, are subjected to identical ordeals of first-generation immigrants. By the end of the novel, Chanu has decided to return to his native home and Karim has identified himself with and turned towards the fundamental Muslim groups.

Accordingly, Bengali immigrants in Britain—and all immigrants for that matter, particularly eastern ones—eventually reach the deep realization that they are different. They start to understand and perceive themselves in the light of multiculturalism and postcolonial perspectives. They understand their hybrid reality, that they reflect and enact two different cultures and that they have and manifest double identities as well. Immigrants realize that they are neither completely Bengali nor entirely English. Immigrants also realize that they could not and will never be able to achieve a full sense of belonging, whether as English or as Bengali. It has therefore been demonstrated that arriving at such deep realizations has ultimately helped immigrants understand their new realities, come to terms with it and eventually enable them to build and achieve their independent identities as such.

### Conclusion

Through presenting, tracing and depicting the life of a Bengali immigrant family, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* has explored and demonstrated the various and diverse problems of immigrants in Britain. The novel—through discussion and analysis—has been observed to have addressed and highlighted the various challenges and diverse difficulties immigrants—particularly Bengalis—face, experience and endure in Britain. Those immigrants have thus been shown to go through and experience both internal as well as external challenges and dilemmas. The internal problems facing those immigrants in Britain are usually immigrant-oriented problems, whereas the external challenges are related to the host country and originate from its people, respectively.

Accordingly, it has been discussed and investigated how the novel's immigrant characters have been faced with the challenge of completely assimilating the English culture and the difficulty of fully blending in with its people. Immigrant's desire and exert quite considerable efforts to assimilate the English culture and integrate with the English people. Nevertheless, they face difficulties assimilating and integrating; immigrants are, on one hand, pulled back by their native culture and traditions. They are, on the other, pushed away by the host country and its people as they do not take immigrants entirely in as English people.

In terms of external obstacles, the host country and its people also perceive immigrants within an already established set of stereotypes; immigrants are looked at as different, strange and thus unfit to fully belong to the host culture and sense of nation. Immigrants are also shown to be subjected to racial discrimination and social prejudices as well. To make things worse, once immigrants turn to their native home and culture, they are perceived as strangers and aliens, not as natives. Such realities cause immigrants to have ambivalence, feel uncertainty and hence end up having double identities. The choice of either retaining their full native affiliation or opting for their immigrant belonging and sticking to it is no longer a

possibility. Immigrants therefore get positioned in a state of in-betweenness, a state of 'neither, nor'; they become—in the case of Ali's *Brick Lane*, for instance—neither completely Bengali nor entirely English.

Hence, the novel has, for illustration, demonstrated how those immigrants as minority ethnic communities have turned to similar immigrants or black English people for self-identification rather than white English people. They have as a result preferred building separate quarters that are also located in the suburbs of the main cities. In so doing, immigrants seem like creating a miniature landscape of their native backgrounds, but in the land, they have migrated to though. Hence, such preference has assumingly represented the immigrants' ambivalence and constant nostalgia for their native homes and cultures. For immigrants, their self-identification with people of color and their isolated miniature communities apparently indicates the eastern culture and traditions in which they are originally rooted.

Concurrently though, those immigrants find themselves driven by their desire and motivated by necessity to assimilate the host culture and integrate with the host people. Immigrants are thus observed to opt for and adopt a western lifestyle; they learn the English language, enact the English culture, embrace the English norms and implement all that in their daily lives. Henceforth, such solitary communities of immigrants become no more practical. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen has attempted that life of solitude and abandoned it for the sake of a hybrid and multicultural life in London and with Londoners. Immigrants eventually realize that this is the path to freedom, modernity and independence, and that they have to take it.

As a result, immigrants ultimately reach such a deep realization of their actual status as a hybrid carrier of difference. They also understand the impractical unfeasibility of accomplishing the fullness of belonging to both sides and thus come to terms with that reality. Consequently, immigrants become capable of transforming and developing; they could overcome some of their difficulties, compromise others and non-defiantly accept the unchanged or irreparable ones. Only then do immigrants become truly qualified and capable of achieving their independent identities and establishing a true life for themselves.

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