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COUNTERING THE "MISERY GENRE": A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE* AND SHELINA JANMOHAMED'S *LOVE IN A HEADSCARF*

BY

ABU SUFIAN

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in English Literary Studies

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
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ABSTRACT

Creative works – especially life writings – by female writers with Muslim names that can be categorized as 'misery genre' are quite prominent in current literary discussion. Such literary texts portray Muslim women as victims of domestic abuse, forced/child marriage, rape, marginalization, societal discrimination and lack of freedom and educational opportunities under Muslim patriarchy. In contemporary British postcolonial literature, there is a tendency among certain writers with Muslim backgrounds to caricature and misrepresent Muslim women and thus misrepresent Muslim societies. Conversely, another group of writers seem to counteract such narratives and show unconditional allegiance to their faith and culture. Based on this observation, this thesis explores the major issues in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) and Shelina Janmohamed's *Love in a Headscarf* (2009) and investigates their perception and representation of diasporic Muslim women in Britain using postcolonial criticism. It also focuses on major contemporary issues involving the Muslim diaspora in Britain and the religion of Islam as portrayed in the two novels.

ملخص البحث

تعد العمليات الإبداعية في – الكتابات عن الحياة خصوصا – من خلال الأقلام النسوية بأسمائها الإسلامية من النوع المعبرة والموصفة عن البؤس، والتي اشتهرت في المناقشات الأدبية المعاصرة، حيث تصوّر المرأة المسلمة وتصفها بأنها ضحية للعنف المنزلي، والزواج الطفلي أو القسري، والاغتصاب، والتهميش، والتمييز المجتمعي، وغياب الحرية، والفرص التعليمية في ظل النظام التربوي الأبوي المسلم. في الأدب المعاصر ما بعد الاستعمار البريطاني يميل بعض الكُتَّاب من ذوي الخلفيات الإسلامية إلى الصور الكاريكاتيرية، وتحريف النساء المسلمات ونتائج هذا التحريف على المجتمعات الإسلامية. وعلى عكسها هناك كُتَّاب آخرون وقفوا للتصدي لمثل هذه الروايات، وأظهروا الولاء التام غير المشروط لدينهم. وبناء على هذه الملاحظة، هذه الأطروحة تستكشف القضايا الرئيسة في للرواية "بريك لين" (2003م) للمؤلفة مونيكا علي، ورواية "حب في الحجاب" (2009م) للكاتبة شلينا جان محمد، وسوف تقوم الدراسة بتحقيق كيفية تصوّرهن وتمثيلهن لشتات النساء المسلمات في بريطانيا. وتركّز الدراسة أيضا على القضايا المعاصرة الكبرى التي تصف وتصور الشتات الإسلامي في بريطانيا، والدين الإسلام كما صوّرتا في الروايتين.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in English Literary Studies.

.....
Md. Mahmudul Hasan
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.....
Siti Nuraishah Ahmad
Examiner

.....
Mohammad A. Quayum
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in English Literary Studies.

.....
Zahariah Pilus
Head, Dept. of English Language and Literature

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in English Literary Studies.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my abba and amma – ***Kharshad Alam*** *and* ***Jannatul Ferdus*****.**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the post 9/11 era, diasporic writers with Muslim backgrounds have become more visible and their writing is largely marked by two narratives. One group of writers confirm Western prejudice about Islam and Muslims while the other group of writers have produced "different and positive" images of the religion and its followers (Ruzy & Noraini, 2014: 125). Likewise, in contemporary British postcolonial literature, women writers of Muslim heritage can be categorized into two groups: the existing dominant group and the emerging group. While the former constantly construct Muslim women's identities as being oppressed, repressed, passive, submissive, silent, voiceless and subjugated in patriarchal societies and Islam as an obstacle to women's liberation, the latter with an impressive list of writings try to debunk and rebut the existing wearisome stereotypes regarding Muslim women and their faith.

At a time when the prevailing group of British writers with Muslim background – through their recurrent stereotypical narratives – arguably participate in a neo-Orientalist venture of stereotyping Muslim women, the emerging group of writers produce an "alternative narrative" that depicts a positive image of Muslim women and the religion of Islam. What is more, the former portray Muslim women as a homogenous group and Islam as a gender oppressive religion, and this kind of characterization of Muslim women and Islam is no different from the stereotypical

depiction of Muslim women in classical Western Orientalist literature.[1] Conversely, the burgeoning group of writers produce contrasting accounts of their happy upbringings in British families and uphold their faith, culture and above all their Muslim identity. Thus, countering the cliché-ridden narrative of the "misery genre", the emerging group of writers provide an alternative narrative and portray Muslim women and their identities in a unique manner that was rarely heard before.

One of the new contributions of the study is that it will subscribe a fictional work under the category of "misery genre" which is mainly attributed to non-fiction works, especially life-writings. The second unique contribution is that the study will conduct a comparative study between a fictional work (*Brick Lane*) and a memoir (*Love in a Headscarf*), applying postcolonial theory. As the researcher's study reaches, so far no other critic subscribes a fictional work as an work that can be categorized under "misery genre", and no researcher carries out a comparative study between a fiction and a non-fiction, applying postcolonial criticism.

The aim of this study is to closely examine how Muslim women's identities are constructed and how the religion of Islam is depicted in Monica Ali's (1967–) *Brick Lane* (2003) and Shelina Janmohamed's (1974–) *Love in a Headscarf* (2009) in the context of contemporary postcolonial British literature. It also seeks to see whether some literary representations replicate and recycle Western Orientalist perspectives while depicting Islam, Muslims and Muslim societies with particular focus on the treatment of women.

Based on this theoretical premise, this research will contextualize Ali's and Janmohamed's works in contemporary British postcolonial literature. It will

[1] The constant portrayal of Muslim women as a monolithic group that is "oppressed, passively submissive and victimized" by a gender in-egalitarian and inferiorizing religion (Islam) is embedded in classical Western Orientalist literature (Hasan, 2015: 1).

investigate whether or not Ali's and/or Janmohamed's narrative(s) participate(s) in the neo-Orientalist venture of depicting Muslim women as oppressed and subjugated in their societies. By way of comparison and contrast, the study aims at analyzing and commenting on two divergent genres – "misery" and "alternative" – in contemporary British Muslim literature. The thesis intends to examine Muslim women's gendered experience and identity as depicted in the texts, with especial focus on the alternative genre that provides a "third space"[2] for many diasporic women writers of Muslim heritage in the context of contemporary British postcolonial literature.

THE AUTHORS' BACKGROUNDS

Monica Ali (1967–)

Monica Ali was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1967. Her parents – a Bengali father named Hatem Ali and an English mother named Joyce – moved to Bolton, England in 1971 due to the liberation war that broke out in Bangladesh, which at the time was known as East Pakistan. Since then the family has stayed in England and Ali was brought up there. Ali received her elementary education at Bolton School and then studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at Wadham College, Oxford University. Later, she started working in the marketing department of a small publishing house and then moved on to similar job before joining a branding agency. During that time, she met her future husband, Simon Torrance, and left the job when her first child Felix was born. Later, she decided to join an online short story writing group, which led her to write *Brick Lane*.

[2] The term is often attributed to Homi K. Bhabha. The "Third Space" is a postcolonial sociolinguistic theory of identity that explains the uniqueness of each person, actor or context as a "hybrid". (Habib, 2015: 9)

In 2002, Ali drew the attention of the publisher (Doubleday) when she had finished only a few chapters of *Brick Lane* and immediately got a book-deal. The novel received "unreserved, buoyant reception in the western literary arena" months before it was officially published (Hasan, 2005: 667). Ali received enormous advances (£200,000 from Doubleday) from British and US publishers when she finished five chapters of this 'cross-cultural' novel. In January 2003 – months before the novel was published – Ali became an overnight sensation when the prestigious literary journal *Granta* listed Monica Ali in the category of '20 Best Young British Novelists Under 40'. One of the world's foremost literary honors, the Man Booker Prize shortlisted her unpublished novel for its literary award (*Encyclopedia*, 2007). Later on, inspired by the success of *Brick Lane* Ali went on to produce three more novels, *Alentejo Blue* (2006), *In The Kitchen* (2009) and *Untold Story* (2011). However, these works have not received as much attention.

Shelina Zahra Janmohamed (1974–)

Shelina Janmohamed is a British Muslim writer of East-African and South-Asian origin. She is an Oxford graduate and was brought up in north London. Janmohamed's parents emigrated from Tanzania to Britain in 1967. *The Guardian* describes her as "a commentator on British Islam and Muslim women" (*Guardian*, 2014). She was named by *The Times* newspaper and the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission as one of UK's 100 most influential Muslim women. She is also named as one of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world (Esposito & Kalin, 2009: 129). Janmohamed has been working as a commentator for such print media as *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Muslim News* and *Emel* magazine, and she writes in her popular blog named *spirit21*.[3]

[3] Shelina Zahra Janmohamed's blog is at www.spirit21.co.uk

The litterateur and columnist Janmohamed is also a social activist and a recognized expert in Muslim/Islamic marketing, having fifteen years of experience in global blue-chip marketing. She is the Vice President of global branding consultancy firm and the world's first Islamic branding agency, Ogilvy Noor which offers "expert practical advice on how to build brands that appeal to Muslim consumers, globally" (Goodfellow, 2015; Ogilvy, n.d.). As recognition of her professional expertise in marketing and branding, in 2013 the UK-based Institute of Practitioners in Advertising gave her "Woman of Tomorrow" award, which is awarded to ten future female leaders of the British advertising industry (Ogilvy, n.d.; IPA, 2013). She has participated in the UK Foreign Office's program titled "Projecting British Islam" and in that capacity visited Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Indonesia (Diane, n.d.).

She received the Best Non Fiction Writer Award in 2008 and 2009, Best Blog (*spirit21*) and Best Female Blogger Award in 2008. These awards were presented be the Brass Crescent Awards (Brass, 2008) and in April 2015, she was shortlisted for the Asian Women of Achievement Awards. Her new book *Generation M* is expected to be published in 2016. This book, as expected by the publishing house's website, will provide a unique and timely insight into the lives and future of the contemporary global Muslim population (Tauris, n.d.).

THE TEXTS

Brick Lane

Monica Ali's Booker-nominated debut novel *Brick Lane* is about Muslims living in Britain. It has been heralded as an incredible contribution to British Asian fiction, following a literary genealogy which consists of writers such as Kamala Markandaya

(1924–2004), Salman Rushdie (1947–), Ravinder Randhawa (1952–), Hanif Kureishi (1954–), Meera Syal (1961–) and others (Pereira-Ares, 2013: 204). The novel was on the bestseller lists for nearly a year and 150,000 copies of hardcover books were sold (Brouillette, 2009: 427). As pointed out by Germaine Greer (2006a), Ali was shortlisted for "every prize there was". Moreover, *Brick Lane* has been translated into more than twenty languages and, in 2007, under the direction of Sarah Gavron the novel was adapted into a film which triggered much controversy, especially among the British Bangladeshi population.

One remarkable feature of the novel is that, it focuses on Muslims living in London at a time when the relationship between Islam and the West has become an enormously big issue of debate. What is noticeable is that, unlike most other literary texts, it did not have to wait for ages for recognition and awards.

Brick Lane chronicles the story of a young Bangladeshi Muslim woman, Nazneen, who moves to London as wife of Chanu, a Bangladeshi immigrant. After she moves to London, Nazneen falls in love with Karim, an 'Islamic' radical in the novel. Karim has his own radical understanding of Islam and sees the Prophet of Islam as mainly a warrior and claims himself as an activist of the religion. Nazneen meets her other neighbors living in the small Bangladeshi community. There she gets to know her fellow Bangladeshis who go through their unique struggles. She learns that some of them struggle against the native cultures and traditions they brought along with them from their native land, while others are concerned about the new tradition (British) that their children are exposed to. Nazneen, too, goes through similar struggles. Her husband becomes determined to bring his family back home, having seen his adolescent daughters becoming more Westernized. But, at the end, Nazneen decides to stay in London with her daughters.

Love in a Headscarf

Shelina Janmohamed's debut memoir *Love in a Headscarf* (2009) has been translated into eight languages (Ogilvy, n.d.). It narrates the story of Oxford-educated Janmohamed who opts for an arranged marriage. Placing 'love' at the centre of the narrative, she unfolds her story of searching for a life-partner who she terms as 'The One' or 'Mr. Right'.

On her journey of searching a life-partner, she had to undergo a number of tribulations and challenges mainly because of some cultural practices prevalent in her community. First, Janmohamed notices the discrepancy between the cultural representations of love and the reality. She realizes that Hollywood films represent girls as charming princesses who meet their sweethearts happily; but in reality, finding a life partner and maintaining a happy relationship after the union of the lover and the beloved is not an easy task. For instance, it took almost a decade for Janmohamed to find the man she would marry.

Second, her identity as a hijab-wearing and practicing Muslim woman leads her to experience xenophobia, especially after the 9/11 tragic attacks in the USA and 7/7 bombings in the UK. Moreover, some of the potential suitors refused to marry her because of her hijab. Third, she faces cultural malpractices and challenges wrong assumptions regarding women in her community and family. Janmohamed discovers that most of those assumptions prevalent among Muslims are largely extraneous to Islamic principles. As regards climbing a mountain, she refers to Prophet Muhammad's wife, and one of the earliest to accept Islam, Khadijah who used to climb mountain routinely to bring food to the Prophet during his meditation in a cave

called Hira. Defying many culturally sanctioned malpractices and wrong assumptions, she continues to search for her probable suitor, and finally finds him—the long expected man that she waited for years.

Love in a Headscarf stands out as a unique and iconoclastic narrative in the corpus of contemporary British postcolonial literature and in the context of the post-9/11 and -7/7 era. It provides a counter narrative to a 'perceived' literary trend that pictures Muslim "women in black veils and [as if] they were about escaping from slavery and forced marriages" (qtd. in Akbar & Taylor 2010). Janmohamed looked at some existing books available in bookstores on Muslim women and noticed that none of them told her story. The dull and lifeless aura of Muslim women depicted in such books induced her to produce the memoir.

Multicultural London and Its Literatures

For decades, London has been a world city, a cosmopolitan place containing people of different national and racial backgrounds. However, in postwar (WWI and WWII) years, it became more and more multicultural, multiracial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. This multiculturalism of *cosmopolitan* London has largely influenced contemporary British literature. Majed (2013) argues that, the "more visible multicultural London becomes, the more multicultural British fiction becomes" (10). Immigrant writers shared their stories in London for a very long period of time, which goes back to the eighteenth century. One of the earliest immigrant writers in Britain is often cited as Dean Mahomed (1759–1851) who wrote a travelogue named *The Travels of Dean Mohamet* (1794). Sukhdev Sandhu in his 2003 book *London Calling* explicates how black and Asian British writers such as Frederick Douglass (c. 1818–1895), Jean Rhys (1890–1979) and V.S. Naipaul (1932–) imagine and depict London.

Sandhu contends that they "have told stories about black and Asian London from the eighteenth century to the present day" (2003: xx).

Despite this long history of literature written by 'Others', however, those literatures were at first "considered ancillary, of minority interest" (Sandhu, 2003: xxii). London has developed an increasingly significant presence of multiculturalism in contemporary British fiction that leads diasporic literature to become gradually more diverse. Consequently, the previous position of critics who considered black and Asian British writers' works as 'ancillary', 'marginal' and of 'minority interest' has changed. This significant shift from a comparatively less to a more palpable cosmopolitan and multicultural London informs the stance of cultural diversity in contemporary British literature. Majed (2013) notices this remarkable change, saying: "multiculturalism has shifted from its previous *marginality* to its present *centrality* in contemporary British fiction" (10) [emphasis added]. John McLeod comments on this shift of immigrant writers from the *marginal* to *central* in the literary arena of London thus:

> [I]t should be no surprise that the predominant tenor of much contemporary writing is currently diverse and hybrid. It is no longer the case that, as in the 1950s and 1960s, multicultural representations of the city constitute a minority or marginal strand in a wider literary landscape. These days London writing is much more consistently and recurrently reflective of a city in which over 300 languages are spoken daily, to the extent that those writers or historians who do have little or nothing to say about London's humdrum diversity seem increasingly out of touch with the city's history and fortunes. (2011: 243–244)

Contemporary London writing is also greatly influenced by another strong dimension, postcolonialism. As diversity centralizes multiculturalism, postcolonialism counters and challenges hegemonic influences and superiorities (Majed, 2013:10). Peter Childs has discussed the role of postcolonialism in literature written in Britain and contends that postcolonialism brought to the British novels "new styles and

Englishes" and it helped bring in postcolonial issues like decolonization, diaspora, and cultural diversity (2005: 280). Apart from the effect of postcolonialism in London, as Nick Bentley observes, writers from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to a certain extent, identified themselves in a similar postcolonial position in those distinct national literatures and sought to single out themselves from two dominating factors: the English language and homogenous 'British' culture (2008: 19).

Writings of Black and Asian British writers are no longer regarded as 'marginal' or 'minority interest', as they have secured a significant place and therefore can be considered *mainstream* and *central* in contemporary British literature. What is more, postcolonialism plays a bigger role in positioning this multicultural literature to the mainstream by highlighting the diversity and thus has broken the 'perceived' homogenous British cultural representation in literature.

MUSLIM WRITINGS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Who are the British Muslim Writers?

There is an engaging debate among many about the identity of British Muslim writers. Is a British Muslim/writer someone who was born in Britain? If we categorize according to one's birthplace, very few writers will qualify. Writers such as Hanif Kureishi (born in Kent), John Siddique (born in Rochdale), Zahid Hussain (born in Lancashire), Robin Yassin-Kassab (born in London) and Shelina Janmohamed (born in London) are British in that sense (Chambers, 2011). Is a British Muslim/writer someone who is a resident or owner of a British passport? This category is the largest; many such writers came to Britain at an impressionable age such as Ahdaf Soueif

(1950–), Fadia Faqir (1956–), Qaisra Shahraz (1958–), Nadeem Aslam (1966–), Roopa Farooki (1974–), Abdulrazak Gurnah (1948–), Tariq Ali (1943–), Aamer Hussein (1955–) and others.[4] The third group is somewhat expatriate and perhaps using Britain as a base for their creative writings. This group includes among others Kamila Shamsie (1973–), Leila Aboulela (1964–), Mohsin Hamid (1971–) and Tahmina Anam (1975–). This study considers all the three categories mentioned above as British Muslim writers.

'Muslim' or 'Islamic' Writers?

Amin Malak categorizes writers of Muslim heritage into two groups by using two terms, Muslim and Islamic. Here 'Muslim' writers refer to those whose identity is shaped by the cultural impact of Islam "irrespective of being secular, agnostic, or practicing believer" while the identity of the latter "emphasizes the faith of Islam" and "denotes thoughts, rituals, activities and institutions specifically proclaimed and sanctioned by Islam" (Malak, 2005: 5). But the question remains, who will specify the parameters which guide who is a 'Muslim', 'Islamic' or 'secular' writer?

Some secular writers use or like the 'Muslim' tag and some writers who are well known as 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' writers show reluctance over the tagging. Leila Aboulela, for instance, is not only an Islamic or Muslim writer but also tagged as a "*halal* novelist"; she does not "want to be labelled or tagged as a Muslim writer" (Aboulela qtd. in Chambers, 2011: 105). What is more, the literary circles in Sudan (her native country) do not like to tag Aboulela as a Muslim writer (Aboulela qtd. in Chambers 2011: 105).

[4] For more details, see Claire Chambers (2011), *British Muslim Fictions: Interviews with Contemporary Writers*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 24

Observing this engaging debate over the tags 'Muslim', 'Islamic' or 'secular' writers with Muslim names, I prefer not to tag them as long as they explicitly say that they belong to a certain category and their works reflect that. Though Amin Malak's categories ('Muslim' and 'Islamic') seem impressive; considering Claire Chambers' point of view on this,[5] I believe that 'Muslim' writers can be addressed as 'writer of Muslim heritage' or 'writer with Muslim name' or 'writer with Muslim background'. This may bring an end to the controversy regarding tagging them as 'Islamic', 'Muslim' or 'secular' writer.

Contemporary British Writers of Muslim Heritage (1990s–present)

British writers of Muslim heritage have secured a remarkable space and received significant critical attention, as many of their works are widely considered of high quality and influential. The first decade of this current century saw a growing critical attention to the term 'Muslim Writing' which is relatively new and currently hotly contested by many commentators in Britain and beyond, especially after 9/11 and 7/7 catastrophic incidents in the US and UK respectively.

Claire Chambers, in *British Muslim Fictions* (2011), brings together interviews of thirteen of the most influential contemporary British writers of Muslim background. They are: Tariq Ali, Fadia Faqir, Aamer Hussein, Leila Aboulela, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Nadeem Aslam, Tahmina Anam, Mohsin Hamid, Robin Yassin-Kassab (1969–), Kamila Shamsie, Hanif Kureishi (1954–), Ahdaf Soueif and Zahid Hussain (1972–).

These writers included in Chambers' interview-book are no doubt influential and award-winning, but there are many such contemporary writers that she could not

[5] See (Chambers, 2011)

add for various reasons. Apart from these thirteen writers that Chambers discussed in detail in her book, some of the prominent writers of Muslim background are: Salman Rushdie (1947–), Ziauddin Sardar (1951–), Rageh Omaar (1967–), Monica Ali (1967–), Qaisra Shahraz (1958–), Ed Husain (1974–), Shelina Janmohamed (1974–), Nai'ma B. Robert (1977–), Shusha Guppy (1935–2008), Imran Ahmad (1962–), John Siddique (1964–), Sarfraz Manzoor (1971–), Moazzam Begg (1968–), Syed Manzurul Islam (1953–), Imtiaz Dharker (1954–), Zana Muhsen (1965–), Nadifa Mohamed (1981–) Mirza Waheed, Hisham Matar (1970–), Zia Haider Rahman and Tony Hanania (1964–).

A list of some contemporary British authors of Muslim heritage whose works reflect aspects of British Muslim life and experience includes Rukshana Ahmed, Shahrukh Husain, Almas Khan, Moni Mohsen, Jamal Mahjoub, Shameam Akhtar, Nasser S. Hussain, Farhana Sheikh, Rekha Waheed (1975–), Roopa Farooki (1974–), Shahida Rahman[6] (1971–) and Suhayl Saadi (1961). The lists of Muslim-heritage British writers I have provided above are by no means exhaustive.

Controversies

Besides their popularity and critical acclaims, some writings by Muslim-heritage authors in Britain have caused controversy. For example, Salman Rushdie's 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses* triggered controversy, caused great offence among Muslims and prompted protests in many countries including Britain. In India, the book was banned; in the UK and Pakistan, *Satanic Verses* was burned in demonstration by Muslims who were angered by the novel's caricaturization of Prophet Muhammad and

[6] Shahidun Nessa Rahman is commonly known by her pseudonym Shahida Rahman.

other Muslim religious figures of his time. Conversely, in defense of freedom of speech, some Muslims criticized the protests against the novel.[7]

In 2006, an incident of similar kind occurred when the Bangladesh community in Britain protested in Brick Lane[8] against the filming of Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane*. The protesters succeeded in stopping the filming and claimed that the novel is an insult to them. In addition, they mentioned that the novel had misrepresented and stereotyped Bangladeshi people. Mahmoud Rouf of the Brick Lane Business Association said, "Yes, you create a work of fiction, but you do not create fiction which offends a whole community" (qtd. in Akbar 2006). Ali dismissed the allegation of stereotype of a particular race and said: "It's gibberish to say it is racist. It's a story dealing with adultery. This is happening to some of our girls…" (Ali qtd in Akbar 2006). These two examples suggest that the controversies aroused over the writings of British Muslim writers are not always solely emanating out of religious cause, but also out of cultural carticaturization or misrepresentation of a particular ethnic community.

Sometimes, non-Muslim writers' caricaturing of Islam also gains attention. In his 1981 travel book *Among the Believers*, V.S. Naipaul (1932–) portrays the 'Muslim world' negatively, claiming that he was encouraged to attend prayers in Pakistan and experienced apparent 'threat' of conversion (Chambers, 2011: 22). Elsewhere in the text, he depicts Islam as "an imperialism and a religion" and criticizes the *sharia* law (Naipaul, 1981: 11). Naipaul's later text, *Beyond Belief* (1999), contains even more controversial views of Muslims and Islam, as he reaffirms that Islam "makes imperial demand" and in the "Islam of converted countries there is an element of neurosis and

[7] See Anouar Abdalla (1994), *For Rushdie: Essays by Arab and Muslim Writers in Defense of Free Speech*. New York: George Braziller.

[8] For specific information about the demonstration see: Arifa Akbar (July 22, 2006), Brick Lane Rises Up Against Filming of Ali's Novel. *The Independent* UK, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/brick-lane-rises-up-against-filming-of-alis-novel-408885.html