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Chanu's Going Back: The Reclamation of Bengali Identity

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Abstract

This present research paper concerned with Acculturation and settler identity has been a subject matter of significant dispute in the 20th century. Coming to the host nation, and getting included into the typical culture is a development which grasps dissimilar settlers. On the one hand, they depart the safety of the home land for an self-doubting future, on the other hand, the bias and non-acceptance of the host nation creates their integration a dissimilar process. Moreover, they also desire to live in the safe zone of their homeland identity thus build including unfeasibility. Going home a set of symptom and a profound love for the motherland Bangladesh is an essential part of Chanu's immigrant identity. He comes to Britain with the imaginings of achieving substantial victory, principally as a civil servant, (Attached to his colonial identity), and after that going back to Bangladesh. He is unfortunately to fulfill this dream because of his personal in adequacies, and thus agreed the job of a council clerk. Incapability to get a promotion in his job, builds him question the potential bias at work. Likely, he lives in Britain the more convinced he is of his return. His incapability to adapt the host culture, gradual marginalization and an intrinsic love for his homeland makes him take the final step of going back. He redeems the promise he complete to himself and in a way redeems himself.

***IndexTerms* - chanu, ethnic, immigrant, identity, homeland, redeem**

I. INTRODUCTION

Brick Lane, the debut novel written by Monika Ali, is open to different readings and elucidations. Some critics suggest that Brick Lane is a documentary of Nazneen, a young Bangladeshi Bride, who is elated from a village in Bangladesh to the life of Tower Hamlets in London, and how she as an immigrant is bare to the various ethnic life of East London. Monika Ali's work has also been evaluate with other British writers such as Hanif kuereshi and Salman Rushdie. However, fascinatingly enough, Ali's novel is not merely a tale of an immigrant experience, but touches upon a host of subject that are a division of the immigrant experiences such as amalgamation, hybridity, multiculturalism, environmental displacement, ethnic migrancy and the going home syndrome. Alistair Cormack observes Brick Lane, as a document about immigration in the structure of postcolonial area under discussion. He writes, " Brick Lane is a sensible narrative with a postcolonial story, it presents an outstanding opportunity to look at the affiliation between the official strategies of mimetic fiction and the chronological contexts of multiculturalism and immigration."(169). Self actualization of Nazneen and the other feminine characters in the novel such as Mrs. Azad, Mrs. Islam or Raiza. I would however, like to understand the novel from the point of view Chanu's immigrant identity, and his consequential return to Bangladesh. The "going home syndrome" Chanu says, "these people not at all really leave home. Their corpse are here, but their souls are back home"(32). When Chanu converse of these people, he refers to the settlers who come as workers or semi-skilled labourers tp Britain, and he thinks himself a class above them. Modest understand that he is also one of them.

Chanu's Dream

Chanu had come to Britain with the same dreams as a lot of first cohort immigrants, thoughts of a superior future. The so called geographical displacement is in chanu's case, however further of a personal option rather than a obsessive option as in the case of any refugees seekers, political asylums or people suffering from prosection of any category. Unlike, most of the settlers that came to Britain in the 1960s, Chanu was a graduate from University of Dhaka, a reality that he was proud of, and made public at every given prospect, be it to his wife or even his friend Dr. Azad. He was one of the some men who were belonged to a better class socially in Bangladesh. Chanu, like many of the immigrants of the post colonies in the Caribbean, Indian sub continent and Africa were magnetized to London because, after all, if was great Britain the (Mother country). The first cohort immigrants of that time cataleptically maintained their colonial identity, thereby looking upto London not only as the influential center of the empire, but also as a land why they would grow. At this time (1950s and 1960s), Britain was undergoing economic extension. This economic extension, promised a lot of job open in is, and thus a better average of living for people of so called Third World.

Immigrants like Chanu, and others had to be ill with bias, and were a susceptible and embattled lot, partly because of the unreceptive of nature of the British, not yet open to the ideas of an interactive multiculturalism; a multiculturalism where in people on together the sides of the fence try to interrelate with each other for a socially optimistic unified relationship. On the one hand, they faced the optimistic hosts, and on the other hand, of their personal options, the immigrants, were also not open to the idea o incorporation, as they were still joined to their desh identity, although they are conscious of the intercontinental aspect of their identity.

IMMIGRANT ACCULTURATION

Emigrating from one country to another has traditionally been an ongoing process for centuries as we have seen in the case of nations such as the United States, Australia and Canada which have all understand enormous waves of immigration. These countries are hugely made up of settlers. Immigrants today, however Ingle by points out are the ones who “come across centuries old empires and even more importantly, they maintain in minority. On the whole they build a Diaspora, that is to stay they retain strong together with their place of birth”(1). Chanu suffocate from the going home syndrome of the first cohort immigrant, but in the novel we do fine other first cohort settlers who have deal with to identify, and incorporate with the host culture. When Chanu left from his council clerk job her was constantly that he would be able to get a good job soon enough, but all of his attempts did not yield any outgrowth. Whatever the causes he begins to attention on going home all the more. He puts all his efforts in the going to home.

Chanu comes with the vision of a better future in Great Britain, but their dealing with the mainstream culture or host country from the starting is at the minimal stage. He does not connect with the Britain people socially, and even when he desires to marry he goes to Bangladesh. Chanu and his wife Nazneen, lives in the Tower Hamlets, and are in no way aloftly mobile. This sort of unique approach goes a long way in nourishing the going home syndrome. Not only does he live in that locality, but he also builds sure that he and his wife merged with only Bangladeshis. His sense of self and also self esteem is bind down to Bangladeshi identity. Turner and Tajfel point out “The Social Identity theory spots on the extent to while individuals identify themselves in of group relationships. The innermost principle of identity theory is that individuals classify their identities along two aspects: social, described by relationship in different social groups; and personal, the eccentric attributes that differentiate one individual from another” (369). Both Chanu and his family were purely a perceptible presence. This kind of separation escorts to marginalization even more because an immigrant not succeed to connect with the people of the host nation.

Furthermore, people like Mrs. Azad had supervised very well within the Britain social system. Mrs. Azad had incorporated to an extent that she had started wearing skirts, smoked cigarette, cut her streaked hair and drank beer, ad did so with no pretentions at all. Mrs. Azad's acculturation is the sort of adaptation, wherein she wants to be one with the normal British identity, instead of adhering on to a Bangladeshi immigrant identity. As she says very significantly that the settlers want the host culture to change for them, but would not change themselves to become accustomed to the host culture. Is this alter an outer change in nature or is it something that is a requirements for settlers who incorporate? Is this mimicry necessary to stay alive or is it a positive practical step to be one with the mainstream culture? Dr. Azad is still oversee by the Bangladeshi back home social mores, so when he daughter asks for money to go the club in front of Chanu and Nazneen, he feels profoundly embarrassed. Chanu feels this embarrassment also, and makes a comment about the settler tragedy, which makes Mrs. Azad reply angrily, and she speaks her mind regarding conflict of cultures, and that the conflict is between the eastern cultures and Western cultures.

He speaks his opinion slightly, “I am talking about the conflict of Western values and our own. I am talking about the resist to incorporate and need to protect one's own inheritance and identity. I am talking about our children who don't know what their identity is. I am talking about the emotions of estrangement

produced by a socially where racial discrimination is prevalent” (113). These lines sum up to a great extent of Chanu's personal emotions. Chanu is worried about that his daughters are being brought in a ethnicity which would contradict their Bangladeshi identity, and that is why before this upheaval happens he wants to take his daughters back to Bangladesh. He has the dread that living longer in Britain would possibly make them like Mrs. Azad or the likes of her, who have in the outlook of Chanu given up their culture and cultural identity. Chanu arouses to the authenticity that he has been a disappointment on all counts, and in nearly all the areas of life. In his vocation he goes strengthening down from being a clerk to a taxi driver; as a provider, he fails as he earns corresponding to what he pays in fines; as a husband he turns a blind eye to his wife's concern and as a final point of his hopes and inculcating Bangali rituals in his children are also met with failure.

HOMELAND IDENTITY

Chanu's resolution to migrate or go back to Bangladesh was a course of action that sees the light of the day in stages. He is an immigrant who thinks after accomplishing success he will go back to his motherland. So, he still lives by the rules, traditions and culture and growths of his native place, though he continues to live in the land of adoption. To him the most awful thing that could happen to an individual is the loss of pride. The pride he is talking about that is again merge and with one's racial, ethnic and cultural identity; a pride that Sir Walter Scott wrote about in the poem “My Native Land” respire there a man with a soul so dead.

First generation immigrant may reconcile or settle down somewhere, but they always have a deep longing for their roots. This also delivers or together down the fact as to why Chanu needs to go to Bangladesh, even after living in Great Britain for more than 20 years. Chanu, is at a standstill tied to his motherland because in his mind he never left it. Chanu, also in his personal being carries the pride of his nation with him. He cherished or loved Bengal, and what it stood for from the time when immemorial. It was a love entrenched in the notion of the golden Bengal of Tagore, history, arts, ethnicity and so forth. Everytime Chanu told his daughters, and Nazneen about the Bengal merited during its golden period. He talks about the Bengal in the sixteenth century, and to this consequence, he wants still the pride of their roots and culture of Bengali into his daughters.

Chanu always distressed in the way of exposed Bangladesh in represented in the media. The media portrayed only food crisis, floods and scarcity in Bangladesh. His love of Bengal is together the reclamation of that Bengali identity, misplaced due to colonization to the British, after the clash of Buxar, in 1765. He in his own way needs to recover that identity of Bengal which is attached to his pride, and self value in terms of the pre-colonial identity. Pride in their ethnicity, race is an necessary aspects of Bengali Identity. Even today Bengali's (Both from Bangladesh and India) take a lot of conceit or pride in Rabindranath Tagore who was awarded a Nobel Prize in literature, but more so, due to the cause of he back to the British territory the title of “Sir” give on him by the British crown, in objection against the Jhalianwala Baugh(massacre) Tragedy(1919). To back the knighthood return to the territory was not an simple step, but Tagore trusted in the rightness of his self-esteem and basis. He could not accept knighthood from the colonizers after the mass destruction that became one of the very critical turning point in the history of the liberty movement.

Non acceptance of the title meant taking a position in opposition to the colonizer and denying colonial power. Chanu, as a usual practice asks his daughters to declaim the national song of Bangladesh written by Tagore. He feels that Rabindranath Tagore was the greatest literary figure who took a position against colonial dominance. Chanu failed to be a booming immigrant in the given terms, but he did not want to fail as a Bengali, reclaiming his motherland identity. From the beginning, he proclaims to Dr. Azad that he had made two assures to himself, "I'll be a success, come what may. That's promise number one. I'll go back home, that it number two. When I am success, and I'll tribute these promises" (35).

CONCLUSION

Chanu was in no way a success had the solid conviction that going home would surely mean reclaiming of his motherland identity; a self that would be deeply rooted in the Bengali ethnicity, could be cultivated through a successfully run soap making business or some other enterprise in a Bengali set up. He could not buy back the first promise he made to himself of being successful, but he could at least redeem the second promise he complete to himself and that is, "Number two I'll go back home..... And I'll honor these assures..." (35). In the beginning of the novel, Chanu leave all his plans and projects uncompleted, which complete Nazneen comment, "He thrashed enthusiastically but without ability. His power went into Niyyah-the making of intention-and here he was advanced and skilful, but the outcome let him down" (181). In one respect the delivery of Niyyah, did not let him downward. Once and for all Chanu took the step of returning back to his nation, and reclaiming his identity; an identity that was and the core of his being. By going back he redeemed himself, for he walked the talk.

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