

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

**LANGUAGE AND GENDER IDEOLOGIES: A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS
OF MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE* AND
*IN THE KITCHEN***

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Dilek KAYA BAKAY

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ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü'ne,

Prof. Dr. Nazan TUTAŞ danışmanlığında hazırladığım “Language and Gender Ideologies: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen* (Ankara, 2021)” adlı yüksek lisans tezimdeki bütün bilgilerin akademik kurallara ve etik davranış ilkelerine uygun olarak toplanıp sunulduğunu, başka kaynaklardan aldığım bilgileri metinde ve kaynakçada eksiksiz olarak gösterdiğimi, çalışma sürecinde bilimsel araştırma ve etik kurallarına uygun olarak davrandığımı ve aksinin ortaya çıkması durumunda her türlü yasal sonucu kabul edeceğimi beyan ederim.

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INTRODUCTION

“Stylistic analysis is not just a question of discussing ‘effects’ in language and text, but a powerful method for understanding the ways in which all sorts of ‘realities’ are constructed through language.”

Deirdre Burton

This thesis aims to explore the way gender ideologies are encoded in language in Monica Ali’s two novels, *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*, through a feminist stylistic analysis. To this end, the study employs the models of modality and transitivity as the tools for linguistic analysis, drawn from M. A. K. Halliday’s functional grammar theory, and it explores the characterizations of the protagonists in these novels with a feminist concern.

Language and reality have a symbiotic relationship: Language does not simply reflect our perceptions of things and ideas but affects and shapes the way we perceive them as well. The notion that regards language as mere exchange of information has been challenged by many critical linguists who assert that language is a result of social processes and ideologies, and that the examination of language will reveal the ingrained ideologies in society. Critical linguists also regard language as a means of manipulation and social control. In this respect, language establishes and maintains social organisations and ideologies, including patriarchy. Patriarchal discourse, which determines the unfair position of women in society, is constructed and consolidated through language. Thus, feminist stylistics undertakes an analysis of language which aims to make the reader aware of oppressive ideologies in relation to gender.

Stylistic analyses, dating back to the 1960s as a form of literary analysis, previously tended to deal with the operations of language *within* the text; in that sense, they adopted a

structuralist or formalist approach. Linguistic theories were used in the analysis of literary texts to reveal how meanings were created at different levels of language, including sound, writing, vocabulary, and syntax. In the interpretation process, such analyses excluded the factors outside the text, such as the social circumstances in which the text was produced. However, in keeping with the developments in linguistics and the emergence of pragmatic and functionalist theories of language, stylistic analyses have evolved into discourse stylistics. Discourse stylistic analyses have shifted the focus to the context in which the text is produced.

Feminist stylistics has emerged as a sub-branch of discourse stylistics and explores the encoding of gender issues in language. The term 'feminist stylistics' was coined by Sara Mills in 1995, and since then, feminist stylistic analyses have been applied in various areas, including the language used in films, advertisements, and news. Feminist stylistics is primarily concerned with the matter of gender. According to this approach, patriarchal ideology is ingrained in the language system, and the users of language, as well as writers, tend to use such ideological language and convey ideological messages as if they were 'natural' or 'common sense' without being aware of such operations of language. A linguistic analysis of the text, such as the analysis of lexis, modality, transitivity, speech acts, and conversational behaviour can demonstrate the underlying patriarchal ideology rooted in and conveyed through language.

As stated above, the oppression of women is embedded in and reinforced through language. Women are disempowered through a disabling language in which patriarchal discourse is embedded. Feminist stylistic analysis offers a means to reveal the constructed nature of such language and provides an optimistic approach to resist the oppressing ideologies through a more conscious use of language. In other words, a feminist stylistic

analysis can systematically describe the way language functions to construct ideologies that oppress women and the way that women could be liberated from such oppressions through language use. Mills's framework of analysis in her *Feminist Stylistics* (1995) offers analyses at the word, phrase, sentence, and discourse levels. Therefore, it is a useful tool to carry out a systematic analysis of gender ideologies in texts.

In Mills's analytical framework, the analysis at the word level focuses on the uses of words that position the male as the norm, such as the generic noun 'mankind' and the generic pronoun 'he'. Moreover, the analysis is concerned with the use of words that derogate women, including insult words or endearments. The analysis at the level of the phrase and sentence are related with the use of proverbs, metaphors, jokes, and transitivity choices which disguise sexism. Finally, at the discourse level, the analysis is conducted in connection with characters and roles, the fragmentation of the male/female body, focalization, and sexist narrative schemata.

Feminist stylistic analyses often tend to expose sexism and the disempowering of women characters in texts; however, this thesis proposes that such analysis could describe the way that women characters are liberated from sexist discourses as well. Mills argues that when the text is deconstructed through a language analysis and the ideologies are exposed, there is room for resisting the ideologies embedded in the text. Similarly, Deirdre Burton asserts that when readers are made aware of the constructed nature of texts, they can make conscious, enabling linguistic choices to express reality. Therefore, the overall purpose of this thesis is to expose embedded gender ideologies in texts, thus describe the constructed nature of texts and raise awareness on the way language shapes our self and reality through a feminist stylistic analysis.

Hence, this thesis adopts the language theory claimed by discourse stylistics that ideology is ingrained in language, and that language not only reflects but also constructs its users' reality. More specifically, this thesis adopts a feminist stylistic approach and aims to examine the embedded ideologies related to gender issues in fiction. Different from the framework offered by Mills, the analysis will be conducted at the level of the clause to reveal the gender ideologies since Mills's framework is not viable to conduct an analysis at the word and phrase levels on the two novels explored in this thesis. Moreover, due to the limitations of time and space, two analysis models, namely the models of modality and transitivity, will be used to examine the way ideology is encoded in the clause.

The model of modality is the means speakers of a language use to express their attitude towards a subject. Through modality, the speakers can, for example, express obligation, wishes, or their commitment to the truth of a proposition. Therefore, an analysis of the modality choices in a text can provide insights into the speakers' worldviews, including those on gender. For instance, the modality choice in the sentence "Women must obey their husbands" has implications about the speaker's gender ideology because the modal choice denotes that women's obedience to their husbands is an obligation of a high degree. Similarly, the sentence "It is possible that women and men are equal" involves modality signalling the speaker's doubts regarding the truth of the proposition. Modality includes the use of modal auxiliaries (may, must, could, etc.), modal and sentence adverbs (certainly/possibly, etc.), evaluative adjectives and adverbs (luckily/fortunate, etc.), verbs of knowledge, prediction and evaluation (believe, guess, know, etc.) and finally generic sentences that proclaim general facts. In fiction, an analysis of the ways these forms of language are used by a character or by the narrator can reveal the underlying ideology.

In a similar vein, the model of transitivity provides a powerful means for the analysis of character construction in a novel. Transitivity is concerned with the linguistic construction of experience, and very briefly, the analysis can be carried out by asking the questions ‘Who does what to whom?’ and ‘Who is affected?’. In this way, the processes in the clause are examined and whether a character has control over her/his actions, environment or other people can be analysed. In other words, it is possible to explore a character’s agency in her/his actions and relations with others through the analysis of transitivity choices. To illustrate, the transitivity choices in the sentences “She was given a job” and “She found a job” have some implications about the person’s agency. In the former sentence, the person lacks control over finding a job while the transitivity choice in the latter implies the person’s agency in getting the job.

These models are employed to answer the following research questions related to the novels *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*:

- Do the female characters have agency over their actions? Are they passivized?
- If they are passivized or disempowered, what ideology makes them passive and disempowered? In what ways is the ideology encoded in language?
- What ideologies account for the motives for the female and male characters’ behaviours?
- Are there conflicting gender ideologies in the text? How are these conflicts encoded in the transitivity and modality choices?

In a discourse stylistic analysis, or in a feminist stylistic analysis in particular, the analysis consists of two main steps: description and evaluation. Therefore, the analyses in this thesis have been carried out as follows: Firstly, isolated sentences, paragraphs and dialogues that are representative of the gender issues in these novels have been selected, and the consistent and systematic modality and transitivity choices in the chosen extracts are

described in detail. Then, the gender discourse encoded in the texts' systematic choices is interpreted from a feminist perspective.

Firstly, *Brick Lane* is linguistically analysed from a feminist point of view by looking at the text's modality and transitivity choices. The protagonist of *Brick Lane* is a Bangladeshi woman, Nazneen, who comes to London through an arranged marriage to a much older man. Nazneen, whose fatalistic upbringing is deeply rooted in her language and has determined her worldview and her behaviour, has been disempowered and passivized. The worldview that disempowers Nazneen is rooted in the language that her mother used while raising her and in the language that Nazneen uses herself. In her thoughts, in her conversations with her husband or her lover, and in her everyday actions she is submissive, silent, and indifferent to the events that directly influence her own life. Yet, as the novel progresses, she finds her voice and is liberated from the ideologies that have constrained her, and her liberation is evident in the change in her language. The disempowering ideology embodied in her language and the change in her worldview and behaviour has been traced through a feminist stylistic analysis of the language that she uses and that is used by the narrator to convey her experiences and thoughts.

The way Nazneen's sister Hasina is victimized by patriarchal society is also explored through a feminist stylistic analysis. The analysis reveals that, in contrast to her elder/younger sister, Hasina endeavours to resist the oppressions of the patriarchal Bangladeshi society. Unlike Nazneen, she refuses to marry someone chosen by her father and elopes with the man of her own choice. However, she is subjected to oppression including physical violence; therefore, she chooses to get away from her husband as well and start a new life on her own. However, the oppression is always there: in her workplaces, she is regarded as a sexual object and finally forced into prostitution. Hasina's experiences and thoughts are presented through

her letters, which enables the reader to have direct access to her mind without a mediating narrator. The oppression she accounts in her letters as a young woman ‘without a family or husband’ in the patriarchal society of Bangladesh provides room for a discussion of gender issues through a feminist stylistic analysis.

In *In the Kitchen*, the characterization of the male protagonist Gabriel (Gabe) is analysed through feminist stylistics. Gabriel is the executive chef of a hotel in London. It is revealed at the very beginning of the novel that one of his workers has been found dead in the basement of the kitchen, and that this event has initiated his nervous breakdown. Apart from the problems in his workplace, he finds himself trapped in a situation that contradicts his values regarding women and his relationship with them. On the one hand, his girlfriend Charlie, a 38-year-old pub singer with whom he believes he is in love, wants to settle down with him. On the other hand, he enters into a relationship with another young woman, Lena, a Belarussian prostitute who has been trafficked to England and has become a sexual victim. Gabe’s relationship with Lena is based on sexuality: He cannot help manipulating Lena as the object of his sexual desires even though he is aware that he is acting immorally. For the analysis, extracts that are representative of Gabriel’s values concerning women and other extracts that depict his relationship with Charlie and Lena have been chosen, and the consistent modality and transitivity choices have been examined. In this way, Gabe’s ideological crisis about his relationship with women and his values concerning women is revealed and interpreted with a feminist approach.

The following chapter first presents an overview of textual, contextual, and feminist stylistics. Then, it provides a more detailed account of the models of modality and transitivity. Chapters Two and Three present a feminist stylistic analysis of the novels *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*, respectively, and the study ends with Conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

STYLISTICS: FROM TEXTUALISM TO CONTEXTUALISM

"To do stylistics is to explore language [.]"

(Simpson, *Stylistics* 3)

1.1 Beginnings of Stylistics: Textualism

Stylistics can be broadly defined as the analysis of style in literary texts. Leech and Short define style in its most general sense as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose" (9). In relation to literary studies, while the term style may refer to the linguistic choices of an individual author, a particular period, a certain genre, and so on (10); the remit of stylistics is mainly concerned with "the linguistic characteristics of a particular text" (11).

Considering that a literary text is a collection of words, phrases and sentences that constitute a coherent story, stylistic analyses play a crucial role in literary criticism. For Simpson, stylistics helps to provide a reference point for various interpretations of the text (*Stylistics* 2). Language being the medium of literature, an interpretation of the text that is achieved intuitively can be systematically presented through stylistic analysis (Carter and Simpson 18), for stylistics provides methods for a systematic analysis of linguistic preferences in a text (Leech and Short 11). Furthermore, Simpson highlights the importance of stylistics in understanding how language functions by stating that "the question 'What can stylistics tell us about literature?' is always paralleled by an equally important question 'What can stylistics tell us about language?'" (*Stylistics* 3).

As an academic discipline, stylistics dates back to the twentieth century. As Bradford states, the Formalists in Russia and central Europe and the New Critics in Britain and the U.S. were the two groups that had a major impact on stylistics in the twentieth century (12).

It was the main premise of Russian Formalism and New Criticism that there existed a different type of language exclusive to literature, and stylistic analyses of the 60s mainly attempted to describe the "literariness" of canonical texts, while other early stylistic analyses were concerned with investigating a particular writer's style (Mills 6-7). The Prague School of poetics underscored the poetic function of language, arguing that the language used in literary texts presented a fresh view of reality through "deautomatisation or foregrounding" of language use, such as the use of poetic devices (Leech and Short 23).

Roman Jakobson, who was among the Formalists in the Moscow circle first and then joined the Prague group later, was a key critic whose work was influential in the development of stylistics as an academic discipline (Simpson, *Stylistics* 50). In 1960, Jakobson pointed to the relation between linguistics and literature studies, stating "a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unversant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms" (qtd. in Carter and Simpson 1). At the time, stylistics was a newly developing field of literary analysis that aimed to define "style", be it the author's the period's or a group's style (1). Studies on syntax and phonology, specifically on poetry prevailed during that period. The stylistic studies of 1960s were essentially Formalist in that they attempted to display the differences between the poet's use of grammar and the norms of grammar in a particular language (2).

Modern stylistics holds the view that there is no pattern or form of language that is completely exclusive to literature; what stylistics is primarily concerned with is "what writers do *with* and *through* language" (Simpson, *Stylistics* 98). Stylistics today tends to go beyond the text itself and analyse literary texts in relation to their context. For Simpson, stylistic analyses need to be "context-sensitive", or consider the time, place, cultural context and cognitive context in the text's production to achieve a fuller analysis (*Stylistics* 3). In

connection with that, Birch makes a distinction between intrinsic criticism and extrinsic criticism: Intrinsic criticism deals with the text itself, which is the tenet of the structuralist approach. However, for Birch, criticism must move away from an intrinsic approach towards a more extrinsic one; that is, it must incorporate other fields of knowledge, which calls for an interdisciplinary and intertextual analysis of literary texts (*Language, Literature* 151-2, 154).

1.2 Discourse Stylistics: Contextualism

Stylistic studies are by nature intertwined with language studies. Therefore, it would be appropriate to refer to two key figures in the field of linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure and M. A. K. Halliday, to gain a deeper insight into what stylistics, particularly discourse stylistics does. Ferdinand de Saussure, whose studies on language has much influenced literary criticism, drew a line between *langue* and *parole*: For the Swiss linguist, *langue* is the sum of the rules shared by speakers of a language while *parole* refers to the uses of those rules in specific situations (qtd. in Leech and Short 9). Leech and Short, then, conclude that style, which is all about making linguistic choices depending on context, is related to *parole* (9).

Saussure's structuralist linguistics was opposed by a functionalist approach, which placed an emphasis on the context of utterance. M. A. K. Halliday's Functional Grammar regards language as "social semiotic" (Halliday; Leech and Short 4). Halliday's functional linguistics proposed that the language system relies on its uses or functions. In other words, the forms of language and meanings are determined by context. This view was a reaction to the formalist view, which held that the language system pre-existed its use; it was a separate entity from its uses (Carter and Simpson 3). Birch expostulated about the structuralist approach, asserting that "[t]he problem with structuralist linguistics has not been the

dichotomy of *langue* and *parole* as such, but the privileging of *langue* over *parole*, that is the privileging of the abstract rule-governed system of language (*langue*) over the actual daily productive uses of language in speech and writing (*parole*)” (*Language, Literature* 47).

Leech and Short provide a concise interpretation of Halliday's three functions related to language use (*parole*). Firstly, the ideational function of language means that it communicates a message about an experience. Secondly, the interpersonal function is about the social aspect of language. Thirdly, the textual function is related with the construction of language in speech or in writing; the utterance or text must be constructed well enough to be decoded by the hearer. These three functions exist together to satisfy the communicative needs of users of a language (109). Leech and Short further argue that stylistic value is about these three functions (110).

Functionalism marked the linguistic studies of the 1970s, and it inevitably influenced the field of stylistics (Carter and Simpson 3). Functionalists regarded literary texts as "naturally occurring texts", thus claimed that functionalist models of language could be used for the analysis of literary texts (Carter and Simpson 3). In line with the wave of functionalism, at the beginning of the 1980s, stylistic analyses began to include pragmatics, speech act theory, varieties of language, and analyses at the dialogue level (3).

Functionalism led up to the analysis of non-literary texts, which is known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA investigates the “use” of language and explores the relations between society and language. Verdonk defines critical discourse analysis as a field of linguistics whose goal is to uncover the hidden ideological, social, and political structures operating in texts (220). Discourse analysis is concerned with the analysis of natural language use in a social context (Carter and Simpson 9). It does not analyse context-free, isolated sentences but the patterns of language use in real contexts (Carter and Simpson 9). Literary

criticism has been much influenced by CDA, and stylistic analyses are no exception. Traditional stylistic analyses implied that the language of a text and the society using the language were separate entities (Birch, “Strategy” 222). This suggested that people had the freedom to choose from the repertoire of language to create meaning. Yet, Birch argues that people are not free when making language choices. They are subject to ideological, social, political, and cultural limitations, which means that language can be used as a control system, a means of manipulation to promote power, assign roles to people and maintain order in society. In other words, communication is never innocent, having its motivations and consequences (222). Another critic that has influenced the interpretation of texts at the discourse level is Michael Foucault. Foucault's argument that knowledge is discursive has largely influenced the contemporary literary criticism. He argues that knowledge and beliefs are produced through power-driven processes in society, meaning that they are not universal or the ultimate truth (qtd. in Carter and Simpson 16).

CDA is particularly concerned with the way ideologies are naturalized or have become “common sense” in language. The dominant values and norms are naturalized by society as people are constantly involved in “a process of inculcation”; they are continuously exposed to such values and norms in written and spoken discourse (Verdonk 220). As Birch asserts, “...your background, biases, ideas, beliefs, politics, education, etc. *determine* your understanding. But they are not invented by you. They are socially determined by the institutions and discursive practices that constitute the social networks you are involved in” (*Language, Literature* 24). The main concern of critical linguistics, another term used to refer to CDA, is to expose the natural-seeming ideologies embedded in language (Mills 12). Fowler argues that “[t]he particular aim of linguistic criticism in the first case is demystification, demonstration of the practices by which language is used to present partial

and slanted concepts as if they were innocent and natural” (*Linguistic Criticism* 51). Critical linguists point at the social role of language, particularly its being “a tool for preserving the prevailing order” (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 44). Also, they argue that when certain styles of language are used continuously, they influence people’s cognitive behaviour (Mills 11).

There is no doubt that ideology is also embedded in literary texts. In 1967, Mikhail Bakhtin pointed to the fact that ideology and language are intrinsically related in the novel:

The author participates in the novel (he is omnipresent in it) with almost no direct language of his own. The language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language. (qtd. in Bradford 83)

Bakhtin’s argument can be regarded as the precursor of the ideas proposed by CDA in the sense that the author’s, consequently, the novel’s language is the product of the ideologies embedded in the society and in its language. Bakhtin, therefore, counters the Formalist view that the language of literary texts was separate from the ordinary language.

Bradford also refers to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism: Bakhtin states, "every novel is a dialogical system made up of the images of ‘languages’, styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language. Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation" (qtd. in Bradford 83). As Lee contends, language is not a separate, single system. Linguistic structure is intimately linked with social structures, and texts are heterogeneous entities made up of separate units coming from different social and historical contexts (118).

A particular branch of stylistics, discourse stylistics, engages itself with the analysis of ideology in literary texts (Leech and Short 374-5). For Leech, discourse stylistics may be defined as "the variety of discourse analysis dealing with literary discourse" (qtd. in Carter

and Simpson 13). As far as discourse stylistics is concerned, ideology is "a complex of ideas which seems to form a conceptual unit and which informs the way we think about things in a stereotypical manner" (Verdonk and Weber 247). Eggins proposes that people's ideological positions, or the values they hold unconsciously or consciously, affect their use of language (10). Thus, the use of language in literary texts conveys ideological messages.

Discourse stylistics treats language as a social semiotic: the analysis of the text goes beyond the micro-context of the effects within the text and deals with the macro-effects in the social context, involving issues of gender, ideology, politics, culture, and so on (Carter and Simpson 16). In other words, it can be suggested that while traditional stylistics is primarily concerned with the aesthetic value of the text, discourse stylistics explores the social and political ideologies embedded in the text (Carter and Simpson 16). Critical analysis is concerned with the "deconstruction and demystification" of reality presented in texts (Birch, "Strategy" 228). Birch contends that "analysis of text is not just a matter of discussing certain effects of language in a text, it can be – needs to be – a powerful method for understanding the ways in which all sorts of realities are constructed through language" (*Language, Literature* 20).

In the 80s, a lot of stylistic studies tended to engage in the application of discourse analysis models to literary texts (Carter and Simpson 4). According to critical analysts, the way we use language, in writing and in speech, is contingent upon the institutions of power, including the political parties, the law, the media the church, the education system, or the family (Verdonk and Weber 239). Carter and Simpson argue that discourse stylistics should aim to demonstrate the implicit ideologies at work in the text and the way the interpretations are discursively produced (17). Critical analysis invites us to question the way reality is

constructed in texts (Birch, “Strategy” 228). Also, Weber notes that the aims of discourse stylistics and those of traditional, structuralist stylistics differ. He states,

The discourse stylistician no longer aims at scientific completeness and objectivity. Dealing as s/he does with largely subjective beliefs, norms and values, s/he realizes that all readings are inevitably positioned and partial. His/her aim is therefore a more modest pedagogical one: to introduce readers to a procedure of vigilance which trains them in critical reading. (*Critical Analysis* 1)

Thus, Weber also highlights the role of the reader in the interpretation process, acknowledging that the interpretation of the text will be subjective.

An influential critic in discourse stylistics was Roger Fowler. He refers to the findings of cultural anthropology to underscore the fact that reality is “a social construct”, and that language is a powerful instrument for constructing reality. He states,

The world of perception and cognition – the world as we know it – is an artifice, a social construct. We have a variety of names for this world: commonsense, everyday life, the natural attitude, ideology. All of these designations refer to the world as we take it for granted, the habitualized world. Cultural anthropologists have observed the extreme variability of everyday life in different civilizations, and it is from these observations that the principle of a socially constructed commonsense has arisen. ... [Cultural anthropologists] Berger and Luckmann acknowledge the power of symbolic systems, and especially language, in the social construction of reality. (Fowler, “Linguistic Criticism” 50)

Fowler challenges the formalist view, which claimed the existence of a language use exclusive to literature, and criticises the New Critics and the formalists for ignoring the fact that literary texts are both influenced by and influence society, saying that “ [f]ormalists vehemently denied that ‘literature’ had social determinants and social consequences, but a sociolinguistic theory...will show that all discourse is part of social structure and enters into...effected and effecting relationships...” (qtd. in Carter and Simpson 12). He asserts that there is a correlation between linguistic choices and the sociocultural environment in which the choices are made, and that a text can be interpreted by considering both its stylistic features and the historical and sociological context that provided the conditions for its emergence (qtd. in Bradford 82-3). For Fowler, literature is a social discourse. Fowler and Kress (1979) propose that “The forms of language in use are a part of, as well as a consequence of, social process” (qtd. in Mills 11). They further argue that analysis of language demystifies the context in which language is used (qtd. in Mills 11).

Critics Verdonk and Birch highlight the role of the reader in discourse analysis. Birch urges us to engage with literary texts by asking questions such as “Who is marginalized?”, “Who is privileged?”, or “Whose truth is presented?”, and to challenge our own values as we deconstruct the texts. He argues that communication is a political, strategic act; however, this politics is naturalized through inculcation processes, and therefore, people fail to notice its problems (“Strategy” 223). For Birch, “issues of race, class, gender, stereotyping, justice/injustice, ‘them/us’, comfort/discomfort, pleasure, masculinity, and so on, necessarily have to be a part of the way we think about communication as strategic before it is linguistic” (227). Meanings are not the end product of communication. They are part of politics which assign and maintain superiority to particular values that products of naturalization processes. Therefore, Birch urges people to focus on the processes of communication rather than the

product of communication (223). Consequently, linguistic analyses must focus on the processes of making meaning beyond the text itself (224). According to this theory, text analysis is a social, political interpretation of the way certain ideologies are privileged (225). As we deconstruct the text, we need to question continuously the values and politics that we are using in our interpretation (227). Verdonk concludes, "we, as readers, are ourselves responsible for the meanings we construct from these labels, and not the author" (221). Hence, critical linguistics and discourse stylistics acknowledge the subjectivity of the interpretations supported by a linguistic analysis.

Being subjective, unlike structuralist criticism, discourse stylistics does not claim a scientific, objective interpretation of a literary text. Birch argues,

“meanings aren’t simply ‘put into’ a text by a writer/speaker, but are constructed by the reader/hearer...the only way we have of constructing a reading for a text is through our own socially determined language as reader/hearer. In effect, that means each time a reader reads a text, a *new* text is created.” *Language, Literature* 21)

Thus, discourse stylistics acknowledges the fact that all readings are driven by a particular ideology, hence inevitably subjective since the reader interprets the text from her/his ideological standpoint. As Birch puts it, “this attempt at explanation is, consciously or unconsciously, ideologically determined” (*Language, Literature* 30).

In a nutshell, it could be concluded that the 60s were marked by formalism, the 70s were marked by functionalism and the 80s were marked by discourse analysis (Carter and Simpson 17). Discourse stylistics argues that traditional stylistics methods do not suffice to provide a full interpretation of literary texts. Also, it claims that texts not only result from but

also bring about social processes. Consequently, the linguistic features of texts need to be investigated in relation to their contexts.

1.3 Feminist Stylistics

Feminist stylistics, a sub-branch of discourse stylistics, was introduced by Sara Mills in 1995 through her book *Feminist Stylistics*. Mills defines feminist stylistics as "an analysis which identifies itself as feminist and which uses linguistic or language analysis to examine texts" (1). Feminist stylistics argues that discourse transmits socially and ideologically constructed norms related to gender, particularly those concerning the roles of men and women and how they think and act (Bradford 86).

Mills keeps feminist stylistics aloof from traditional stylistics, arguing that traditional stylistic analyses are concerned with the artistic function of language (5). Through feminist stylistics, Mills attempts to incorporate the issue of gender into stylistic analysis (9).

Mills does not only aim to expose the sexism in individual linguistic structures; through linguistic analysis, she also aims to "analyse the larger-scale systems whereby reality is organized along gendered lines" (11). For Mills, "feminist stylistic analysis is concerned not only to describe sexism in a text, but also to analyse the way that point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender, to discover whether women's writing practices can be described, and so on" (1).

According to feminist stylistics, both the writer and the reader are subject to discursive parameters which are beyond their conscious control and influence the way they produce or interpret texts. In other words, a writer may not be aware of the linguistic choices she/he makes in her writing process, or a reader reads a text in particular ways that discourse dictates (Mills 66). In her seminal book *Feminist Stylistics*, Mills analyses texts from a range

of contexts such as newspapers, advertisements, and song lyrics in order to expose the hidden sexist ideologies in them. Doing so, she presents a framework of analysis at the levels of the word, phrase, sentence, and discourse.

With feminist stylistics, Mills attempts to offer a way out of the constraints of language in terms of gender issues by uncovering the way gender is represented in language and by providing space for alternative representations:

What I would like to capture in this book is the way that the meanings of gender are represented so that it is possible to contest those representations, or reinterpret them; but I would also like to 'make strange' the way gender is represented in our culture, so that perhaps we might be able to think of ways in which it could be represented differently and more productively, both for women and men. (2)

Thus, feminist stylistics can not only pave the way for resisting restrictive patriarchal ideologies, but it can also help construct a non-sexist language.

For Mills, linguistic analysis can help raise awareness on oppressive gender ideologies (2). Mills adopts a constructive approach in relation to ideology; she asserts that when people recognise the fact that ideologies change, they can develop resistance strategies in order to deal with the effects of the ideologies (12). In this sense, language can also be a means of emancipation from the ideologies embedded in language (Mills 14).

In short, feminist stylistics is related with the analysis of contextual factors that produce language, and deals "explicitly with questions of gender" (Mills 14). Feminist text analysis can force "readers to re-examine the text in the light of a consideration of gender" (39).

The stylistic analyses in this thesis are largely in line with the theoretical arguments proposed by Mills. This thesis tries to explore the way gender issues are problematized in Monica Ali's two novels, *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*, through their representation from male and female consciousnesses.

In sum, while both formalist stylistic criticism and discourse stylistic criticism use theories of linguistics to achieve an understanding of the text, there are significant differences between the way they approach a (literary) text. Formalist stylistic criticism is structuralist in essence, aims at objectivity and text-based. Discourse stylistics, on the other hand, is post-structuralist, acknowledges that it offers subjective interpretations of the text. It is reader centred and ideologically driven. This thesis adopts the latter stylistic theory and analyses two of Monica Ali's novels from a feminist stylistic perspective. To that end, it makes use of two theories of sentence grammar, namely the theories of modality and transitivity, in order to explore the reflection and construction of ideology through language.

1.4 Methods of Analysis

Different from other literary criticism, stylistics attempts to do a systematic analysis of the linguistic features of a literary text and to present "proof" for the interpretations that have been achieved through intuition. As Short puts it,

Stylistic analysis, unlike more traditional forms of practical criticism, is not interested primarily in coming up with new and startling interpretations of the texts it examines. Rather, its main aim is to explicate how our understanding of a text is achieved, by examining in detail the linguistic organization of the text and how a reader needs to interact with that linguistic organization to make sense of it. ... But the main purpose of stylistics is to show how interpretation

is achieved, and hence provide support for a particular view of the work under discussion (“Understanding Conversational Undercurrents” 53).

Hence, the stylistic analysis underpins the interpretation that has already been formed in the critic’s, or reader’s, mind rather than offer a different interpretation. The linguistic tools serve as the means to uncover the reader’s interpretation processes.

These interpretation processes can be made explicit and straightforward by relying on some principles, or the three Rs of stylistics: Rigour, Retrieval and Replicability. Firstly, the analysis is done according to structured frameworks of analysis, so that it does not simply consist of disorganised comments based on simple intuition. Secondly, the analysis uses explicit terms, a *metalanguage* that is agreed on in the remit of stylistics, so other stylisticians can track how the interpretation of the text is achieved. Finally, the analysis needs to be transparent enough to allow for verification of the methods either through application the same text or on different texts (Simpson, *Stylistics* 4).

Analyses in discourse stylistics are based on the relationship between the linguistic codes and ideology. As Fowler argues,

linguistic expressions ‘package’ experience of the world and encode different views of the way objects and events are organized. When we speak or write about something, the words we choose, and the structure of our sentences, convey an implicit analysis of the topic, an attitude to it. These attitudes relate to the way we were brought up with language, and to the purpose for which we are using it – these are social, even political, factors. (*Linguistic Criticism* 33-4)

In other words, linguistic choices are dependent on the speaker’s or writer’s context, and they are inevitably ideological. Through their encoding of the experience, individuals convey their

attitude to the topic at hand. Moreover, consciously or unconsciously, writers or speakers make “consistent stylistic choices [which] signify particular, distinctive, orderings of experience; different outlooks on the world” (Fowler *Linguistic Criticism* 12). A discourse stylistic analysis seeks to identify those consistent linguistic choices and uncover their ideological implications. Even though the experience is personal, it is a result of the individual’s social and economical context (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 211). Individual utterances are, in fact, reflections of a larger social system, and often they serve to reinforce the ideologies embedded in them.

The following analysis methods, or “tools”, namely the models of transitivity and modality will be employed in this thesis to explore the representation of gender issues in Monica Ali’s two novels, as these methods can help uncover the characters’ values, norms and beliefs in relation to gender. Through the analysis, this thesis aims to expose how language works at the level of the clause in the reflection and construction of ideologies related to gender.

1.4.1 The Model of Modality

According to the critical linguist Roger Fowler, literature is a social discourse. A literary text is a "communicative event" transmitting values and ideologies (qtd. in Weber, “Dickens’s” 95). Thus, he argues that literary analysis should be concerned with the analysis of the value and belief systems embedded in texts. A particular way in which ideologies are linguistically realized is modality (Weber, “Dickens’s” 95-8). For Fowler, “[m]odality is the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to” (*Linguistic Criticism* 166-7).

Fowler contends that the speaker's use of modal structures explicitly expresses her/his beliefs or worldview. The modality structures include (a) modal auxiliaries (must, should, etc.); (b) modal and sentence adverbs (possibly, definitely, etc.); (c) evaluative adjectives/adverbs (fortunate/ fortunately, etc.); verbs of knowledge, prediction and evaluation (know, guess, (dis)approve, etc.); and generic sentences, or generalized sentences proclaiming universal truths (167).

Weber refers to Halliday's model of modal expressions, which distinguishes between modality and modulation. According to this model, modality is related to probability while modulation is related to obligation. Halliday identifies three levels of modality/modulation, which are high, median and low. Moreover, Halliday analyses obligation in two categories, which are internal (subjective) orientation and external (objective) orientation (qtd. in Weber, *Critical Analysis* 75). For instance, "supposed to" is used to express social norms. On the other hand, "must, should" are generally used to express personal norms (75).

The table below shows Halliday's model (qtd. in Weber, "Dickens's" 100):

Table 1.4.1

Halliday's model of modality

<u>Value</u>	<u>Probability</u>	<u>Obligation (Internal/external)</u>
high	certain	required
median	probable	supposed
low	possible	allowed

In relation to modality, Simpson points at the interpersonal function of language. The interpersonal function is related with the way speakers construct their utterances as discourse, and modality is the grammatical structure that allows speakers to express their values, beliefs, obligations or attitudes (*Stylistics* 123).

The three main types of narrative modality are positive shading, negative shading and neutral shading. In positive shading, the deontic model is prevalent in the narrative, meaning the narrator's desires, obligations or opinions of events are expressed. Also, the use of *verba sentiendi* is common. *Deontic modality* refers to modality that is used to express obligation and desire (124). In Uspensky's terms, *verba sentiendi* are words that represent feelings, thoughts and perceptions, such as 'feel' or 'understand' (qtd. in Simpson, *Stylistics* 124). In negative shading, the narrator is trying to make sense of the world by relying on her/his observations. Consequently, the narrative abounds in what Simpson calls "words of estrangement", such as "There must be...", "perhaps", or "it seemed as if..." Finally, in neutral shading, the narrator completely abstains from subjectivity, and the result is a lack of expressions of modality (Simpson, *Stylistics* 126-7).

Through an analysis of modality, the reader can analyse how a character's, narrators, or author's beliefs, attitudes, and values are encoded in the clause, involving those concerning gender issues. The modality analysis in the interpretation of ideology can be backed up with an analysis of transitivity, which is presented in the following section.

1.4.2 The Model of Transitivity

The experiential function of language (Halliday) is related to the way experiences are communicated in speech or writing (Simpson, *Stylistics* 22). When communicating actions, thoughts or perceptions, speakers or writers consciously or unconsciously prefer certain styles over others, and these stylistic choices affect the way a text is constructed and interpreted. The system of *transitivity* is the grammatical means to capture experience. Transitivity "refers to the way meanings are encoded in the clause and to the way different types of *process* are represented in language" (Simpson, *Stylistics* 22). In addition to the

writer's or speaker's choice of lexis, their preference for particular syntactic structures can also have ideological meaning. The same event can be expressed in different ways, and stylistics is interested in why a certain expression is preferred to the other choices available (22). As Fowler contends, "[d]ifferent syntactic arrangements encode different meanings even though the words may remain the same, even though the 'statement' is the same" (*Linguistic Criticism* 31).

Halliday identified six basic types of process in relation to the transitivity system, and Simpson presents a summary of these categories (*Stylistics* 22-5):

1. Material processes: These are processes of *doing*, and they are associated with the physical world. The two participant roles in material processes are the Actor and a Goal. While every material process has an Actor role, it does not necessarily have a Goal role. E.g.: She opened the door.: Actor + Process + Goal

The door opened.: Actor + Process

2. Mental processes: These are processes related with *sensing*, and they express experiences belonging to consciousness. The three main types of mental processes are cognition, reaction and perception. The Sensor and the Phenomenon are the two participant roles regarding mental processes.

E.g.: Kate thought about the plan.: Sensor + Process + Phenomenon (cognition)

Gabriel heard a noise.: Sensor + Process + Phenomenon (perception)

I loved the place.: Sensor + Process + Phenomenon (reaction)

3. Behavioural processes: Processes of this type are in between material and mental processes as they involve physiological actions or mental processes. The participant role in behavioural processes is the Behaver.

E.g.: The kid fainted in the classroom. Behaver + Process + Circumstance

The baby cried.: Behavior + Process

4. Verbalisation processes: These processes represent *saying*. The participant roles embodied in this type are the Sayer, the Receiver and the Verbiage.

E.g.: The teacher explained the rules to the students. Sayer + Process + Verbiage + Receiver

The speaker argued that her approach had scientific grounds. Sayer + Process + Verbiage

5. Relational processes: These processes express relationships between two things. The three main types of this category are a) intensive relational processes, which portray equivalence between two entities (x is y); b) possessive relational processes, which show possession (x has y); and c) circumstantial relational processes, where the circumstantial element “fulfils the role of a full participant in the process” (x is in/on/at/with etc. y) (Simpson, *Stylistics* 24).

E.g.: The food was nice. / Ankara is the capital city of Turkey.: Intensive relational process

She has a car. / That car is Joanna’s.: Possessive relational process

The TV is on all day. / He is in hospital.: Circumstantial relational process

6. Existential processes: The last category in the transitivity model is the existential processes. These processes are used to express that something exists, mainly through the use of the dummy subject “there”. The participant role in this category is the Existent.

E.g. There was an accident.

Furthermore, Simpson classifies material and verbalization processes as externalized, and mental processes as internalized ones (*Language, Ideology* 91). Thus, through such

identification, a character's physical interaction with her/his environment and other people as well as her/his mental processes can be analysed and interpreted systematically.

Because transitivity is concerned with the way actions and events are communicated in a text, it is indicative of characterization in a story. The extent to which a character takes an active role in "the forward momentum of the plot" provides implications about the characterization. In other words, a character may actively steer the direction of events in the story or remain a mere observer (Simpson, *Stylistics* 74). Simpson also asserts that "[t]he transitivity model provides one means of investigating how a reader's or listener's perception of the meaning of a text is pushed in a particular direction and how the linguistic structure of a text effectively encodes a particular world-view" (*Language, Ideology* 104). Therefore, the analysis of transitivity helps to reveal the ideology of a character, narrator, or author.

In relation to the theory of transitivity, a seminal work in modern stylistics is M. A. K. Halliday's 1971 paper on *The Inheritors* by William Golding, which Simpson calls "the blueprint of a modern stylistics" (*Language, Ideology* 109). Halliday explores the characterization of the primitive Neanderthal peoples in the novel by analysing the linguistic structures in their language. He presents an extract narrated from Lok's, a primitive Neanderthal man's, perspective. Lok's language is dominated by intransitive, non-modalized clauses in past simple. To illustrate, clauses narrating an event from Lok's perspective like 'The bushes twitched again' or 'A stick rose upright' are intransitive clauses in past simple. The effect of the stylistic choice is that Lok's mind is represented as limited; failing to see a causal relationship between events, for in the story it is Lok's enemy that is hiding behind the bushes and causing them to twitch and raising his bow. Golding's transitivity choices depict the limited mind style of the character (Halliday 24-5).

Another key analysis using the transitivity model is Chris Kennedy's study (1982), where he analysed the climactic scene of *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad. In this scene, Mrs. Verloc murders her husband with a knife upon her discovery that her husband was involved in her brother's death. Kennedy refers to his "intuitions of Mr. Verloc's submissiveness and that Mrs Verloc is somehow not really responsible for what she does" (86). The transitivity analysis reveals that Mrs Verloc's actions are without a goal, "as if she is driven by a force which she is unable to bring under control" (Kennedy 88). Simpson argues that the stylistic technique called *meronymic agency* is relevant to transitivity analyses to some extent. In this technique, a part of the human body, such as the arm, the hand, etc., stands for the whole body and fulfils the participant roles including the Actor, the Sensor and the Sayer. In Mrs. Verloc's case, clauses like 'Her right hand skimmed lightly the end of the table' and 'a clenched hand [was] holding a carving knife' contribute to the characterization of Mrs Verloc as someone acting unconsciously. In the technique named *holonymic agency*, however, the individual as a whole fulfils the participant roles. Simpson contends that when the meronymic agency technique is employed, the effect is that the character seems to be weak in willpower, acting unconsciously or involuntarily (*Stylistics* 77).

Deirdre Burton's transitivity analysis of a passage from Sylvia Plath's autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar* is directly concerned with gender (Burton 187-94). In her paper, Burton invites the readers to ask the simple question "who does what to whom?" while reading the passage to identify the transitivity patterns in a text. She gives the reader the following instructions:

- (1) isolate the processes per se, and find which participant (who or what) is 'doing' each process;

(2) find what sorts of process they are, and which participant is engaged in which type of process;

(3) find who or what is affected by each of these processes. (189)

Burton argues that how the character's reality is constructed can be systematically analysed by implementing these steps.

In the passage, Plath recounts the details of the electric-shock treatment she is given for her depression. The transitivity choices in clauses like "I tried to smile, but my skin had gone stiff, like parchment" or "Then something bent down and took hold of me and shook me like the end of the World" contribute to the construction of a helpless, victimized character. In these clauses, the character's actions do not affect anyone or anything while she is affected by an inanimate object, the electric machine. The transitivity choices and other linguistic choices in the passage reflect Plath's construction of herself in her language as being a disenabled, disempowered character. As Burton puts it, "[h]er texts abound in disenabling metaphors, disenabling lexis, and [. . .] disenabling syntactic structures" (188).

Mills asserts that the transitivity analysis method can also be used to investigate the construction of a woman character who seems to be assertive and have control over her life. An analysis into the linguistic features of the text or the character's language can reveal whether the language choices are consistent with the overall characterization or whether the character has control in all situations. She notes that even in novels where stereotypical gender roles are challenged, the woman character may be depicted as passive, especially in romance scenes (145).

In conclusion, with regard to a feminist stylistic analysis, analysing a text in terms of the modality and transitivity choices can expose the gender ideologies embedded in it. The analysis of modality, for instance, can demonstrate whether patriarchal ideologies are

adopted or rejected by the character(s). Similarly, the transitivity analysis of a text offers insights into the extent that a character is enabled or disenabled to create an effect on her/his environment. Therefore, the transitivity analysis can help to interpret whether a male or female character is depicted as powerful or submissive. In keeping with these, the following chapter will present an application of these models to Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* to analyse and interpret the protagonist's gender ideology.



CHAPTER 2

A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE*

This chapter aims to explore the linguistic representation of gender issues in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* through a feminist stylistic analysis. For this purpose, a stylistic analysis of the protagonists' characterization will be presented through the analysis frameworks of modality and transitivity, based on Halliday's functional grammar theory. The primary purpose of the analysis is to explore the construction and reflection of gender ideologies in the protagonists' language, as well as in the novel's narration. In this way, the analysis aims to raise awareness on the way language functions at the sentence level in the construction and reflection of reality.

Brick Lane is the author's debut novel published in 2003 and shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in the same year. The novel recounts the story of the protagonist Nazneen beginning from her premature birth in East Pakistan in 1967 until her 'new' life in London as a self-sufficient 35-year-old woman with two daughters by her and a husband overseas. Ali's novel presents a "description of the transplantation of Bangladeshi gender ideology in London, as the novel unravels its limits and inefficacy in the postcolonial world of information technology" (Hasan 59) and relates Nazneen's "arrival at self-definition through her journey from Bangladeshi patriarchy to its transplanted form in the diaspora and her eventual defiance of its domestic gender norms" (Hasan 74). In that sense, the novel can be considered a "feminist bildungsroman" (74).

The novel derives its title from Brick Lane Street in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which is densely populated by the Bangladeshi, and therefore is also called 'Banglatown'. While the bulk of the novel deals with Nazneen's life in a Bangladeshi community on Brick Lane Street in London and her childhood back in East Pakistan (later

Bangladesh) via flashbacks, through her letters to Nazneen, there are references to Hasina's story. Hasina, Nazneen's younger sister, elopes with a man and leaves him upon facing domestic violence. Struggling to be an independent woman in the capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka, with nobody to "support" her, she becomes a victim of the patriarchal ideologies of her society.

Brick Lane explores issues of immigrants and cultural conflict, as well as the issues of patriarchal ideology and sexuality. Born to a traditional Muslim family, Nazneen is raised according to traditional and patriarchal values. She has a fatalistic attitude towards everything in life: perhaps this explains why at the age of eighteen she defers to her father, who has picked a husband for her, and marries Chanu, a 40-year-old man who has immigrated to London. This is how her new life in a new country begins. Hasan states,

In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen's transnational, intercontinental marriage with Chanu presumably gives the latter an assurance of transplanting and maintaining Bangladeshi cultural norms including gender roles in the diaspora. So the domestic condition Bangladeshi immigrant women inhabit is a patriarchal household that reflects the cultural mores of Bangladesh society and upholds its gender norms which are believed to be a prerequisite for maintaining cultural purity and traditions in the new social context. (60)

Thus, her new life involves the traditional gender roles as those back in Bangladesh. They begin to live in Chanu's flat located in an estate populated by the Bangladeshi community. She is young, inexperienced, and has no knowledge of English except for the words 'Sorry' and 'Thank you'. In this new country, save for her relationships with a few Muslim women from the Bangladeshi community, she finds herself confined to leading a lonely, traditional, and domestic life cleaning, cooking, praying and organizing her husband's files. As Hasan

points out, “[i]n London, Nazneen faces the same patriarchy that has its stronghold in Bangladesh and is relegated to the sphere of domestic, private life of an immigrant ghetto” (65).

Nazneen’s husband, Chanu, who has an English literature degree from Dhaka University, is the ‘reading’ and ‘talking’ type: He reads, philosophizes, attends courses, and gets certificates to be acknowledged by British society, which he never succeeds. His life is one of unfulfilled dreams about success and acknowledgment by society. Despite having adopted the liberal values of the west to some extent, he maintains traditional values, particularly those related to marriage and gender roles.

Nazneen and Chanu have a son, but the baby gets sick and dies. After this tragic event, the novel switches to Hasina’s letters, and no information about Nazneen’s life is presented except for the bits of information the reader elicits from Hasina’s letters. The reader learns from the letters that Nazneen has two daughters and Chanu cannot find a proper job. The novel switches back to narrating Nazneen’s story starting from the year 2001, and the rest of the novel accounts Nazneen’s story between 2001 and 2002. During this time, Nazneen begins to do a textile job from home, which leads up to her affair with Karim, a radical Islamic activist much younger than her. In the meantime, Chanu is busy making plans to return to Bangladesh. Nazneen finds herself stuck in a dilemma between moving to Dhaka with Chanu and the girls and staying in England to marry Karim. In the end, she chooses to stand on her feet: Chanu goes to Dhaka alone, she leaves Karim and begins to lead a life in London with her daughters. As Hasan puts it, she “frees herself from the restrictions of the domestic cocoon constructed for women in the Bangladeshi immigrant community and gains entry into public spheres” (60).

Though born to the same family and raised in the same way, Hasina's disposition differs a lot from Nazneen's. She is not the 'submissive type:' At the age of sixteen, she elopes with the man he likes. However, upon being subjected to violence, she runs away from her husband and under the protection of an older man, she gets a job in a garment factory in Dhaka. Hasina's story is an account of the sexual, physical, and social abuse of women in the patriarchal society of Bangladesh. She is defamed by an unfounded rumour that she has had sexual affair with a man from the workplace, gets sacked, and raped by the man who was supposed to provide protection. In the end, having no other means to live by, she is forced to prostitution. Later, one of the customers proposes to her and they get married, but it turns out that he has some psychological issues, and the marriage does not last long. In the following five years, she writes only two letters, which hints that she has been going from place to place and struggling. Finally, she finds a house to work as a maid, but she is sexually abused by the cook in her new house. Hasina's last letter involves her retrospection of their mother's death, which reveals that her death was not an accident but suicide.

Hasina's accounts of her experiences and observations in Dhaka present a picture of the dark face of Bangladesh. Her letters involve issues like child workers, the ever-growing gap between the affluent and the poor, and sexual and physical violence against women. Particularly, her friend Monju's story is tragic: Her husband wants to sell their baby, and when she objects to him, he throws acid on the infant. Monju has been working hard for years to collect the money for her son's operations, but she also suffers acid attack by her husband and his brother and sister and dies tragically in a hospital.

While the reader has direct access to Hasina's experiences and thoughts through the first-person narration facilitated by the epistolary mode, Nazneen's story is told in third-person narration. However, the story is internally focalized. Focalization is "the 'point of

view' or 'angle of telling' that is adopted in a narrative" (Simpson and Montgomery 149). When the events are described from a particular character's perspective, the character becomes the *reflector* of fiction (Simpson and Montgomery 149). Thus, Nazneen is the reflector of the story. The reader also hears Nazneen's own voice in her dialogues with the other characters. The distinction between objective narration and internal focalization is relevant to the linguistic analysis of characterization, for the internal focalization gives insights into the way Nazneen constructs her own reality in her language. In other words, we have access to Nazneen's mindset, or to the way she chooses to convey her experiences, thoughts, and beliefs.

2.1 Nazneen's Ideology Encoded in Language: An Analysis of Modality

Modality can be defined as "the means by which a speaker's attitude towards what they are saying is conveyed" (Simpson, *Language* 39). It allows individuals to express their beliefs, values, worldviews, or ideologies to others. In that sense, modality is related with the interpersonal function of language (Simpson, *Language* 47). In critical linguistics, ideology refers to "the ways in which what we say and think interacts with the society" (Simpson, *Language* 5). Ideologies are based on the collective assumptions, values, and beliefs in a society. Dominant ideologies are those which belong to and are controlled by a powerful social group and which are maintained by powerful social and political institutions, such as the government and the legal system (5). It is a tenet of critical linguistics that "language reproduces ideology" (6). Due to the social dimension of language, it not only reflects but also constructs ideology (6). As Kress and Hodge state, language "is a version of the world, offered to, imposed on, exacted by someone else" (9).

In fiction, modality is closely related with point of view, for it is instrumental in denoting the writer's, narrator's, or characters' worldviews. The model of point of view was proposed by Boris Uspensky and redeveloped by Roger Fowler (Neary 177). The Russian semiotician Boris Uspensky had identified four planes of point of view: (1) the ideological plane of point of view, (2) the phraseological plane of point of view, (3a) the spatial and (3b) temporal point of view, and (4) the psychological point of view (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 162). The critical linguist Fowler dealt with the psychological plane for the analysis of ideology (162), for he argued that the ideological and psychological planes overlap (165). Fowler also refers to the French structuralist Gerard Genette's work on point of view, particularly the concept of *focalization*, which denotes "alternative viewing points from which a story might be told" (162). Fowler argues that Uspensky's psychological point of view may include Genette's focalization (162).

Simpson defines the ideological plane of point of view as "the way in which a text mediates a set of particular ideological beliefs through either character, narrator or author" (qtd. in Neary 177). The ideological point of view could be manifested directly by the narrator or a character through the use of a range of modal structures, which may include (a) modal auxiliaries such as *must*, *may*, and *could*; (b) sentence adverbs like *perhaps*, *certainly* or constructions like *It is certain that*; (c) evaluative adjectives and adverbs such as *lucky*, *(un)fortunately*; (d) verbs of knowledge, prediction and evaluation such as *seem*, *guess*, or *dislike*, respectively; and finally, (e) generic sentences claiming universal truth, whose syntactic structures resemble those of proverbs or scientific laws (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 166-7). It can also be expressed less directly, such as through choices of transitivity (168), which will be dealt with in considerable detail in the following part of this chapter.

Simpson identifies four modal systems in English: deontic modality, boulomaic modality, epistemic modality, and perception modality, a subcategory of epistemic modality (*Language* 47). Deontic modality concerns itself with the speaker's attitude to 'duty', and it comprises permission, obligation and requirement (47). Boulomaic modality is realized through expressions of 'desire', such as 'I hope' or 'I wish' (48). Epistemic modality refers to the speaker's (lack of) confidence regarding the truth of a proposition. It is realized through expressions like 'may be', 'must have been', 'I suppose', 'arguably' or 'certainly' (48-49). Categorical assertions, as in 'You are right' rather than 'You must be right' are non-modal expressions which are much stronger than the modalized expressions. For Lyons, they express the speaker's commitment to the truth of a proposition at the strongest level (qtd. in Simpson, *Language* 49.) Modalized assertions can convey strong commitment (must be, certainly), medium commitment (may be, probably), or weak commitment (could be, possibly) (50). Perception modality, a subcategory of epistemic modality, is about the speaker's confidence of the truth of a proposition expressed through a reference to perception, as in 'It's obvious that ...' or in the use of adverbs like 'obviously' (50). The following analysis will investigate the way Nazneen's worldview, or ideology, is linguistically constructed through a closer look into the choices of modality.

The novel begins with Nazneen's premature birth story. She is assumed to be stillborn; however, very soon it becomes apparent that she is alive. When Nazneen's 'Amma' (mother), Rupban, is told by the midwife that the baby is weak and may not survive, she refuses to take her baby to hospital. The language her mother used in her response includes particular modality choices that reveal her worldview, or ideology:

‘No,’ she said, ‘we must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger.’ (*Brick Lane* 14)

Rupban’s utterances involve deontic modality, or her attitude towards ‘duty’. The use of the modal auxiliary ‘must’ reveals her strong commitment to her obligation to obey fate. What is more, the two non-modalized utterances, namely “Whatever happens, I accept it” and ‘That way, she will be stronger’ are indicative of Rupban’s commitment to the truth of the proposition. Her faith in fate is incontestable; she is determined not to take action to change the course of things. Such attitude to life requires one to remain passive and submissive. Ciocoi-Pop proposes that

Amma symbolically stands for the internalized patriarchy: women who have been brainwashed out of their true self into accepting patriarchy’s game of blind submission (to fate, materialized by men), violence and mental abuse, and who now apply the same patriarchal model that crushed them on their fellow women. (23)

Rupban applies this ideology to her daughter, and her fatalistic worldview becomes Nazneen’s own ideology: She chooses to be indifferent and submissive to the events that influence her life, including her marriage, and having children as well as her love affair until her worldview undergoes a substantial change when she is thirty-four:

What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. This principle ruled her life. It was mantra, fettle and challenge. So that when, at the age of thirty-four, after she had been given three children and had one taken away, when she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover, when for the first

time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but had to make it for herself, she was as startled by her own agency as an infant who waves a clenched fist and strikes itself upon the eye. (*Brick Lane* 16)

Rupban's fatalistic attitude has its repercussions in Nazneen's worldview: In a way, Rupban's language has become Nazneen's language. As Fowler argues, "infants learn their language first from parents; in effect, from a generation older than they are, and in absolute authority over them. They are exposed to meanings which serve the interests of an older, authoritarian group" (*Linguistic Criticism* 43). Fowler also argues that contrary to individuals' assumptions, meanings which we take as ours were already determined by society and encoded in language. He contends that "the meanings which an individual has available were not invented by her or him, but were already encoded in the language s/he acquired as a child. It is the language of the society, and not a personal code, which s/he speaks, and through the medium of which s/he sees the world" (*Linguistic Criticism* 42-43). In other words, ideologies that we regard as personal or natural shape the way we interpret the world. The extract, which is focalized by Nazneen's consciousness, involves the same modality choices as in her mother's language. The modal auxiliaries in "What could not be changed must be borne" and "since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne" indicate Nazneen's strong commitment to her obligations to fate and her confidence in the truth of the proposition. Just like her mother, she believes in the futility of one's actions against fate. However, her attitude changes, as signalled in the clause 'when for the first time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but had to make it for herself'. She does not feel any obligation to fate anymore; this time she feels obliged to take action to determine the flow of her own life. This change in her worldview takes place through the end of the novel, and the conflicts in her consciousness are denoted through the modality choices in Nazneen's

language. Still, her mother's fatalistic attitude dominates Nazneen's ideology substantially throughout the story.

Fowler points at the role of language in the construction of ideology. He argues,

A child learns the values and preoccupations of its culture largely by learning the language: language is the chief instrument of socialization, which is the process by which a person is, willy-nilly, moulded into conformity with the established systems of beliefs of the society into which s/he happens to be born. Language gives knowledge, and allows knowledge to be transmitted from person to person. Transmission of common sense through language occurs largely in the most mundane discourse. (*Linguistic Criticism* 30)

'Common sense' could be explained as the assumptions of members of a community which they take as natural, and these attitudes could be called 'world-view' or ideology (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 26). Fowler defines 'ideology' as the "unexamined, unself-critical, routinized presentations of the world" (26). Thus, it could be argued that Rupban's submissive, passive attitude to Fate is her ideology; it is an unexamined worldview. Indeed, the very concept of fate does not allow for questioning, as this would mean defying it. Furthermore, as Kress and Hodge propose, "ideology involves a systematically organized presentation of reality" (15). In that sense, it may be suggested that Rupban's modality choices consistently present a worldview that embodies obligation and submission regarding fate in general and gender matters in particular. Rupban's ideology is transmitted to Nazneen through language and reflected in Nazneen's language. In other words, Rupban's language has constructed Nazneen's ideology.

In compliance with her ideology, at the age of eighteen, Nazneen submits to her father's wish and has an arranged marriage to Chanu, a man much older than her. She moves

to England, where her husband has been living for years, and finds herself alienated in a new environment. She is now a married woman in a new country whose language she cannot speak. In the meantime, her sister Hasina has eloped with a man, and she is worried about it:

The days passed more easily now than at first. It was just a matter of waiting, as Amma always said. She had waited and now they passed more easily. If it wasn't for Hasina, she could call herself calm. *Just wait and see, that's all we can do.* How often she had heard those words. (*Brick Lane* 46)

The extract depicts Nazneen's passive attitude to life: She does nothing but waits, as her mother advised. Nazneen confirms Rupban's worldview through her experience; waiting or doing nothing makes her life more bearable. The generic, nonmodal sentence ("It [is] just a matter of waiting") and the imperative clause and the clause involving a modal auxiliary (*Just wait and see, that's all we can do.*) imply a worldview that requires submission and not taking any action, for it is beyond one's abilities to defy fate. Birch argues that patriarchal "oppression comes not simply with the obvious patriarchal structures; it can also come with the psychological and social formation of gendered subjects, who can be disabled as objects by controlling, dominant, but often unconscious, gendered interests" *Language, Literature* 18). In Rupban's and Nazneen's case, oppression comes with the fatalistic ideology that most women in their culture have adopted. This worldview makes them submissive and powerless, especially in terms of gender roles.

On receiving a letter from Hasina, who wrote that she has run away from her husband and gone to Dhaka, Nazneen tests her boundaries for the first time: She leaves home and gets lost in the streets of London, just as her sister is all alone in Dhaka. When Nazneen finally makes her way home, she asks Chanu to go to Dhaka to find Hasina. As Chanu refuses to do anything, Nazneen feels furious, though she does not manifest it:

Anything is possible. She wanted to shout it. Do you know what I did today? I went inside a pub. To use the toilet. Did you think I could do that? I walked mile upon mile, probably around the whole of London, although I did not see the edge of it. And to get home again I went to a restaurant. I found a Bangladeshi restaurant and asked directions. See what I can do! (*Brick Lane* 62-63)

Her language includes the adjective ‘possible’ and the modal auxiliaries ‘can’ and ‘could’, which represent a different mindset. She seems to be aware of her abilities to act rather than remain passive. Her actions, such as using the pub toilet or asking for directions, seem too trivial to count as achievements, yet they remind her for a moment that it is possible to defy fate. This little manifestation of willpower is a delusion, and Nazneen tells nothing to her husband.

In fact, as a child, Nazneen has been taught to remain silent and not to ask any questions. Her father often leaves home for a few days, and one day she asks her mother where he goes:

‘Where does Abba go?’ asked Nazneen.

Amma looked towards the heavens. ‘Look! Now my child is asking where he goes.’

[...] She took Nazneen’s wide face between her two palms and spoke to her:

‘If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men.’ (*Brick Lane* 80)

The generic expression “If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men” implies an ideology which deems women inferior to men. Men are privileged to question things, and this cannot be defied, for it is God’s will that women do not ask questions. This

ideology has been transmitted to Nazneen through language, and she never questions her husband, her lover, or the events that influence her life.

The following extract shows the crisis in Nazneen's consciousness between her duties to God and her wish to act:

It was her place to sit and wait. Even if the tornado was heading directly towards her. For her there was nothing else to be done. Nothing else that God wanted her to do. Sometimes she wanted to get up and run. Most of the time she did not want to run, but neither did she want to sit still. How difficult it was, this business of sitting still. But there was nothing really to complain of. There was Chanu, who was kind and never beat her. There was Raqib. (*Brick Lane* 102)

The extract above involves both deontic modality, which expresses one's commitment to duty, and boulomaic modality, or the expression of one's desires. The non-modalized sentence "It was her place to sit and wait" suggests that Nazneen has no doubts about her role in life. As said earlier, non-modalized utterances express the strongest degree of commitment to the truth of a proposition. The statements "For her there was nothing else to be done. Nothing else that God wanted her to do" also express her strong commitment to obey God and accept whatever happens. Her wishes are expressed through the verb 'want': Sometimes she wishes to stop being passive and finds it hard to obey God's wish. However, she silences her wishes thinking that she should have nothing to complain about, for Chanu never beats her and she has a kid.

It could be argued that Nazneen's ideology regarding the husband-wife relationship has been influenced by the relationships she witnessed as a child. In her own family, her mother does not question her husband's actions and "suffers in silence". One day, Nazneen

listens in on a conversation between her mother and her aunt. The generic sentences in their utterances point at an unquestioned ideology regarding marital relationships that places women as inferior to men:

‘We will suffer in silence.’ Amma’s sister paid a long visit in the summer of Nazneen’s tenth year. [...]

‘In silence,’ said Amma. [...]

‘That is all that is left to us in this life,’ said Auntie. [...]

‘We are just women. What can we do?’

‘They know it. That’s why they act as they do.’

‘God has made the world this way.’

‘I told him I will not go back.’

That’s what you said.’

If he carries on this way, that’s it.’

You said it last time as well.’

‘What else can I do?’ (*Brick Lane* 102-3)

This private conversation between these women is highly ideological. Fowler proposes that “[o]ur private language is regarded as minimal and mundane and, in so far as it discourses on social, personal, and political topics, it is deeply ideological because of its dependence on legitimated concepts” (*Linguistic Criticism* 43). Men’s superiority over women has been legitimized by Rupban’s culture and religion, and this ideology is reflected in the generic sentences in the conversation about womanhood and religion. As Fowler puts it, “ideas such as ‘God’, ... ‘duty’, are advantageous to some classes of people and damaging to others” (44). Obviously, they are advantageous to men in Nazneen’s culture and women are left with the only option to suffer. Hence, when Nazneen feels any discontentment about her life, she

dismisses the feeling by thinking that she has no right to do so, for her husband never beats her.

When her son gets seriously ill, Nazneen feels “enraged” (*Brick Lane* 163) at her mother, who had done nothing to save her life when she was born prematurely and did not feed for the following days. When they take Raqib, her son, to hospital, the doctors say that the baby could have not been saved if they had been too late to bring him to hospital. For the first time, she believes that she can defy fate and control the course of things in life, as she has not acted like her mother but tried to save her son’s life. When the baby passes away, she is faced with the fragility of her willpower against fate once again and clings to her “her lifeline. What would be would be. It was not of her making” (*Brick Lane* 426).

After their son’s death, Nazneen and Chanu have two daughters. Chanu has been making plans to return ‘home’, but Nazneen knows that their daughters will not be happy about leaving England. Nazneen’s passive, fatalistic worldview manifests itself when she notices her son’s picture:

They would go. Or they would stay. Only God would keep them or send them.

Nazneen knew her part, had learned it long ago, and rolled the dead skin around in her palm and sat quietly, waiting for the feelings to pass. (*Brick Lane* 183)

Her son’s memory reminds Nazneen of her powerlessness against fate. She remembers Raqib’s death, and how naively she assumed that she would not let her son die. Nazneen knows for sure that their future is to be determined by fate, which is demonstrated in the non-modalized sentence ‘Only God would keep them and send them’. The use of the verb ‘know’, a verb of knowledge, in the clause ‘Nazneen knew her part’ is also indicative of her commitment to fate.

Nazneen's daughters strongly object to their father's decision to leave England for Bangladesh. To console them, Nazneen says, "We just have to wait and see. ... We do not know what God has in His mind" (*Brick Lane* 216). When Shanana asks her mother if she wants to go, as a response Nazneen tells the story of her birth that began with "I was a stillborn child" and ended with "that was God's will". Nazneen's utterances "We just have to wait and see" ... "We do not know what God has in His mind" are clear expressions of her worldview; the first utterance indicates strong commitment to duty while the second utterance refers to a weak commitment to humans' knowledge about the future. Her birth story, which she has told her daughters many times, also carries an ideological message about fate, and her commitment to fate does not allow her to make a decision about the future of the family until the very end of the novel.

Her mother's influence haunts Nazneen even long after her death. One night, when she is overwhelmed by the issues between her husband and daughters as well as by the existence of her lover Karim, Nazneen has a vision of her mother: She tells Nazneen that

'God sees everything. He knows every hair on your head.'

[...]

'God tests us,' she said. 'Don't you know this life is a test? Some He tests with riches and good fortune. Many men have failed such a test. And they will be Judged. Others he tests with illness or poverty, or with jinn who come in the shape of men – or of husbands.' ... 'Come down here to me and I will tell you how to pass the test.' ... 'It's easy. You just have to endure.' (*Brick Lane* 322-23)

What Rupban tells her is in line with her fatalistic ideology. Her utterances convey an ideological message about marital relationships: Marriages, or husbands are the means by which women are tested and women “just have to endure” to pass God’s test.

Through the end of the novel, Nazneen’s worldview undergoes a profound change. Quite contrary to the worldview that dominated her life until that time, she makes the decisions that concern the future of their family by herself. She also decides to leave her lover Karim, who is making plans of marriage on behalf of Nazneen. To tell him about her decisions, she meets him. Nazneen’s utterances in the conversation between them demonstrates the change in her worldview:

‘But I am not going,’ said Nazneen. It occurred to her that *she* could have done this before. What kept her tied to the corner of the room? ‘The children are not going.’

All right,’ Karim said again. ‘We can talk again after the march. I’ve got ten thousand things to do.’

‘I know. I had to tell you.’

‘Call me on the mobile,’ said Karim. We shouldn’t see each other again before the wedding.’ [...]

We can’t get married.’

‘Not straight away,’ said Karim.

‘Not ever.’ [...] I don’t want to marry you, said Nazneen, looking at the juggler. ‘That’s what I mean.’ (*Brick Lane* 450-51)

Fowler argues that “[a] writer may create a narrator, or a character, whose language expresses a characteristic or idiosyncratic point of view; and the style may be adjusted, as the book progresses, in order to express ideological development” (*Linguistic Criticism* 168).

Nazneen's transformation is also reflected in the shift in her modality choices. Her language substantially shifts from deontic modality (must, have to, and so on) to epistemic modality, indicating her determination and agency. Nazneen's utterances "But I am not going" and "The children are not going" are epistemic non-modalized expressions that denote her commitment in the truth of what she is saying. For the first time, she does not wait for fate to reveal her future; she determines herself what is going to happen. The sentence "It occurred to her that *she* could have done this before" foregrounds Nazneen's agency in making decisions by italicizing the subject. Furthermore, the modalized expression 'could have done' points at her realization of her ability to make decisions and have control over the events regarding her life. The other modalized expression "We can't get married" belongs to the deontic modality system, yet the prohibition is not related to Nazneen's fatalistic or religious worldview, but a manifestation of Nazneen's own willpower, which is clarified by her boulomaic utterance "I don't want to marry you".

The same determination can be observed in the following conversation between Nazneen and her daughters. After the girls are informed that Chanu is going to Bangladesh alone and they are staying, one of them asks Nazneen for confirmation:

'So are we not going, Amma?'

'Just wait and -' Nazneen interrupted herself. 'We'll talk about it tomorrow, or later, and We'll decide what to do. [...]' (*Brick Lane* 480)

It is quite likely out of habit that Nazneen begins her reply in her usual way, but she does not complete her sentence. This linguistic behaviour obviously suggests that Nazneen does not retain her longstanding fatalistic ideology. Through her language, she declares her determination about taking control of their future.

Towards the very end of the novel, Nazneen comes across a boy who was in Karim's political group and asks him about Karim's whereabouts. She finds out that he is in Bangladesh. When the man invites her to a new political organization, she responds, "I'll come. I'd like to, thought I only went to a few of the other meetings" and adds, "But that was before I knew what I could do" (*Brick Lane* 486). The modalized expression 'could' involved in her final utterance, which is intensified by the epistemic expression 'I knew' underscores the fact that she has gained insight into her ability to act rather than "wait and see".

In conclusion, a linguistic analysis of Nazneen's and her mother's language could help investigate the way ideology is reflected and constructed in language, in the modality choices in particular. The 'old' Nazneen's language is abound in expressions of deontic modality, or the expression of duty, which denote her fatalistic ideology that deems her powerless in the face of anything. On the other hand, the 'new' Nazneen's language involves modal auxiliaries that denote her abilities, or non-modalized assertions that highlight her agency in making decisions about her future.

2.2. Reflections of Worldview in the Representation of Nazneen's Experience: An Analysis of Transitivity

In the following analysis, the transitivity model will be used to investigate the characterization of Nazneen and her construction of reality. Before the analysis, some aspects of the transitivity model will be briefly presented.

The story of a character is constructed in the reader's mind through the linguistic formulations that tell the story; however, the reader also uses her/his knowledge of the world to make sense of the story (Canning 45). As Canning puts it, "language does not function in a vacuum – it does not 'do' or mean everything in and of itself" (46). Functional stylistics

helps to explore how the reality is constructed in the story by considering the linguistic choices in relation to their context.

Fowler points at the significance of transitivity choices by stating that

agency, state, process, and so on seem to be the basic categories in terms of which human beings present the world to themselves through language. We think of the world, and speak and write about it, as a system of objects with constant properties: some animate, some inanimate, acting, moving, changing, causing change in other things, or just being or continuing in a certain state or condition. (*Linguistic Criticism* 74)

In Halliday's functionalist theory, the ideational metafunction of language is related to "encoding and representing ideas and experience" (Canning 50). The transitivity model helps to analyse the way an event or experience is captured in a clause since "reality is made up of experiential processes – doing, sensing, being, happening and becoming" (Canning 51). The consistent use of particular linguistic structures denotes a particular representation of reality. As Fowler puts it, "[c]umulative ideational structuring depends on regular and consistent linguistic choices which build up a continuous, pervasive, representation of the world" (*Linguistic Criticism* 213). The transitivity model involves the process, the participants, and the circumstances in a clause. The Process in the clause is expressed by the verb or verb phrase, the participant roles can be summarized as the Agent and the Affected, and the Circumstances denote the information about where, when, and how the process is realized (Canning 51).

To illustrate material processes, Canning presents some example clauses that express the same event (51):

(a) David kicked an old tin can.

(b) An old tin can was kicked by David.

(c) An old tin can was kicked.

(d) An old tin can rolled.

Although all the four clauses are about the same event, the reader's interpretation will vary depending on the transitivity choices. In (a), 'David' is the Actor, 'kicked' is the process and 'an old tin can' is the Goal. What is happening here is that the Actor/Agency fulfils the process intentionally. Such process types are called Action-intention processes. (b) is also an Action-intention process, but the Actor is backgrounded by the passive structure. While (c) is an Action-intention process, the Agency (David) is deleted, which might mean that there is no actor to be held responsible for the deed, or the information related to the Actor is hidden for a reason. Finally, in (d) 'an old tin can' is no more the Goal element. The event happens by itself; such processes are called Action-supervention processes (51). In a supervision process, "the actor does not intentionally act out the process" ("Representing processes").

For the transitivity analysis, particular extracts narrating the events and states which are representative of Nazneen's passivity and powerlessness, her inner conflicts regarding her willpower, and her liberation from her fatalistic ideology have been chosen. Also, the extracts are mostly related to the important events in her life, involving her marriage and starting a new life in a new country, her baby's illness and death, her affair with another man, and finally, her decision to not leave England and maintain her life there as an independent woman.

The following extract, which appears in the early parts of the novel, provides initial implications about the characterization of Nazneen:

What could not be changed *must be borne*. And since nothing *could be changed*, everything *had to be borne*. This principle *ruled* her life. It was

mantra, fettle and challenge. So that when, at the age of thirty-four, after she *had been given* three children and *had one taken away*, when she had a futile husband and *had been fated* a young and demanding lover, when for the first time she could not wait for the future *to be revealed* but had to make it for herself, she *was as startled* by her own agency as an infant who waves a clenched fist and strikes itself upon the eye. (*Brick Lane* 16) (italics added)

Apart from the modality choices in this extract, which have already been analysed in the first part of this chapter, particular transitivity choices and passive constructions stand out in the text. They give the impression that Nazneen has no control over whatever happens in her life. As Fowler suggests, an abundance of passives in fiction is not common, and if they are commonly used, they foreground a particular aspect of the story. He proposes,

For instance, an exceptional number of passives is found in scientific writing, but in that context it is conventional and not noticeable. In the telling of a story, however, even a few passives instead of active sentences are likely to be experienced as an oddity because readers of narrative assume that the essence of the genre is a sequence of actions. (*Linguistic Criticism* 97)

The unusual regularity of the passive structures in the extract foregrounds Nazneen's personality and fatalistic ideology: She does not act but is acted upon. She has no control over the most important events in her life, such as getting married, having children or even having a lover.

It is obvious from the above extract that Nazneen has a fatalistic attitude towards everything in life. The roots of this attitude can be traced back to her birth story: At the very beginning of the novel, the reader finds out that Nazneen was born prematurely, assumed to be stillborn, did not feed for five days, and yet not taken to hospital. Nazneen's mother refuses

to take action to make her daughter survive, saying “we must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it” (*Brick Lane* 14). This story even acquired a title; the story of “How You Were Left To Your Fate”, to which Nazneen refers a few times throughout the novel. A transitivity analysis of this phrase can reveal how Nazneen’s birth and survival experience is linguistically encoded in a simple phrase and how it helps to construct Nazneen’s reality, or her submissive attitude towards life. “How You Were Left To Your Fate” denotes an action-intention process with Nazneen as the Affected participant. The passive construction of the phrase allows that there is no Agency to be held responsible for the ‘doing’; the passive structure suggests that Nazneen’s mother could avoid any responsibility for the possible consequences of her decision to not act. It is made clear in the novel that Nazneen is exposed to this story many times: “As Nazneen grew she heard many times this story of How You Were Left To Your Fate” (15). Over time, it becomes her reality; she remains passive in the face of whatever happens to her, including her marriage, which will change her life profoundly.

Nazneen marries the man that her father chooses for her without meeting him even once before the wedding. Her arranged marriage “signif[ies] the patriarchal power she experiences prior to moving to London” (Prasasti 81). When his father asks her whether she wants to see her future husband’s photograph, she refuses and says, “Abba, it is good that you *have chosen* my husband. I hope I can be a good wife, like Amma” (italics added) (*Brick Lane* 16). Prasasti contends that in “[t]he patriarchal system ... women are viewed as submissive, as they have no urge to move forward. They are considered to be reluctant in making any decision. Thus decision making remains in the hands of men” (81-2). Nazneen’s case is no different: The first clause indicates that Nazneen claims no agency for the decision concerning her own life. Her father being the Actor element and her husband the Goal

element, it is obvious that Nazneen will be the affected side in this process. Moreover, she describes her passivity regarding the decision as something desirable, indicated by the choice of the adjective ‘good’.

Nazneen’s moving to England through her marriage is also captured in a passive formation: “Six months now since she *’d been sent* away to London” (italics added) (18). Here, the choice of a transitive verb (send someone/something away) allows Nazneen to be object of the verb. As Simpson notes, “[c]hoices in style are motivated, even if unconsciously, and these choices have a profound impact on the way texts are structured and interpreted” (*Stylistics* 22). It is an Action-Intention process, but the passive clause determines Nazneen as the Goal element while the Actor element is excluded. Who or what could be held responsible for the process is unclear; it could be fate, her father in particular, or the patriarchal ideology that allows fathers to decide husbands for their daughters.

In stylistic analyses, reformulating the clause in alternative ways is suggested to compare the resulting effects in both clauses. As Simpson adds, “transitivity offers systematic choice” (*Stylistics* 26). Therefore, it might be useful to encode the same experience in a different clause:

Six months now she *had left* her country for London.

This alternative clause construction still embodies an Action-Intention process. However, here Nazneen becomes the Actor element, implying that she has agency over her actions. The rest of the extract is as follows:

Six months now since she *’d been sent* away to London. Every morning before she *opened* her eyes she *thought*, if I were the wishing type, I know what I *would wish*. And then she *opened* her eyes and *saw* Chanu’s puffy face on the pillow next to her, his lips *parted* indignantly even as he *slept*. She *saw* the

pink dressing table with the curly-sided mirror, and the monstrous black wardrobe that *claimed* most of the room. *Was* it cheating? To *think*, I *know* what I would *wish*? *Was* it not the same as *making the wish*? If she *knew* what the wish *would be*, then somewhere in her heart she had already *made* it. (Brick Lane 18) (italics added)

In this extract, the transitivity choices form a consistent pattern: Mental processes dominate the clauses that encode Nazneen's experiences. Her mental processes include cognition (thinking, wishing, knowing) and perception (seeing, which appears twice). These processes also denote boulomaic modality, or her wishes, and perception modality, as opposed to the deontic modality that refers to the obligations imposed upon her. Material processes are realized in two of the clauses in which Nazneen has the Actor role. The clause "she opened her eyes" appears twice in the extract; while Nazneen has the Actor role, her action affects part of her own body. The final clause involving the use of a conditional indicates her inner conflict between submission to fate and hearing the voice of her willpower. The linguistic choices in the extract add up to the construction of Nazneen's character as passive and hesitant to act. It is also noteworthy that in the extract, the only entity that has control over its environment is an inanimate object: the wardrobe. Nazneen is characterized as an Actor whose actions do not have any influence on the environment or as a Sensor; however, the wardrobe is depicted as an entity that has much more agency than the humans in the passage. In fact, it dominates their territory.

The transitivity analysis of an extract that narrates Nazneen's everyday routine could provide a deeper insight into Nazneen's characterization:

Life *made* its pattern around and beneath and through her. Nazneen *cleaned* and *cooked* and *washed*. She *made* breakfast for Chanu and *looked* on as he

ate, *collected* his pens and *put* them in his briefcase, *watched* him from the window as he stepped like a band leader across the courtyard to the bus stop on the far side of the estate. Then she *ate standing up* at the sink and *washed* the dishes. She *made* the bed and *tidied* the flat, *washed* socks and pants in the sink and larger items in the bath. In the afternoons she *cooked* and *ate* as she *cooked* so that Chanu began to wonder why she hardly *touched* her dinner, and she *shrugged* in a way that suggested that food was of no concern to her. And the days were tolerable, and the evenings were nothing to complain about. Sometimes she *switched* on the television and *flicked* through the channels, *looking for* ice e-skating. For a whole week it was on every afternoon while Nazneen *sat* cross-legged on the floor. While she *sat*, she was no longer a collection of the hopes, random thoughts, petty anxieties and selfish wants that made her, but *was* whole and pure. The old Nazneen *was sublimated* and the new Nazneen *was filled* with white light, glory. (*Brick Lane* 40-41) (italics added)

In the initial sentence, life is the Actor element and Nazneen is the Goal element. This linguistic choice of positioning Nazneen as the object of the process contributes to her portrayal as somebody who has no agency over her life. The way that the prepositions *around*, *beneath* and *through* are used help to create an image of her entangled by the course of things, leaving no space for her. The majority of the clauses in the extract that have Nazneen in the subject position include Action-intention processes (*clean*, *cook*, *wash*, *tidy*, etc.) with inanimate entities as the Goal elements. The things that are affected by her activity are food, objects in the house, or Chanu's belongings. In this way, the way a traditional gender role is attributed to Nazneen is depicted in the narration. Apart from the use of

transitive verbs, the intransitive verb *sit* is used twice and in the extract. Finally, a behavioural process appears once (*shrug*) and a perception process is used once (*watch*). These linguistic choices underpin Nazneen's portrayal as an inactive person.

It can be proposed that the ice-skating show on television becomes a symbol for her desire for freedom. However, the passive constructions in the clauses “the old Nazneen *was sublimated* and the new Nazneen *was filled* with white light, glory” might suggest that she is passive in the face of her desires. The extract continues as follows:

But when it ended and she *switched off* the television, the old Nazneen *returned*. For a while it was a worse Nazneen than before because she *hated* the socks as she *rubbed* them with soap, and *dropped* the pottery tiger and elephant as she *dusted* them and *was* disappointed when they did not break. She *was* glad when the ice e-skating came no more. (*Brick Lane* 40-41) (italics added)

This extract involves the shift in Nazneen's attitude to her domestic duties. She is not content with the impact that the ice-skating show makes on her, which is signalled with the introduction of the modality, conveyed by the verb *hate* and the adjective *disappointed*.

Nazneen's suppressed willpower manifests itself again when she receives a letter from her sister Hasina telling Nazneen that she has left her husband due to domestic violence and is running away to Dhaka. To find and help her, Nazneen suggests Chanu that he could go to Dhaka to look for her. In return, she is teased by Chanu, who finds her suggestion nonsense because there is no information regarding Hasina's whereabouts. Disappointed and raged, Nazneen finds her own method of rebellion and begins to neglect “her duties as a wife”. The change in her behaviour is largely encoded in the narration in a way suggesting that she is acting without volition:

Nazneen *dropped* the promotion from her prayers. The next day she *chopped* two fiery red chillies and *placed* them, like hand grenades, in Chanu's sandwich. Unwashed socks *were paired* and *put back* in his drawer. The razor *slipped* when she cut his corns. His files *got mixed up* when she *tidied*. All her chores, peasants in his princely kingdom, *rebelled* in turn. Small insurrections, *designed* to destroy the state from within. (*Brick Lane* 63) (italics added)

Firstly, she stops praying for the promotion that Chanu has been longing for. Then, she shows her anger by making Chanu eat red chillies. Except for the first three processes (dropped, chopped, placed) which are expressed through an active formation and have Nazneen as the Agent, the remaining processes in the extract that depict how Nazneen rebels are either expressed through passive formations, or they are used in active clauses but with a different Agent. The passive formations in “unwashed socks were paired and put back in his drawer” and “his files got mixed up” background Nazneen as the Actor. Moreover, it is the razor that slips; it is not Nazneen hurting Chanu intentionally, and it is her chores that are rebelling; not Nazneen. The verb “design” in the final clause, which denotes a cognition-intention process, is also used in a passive construction. In the light of these linguistic choices, it can be argued that it is as if Nazneen is trying to avoid the responsibility of manifesting her own will.

The more Nazneen tries to silence her volition, the more it manifests itself. It takes possession of her no matter how hard she tries to get free from it, which could be observed in the following extract:

And there was this shapeless, nameless thing that crawled across her shoulders and nested in her hair and poisoned her lungs, that made her both restless and listless. What do you want with me? She asked it. What do *you* want? it hissed back. She asked it to leave her alone but it would not. She pretended not to

hear, but it got louder. She made bargains with it. No more eating in the middle of the night. No more dreaming of ice, and blades, and spangles. No more missed prayers. No more gossip. No more disrespect to my husband. She offered all these things for it to leave her. It listened quietly, and then burrowed deeper into her internal organs. (*Brick Lane* 101-2)

It might be practical to deal with the clauses in the above extract in two categories: those which have Nazneen as the subject and those which have ‘this shapeless, nameless thing’. The processes that have Nazneen as the Agent are *asked* (question), *asked* (request), *pretended* not to hear, *made* bargains, *eating*, *dreaming*, *missed* prayers, and *offered*. On the other hand, the processes ‘the thing’ realises and the Goal elements are *crawled across her shoulders*, *nested in her hair*, *poisoned her lungs*, *made her restless and listless*, *hissed*, *got louder*, *listened*, and *burrowed deeper into her internal organs*. Nazneen’s processes do not have much effect on her environment. What is more, the processes that embody Nazneen’s trials to affect ‘the thing’ are also directed towards herself, as in *asked to leave her alone*. In contrast, the processes that ‘the thing’ realises have Nazneen’s body as the Goal element, excluding the behavioural process *hiss*. This linguistic strategy helps to create a metaphor of invasion. It invades her shoulders, her hair, and even her internal organs. This imagery contributes to Nazneen’s depiction as a submissive and powerless character, and it is achieved through particular transitivity choices.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the reader does not hear Nazneen’s ‘voice’ from 1988, the year when her baby got sick and died, to 2001. The reader’s knowledge about Nazneen’s life during these years comes from the Hasina’s letters to Nazneen, in which she occasionally responds to what Nazneen has written to her. According

to those letters, Nazneen has had two daughters and Chanu has been trying to find a steady job. The rest of the novel narrates Nazneen's story between 2001 and 2002.

In 2001, Nazneen begins to do textile jobs from home, partly to support the family financially but mainly to save money to send to Hasina, who has undergone extreme difficulties in Dhaka. It is through her textile job that she meets her lover Karim. The extract below narrates the moment they meet for the first time:

And on the first hot day of the year, when the windows were closed against the ripening of waste bins and the flat hummed to the tune of its pipes, and Nazneen had mopped up the overflow from the blocked toilet and washed her hands and sighed into the mirror, a new middleman appeared. Karim, with a bale of jeans over his broad shoulder.

This was how he came into her life. (*Brick Lane* 209)

To introduce the extract above, the expressions 'she meets' and 'they meet' have been used. Given the nature of the verb 'meet' and the context of the narration, it quite makes sense to assume that Nazneen and Karim met by coincidence. However, the transitivity choices in the original story may lead to a different interpretation, for Nazneen has been attributed no agency in the narration. As she is busy with her chores, Karim 'appears'. The choice of this verb, which marks a material process of 'happening', is in line with the fact that Karim and Nazneen met by chance. Yet, the statement "This was how he came into her life", which is separated from the preceding paragraph and thus has been foregrounded, involves a different type of transitivity: Karim is given the Actor role and Nazneen becomes the Goal element. In other words, Nazneen is devoid of any control over Karim's action. While the alternative clause constructions "They met" and "She met Karim" give agency to both parties or to Nazneen respectively, the original clause portrays Nazneen as ineffective. Furthermore, it

could be said that the statement implies Karim's dominance in their future relationship. Hence, it could be argued that linguistic choices are once more manipulated to create a particular character in the reader's mind.

The following extract narrates the romance scene where Nazneen and Karim are intimate for the first time:

He kissed her on the mouth and he led her into the bedroom. Get undressed, he said, and get into bed. He left the room. She got changed into her nightdress and lay beneath the sheets. Through the window she looked at a patch of blue sky and a scrap of white cloud. She pulled the covers up to her neck and closed her eyes. What she wanted to do was sleep. It would be impossible to stay awake. She was sick and she needed to sleep. She had a fever and her body was shaking. She turned her face into the pillow and moaned and when he kissed the back of her neck she moaned again. (*Brick Lane* 288)

A linguistic analysis of the extract makes it clear that Karim has dominance over Nazneen and her body. The table below displays the material processes attributed to Karim and Nazneen:

Table 2.2.1

Processes in Karim's and Nazneen's first sexual intimacy

Karim	Nazneen
kissed her on the mouth	got changed into her nightdress
led her into the bedroom	lay beneath the sheets
said 'get undressed and get into bed'	looked at a patch of blue sky and a scrap of white cloud
left the room	pulled the covers up to her neck and closed her eyes
kissed the back of her neck	wanted to sleep
	was sick
	needed to sleep
	had a fever
	her body was shaking

turned her face into the pillow moaned moaned again

The material processes that Karim realizes are *kissed* (used twice), *led*, and *left*. Two of the goal elements that are influenced by these processes are Nazneen or her body parts (mouth, back of her neck) while one Goal element is an inanimate object (the room). Moreover, Karim's verbal process *said* involves two commands directed at Nazneen ("get undressed and get into bed"). Nazneen's processes, however, do not affect Karim at all. To illustrate, the first two of her material processes are realized in response to Karim's commands, and there is either an inanimate entity as the Goal element ("got changed into her nightdress") or the verb is an intransitive one, hence a lack of a Goal element (lay beneath the sheets). The other material processes and the Goal elements are *pulled the covers*, *closed her eyes* and *turned her face*; these material processes also affect an inanimate object or part of her own body. The remaining processes are *looked*, *wanted*, *needed*, which are mental processes of perception and cognition; *moan*, *shake -her body was shaking-*, two behavioural processes; and finally, *had a fever* and *was sick*, two relational processes. As the analysis shows, Nazneen's processes are mostly directed towards herself and there is little action. On the other hand, all of Karim's processes are material, and four out of five processes affect Nazneen directly. Consequently, Nazneen is portrayed as weak and submissive in their initial sexual relationship.

As their relationship progresses, Nazneen discovers a force in herself: the power of her sexuality. She contemplates the change in her attitude: "She had submitted to her father and married her husband; she had submitted her husband. And now she gave herself up to a power greater than these two" (*Brick Lane* 299). She is taken aback by the intensity of her sexual desires, thinking "How could such a weak woman unleash a force so strong?" (300)

and drawn into a crisis between her values and her sexuality. The following extract portrays how her attitude is reflected in the transitivity choices:

She bit his ear. She bit his lip and tasted blood. He pushed her onto the bed and tore at her blouse and pushed the skirt of her sari around her waist. Still dressed, she was more than naked. The times when she had lain naked beneath the sheets belonged to another, saintly era. She helped him undress. She felt it now: there was nothing she would not do. She drew him in, not with passion but with ferocity as if it were possible to lose and win all in this one act. (*Brick Lane* 343)

Unlike the extract which depicts the first time they are intimate, the linguistic choices in this extract point to a balance of power regarding sexuality. The following table shows the material processes by Nazneen and Karim:

Table 2.2.2

Processes in Karim's and Nazneen's later sexual intimacy

Karim	Nazneen
pushed her onto the bed	bit his ear
tore at her blouse	bit his lip (& tasted blood)
pushed the skirt of her sari	helped him undress
	drew him in

As can be seen above, in this extract Nazneen is attributed material-intention processes that have Karim or his body parts as the Goal elements. This points to the fact that this time, both Karim and Nazneen have agency over their actions. However, for Nazneen the feeling of guilt is still there. She associates lying beneath the sheets passively with innocence. She has transformed from the “saintly” woman devoid of sexual desires into a sinful woman.

Her agency also becomes apparent in the conversations within the family. Nazneen, who has been depicted as a character with little influence on the people around her, literally

makes her 'voice' heard by her husband and daughters in the following conversation. When Shahana, her elder daughter, says she wants to attend a festival organized by the Islamic activists in the region, Chanu gets angry and threatens to beat her. Raged, Nazneen responds as follows:

'Nothing will be left,' screamed Chanu, 'only a little bit of bone.'

Nazneen stood between her husband and her daughter. 'I say she can go,' she said, but as they were both shouting she could not be heard. 'I say she can go', she yelled. They were silent and shocked, as if she had ripped out their tongues. 'And Shahana, show respect to your father.'

'Yes, Amma,' said Shahana.

'And you,' she told Chanu, 'should be careful what you say to such a small girl.'

Chanu's mouth worked silently. 'That is true,' he managed, after a few moments. (*Brick Lane* 349)

This extract involves Nazneen's, Chanu's and Shahana's verbalization processes. Nazneen's processes are powerful enough to lead to a change in her husband's and daughter's behaviour. When she says 'I say she can go', she performs a speech act of permission while challenging his husband at the same time. In addition, she commands Shahana to be more respectful to her father and warns Chanu about the way he speaks to Shahana. Chanu and Shahana, in return, react to Nazneen's words in an obedient way. It could be argued that Nazneen's passive character has been subverted through linguistic means; her language does have influence on the people around her.

Though Nazneen is more powerful than before as manifested in her speech, she does not know how to make use of this newfound power. While Chanu is busy making plans to

take the family back to Bangladesh, and Karim is coming up with wedding plans and looking for ways for Nazneen to divorce Chanu, she wants to steer her life in the direction that she wants, but finds herself at a loss:

Suddenly her entire being lit up with anger. *I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one.* A charge ran through her body and she cried out again, this time out of sheer exhilaration. ... The exhilaration also drained away, leaving only its ghosts behind. *What* would she decide? *What* did she want? (*Brick Lane* 405)

In the first part of the extract, Nazneen is under the influence of the illusion of power, which is signalled through the way the narrator depicts her feelings. The expressions ‘her entire being lit up with anger’, ‘a charge ran through her body’ and ‘the exhilaration also drained away’ lead to the interpretation that Nazneen’s power is still at surface level. The second part of the extract makes it obvious that she does not know how to act. The question formations in ‘*What* would she decide? *What* did she want?’ point to an absence of a Goal in her mental processes. In other words, Nazneen has no intentions or wants of her own regarding her life yet. Moreover, from a perspective of modality, Nazneen is stuck between determination and lack of confidence.

Nazneen’s vision of her future begins to form when Mrs Islam, from whom Chanu had borrowed money to get the sewing machine for Nazneen, appears with her two sons to collect the interest. The paradox between Mrs Islam’s family name and her behaviour, which is totally non-Islamic, is remarkable. She seems to be rejecting the notion that women are made to suffer; moreover, she is committing a major sin according to her religion. Having lived away from her native culture for a long time, she has learned to survive by any means, including usury. However, when Nazneen refuses to pay the demanded amount, saying that

they have already paid back the sum as well as a remarkable amount of interest, Mrs Islam gets furious and claims that she is no usurer and would not charge any interest. Upon this, Nazneen challenges her by bringing the Qur'an and saying, "Swear on the Qur'an. And I'll give you the two hundred." (*Brick Lane* 445). When one of the sons, who has already broken the glass showcase, says "I'm going to break ...", Nazneen interrupts him, shouting "Break my arm. Break them both." (445). This time, Mrs Islam threatens her by implying that she will inform Chanu about her relationship with Karim. Nazneen replies that her husband "knows everything. He'll come soon. Why don't you ask him?" (445). Consequently, Mrs Islam steps back and they leave without getting any money.

Nazneen's speech acts indicate courage, determination, and power. They have the capacity to change the course of things in the opposite direction. Upon his event, she feels herself empowered. She decides to meet Karim to tell him that she is neither going to Bangladesh with her husband nor marry him. The following utterances by Nazneen are chosen from Karim and Nazneen's dialogue, and it could be argued that they denote the change in Nazneen's character:

'But I am not going [.]'

'The children are not going.'

'We can't get married.'

'I don't want to marry you.' (*Brick Lane* 450-51)

The utterances above suggest that Nazneen not only has agency and responsibility over not only her own actions, but she also determines the way things are going to be. Through her language, she assures him that her daughters are staying in England, and that the marriage will not take place.

Even the wardrobe, which denoted her passivity at the beginning of the novel, has its fair share of Nazneen's empowerment. When Chanu suggests selling it rather than shipping it to Bangladesh, she responds, "Definitely. Get rid of it." The wardrobe, which had invaded Nazneen's territory, becomes the Goal element of Nazneen's process. Symbolically, she is letting go of the constraints that have passivized her all those years.

When Nazneen informs Chanu about her decision to stay, he responds that he cannot stay. He calls her daughters to give them the news. His choice of linguistic structures aims to promote his agency in making the decision. He says, "I have suggested, and your mother has agreed, that the three of you come later" (*Brick Lane* 479). The way he constructs his utterance creates the illusion that Chanu has made the decision himself. He places himself as the Sayer of the process of suggesting, Nazneen as the Receiver, and the idea as the Verbiage. Thus, through his language, he attempts to maintain the traditional gender role of the Head of the Family who decides what happens.

On the other hand, when Nazneen talks to the girls later about the decision, she allocates responsibility to the three of them. She says, "We'll talk about it tomorrow, or later, and we'll decide what to do. Staying or going, it's up to us three" (480). Her use of 'we' gives agency to all of them in deciding what path to follow in the future. In this way, she involves her daughters in the verbalization process of *talking* and the mental process of *deciding*.

After Chanu leaves for Dhaka alone, Nazneen begins to work for Razia, and from this sewing job she earns enough to get by and even to send some to Hasina. Through the very end of the novel, Nazneen is portrayed while dancing to the song on the radio:

Nazneen moved her head to the song. Her hips went side to side. She tapped her right foot, then the other. She raised her arms and moved her chest. The music broke in waves over her entire body.

She waved her arms, threw back her head and danced around the table. *Shout!* She sang along, filling her lungs from the bottom, letting it all go loose, feeling her hair shake out down her neck and around her shoulders, abandoning her feet to the rhythm, threading her hips through the air. She swooped down and tucked her sari up into the band of her underskirt. *Shout!*

Nazneen put her hands on her waist and kicked her legs high. She turned and kicked, turned and kicked, jumped and kicked and her foot went over her head. (*Brick Lane* 489)

Nazneen's dance could be interpreted as symbolic of her overcoming the boundaries that made her a passive, submissive woman earlier. The extract almost completely consists of Nazneen's action-intention processes that have her body parts as the Goal elements. Symbolically, this might suggest that Nazneen has turned into an active, powerful character who has complete responsibility and control over her own actions. Nazneen has predominantly been portrayed as a dormant, ineffective and powerless woman. Thus, such depiction, which is full of energy and movement, stands out. In the final paragraph of the extract, her moves reach the utmost. Nazneen, who was depicted while sitting and watching the ice-skating show on TV at the beginning of the novel, is dancing in a way that connotes some of the ice-skating moves. In other words, she is not merely watching it; she is realizing it.

2.3 Ideology Encoded in Modality and Transitivity Choices: The Characterization of Hasina

Having been born to the same family, Hasina's character and worldview differ substantially from her sister's or mother's, and it is possible to draw conclusions about Hasina's characterization from the transitivity and modality choices made in the novel. The following extract introduces Hasina with these sentences:

Her sister Hasina, born only three days after Banesa passed away (one hundred and twenty years old then and for evermore), listened to noone. At the age of sixteen when her beauty was becoming almost unbearable to own or even to look at, she eloped to Khulna with the nephew of the saw-mill owner. Hamid ground his teeth and an axe besides. For sixteen hot days and cool nights he sat between the two lemon trees that marked the entrance to the compound. For that time his only occupation was throwing stones at the piebald dogs that scavenged in the dump just beyond, and cursing his whore-pig daughter whose head would be severed the moment she came crawling back. Those nights, Nazneen lay awake listening to the rattling of the corrugated tin roof, starting at the owl calls that no longer sounded like owls but more like a girl felled by an axe on the back of her neck. Hasina did not come. Hamid went back to supervising the labourers in the paddy fields. But for a couple of trashings given on only the slightest of provocation, you would not know that he had lost a daughter. (*Brick Lane* 16)

The extract involves Hasina, Nazneen and their father Hamid, and the transitivity choices made by the narrator for each character offer insights into their characters and worldviews. The table below presents particular processes reserved for each character:

Table 2.3

Comparison of Hasina's, Hamid's and Nazneen's processes

Hasina	Hamid	Nazneen
listened to noone (her beauty) became almost unbearable to own / look at eloped to Khulna did not come	ground his teeth and an axe besides sat between lemon trees threw stones at dogs cursed his daughter went back to supervising lost a daughter	lay awake listened to the rattling

Hasina is mostly depicted with action-intention processes, which indicate a rebellious character who has agency over her decisions unlike her sister Nazneen. However, the processes associated with her beauty (own, look at) objectify her as a young woman. Hamid's processes, on the other hand, do not have any influence on Hasina's actions. He is depicted as powerless and passive against Hasina's willpower. Nazneen's processes are line with her ideology; she is represented with processes that do not affect anyone and that denote lack of activity. Hamid maintains the patriarchal role of the father who dominates his daughters' actions. While he has succeeded in determining Nazneen's future by choosing her husband and sending her to England, he has failed to dominate Hasina.

Hasina's behaviour is a rejection of both the patriarchal role of the father and the fatalistic ideology, which requires one to be submissive against anything. Nazneen is worried, for her sister "kicked against fate" by marrying a man of her own choice (*Brick Lane* 22). Rascanu argues that the impression that the reader has at the beginning of the novel is that Hasina has more agency than Nazneen. She states,

In the beginning of the novel, readers are made to believe that of the two sisters, it is Hasina who is more likely to perform "agential activity" [...] as, unlike Nazneen, she kicks against her fate, a metaphor symbolising agency as free will, autonomy and ability to act ("kick") and react against patriarchal

norms (“fate”). ... [T]he younger sister, though more strong willed as a child and later as a young adult, lives to learn that kicking against one’s fate (manifesting one’s agency as freedom to act or decision-making) can have negative, painful consequences for the woman. (34)

Hasina’s rejection of her father’s oppression does not mean a rejection of the entire patriarchal system. In her letter to Hasina, she writes, “Even we have nothing I happy. We have love. Love is happiness” (*Brick Lane* 25). For Hasina, love comes before anything. She has no doubt that love means happiness, which is indicated by the non-modalized generic sentence “Love is happiness”. Still, Hasina adopts certain patriarchal ideologies of her society. She acknowledges that women need to keep silent and that husbands can beat wives. She writes, “Just because man is kind to wife it do not mean she can say what she like. If women understanding this no one will beat” (25). Her language conveys ideological messages about husband-wife relationships. Her sentences present generalizations about men and women and the behaviour expected from them. According to her, women are not allowed to say whatever they like, as indicated by the use of the modal auxiliary ‘can’ with a preceding clause involving a negative verb (‘do not mean’). Even if she has defied her father’s hegemony, she accepts the norms of her society regarding gender roles in marriage.

However, unlike her mother, she does not believe that women are made to suffer. She has a positive attitude towards life and to marriage in particular. She expresses her happiness regarding her marriage as follows:

I so happy now I almost scared. Hardly dare opening my eye. Why it is? What is bringing fear? God not putting me on earth only to suffer. I know this always when days bringing no light. (*Brick Lane* 25)

The non-modalized sentence ‘God not putting me on earth only to suffer’ demonstrates the extent of her commitment to the truth of this proposition, and she emphasizes this with a clause involving a verb of knowledge, ‘know’. However, despite her assertions that she is not to suffer, she has fears beneath the surface, which must have been caused by the ideology with respect to women’s suffering she has been exposed to all her life.

Her fears are justified as she is victimized by both men and women. She suffers physical violence by her husband and runs away from him. She finds a job at a garment factory, but she is defamed by the people around her, and finally, she is forced to prostitution to make a living. She marries for the second time, endures her husband’s psychological violence, leaves him and finally is taken under the protection of a wealthy family. Rascanu claims that even though Hasina appears to have agency, her struggle for agency has been futile. She contends,

Yet, it is not choice that Hasina performs: she does not choose to leave her job; she does not choose to let Mr. Chowdhuri take care of her (she lets herself go with the flow); she does not choose to become a prostitute; it is not her choice to marry again nor to leave her new husband. (35)

In fact, after she writes about her problems with her second husband, she sends no letters to Nazneen for almost five years, so the reader can only infer that she has gone through a lot of hardships.

In her letters to Nazneen, Hasina relates the way she is victimized by the men around her. When she writes about the domestic violence that she suffers in her first marriage, she tells Nazneen that the landlady will help her run away, even if she does not approve of it: “She say it is better get beaten by own husband than beating by stranger. But those stranger not saying at the same time they love me. If they beat they do in all honesty” (*Brick Lane*

58). The landlady's utterances reflect her submissive attitude to domestic violence. As her non-modalized generic sentence suggests, she believes that such treatment by husbands is acceptable in marriage. Hasina, on the other hand, exposes the crooked attitude which her husband has towards women. Unfortunately, in almost all cultures, it has been normalized to love and abuse women at the same time.

In Dhaka, Hasina starts working at a garment factory but loses her job after being defamed. She writes to Nazneen how she was fired by the manager:

‘You have behave in lewd manner. You have show no regard for reputation of the factory. I am not running a brothel. Do I look like brothel keeper to you?’ He is looking at me. No I say. Not a brothel keeper. Then he stand up.

Get out. You are finished in garment business. (*Brick Lane* 161)

She is accused of having sexual relationship with one of the factory workers. The manager's language involves speech acts of humiliation, insult and threat; indicating his misogynist attitude. His attitude is also obvious in the way he treats the male company worker, Abdul, with whom Hasina is accused of having a relationship. Hasina writes to Nazneen, “Manager I hear him. ‘Pretty girl eh? You boys! Have to get a little practice in before marriage eh?’ He laughing” (162). The manager's modalized sentence ‘Have to get a little practice in before marriage’ normalizes nonmarital sexual activity for men as his use of the modal expression ‘have to’ conveys the message that such sexual activity is a need for them.

When the landlord Mr Chowdhury, who claims that he protects Hasina because she is like a daughter to him, finds out why Hasina was fired from the factory, he humiliates her with his words and then rapes her. Hasina writes,

He put lamp down and he starting to take off shirt. He quiet and I glad for it.

Then he take off trousers. I say nothing I do nothing and then it done and he

sit in the chair. He ask me to rub feet and I do it. He tell me not to cry and I stop. He ask me if it he who taking care of me and I say yes it him. (*Brick Lane* 166)

The transitivity choices in the extract depict Hasina as a powerless, submissive woman. She does only what she is told to do while the landlord's actions directly influence her. Furthermore, his question about whether he is the one who takes care of Hasina has ideological implications. Beneath his question lies a worldview that regards women in need of protection, and that gives men the right to take advantage of the women they protect.

Hasina's second husband, who was one of Hasina's customers, convinces her to marry him. In the beginning, everything goes well, but very soon he claims that Hasina "has changed her face". He might have been suffering a psychological disorder, for he is obsessed with the order of his possessions as well as Hasina's looks. He looks at Hasina's face, shapes her hair, makes her tilt her head, and so on; but he gets angry because he cannot see Hasina the way he saw her for the first time. Hasina writes, "He say I put curse on him and that is why we marry. He say how his family going to take daughter-in-law like me?" (*Brick Lane* 176). His first utterance evokes the times when women were accused of witchcraft. This non-modal expression demonstrates how strongly he believes in his proposition. The transitivity choice in his second utterance is also ideological, for it places his family as the subject and Hasina as the object of the process. In this way, Hasina's agency is removed and she is passivized through language.

Hasina is not only victimized by men, but also by the women around her. When the rumours spread that Hasina is having a sexual relationship with Abdul, her friends at the factory turn their back on her. The extract below narrates Hasina's exclusion from her social group:

I out from favour at factory. One week past they shunning me. I go to sit with the others for lunch time they make silence. I sitting apart and only look at chapatti. They put hands up and whisper. I am not looking still I see. I sit near the tap. [...] No one is speak to me only Abdul. I say to Aleya when she come for handwashing 'Sister how I can defend myself? I do not know the charge.' For reply she putting hands too close under spout water spraying on my shoulder. (*Brick Lane* 158)

It might be useful to ask the question 'Who does what to whom?' to find out what is happening in the scene. Hasina's processes are *(be) out from favour, go, sit, look at chapatti, not look at (the people), see, defend herself*, and *not know*, while the others' processes are *shun Hasina, make silence, put hands up and whisper (about Hasina), not speak to her*, and *(Aleya) spray water on Hasina's shoulder*. These processes depict an experience of exclusion in which Hasina is powerless and passive, for her actions affect no one. Conversely, the others' processes are all directed at Hasina and are meant to disempower her. As the extract shows, the women around her take side with the misogynist attitude of the manager, not with Hasina.

Hasina's language undergoes a change she experiences victimization by society. Indeed, her ideology about womanhood has so far been quite contrary to her mother's or her sister's ideology. In the extract below, Hasina writes to Nazneen what a woman in her factory told her, and what she thinks about that matter:

'We waiting and suffering. That is why we are here.'

I am not waiting around suffering around. Let her suffer if she like it. (*Brick Lane* 159)

The processes in the woman's utterance (wait, suffer) indicate a pessimistic worldview about womanhood, for "we" refers to women in general. Moreover, her non-modalized expressions demonstrate the extent of her commitment to the truth of the statement. Nazneen's utterance involves a negation expressed by 'not', and this shows her lack of confidence in the truth of the statement. However, after she is sexually abused by the landlord, she adopts a pessimistic worldview, which is reflected in her language:

Little and little I getting stronger. I pray God forgive me. I sick then inside my mind. Everything has happen is because of me. *I take my own husband. I leave him. I go to the factory. I let Abdul walk with me. I the one living here without paying.* (Brick Lane 166) (italics added)

Hasina begins to blame herself for whatever has happened to her, demonstrated by the italicized sentences, whose subjects are 'I'. As the active voice in her utterances suggest, she acknowledges the fact that she is to be held responsible for her actions and their implications. If these sentences were uttered by a man, the absurdity of this gender-biased worldview would be so apparent. However, in Hasina's society, women are not supposed to choose their husbands or leave them, work to make a living, have social relations with other men or accept help from unrelated men. From a discourse stylistic point of view, such straightforward sentences may carry highly ideological messages.

After the rape incident, Hasina has an affair with Hussein, and this affair leads Hasina to become a prostitute as she has no other way to make a living. She becomes bewildered when one of her customers insists on marrying her. In response, she says, "I am a low woman. I am nothing. I have nothing. I am all that I have. I can give you nothing" (Brick Lane 171-72). Hasina adopts a disempowering language in her response. The processes in her first four sentences are all relational processes, which express the relationship between two things. The

sentence 'I am a low woman' involves an intensive relational process (x is y), hence demonstrates equivalence between the 'I' and 'low woman' (I=low woman). In the same way, the second sentence equates Hasina with nothingness (I=nothing). The third sentence has a possessive relational process (x has y – 'I have nothing'), depriving Hasina of any possession and the fourth sentence embodies a combination of both an intensive and a possessive relational processes (I=all that I have → Nothing=Nothing). Finally, the modality choice in the last sentence foregrounds Hasina's lack of ability to provide anything.

Yet, before the rape incident, Hasina's language reflects a more optimistic and confident attitude to life. In one of her letters, she writes:, "Pure is in the mind. Keep yourself pure in mind and God will protect. ... I keep purdah in the mind no one can take it" (*Brick Lane* 153). Hasina's non-modal expressions strongly indicate her worldview on virtue. She refers to the internal sources of virtue, rather than external ones; for her, as long as one is pure in mind, s/he is virtuous and God is with him/her. Nonetheless, as the previous extract shows, she thinks she has become a 'low woman' although, in fact, she has been victimized by society.

Despite all the victimization and exclusion that she suffers, Hasina does not disempower herself in the end. Once Nazneen and Hasina were still at home, her mother said that she expects nothing from life (*Brick Lane* 102). While Nazneen found her mother's argument sensible, Hasina vehemently disagreed, saying 'If you ask for nothing, you might get nothing!' (102). According to Fowler, there is room for resistance in language against the dominating discourses. He contends that a "language embodies alternative ways, not one way, of looking at the world, and in these circumstances it is obvious that speakers are not going to be trapped within one overriding system of beliefs" (*Linguistic Criticism* 212). This

seems to be the case for Hasina, for she does not adopt her mother's ideology. In her last letter to Nazneen, she clearly makes her point about womanhood and suffering. She writes,

Amma always say we are women what can we do? If she here now I know what she say I know it too well. But I am not like her. Waiting around. Suffering around. She wrong. So many ways. At the end only she act. She who think all path is closed for her. She take the only one forbidden. (*Brick Lane* 434)

Her mother's ideology is that, as her modalized rhetorical question suggests, women lack the ability or permission to act. Until her suicide, she waits and suffers, and her suicide becomes her only intentional act. Hasina explicitly expresses her own ideology in non-modalized sentences, saying "I am not like her" and "She [is] wrong. So many ways". Her mother has also been victimized by the gender ideologies that she has adopted without questioning them. Hasina, however, resists the gender ideologies deeply rooted in her culture's language both through her actions and through her language.

This chapter has presented an analysis of the consistent and systematic modality and transitivity choices in the novel to expose the gender ideology embedded in them. The analysis has shown that the fatalistic ideology encoded and reflected in the modality choices has contributed to the construction of submissive female selves, which is also reflected in the transitivity choices denoting the characters' processes. The following chapter will present a linguistic analysis of Monica Ali's novel *In the Kitchen* using the tools of the transitivity and modality systems to examine the protagonist's conflicting worldviews on gender-related matters.

CHAPTER 3

A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF MONICA ALI'S *IN THE KITCHEN*

This chapter aims to investigate the way gender ideologies are represented in language in Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen* through a feminist stylistic analysis. To this end, the characterisation of the protagonist, Gabriel, will be explored through modality and transitivity analyses.

In the Kitchen is Monica Ali's third novel published in 2009. Taking place in contemporary London, the novel relates the experiences of Gabriel Lightfoot (Gabe), the executive chef of a historical hotel's restaurant. Gabriel, an unmarried man in his early forties, is in charge of several kitchen workers coming from diverse cultural and national backgrounds: "a United Nations task force" (*Kitchen* 97). As Gabe puts it, "[e]very corner of the earth [is] represented here" (97). Gabe's life begins to "fall apart" when a Ukrainian worker is found dead in his kitchen's basement, and at the same time when Gabe finds out that his father is a terminal cancer patient. After the discovery of the dead body, Gabe begins to have nightmares about the corpse. Meanwhile, due to his father's illness, he is engaged in a closer contact with his sister, father, and grandmother, with whom he had loose ties until recently. Gabe's late mother had bipolar disease, which he finds out much later than her mother's death. The novel recounts the protagonist's conflicts regarding his values and identity: "Gabe's struggle represents how a man tries to adapt to the contemporary social norms and values, and at the same time he has to reclaim his self and selfhood in the battle" (Prajapati 32).

Through its characters and events, the novel explores a variety of issues: immigration, ethnic diversity, human trafficking, and cheap labour to name a few. In particular, the immigrant workers in the novel offer a ground for an analysis of transnational identities.

Nonetheless, as the focus of this thesis is a feminist approach, this chapter will explore Gabe's ideologies related to gender by referring to his relationships with women, mainly with Lena, a former prostitute who worked in his kitchen as a dishwasher and whom he accepts his home to take care, and with Charlie, his girlfriend that he intends to marry. The analysis will focus on the systematic modality and transitivity choices that give away the protagonist's inconsistencies in his ideology regarding gender issues.

Gabe has a long-term relationship with Charlie, a 38-year-old club singer wanting to settle down with Gabe. After Yuri's, the Ukrainian kitchen worker's, dead body is found in the kitchen's basement, Gabe meets Lena, a young dishwasher who has been living at the basement together with Yuri. Gabe is mysteriously drawn to the young woman and offers her to stay in his place now that she has no other place to live, and thereby their relationship begins. Soon after Lena begins to stay in Gabe's flat, she tells him her story: she has been trafficked from Belarus for sexual exploitation and has been hiding from her pimp. Gabe promises to help her and provide financial support. At the same time, he has sexual intercourse with her regularly. Once Charlie finds out that Gabe has been sleeping with Lena, she leaves him. Although Gabe is convinced that he is in love with Charlie, he cannot help finding Lena mysteriously attractive and sleeping with her. At the end of the novel, Gabe experiences a nervous breakdown, takes all his money from the bank and gives it to Lena, telling her that he loves her. In the end, Lena disappears with the money, and Gabe attempts to reconnect with Charlie.

The story is a third-person narration which is internally focalised. The events are presented from Gabe's consciousness, which means that the reader has access to Gabriel's mind. On the other hand, the reader has no access to the other characters' consciousnesses. As for Lena, for instance, the reader's knowledge comes from Gabe's dialogues with her or

his perceptions or thoughts regarding her. As Gunning argues, “Gabe establishes the physical presence of Lena in his own terms and thereby avoids engaging with her on hers. ... *In the Kitchen* ... leaves Lena frustratingly inaccessible to the reader, who is trapped within Gabe's fixed understanding” (792). Therefore, the reader must take into consideration Lena's background and the conditions which she lives in to understand and make sense of the motives behind her attitude towards Gabe and her treatment of him.

On the other hand, the internal focalization allows for the analysis of Gabe's conflicting gender ideologies, for the omniscient narrator does not interfere with the protagonist's values or beliefs concerning gender issues. It could be argued that the protagonist, Gabe, is suffering from what is called in psychology “cognitive dissonance,” “a term for the state of discomfort felt when two or more modes of thought contradict each other. The clashing cognitions may include ideas, beliefs, or the knowledge that one has behaved in a certain way” (“Cognitive Dissonance”). This chapter deals with the linguistic realizations of the protagonist's contradicting values regarding gender issues. Gabe, who assumes that he holds a liberal, modern ideology regarding women, thinking that he promotes women's independence in relationships, becomes involved in a relationship in which he takes sexual advantage of a woman who, due to her financial and social conditions, is totally dependent on him. Lena has no other option but to remain indifferent to Gabe's “sexual obsession for her” (Caporale-Bizzini 588). Gabe is aware of the inconsistency between his worldview and his behaviour, thus suffers mental discomfort and comes up with cognitive strategies to justify his actions, which are reflected in his modal and transitivity choices.

Gabe's perceived ideology regarding women is that he values and promotes their independence. His opinions about Charlie expose such a worldview. Furthermore, the fact that Charlie is equal to him in terms of financial independence underpins Gabe's appraisal of

women's financial self-sufficiency as well. In that sense, both Charlie and Gabe maintain roles of equal power in their relationship. On the other hand, Lena's social condition that she is an illegal immigrant prostitute, and her lack of financial means to survive make her dependent on Gabe, who takes advantage of this condition and sexually exploits her. As Caporale-Bizzini points out, "[t]rafficked women like Lena cannot rely on British justice to protect them, because of the likelihood of being deported back to their home countries as illegal aliens. As a result, she must hide both from her tormentors, and also from the police" (589). It is true that Gabe never forces her to have sex with him or makes her stay in his place by threatening her and so on, but Lena's conditions do not allow her to make choices. Therefore, she remains non-responsive to Gabe's treatment of her. Nevertheless, Gabe is in the position to make his own choice between helping her or exploiting her, and he opts for the latter.

The following section presents an analysis of the consistent modality choices in the novel. Certain extracts chosen from the novel represent Gabe as a "puzzled" character: he is either surprised by or uncertain about his perceptions in general. Other extracts depict Gabe as a character who is certain about holding a modern ideology regarding women. However, there exists a gap between Gabe's own perceived ideology regarding women and his behaviours. Consequently, this chapter puts forward the claim that Gabe has conflicting ideologies on gender, that is, the ideology he thinks he holds and his unconscious and uncontrollable ideology related with gender contradict. Badran proposes that "a systematic reading of modality has the potential of providing insight into ideological twists in discourse by helping point out some of these inconsistencies" (153). Accordingly, the following analysis of modality aims to expose the way Gabe's inner conflicts are linguistically realized

in the narration. The modality analysis will be followed by a transitivity analysis that attempts to underpin the modality choices reflecting the protagonist's gender ideologies.

3.1 Gender Ideology in Crisis: A Modality Analysis into the Characterization of Gabriel

Simpson determined three patterns of modality, which he called *positive shading*, *negative shading*, and *neutral shading* (*Language, Ideology* 65-67). Texts which have *positive shading* involve deontic modality, or expressions related to obligation and duty; also, such texts embody generic sentences that imply a certain worldview (65). Positively shaded texts also involve boulomaic modality, or expressions of desire (Neary 183). The resulting effect of the use of generics, deontic modality and boulomaic modality is a text that exposes the narrator's or the character's assumptions about his/her duties, obligations and desires (183). In that sense, *Brick Lane* is a positively shaded narrative, for it lays bare its protagonist's desires and her attitude to her obligations. On the other hand, texts which have little or no modality have *neutral shading* (Simpson, *Language, Ideology* 67). In such texts, the character(s) or the narrator does not offer any psychological evaluation of their perceptions (Neary 183). Finally, texts which are rich in epistemic and perception modality denoting the character's or the narrator's lack of certainty with regard to characters, actions or events have *negative modal shading* (183). Negatively shaded narratives are rich in words that suggest alienation, estrangement, or bewilderment (Simpson, *Language, Ideology* 65). This thesis argues that *In the Kitchen* is a negatively shaded narrative insofar as it reveals its protagonist's lack of certainty as regards his beliefs or perceptions. What is more, little reference to deontic modality stands out in the novel in comparison to the domination of deontic modality in *Brick Lane*.

The following extract narrates the first time Gabriel meets Lena. The day after the dead body is found in the kitchen's basement, Gabe goes there to get some food needed for the kitchen, and he sees her:

Gabriel *sensed* someone behind him, another beating heart. He stuffed the tights in his trouser pocket and turned and *saw* her. That girl, Lena, standing in the doorway in the jumble of shadow and light, let him look at her and she looked back at him. Her face was thin and rigid, and her hands, which she held twisted together at her chest, were fleshless claws. This morning he had told Oona to fire her. It *astonished* him that he *had never looked at* her before. Gabriel breathed deeper, to breathe the air she had breathed.

He opened his mouth *without knowing* what he would say.

Lena smiled, or he *imagined* it, and then she ran away, into the maze.

(*Kitchen 20*) (italics added)

The first sentence of the extract involves “sense,” a modal perception verb implying the possibility of someone’s existence in the basement, which is verified when he sees Lena. Gabe realizes with surprise that he has not actually looked at her before as the use of the verb “astonish” suggests unassertiveness on Gabe’s part. This is even consolidated by the expression “without knowing”, which also implies uncertainty or lack of confidence. Finally, as the verb “imagine” suggests, Gabe is not sure about his perceptions regarding Lena’s behaviour. These modality choices in the extract which narrates Gabe’s first encounter with Lena point at a character who is at a loss concerning his perceptions and feelings about a woman. It could be argued that this extract serves as a foreshadowing of Gabe’s relationship with Lena, which is characterized by Gabe’s lack of control over his behaviour.

The second time he sees her around the hotel, Gabe concludes that she came there to meet him:

..., he saw a figure step away from the wall. He *was not surprised*. It *seemed natural* that he should have conjured her like this. ... She shivered but looked at Gabriel with indifference *as though ready to walk on by*. ... [H]e *had the sensation* that she was floating in the circle of orange light.

“It’s very late,” he said stupidly. “Do you . . . do you have anywhere to go?” He *knew* that she had come for him, though he *hardly dared believe* it yet. “I’ll carry your bag,” he said. He took one step toward her. *She didn’t bolt, so he took another*. He approached her gradually, as he would a wild creature. “There,” he said. “It’s okay. You can stay with me.” (*Kitchen* 76)

Different from their first encounter, this time Gabe is more confident about his evaluations based on his perceptions as the epistemic modality suggests. The epistemic expressions “was not surprised” and “seemed natural” imply that he is confident about Lena’s attraction to him. Even if he finds it hard to believe, he “knows” that Lena has come for him. When he approaches her, Lena does not change her direction, and based on this visual evidence, Gabe approaches her further. In short, relying on his perceptions, Gabe rationalizes his attraction to Lena by thinking that she is attracted to him as well.

Since Lena accepts his offer, Gabe takes her to her flat. As he attempts to hold a conversation with her, doubts begin to emerge in his mind concerning her potential attraction to him. Gabe is no more certain about the conclusions he drew from Lena’s actions:

Why did she come to him, anyway? *Had* she come to him? One look they had exchanged in the catacombs, what could one look mean? How much? Did she look at him, then, the way he thought she had? They had seen each other only

for a second or two, the rest he had made up, invented now, tonight, because he was – what? – lonely? Was he lonely? Had he been lonely? Or was that something he had just now begun to feel? Was she making him lonely? It didn't make any sense. He was feverish. He couldn't think straight. He would take some more aspirins. (*Kitchen* 81-2)

Gabe's uncertainty is encoded in the way the statements are formulated; questions to which there are no answers dominate the extract. He begins to doubt that Lena came for him or she is attracted to him. In the end, he fails to make sense of his thoughts or his perceptions. Hence, this extract presents a character who is bewildered and confused; Lena's entering his life has shattered the solid ground he has been standing on.

Indeed, until his encounter with Lena, Gabe assumes a solid ideology regarding women and his relationship with them, which could be inferred from his attitudes to women other than Lena. It is obvious from his judgment of some other women around him that he has a critical attitude to women's domesticity. For instance, he criticizes the executive sous chef, Oona, for being too domestic:

What *offended* him about Oona was simply this: her domesticity. When she blew into his office and sat down, it was *as if* she had just got home with the shopping, looking forward to a cuppa and a chat. The way she talked, the way she walked, the way she pressed her bosom when she was thinking, all of it, at core, was *irreducibly* and *inescapably domestic*. (*Kitchen* 9) (italics added)

Not only modal auxiliaries but also evaluative verbs, adjectives or adverbs are involved in the modality system. The boulomaic verb "offend" clearly demonstrates Gabe's stance towards women's domesticity. Based on his perceptions, he constructs an image of Oona, indicated by the use of "as if", and he comes to a judgment of her personality based on his

perceptions about Oona's actions, calling her "irreducibly and inescapably domestic." It could be concluded from his evaluation of Oona that Gabe rejects the traditional gender roles where women adopt domestic traits.

A very similar attitude can be inferred from Gabe's thoughts on her sister Jenny, who was once very attractive and "used to drop one laconic word in the pub and send everyone scurrying to pick it up, frame it, and hand it around" (*Kitchen* 33). He reflects on how different Jenny's life could have been:

If Jenny had got out of Blantwistle. If she hadn't saddled herself with a baby. What was the point, anyway, of thinking about that? She wore velour tracksuits now in purple or green. ... It was strange how knowing every last thing about her made him feel as though he didn't know her at all. (Kitchen 34-5) (italics added)

The third conditional is used when the speaker imagines how different things could have been in the past. It is often used to express regret or criticism. In the first two statements above, Gabe obviously feels pity for her sister for not leaving Blantwistle and for having a baby. The verb that Gabe reserves for the experience of "having a baby" is "to saddle", a verb which connotes restriction and oppression. Moreover, her sister now wears clothes that also connote domesticity. The third conditional and the vocabulary used to describe Jenny's clothing reflect how Gabe evaluates her sister's situation, providing further hints about Gabe's ideology regarding women; he underrates women who adopt domestic traits. The more he knows about her sister's current habits, the less confident he is about knowing her, indicated by the statement "as though he didn't know her at all."

Gabe's evaluation of a previous girlfriend also points at a similar worldview with regard to women and relationships with the opposite sex. He has had an unsuccessful

relationship with his girlfriend before Charlie, Catherine, as they both have tried to give up on their independence:

He'd given it a good try, moved into her Putney *cottage* with all the *retro floral prints* and lime-washed pine. What had happened? They wanted so much from each other that every day was like *being eaten alive*. ... With Catherine, they'd *suffocated* each other, too many needs, too imprecisely defined. Charlie was *different*, anyway, *independent*, *light on her feet*. It was a bonus of marrying late, when they both *knew* their own minds.

Of course he was going to marry her. He *'d known* it for a long time without putting it into words. (*Kitchen 98*) (italics added)

The words through which Gabe describes Catherine's place, such as "cottage" and "retro floral prints" connote a traditional marriage and a domestic lifestyle. Also, Gabe describes his experience with Catherine using negative expressions, such as "suffocate", "being eaten alive", and the adverb "too" to emphasize a negative meaning. It could be inferred from the extract that his worldview about traditional marriage or relationships is that the spouses are too dependent on each other. In other words, he believes that he has adopted an ideology regarding relationships in which both sides are independent since he likes Charlie for contrary reasons. She is the embodiment of the opposite of domesticity: She is a club singer, and she is (financially and personality-wise) independent. Gabe is certain that they both know what kind of people they are and what they expect from life, indicated by the statement "they both *knew* their own minds".

In the extract, the verb "know", a verb of knowledge, is used twice. The epistemic modality indicated by the knowledge verb "know", and the sentence adverb "of course" demonstrate his confidence in the truth of what he thinks about Charlie and their relationship:

he is sure that they are fit for each other and they will marry. The epistemic modality reflects Gabe's own perceived worldview about women and marriage: He can only marry an independent woman, and he *wants* such marriage. Nevertheless, as the events unfold, it becomes evident that there is a substantial gap between the ideology that Gabe believes he holds and his unconscious ideology which makes him treat a very young woman in need, Lena, in a way that contradicts his ideology. He keeps Lena in his home and takes advantage of her sexually despite his moral convictions. He seems to be certain of his values regarding women's independence, however, in his relationship with Lena, he has created a woman totally dependent on him and has abused her.

Although Gabe assumes that he wants to marry Charlie, in fact the thought of marriage is becoming a burden for him. The things that he takes as his obligations does not allow his mind to rest. Among those obligations are opening his own restaurant and proving himself to his dad, who is dying because of cancer, although he has never been in good terms with him. He also feels that it is his duty to start a family. One night, he cannot sleep since his "to-do list" is keeping his mind too busy:

He ran over it again. Get Dad to the opening. Get the restaurant on its feet.
Move in with Charlie. Have a kid. Dad. Restaurant. Charlie. Kid. Tick them
off, cross them out. Tick, cross, tick, cross. (*Kitchen* 85)

Simpson proposes that certain choices of modality tend to dominate a particular type of narration (qtd. in Neary 182). Overall, there is little deontic modality in Gabe's language, and it mainly refers to his relationship with Charlie. Even if Gabe resorts to deontic modality, he does not embrace his obligations but regards them as restrictive. The resulting effect is the construction of a character who does not feel obliged to act in certain ways, or someone who refuses obligations. The extract above involves imperatives, suggesting that Gabe regards

those actions as his obligations. However, the way they are narrated implies that the thought of these actions keeps revolving around his mind, making him feel as if there was no way out of them. In other words, Gabe is overwhelmed by these obligations.

In a conversation with Nikolai, a kitchen worker, Gabe shares his thoughts about Charlie and women in general. He says,

“The thing about Charlie is, she’s very independent. She likes her freedom. Likes to do her own thing.” ... “But she can be very needy. Biological clock, all of that. You know how women are.” (*Kitchen* 229)

Gabe refers to the qualities that he likes in Charlie, namely her independence and her strong personality. However, as she wants to settle down with Gabe and have kids, and she is worried that she might be too old to become a mother, Gabe begins to find Charlie “needy.” The linker “but” signals a change in the way he describes Charlie, from a positive to a negative one. He judges her to be “needy”, an adjective with negative connotations. Furthermore, he stereotypes women to be needy due to their biological creation, and he thinks Charlie is no different. Gabe also presupposes that Nikolai shares his opinion, signalled by the epistemic verb “know” in “You know how women are”. The generic, non-modal expression “how women are” shows his confidence about the truth of the generalization he makes about women.

His sleeping with Lena could be his exit from the obligations that threaten his independence. Even if he cannot make sense of his cheating on Charlie, still he is convinced that his love for her persists:

He *knew* Lena would not affect his desire, his anything, for Charlie. That was why he could let it happen. *No one could* touch his relationship with Charlie – not Lena, anyway. (*Kitchen* 127) (italics added)

The epistemic verb “know” makes it evident that Gabe is certain about his feelings for Charlie even though he has slept with Lena. His confidence is demonstrated by the use of the modal auxiliary “could” with the subject “nobody”; for Gabe, it is impossible that their relationship can be interfered in by anybody, not even by Lena. He believes the very reason for his disloyalty is his confidence in his feelings for Charlie, as demonstrated by the non-modalized expression “That was why”. Overall, the modality choices that he reserves for his relationship with Charlie demonstrate his confidence in his feelings for her. The following statements also show his certainty:

He was lucky to have her. Of this he was sure. (*Kitchen* 138)

His choice of the adjective “lucky” denotes his positive attitude towards his relationship with Charlie, and this is further emphasized by the adjective “sure”, pointing at his confidence regarding the truth of the idea. Indeed, Gabe is experiencing a crisis in his inner world; he is cheating on the woman he is sure that he loves. Thus, he keeps reminding himself that he still loves her, trying to restore his mental balance.

Gabe is undergoing a crisis in the way he behaves in his relationship with Lena as well. Lena has been trafficked from Belarus to England and forced to prostitution, and Gabe believes his intentions are humanly when he first invites her to stay in his flat. She has been running away from her pimp and staying in the kitchen’s basement with Yuri, the kitchen worker who has been found dead there. Now that Yuri is dead, she has no other place to stay. Therefore, she accepts Gabe’s offer and comes to his flat. Probably because she thinks Gabe has offered his place since he wants to sleep with her, she has the following conversation with Gabe:

“If you want sex,” said Lena, “I don’t have problem.”

Gabriel *opened his eyes*. “No,” he said. “What? No.” He shook his head.

(...) “I don’t have problem. We do it, okay, now if you want.”

Again he shook his head, staring at her cadaverous little frame. He *scarcely believed* those words had spilled from it, and he was *appalled*. He *wanted* very much to have sex. “Christ, no. That’s not why I . . .” He rubbed his face.

“Look. You don’t know me, but if you think I . . . *that’s not how I am, I am not like that at all.*”

“Okay,” said Lena.

“You don’t believe me? *I didn’t bring you here for . . .* You said you needed a place to stay.”

... *It was madness to try to help this girl.* She could stay one night on the sofa, and then she would have to leave. (Kitchen 78) (italics added)

Gabe is obviously surprised by what Lena says. The expressions “opened his eyes”, “scarcely believed” and “was appalled” refer to a character who is puzzled by the situation. Nevertheless, he believes that he is certain about one aspect of his personality: He would never touch a woman that he offered to help. His certainty is indicated by the non-modalized expressions “*that’s not how I am, I am not like that at all*”, “*I didn’t bring you here for . . .*”, which show the highest degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. Therefore, he begins to regard the idea of helping her as “madness”. On the other hand, this extract also involves boulomaic modality, or reference to the speaker’s desires: He *wants* to sleep with Lena. Gunning states that “[h]e takes her into his flat, but it is never a clear place of asylum, as there is always a suggestion that she feels forced to have sex with him in order to guarantee her refuge. . . . Their relationship is marked by a tension between her evasiveness and his wish to possess her as he keeps her in his flat” (791). Thus, this extract lays bare a conflict between his desires and his perceived self. He assumes a value about his gender role, according to

which he must not take sexual advantage of a woman in need of help. However, he is also aware that he wants to sleep with her.

Gabe is appalled by Lena's straightforwardness in offering sex to him. For the moment, Gabe adopts a negative attitude towards Lena:

Gabe wished it were already morning so he could put her out of his flat and out of his life. She wasn't in the least bit attractive. She was hostile. What was wrong with her? Offering sex like that but not a single word of thanks.
(*Kitchen* 79)

The boulomaic modality in "Gabe wished it were already morning so he could put her out of his flat and out of his life" demonstrates his unwillingness to have Lena in his life. The non-modal expressions in his evaluation of Lena's appearance and character denote his certainty in his judgments.

Despite the precision in his evaluation of Lena, Gabe decides to keep her in his flat. He thinks,

He would help her because he felt sorry for her, though - Yuri aside - hers was a familiar story and, usually, you had to steer clear. (*Kitchen* 84)

The use of "will" in the statement above demonstrates Gabe's determinacy and willingness in helping her, although his common sense tells him to stay away, which is indicated by the modal auxiliary "have to" in "you had to steer clear". Lena is an immigrant, possibly an illegal one, and she might have some connections with Yuri's death. Hence, Gabe's reason tells him that it is necessary to avoid her.

Yet, Gabe knows that he will sleep with her. The following day, while he is having a conversation with a kitchen worker, he cannot help thinking about Lena:

If he wanted to sleep with Lena, how could he kid himself that it was “just going to happen”? As if he were the victim of history, of war, of fate. ... *He knew what was going to happen with Lena.* But where was the knife at Gabriel’s throat? He was free to choose, was he not? (*Kitchen* 119)

The conditional statement reveals the conflict between his desires and his ability to control his actions. The boulomaic modality in “he *wanted* to sleep with Lena” reflects his desire. Nonetheless, he also acknowledges that he should not disguise his desire for Lena by thinking that what is going to happen between them is meant to happen. Such thinking would mean that Gabe had no free will, but Gabe is certain that he is not “a victim of fate”. The statement involving “as if” shows Gabe thinks the opposite of the statement is true for him. However, immediately after thinking so, he begins to have second thoughts about his freedom of choice. Thus, the extract exposes Gabe’s inner conflicts about his desires and his will.

Gabe acts in a way that contradicts his values and sleeps with Lena shortly after she begins to live in his place. Since Lena has triggered the intimacy between them, Gabe thinks that he does not necessarily have to feel guilty:

If he could make her laugh, he decided, there was nothing to be sorry about. Though she had started it, touched him, she was behaving *as if* he had taken something from her. (*Kitchen* 124) (italics added)

The use of “as if” suggests that Gabe is certain that the opposite of the proposition is true. In other words, he holds Lena responsible for what has happened between them. From this point of view, he has not compromised his values.

Once Gabe finds out that Lena is a victim of sex trafficking, his attitude to his affair with her is altered. He thinks,

The sex had to stop. Now that he knew. He had to protect her now. (*Kitchen* 165)

The deontic modality, indicated by “had to”, refers to a high-value obligation. Chrisman defines deontic modality in contemporary philosophy as “a kind of modality which has to do with what is necessary or possible according to various rules, such as the norms of morality, [or] the principles of practical rationality” (“Deontic modals”). In keeping with this, Gabe feels that he is morally obliged not to take sexual advantage of a victim. Moreover, he feels a moral obligation to provide protection. However, for Gunning, Gabe’s wish to care for Lena is only superficial. He contends, “[t]he quest to know the body of Lena, as much as to know her history, is for Gabe a pursuit of mastery over her, through which he hopes to shore himself up. The urge to care seems easily revealed as another form of exploitation” (792). Indeed, rather than help her find a job and a flat, get help from the police, and so on, Gabe sexually exploits her.

Despite his moral convictions, Gabe continues to sleep with her; nonetheless, he believes he is different from those men who have had sex with Lena as her customers. For Gabe, men who go to prostitutes are evil:

“And *all the men* who came to the flats, when you were . . . when you were working, *they were evil*, too. But *most men aren’t like that*.” . . . “It must be hard for you to believe it, but *most men are basically good*.”

Lena, without turning, said, “Like you Gabriel? You are good?”

“*I hope so*,” he said, “*I’m not like those men who –*”

“They are okay,” she said, “most of them.” . . . “Is one man who want for me to wear high shoe and walk on him. He is good customer. He never touch me. Never.”

Pervert, thought Gabriel, but he kept the thought to himself. (*Kitchen* 239)

(italics added)

As indicated by the non-modal statements which include evaluative adjectives (“they were evil”, “most men aren’t like that”, “most men are basically good”), Gabe classifies men in two categories: Those who sleep with prostitutes are evil while most men - who do not sleep with prostitutes - are good people. This worldview is flawed, for technically he is sleeping with Lena, a prostitute, and he is paying her by offering her a place to stay. Lena notices this flaw in Gabe’s mindset and asks him whether he is a good man, and Gabe replies by saying “I hope so”. Although he is unsure whether he is a good man, as indicated by the hedging “I hope”, he is sure that he is different from Lena’s customers. When Lena mentions a customer who does not touch her but gets her to walk on him in high heels, Gabe evaluates the man as a “pervert”, thinking that he is a fetishist. In fact, Gabe is a foot fetishist, and he discovers his fetish in his relationship with Lena.

Gabe begins to feel doubts about his feelings for Charlie as his relationship with Lena progresses. He evaluates the possible reasons for his attraction to Lena, thinking,

Maybe he had needed that: to test his relationship with Charlie, to see how solid it was.

Or – wasn’t this *more like* it? – he had been tightly wound, and Lena had offered him a release. *If someone passes you a plate, you take it automatically, before you realize your hand has moved.* ... He *wasn’t* a monster. He felt something for Lena. More than she felt for him. (*Kitchen* 139) (italics added)

The modal adverb “maybe” and the conjunction “or” are indicative of Gabe’s doubts concerning the very reasons for his relationship with Lena. For Gabe, it is possible that Lena acts as a catalyst for his feelings for Charlie. It is also possible that Lena is a means of freedom

from his obligations. The statement “If someone passes you a plate, you take it automatically”, which is reminiscence of a proverb, reveals the way Gabe rationalizes his sleeping with Lena; it was inevitable because it was offered by Lena. In other words, he regards having sex with Lena as the natural outcome of her offer. Gabe begins to acknowledge that he has feelings for Lena even though he is not sure whatever it is— “he felt *something*”. Also, he is convinced that he is not a “monster” since he has feelings for her. In a way, Gabe also regards his feelings as a means of justification for his relationship with her, which is based on sexuality.

Gabe seems to have adopted a more positive attitude to Lena, but his judgments are not to be trusted. When he is around Charlie, his attitude to Lena becomes different. While he admits feeling something for Lena, he believes he needs to be with Charlie, even marry her:

He *should* ask her to marry him. *Have done* with it. It was on his list *to do*.

But how could he ask her now, this instant, with Lena *infesting* his couch, his bed? (*Kitchen* 145) (italics added)

The modal auxiliary, “should,” denotes an obligation of medium value, implying that Gabe’s feelings for Charlie are not as strong as before. He thinks that he should have proposed to her earlier. The choice of modals “should, [should] have done” and the expression “to do” suggest that Gabe regards his relationship with Charlie as an obligation; nevertheless, his relationship with Lena thwarts him. Also, to refer to Lena’s staying in his place, Gabe reserves the verb “infest”, one that has negative connotations, and that renders her the scapegoat in their relationship.

Gabe’s naming strategies also provide insights into his conflicting evaluations of Lena. He refers to Lena in the following ways: Lena, his charitable cause. (*Kitchen* 84); ...

his irritant, his ache, his skinny girl, ...his salvation, his ruin, or neither, but simply his release (121); his waif, his stray (184). The adjectives with contradictory meanings denote Gabe's inconsistencies concerning the way he judges her.

In the course of their relationship, Gabe directs his judgments to himself. He adopts a negative attitude to himself for taking advantage of her as a sexual object. He is precise in his judgement of himself, but he cannot help touching her time and again:

Oh, how he hated himself. He would never touch her, swore to it silently, looking at her back. ... he would not touch Lena, not ever, not ever, but for this one final time. (*Kitchen* 325)

The evaluative verb "hate" clearly expresses the way Gabe evaluates his behaviour. He condemns himself but keeps behaving in a way that completely contradicts his morals. The modal past auxiliary "would" denotes his determination to end his behaviour, but he is not determined as he supposes.

When Lena confronts Gabe about his using her sexually, he responds to her assertively, implying that he has been fair in his treatment of her. The following conversation exhibits Gabe's internal doubts and external assertiveness:

Lena: "You keep me here like . . . like prison. Like animal in cage."

He could see what he was doing wrong. He looked at himself with a mixture of pity and disgust. What a sap. What a fool. Would he never learn? "Do I lock you in? Do I beat you?" He should know better than to shout. He did know better. But here we go again. "Don't I give you everything you ask for and more?"

“You promise,” said Lena, attacking her fingernail, “but you don’t give.” ...

“I have earn that money. I have earn it. Here, with you, is not for free. Why don’t you pay me? Pay me what you owe.” (*Kitchen* 346-7)

The non-modal structure of the rhetorical questions “Do I lock you in?”, “Do I beat you?” and “Don’t I give you everything you ask for and more?” indicates certainty in the message he conveys to Lena that he has not acted wrong, whereas in his mind he feels pity and disgust for himself, suggesting his awareness of having treated Lena unfairly. Moreover, the shift of modality in “He should know better than to shout. He did know better” represents his inner conflicts about behaving right. In the end, Lena explicitly states that she has consented to Gabe’s using her sexually in return for money. Caporale-Bizzini provides an explanation for Lena’s attitude:

[F]rom her perspective, he is merely another man who wants sex in exchange for helping her. Even in intimate relationships, society’s economic values render the balance of power unequal. Lena has apparently internalised the service economy, and sees her relationship with Gabe as a trade: she wants to be paid for having sex with him. ... When Gabe tries to redeem himself, toward the end of the novel, by giving Lena all his money, she does not see it as a gift; rather, she considers it as due payment for her sexual services. (590)

Being a victim of patriarchal society, Lena’s attitude to Gabe is only justifiable: At a very young age, she has been trafficked and physically, psychologically, and sexually abused. It is crystal clear that she is not staying with Gabe because she loves him, for their relationship is based on Gabe’s sexual obsession for her. The issue is that Gabe turns a blind eye to this fact and keeps abusing her.

In conclusion, the language that Gabe uses when referring to Charlie and other women implies that Gabe rejects traditional gender roles where the men and women have unequal power; that is, women are dependent on men and confined to homes, and men have dominance over them. His language is assertive, indicating that he is confident about his attitude, beliefs and values, whereas with regard to Lena, his language conveys contradictory messages. In his relationship with Lena, his values and behaviour contradict. The way he describes Lena and their relationship is slippery; his language reveals his inner conflicts. Gabe is acting against his values regarding gender, taking advantage of a sex trafficking victim, and his language reveals his attempts to rationalize his behaviour.

3.2 Questions of Agency and Will: An Analysis of Transitivity into the Characterization of Gabriel

The second part of the chapter presents an analysis of transitivity to explore the characterization of Gabe in his relationship with Lena. The modality analysis has shown that Gabe supposes to be more confident in his attitude to Charlie, but his actions do not justify his assertion. With Lena, on the other hand, Gabe has contradictory views as the modality choices have revealed Gabe's inconsistencies in his values and judgments regarding Lena.

An analysis of transitivity provides hints about Gabe's conflicts concerning the question of will in his treatment of Lena. Consistent transitivity choices in the novel present Gabe's mind as having doubts about his agency in treating her as a sexual object. To illustrate, after Gabe sees Lena in the basement for the first time, he remains under the influence of their encounter the whole day:

That girl, the porter Lena, kept *inserting* herself into his brain. Whatever he had felt, some kind of sickness, when she *showed* her ghoulish self in the catacombs had quickly passed, but she had *become* a headache now.

(*Kitchen* 30) (italics added)

The choices of transitivity in the extract suggest that Lena has influence over Gabe, and Gabe is passive against her influence. The transitivity choices are as follows:

That girl + kept inserting + herself + into his brain. =

Actor + Material Process (used metaphorically) + Goal + Circumstantial Element

He + had felt + some kind of sickness. = Actor + Material Process + Phenomenon (perception)

She + showed + her ghoulish self (+ to Gabe). = Actor + Material Process + Goal (+ Circumstantial Element)

She + had become a headache (for Gabe). = Actor + Relational Process (+ Circumstantial Element)

The transitivity analysis shows that Lena has agency over her actions even if she does not aim at influencing Gabe, and Gabe is the passive recipient of the impact of her actions. In other words, even though Lena does not intend to influence Gabe, he is influenced by her in their first encounter.

At that night, Gabe remembers seeing Lena earlier in the kitchen. When he dozes off, he dreams of Lena:

He remembered now. How she *looked*. How she had *looked at him*. She was *nodding* and *staring down at a spill of soapy water*, and then she *raised her eyes*. They were dark, dark blue, wide and deep, and she *parted her lips*, and he reached for her and kissed her. He kissed her hard and then harder still

because that was what she wanted, he was sure of it, and the harder he kissed her, the more she wanted, he knew it, and then she *pulled away* and he saw what he had done: there was blood all over her face. (*Kitchen* 31) (processes italicized/underlined by the writer of this thesis)

Marino interprets this dream as Gabe's unconscious wish for male possession: "At first, Gabe acts just like the last of her exploiters: despite his (occasional) guilty feelings, he trades his protection for sex; in one of his dreams, resembling a cannibalistic ritual of possession, he kisses her so hard that "there was blood all over her face"" (30). In fact, the transitivity choices could justify this interpretation, for Lena is depicted as passive and Gabe as dominant. In the extract, Lena's processes hardly affect Gabe, except for "looking at him". The Goal elements of her processes are either an inanimate object (staring down a spill of water) or part of her body/her body as a whole (nodding, raising her eyes, parting her lips, pulling away). On the other hand, Gabe's material processes affect Lena directly while intensifying in effect (kissing her, kissing her hard, kissing her harder so that he causes her lips to bleed). Furthermore, despite lack of clear evidence, Gabe is somehow certain that Lena wants to be kissed. Gabe's dream suggests that he is extremely attracted to Lena while he assumes that their attraction is mutual.

The first night Lena stays in his flat, Gabe sees her undressing and watches her for some time:

When he passed the sitting-room door, she was undressing in the lamplight with her back to him. For a few moments he *watched her*. He *focused* all his charity on *the pathetic ridge of her spine*. (*Kitchen* 84) (italics added)

Lena is unaware that she is being watched. The transitivity choices indicate that she is the object of Gabe's gaze. In the statement "he watched her", Lena is the Goal element of Gabe's

intentional mental process of perception. However, the narration suggests that Gabe does not regard Lena as a sexual object at that particular moment. The choice of the words “charity” and “pathetic” in the last sentence of the extract suggests that Gabe is looking at Lena with affection, sympathy and pity.

Despite his assumptions that his purpose is to offer help and protection to Lena, Gabe is inexplicably attracted to Lena sexually. Different from his attraction to Charlie, whose reasons are obvious to him, such as Charlie’s independent attitude in relationships, he has neither control over nor explanation for his attraction to Lena. The following extracts imply that Gabe regards his connection with her as an occurrence that happened of its own volition; something that happened beyond Gabe’s free will:

How did I get myself into this thing with Lena? Thought Gabriel. But it *wasn't* even *something he had got himself into*. It was *something that had happened to him*. He *didn't*, after all, *ask for her to appear* like that in the yard. (Kitchen 118)

The transitivity choices denote how Gabe feels to be out of control in bringing her to his flat. The way he encodes his experience of meeting Lena that night suggests that his inviting her to his flat was caused by Lena’s appearance there; that is, it was an involuntary act. He was meant to act so merely because Lena was there that night.

Gabe tries to make sense of his sexual attraction to Lena in a similar manner. He is aware of his rationalization processes concerning his desire for Lena:

He knew what was going to *happen* with Lena. That was what he was trying to avoid [...] ... If he wanted to sleep with Lena, how could he kid himself that it was “just going to *happen*”? (Kitchen 119) (italics added)

To refer to having sex with Lena, Gabe prefers the verb “happen”, an intransitive verb embodying the meaning that the thing will occur by itself without Gabe’s using his initiative. Besides, Gabe is making a conscious effort to not be influenced by it, as demonstrated by the verb “avoid”. Nevertheless, he is aware that he is trying to justify his desire under the veneer of fatalism.

Not surprisingly, that same night Gabe sleeps with her. When he arrives home, Lena is asleep, but she wakes up, or just opens her eyes, and triggers the intimacy. The transitivity choices regarding Lena’s actions denote volition on her part while Gabe’s processes suggest he is acting on impulse:

Lena stirred and opened her eyes. Gabe, on his knees at her side, pulled back with a guilty speed, as if he had been stealing. Her mouth stretched to form an O and closed again. For a long, frozen moment they looked at each other, and Gabe’s ears filled with the pounding of blood. She raised an arm and put her hand against his chest. She slid it inside his shirt. When he moved on top of her, it was with grace and ease he had not known he possessed. Her hard little fingers moved through his hair. Am I the kind of person who does this? he thought. Is this me, am I this type? And then there was only the movement, the heat, the wet, the rub, the glide, the ripples across his back, and he dissolved, no I, no me, no who, but only this, their bodies, and nothing more Gabriel came back to himself. Oh shit, he said silently, but it was mere experiment, the regret that he expected had not reported for duty yet. (...)

(*Kitchen* 121)

The table below presents the processes that encode Lena’s and Gabe’s experiences during their intimacy:

Table 3.2.1

Transitivity analysis of the narration of Gabe and Lena's initial intimacy

Lena	Gabe
stirred opened her eyes her mouth stretched an O and closed looked at Gabe raised an arm and put her hand against his chest, slid it inside his shirt her fingers moved through his hair	pulled back looked at Lena his ears filled with the pounding of blood moved on top on her with grace and ease he had not known he possessed thought: Am I the kind of person who does this? Is this me, am I this type? dissolved came back to himself, said "Oh shit" expected regret

Because the scene is focalized from Gabe's point of view, we only have access to Gabe's mental processes. The reader's assumptions for Lena's consciousness can be derived from the transitivity choices signifying her will. Lena's raising her arm, putting her hand against Gabe's chest and sliding it inside his shirt are material action intention processes targeted at Gabe's body. Gabe's processes, however, suggest that he is acting without much control. The transitivity choice in the statement "his ears filled with the pounding of blood" refers to the automatic reaction his body produces as a response to his sexual desire. His "pulling back" when Lena opens her eyes is a process capturing his reflexive behaviour. Even his moving on top on her, a material process that has Lena's body as the Goal element, is realized with agility Gabe did not know he possessed. The processes of "coming back to himself" and "dissolving" consist of intransitive verbs, meaning that they do not influence anyone; moreover, they imply lack of control on one's behaviour. Finally, his thoughts show his doubts over his identity, and his expectation of regret demonstrates that he has acted against his values. The overall transitivity choices in the extract hint at Gabe's lacking self-control and his inner conflicts, which is in tune with the modality choices describing his mind in his relationship with Lena.

Despite his inner conflicts, Gabe continues to sleep with Lena, even after finding out that she is a sex trafficking victim. Right after she tells him how her pimp forced her to prostitution by beating her and seizing her passport, he approaches her again with the purpose of having sex:

He worked at her with an urgency he had not known before. And yet he felt little desire. In this coupling, they would be made new; from this they would draw their strength. *He needed this, to wipe the slate, and to brand his indelible mark.* Sweat rolled off his brow and into his eyes. It made them sting. He buried himself. *He needed this. To engrave himself so deeply that the others would be erased.* (Kitchen 153) (italics added)

Interestingly, Gabe feels little desire but a need to exert power: The statement “he needed to wipe the slate/ brand his indelible mark/engrave himself so deeply that the others would be erased” demonstrates Gabe’s wish to exert his influence on Lena through his sexuality. The transitivity choices in the metaphors point at Gabe as Actor acting purposefully and Lena’s body as Circumstantial element (branding his mark [on her body]; engraving himself [in her body]). He supposes that he has the power to make her forget her past and eradicate the remains of the other men by having sex with her.

Gabe is bewildered at how powerless he is against his desire for Lena. When he goes to his father’s house since he is terminally ill, he finds out that his mother, who died when he was twenty-eight, had the bipolar disease. Even at this moment when he is grieving for his mother and trying to make sense of her mother’s behaviour in the light of her illness, he is sexually aroused by the thought of Lena. Appalled, he thinks:

What kind of man was he? In his grief, even in his grief, *he was penetrated by desire*, and for a girl he did not want. (Kitchen 185) (italics added)

The non-modalized expression “a girl he didn’t want” shows Gabe’s certainty about his conscious intentions regarding Lena; he does not want her. However, he is helpless against his desires, as shown by the passive construction in “he was penetrated by desire” positioning Gabe as the object of the process. It is “desire” that has agency, not his own willpower. This extract captures Gabe’s state of mind: an appalled one that operates beyond control and against his conscious choices.

Lena tells Gabe atrocious stories of victims of sex trafficking, including hers. She tells him that on her first night, her pimp brought six men for party. She also tells the story of a sixteen-year-old Romanian girl who was rescued by the police and returned to her country. Once the girl’s family finds out what she has gone through, her father commits suicide. Besides, Lena tells him that some customers were psychopaths. Gabe is deeply moved by what he has heard, yet despite the judgment of his conscience, he cannot help being sexually aroused:

He looked around at the bland bedroom furniture, seeking an anchor, a clue to the man who lived here and *who would not touch this girl*. He trembled. Lena had shut her eyes. Close to tears, he sat at the edge of the bed and *took hold of her feet*. ... After a certain point he could not stop himself. *His desire was a foul creature that climbed on his back and wrapped its long arms around his neck*. What did it want with him? He would *cage it* if he could. One day he would have the strength to *kill it*, for it was not part of him. (Kitchen 239-40) (italics added)

The use of “the man” in “a clue to the man who lived here and who would not touch this girl” creates an effect of alienation: Gabe feels alienated to his own self, for he is acting against his conscience and free will. The modality choice in “wouldn’t touch this girl” denotes

certainty in terms of moral judgment, but it belongs to the self he has been alienated from. The transitivity choice in “took hold of her feet” denotes an action-intention process directed at Lena’s body. At the same time, the transitivity choices in the metaphor “his desire climbing on his back and wrapping its arms around his neck” refer to an experience in which Gabe is acted upon. Paradoxically, Gabe is acting on purpose when taking advantage of Lena, but he is doing so under the influence of desire that makes him powerless. Hence, it could be argued that Gabe is using his desire as an excuse for his intentional actions. The transitivity patterns in “cage it” and “kill it” place his desire as the object of his action-intention processes; however, the modality choices in the clauses point at Gabe’s inability to realize them yet.

Not only does Gabe make his desire a scapegoat, but he also holds Lena responsible for what is happening. Gabe’s mental processes reveal his efforts to rationalize his behaviour:

He had decided that he had loved her and he wanted little enough in return. When he felt guilty about the relationship he reminded himself that he had taken her in and given her a home. She came to him. If he grew angry at her he was careful to remember that she had been rude to him first. When he regretted scaring her about the world outside his door he kept in mind that it had, indeed, been a dangerous place for her. It was all a trade. He played his part; she played hers. It pricked his conscience to lie to her about the private eye. But she had lied to him. (*Kitchen* 325)

In his consciousness, Gabe apportions responsibility for their relationship between himself and Lena. The following table presents their processes directed at each other:

Table 3.2.2

Gabe' and Lena's reciprocal processes

Gabe	Lena
loved her and wanted little enough in return	came to him
had taken her in; given her a home	
grew angry at her	had been rude to her first
played his part	played her part
lied to her	had lied to him

Haynes points at the relationship between ideology and interest, stating that “the term interest suggests that people hold – or perhaps we should say ‘embody’ – ideologies which represent their lives and experiences in the most favourable light to themselves, and justify acts which are to their economic, and other, advantages” (127). Thus, it could be argued that Gabe comes to embrace an ideology about Lena that justifies his sleeping with a woman who is disadvantaged in terms of power. He supposes that he is acting out of love and his wish to protect her. To rationalize his taking advantage of her, Gabe thinks that their intentional actions have been reciprocal. He thinks he loves her, wants little from her and offers her protection; besides, it was Lena who came to him. This suggests that Lena is acting with her own consent. Also, the transitivity choices in Gabe’s consciousness imply that they both have agency in their actions directed at each other, and even that Gabe’s actions have been motivated by Lena’s behaviour directed at him. This extract demonstrates a shift in Gabe’s mindset in that he acknowledges the role of his freewill in his treatment of Lena.

Through the end of the story, Gabe experiences a nervous breakdown, an identity crisis. It is as if he is going through the manic phase of the bipolar disorder, which his mother had. He barely sleeps, acts frenetically and his mind is not clear. He asks Charlie and some of the kitchen workers to define him, for he barely knows who he is. Besides, he takes all his

savings from the bank to give it to Lena. Meanwhile, he takes on the responsibility of his behaviour in his relationship with Lena. He thinks,

How, oh, how had it happened? Why had he not behaved – as he *knew* from the very start – the way he *should*? *He had given free rein to his impulses, turned his desires into needs and his needs into obsessions*, all in the service of – what, exactly? Himself, of course. (*Kitchen* 393) (italics added)

The modality and transitivity choices in this extract demonstrate the conflict between Gabe's values related with gender roles and his behaviour. The deontic modality in “why he had not behaved the way he *should*” refers to the gap between the way he treated Lena and his morals. Also, the epistemic modality in “as he *knew* from the very start” reveals that Gabe was well aware of the fact that he was acting against his values. Thus, the modality choices show that he acknowledges the responsibility of his actions. In the same way, the transitivity choices also refer to Gabe's agency in his actions. The active constructions in “*He had given free rein to his impulses, turned his desires into needs and his needs into obsessions*” indicate that he acknowledges his willpower in his taking advantage of Lena. These active constructions having Gabe as Actor contrast with the active or passive sentences that have “the thing between them” or “desire” as Actor and Gabe as the Goal element, as explained in the previous extracts.

The following sentences from the extracts explained in this chapter depict how the same experience of being with Lena is encoded in Gabe's consciousness throughout the story:

It was something that had *happened to him*. (118)

He knew what was going to *happen* with Lena. (119)

In his grief, even in his grief, he *was penetrated by desire*, and for a girl he did not want. (185)

His desire was a foul creature that *climbed on his back and wrapped its long arms around his neck*. (240)

He *had given free rein to his impulses, turned his desires into needs and his needs into obsessions* [.] (393)

In short, the shift in transitivity choices expose the inner conflicts Gabe experiences with respect to his volition in his treatment of Lena as a sexual object. He has been acting intentionally since the onset of their relationship, but it is not until the end of the story that Gabe acknowledges this fact.

This chapter attempted to analyse the role the modality and transitivity choices play in the characterization of Gabe, who experiences an ideological crisis and acts against the gender values that he supposes he holds. The modality analysis has shown that Gabe is certain about his commitment to certain values and obligations related to gender roles in relationships, such as the rejection of traditional female role where women are dependent on men. However, his treatment of Lena is completely against his perceived worldview. The transitivity choices in the characterization of Gabe reveal Gabe's inner conflicts about his agency in treating Lena as a sexual object. In the beginning, he tries to reject his volition regarding his actions,; however, in the end, he acknowledges that he has been acting wilfully against his values.

CONCLUSION

Language and ideology are inseparable from each other. The dominant ideologies of society are encoded and reflected in language, and the values, beliefs, or attitudes that we take as natural or common sense have been transmitted to us through language. A linguistic analysis of texts is a powerful tool to demystify the underlying ideologies in texts, question them, and adopt one's own stance. Therefore, this thesis presented a feminist stylistic analysis of Monica Ali's two novels, *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*, to reveal the gender ideologies encoded in the systematic modality and transitivity choices in the texts.

Brick Lane recounts Nazneen's transformation from submissiveness and powerlessness caused by a fatalistic ideology into her empowerment and independence from the patriarchal norms of her culture. The novel also narrates her sister's, Hasina's, struggles for survival in the patriarchal, oppressive, and abusive society of Bangladesh. The transitivity and modality analyses of the novel's language have given insights into the way oppressive gender ideologies are ingrained in and conveyed through language to construct the protagonists' realities. In addition, the analyses have also demonstrated the way the characters deal with those oppressive ideologies in their language.

To begin with, the analysis of the modality choices in *Brick Lane* has revealed the fatalistic ideology encoded in Rupban's, Nazneen's mother's, language. Her ideology, representative of the ideology internalized at a larger scale by women in her society, requires women to remain passive, to not make decisions, or to not act. This fatalistic ideology is, by and large, encoded in the deontic modality, which is the linguistic means to express duty and obligation. External obligations, such as obeying God's will and submitting to fate, are

ingrained in language structures, including the modal auxiliaries “must” and “have to”, and generic sentences emphasizing women’s powerlessness and submissiveness.

Nazneen was raised according to the dominant patriarchal values of her religious society which teaches their women to bear whatever fate brings to them, and she has been exposed to the idea of the fragility of human’s will against God’s will. Interestingly, this ideology favours men: Nazneen’s father sees other women rather than be content with the marriage he has, as his wife bears his betrayal, and picks a husband for her daughter and determines her fate. Similarly, Nazneen’s husband, Chanu, leaves the country to build a better future for himself, seeks opportunities to thrive in England, picks a wife from his country and brings her to London, and decides to return home when his expectations of success are not fulfilled. Nazneen, in contrast, only waits to see what fate has to reveal for her and does nothing to determine her future.

From birth, a passivizing language has been imposed upon Nazneen especially by her mother. For instance, when she was born as a weak premature baby, her mother objected to taking her to hospital by saying “we must not stand in the way of Fate” (14). The strong commitment to duty is encoded in the modal auxiliary “must (not)”, and the statement conveys prohibition with respect to defying fate. Nazneen has adopted this worldview without questioning it. She maintains the ideology that “[w]hat could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne” (16). The modal auxiliaries denote lack of ability, indicating her powerlessness, and external obligation that also signifies her weakness. Relying on this ideology, Nazneen never makes her own decisions: she enters into an arranged marriage, submits to her husband, and later, submits to her lover.

The generic statements that Rupban utters are also loaded with patriarchal values. To illustrate, when Nazneen enquires about her father's occasional disappearance from home, which is later revealed to be due to his visits to other women, Rupban replies by saying "If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men" (80). The hypothetical conditional implies the impossibility of women asking questions, and the ideology underlying Rupban's generic statement is one that renders men superior to women and privileged to ask questions in accordance with the will of God. Other generic statements that women in Nazneen's culture utter, such as "We will suffer in silence", "We are just women. What can we do?", and "God has made world this way" (102-3) also highlight women's disempowerment based on religious beliefs. In other words, women's passivity and silence has been legitimized by the religious fatalistic ideology encoded in certain generics. The generics denote the highest degree of commitment to the truth of a proposition, for they are factualized statements. Having been exposed to such language all her life, Nazneen internalizes this disempowering ideology and never questions it since she takes it as 'common sense.'

What is more, she uses the same language when talking to her daughters, pointing at the insignificance of one's will. She often tells them her birth story, the story of "How You Were Left To Your Fate", to point out that her existence is only due to the will of God. In addition, when they ask her whether they are going to leave London for Bangladesh, she tells them "We just have to wait and see. ... We do not know what God has in His mind" (216), highlighting their inability to determine their future.

Her disempowerment is also evident in the transitivity choices in the narration. She is frequently depicted in passive constructions. For instance, at the beginning of the novel, the important happenings in her life are narrated as "she had been given three children and

had one taken away”, and “she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover”, implying her lack of agency in shaping her own life. In active constructions, she is often positioned as the recipient of the process, as in “Life made its pattern around and beneath and through her” (40-41), or even when she is the subject of a clause, her processes barely make a significant impact on her environment. Her actions are mostly domestic ones, affecting the objects in the house, as in “She made the bed and tidied the flat, washed socks and pants” (41), or her processes mostly influence part of her body, as in “She opened her eyes” (18), rather than affect other humans. Moreover, her processes of “sitting” and “waiting”, which appear occasionally throughout the novel, as in “It was her place to sit and wait”, are intransitive ones, meaning that they have no objects, hence no influence (101). These consistent transitivity choices add up to render her a disempowered and passive woman.

Nazneen’s relationship with her lover, Karim, is also characterized by her passivity and submissiveness denoted by systematic transitivity choices, although one would assume that having a lover while maintaining a marriage must be indicative of one’s agency. However, especially the transitivity choices in the extracts narrating their sexuality point at Nazneen’s lack of agency. For instance, the first time they are intimate, Karim’s actions directly affect Nazneen’s body (“kissed her”, “led her into the bedroom”) while Nazneen’s processes are related with herself (“her body was shaking”, “closed her eyes”, “had a fever”, “wanted to sleep) (288). Yet, in the course of their relationship, she discovers the power of her sexuality, and her actions begin to affect Karim physically.

The change in Nazneen’s language and in the narration is a proof that it is possible to surmount those restrictive ideologies and adopt an empowering language. Her style shifts from the “must/have to” and “passive” mode to “can/be going to/will” and “active” mode as

she claims her independence from her boundaries. At the end of the novel, Nazneen firmly tells her husband that she is staying in London with the girls. Also, she rejects Karim's proposal and leaves him, saying "We can't get married" and "I don't want to marry you" (451). Her utterances indicate confidence, empowerment, and agency. Thus, her 'new' language portrays her as an empowered woman who is capable of making her own decisions.

Unlike Nazneen, Hasina is depicted as a defiant character who rejects the ideology that passivizes women under the veneer of fatalism. Although she has been raised in the same culture, her attitude is completely different from her sister's. One reason might be that Hasina has not been as much exposed to the fatalistic language as Nazneen was, for Nazneen's premature birth story has been used as a tool for emphasizing that her very existence is the result of God's will. Hasina's free will is manifested in her actions. To begin with, "she listen[s] to no one" (16) and marries a man of her own choice, an explicit rejection of her father's dominance. Furthermore, she openly expresses her rejection of her mother's ideology of "waiting and suffering" and struggles to survive in the face of all the oppression she goes through in the patriarchal society of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, she is subjected to victimization both by men and women in her society, and her endeavours to maintain her agency become a futile effort. Yet, she never loses hope: in her last letter in the novel, she emphasizes once again that she rejects her mother's fatalistic ideology, saying "But I am not like her. Waiting around. Suffering around. She wrong. So many ways" (434). The epistemic modality encoded in her non-modalized statements demonstrate how confident she is in her attitude.

The analysis of the modality and transitivity choices in *In the Kitchen* has led to conclusions different from those arrived at in *Brick Lane*. The main conflict that the novel presents concerning gender issues is that Gabe, the protagonist, acts in complete opposition

to the values he believes he holds. On the surface, he adopts modern gender roles promoting women's independence; nonetheless, he is involved in a relationship in which he treats a woman as a sexual object. Besides, she is totally dependent on him due to her financial and social conditions.

Gabe's dualistic position in terms of conflicting gender ideologies is evident in the modality choices. Unlike in *Brick Lane*, where deontic modality prevails, epistemic modality, or the expression of knowledge (certainty/uncertainty), and perception modality are dominant in *In the Kitchen*. For example, Gabe "knows for sure" that he loves her girlfriend for her independent attitude. However, he is depicted as a "bewildered" character in his relationship with Lena, the sex-trafficking victim. When it comes to Lena, the narration involves perception modality, as in "Gabe sensed someone behind him", "saw her", and "Lena smiled, or he imagined it"(20). The resulting effect of the choice of perception modality is that it contributes to the depiction of Gabe as a character who tries to make sense of his perceptions of Lena. Also, epistemic modality is dominant in the narration regarding Gabe's relationship with Lena. For instance, when he sees her around the hotel's kitchen, he confidently concludes from her outward behaviour that she has come for him. His confidence regarding his deductions is indicated by epistemic modality as in "He knew that she had come for him, though he hardly dared believe it yet" (76). The epistemic verb "know" points at his commitment to the truth of the situation. On the other hand, he also questions the truth of the propositions, of which he had been sure. To illustrate, the same night when he takes Lena to his flat, convinced that she has come for her, he begins to doubt what he took for granted earlier. The questions in his mind "Why did she come to him, anyway? *Had* she come to him?" demonstrate his lack of confidence regarding his inferences. Thus, the consistent use of epistemic modality, which denotes Gabe's (lack of) confidence in the truth of the

information, contributes to Gabe's characterization as someone who is oscillating between the two opposite ends of certainty and uncertainty.

The statements that involve Gabe's evaluation of his co-worker Oona, his sister Jane and his previous girlfriend Catherine have implications about the ideology that Gabe assumes regarding women. First of all, he finds Oona too domestic; her domesticity "offends" him (9). The choice of the verb "offend" can refer to the existence of boulomaic modality since the verb implies Gabe's wishes. In other words, this might suggest that Gabe seeks the opposite of domesticity in women. Secondly, Gabe thinks his sister "saddled herself with a baby" (34). The verb "saddle", connotating restriction, also demonstrates Gabe's negative attitude to the traditional, restrictive role of motherhood. Finally, the way he describes her previous girlfriend's house (cottage, retro floral prints) connotes a traditional male-female relationship in which Gabe thinks they "suffocated" each other.

Gabe seems to appreciate his long-term girlfriend Charlie for being different from his previous girlfriend; in fact, Charlie's independence is emphasized by Gabe several times in the novel. Yet, as Charlie wants to settle down with Gabe, his attitude undergoes a change, and he begins to regard her as "needy", which reflects his negative attitude towards women who are dependent on men.

The language that conveys Gabe's relationship with Charlie is characterized by deontic and epistemic modality. There is little use of deontic modality in the novel, and it is reserved to denote the obligation that Gabe feels to marry Charlie. The obligation is implied through imperatives, such as "Move in with Charlie. Have a kid" (85), or through modal auxiliaries, as in "He should ask her to marry him" (145). However, unlike Nazneen in the other novel, who has internalized her obligations, Gabe feels overwhelmed by them. Still, he

feels sure of his feelings for Charlie. He “knows” that Lena cannot change his feelings for Charlie, and he is “sure” that he is lucky because he is with her.

While the epistemic and perception modalities in the narration of Gabe’s relationship with Lena highlight Gabe’s bewilderment and lack of certainty, the transitivity choices raise questions about Gabe’s agency and free will. After they meet for the first time, Lena “[keeps] inserting herself into his brain” (30), their relationship is “something that had happened to him” (118), and he is “penetrated by desire, and for a girl he did not want” (185). He begins to have doubts about his identity, thinking “What kind of man was he?” (185) as he fails to make sense of his behaviour. Even though he is aware that he is acting against his moral convictions and exploiting her, he attempts to rationalize his actions by assuming that they are led by “desire”, and that his agency plays no role in them. However, at the end of the novel, he admits having acted immorally and acknowledges the role of his free will in his treatment of Lena as a sexual object. Hence, the analysis of modality and transitivity exposes the contradictions in Gabe’s worldview concerning gender issues and presents an argument of agency and free will.

The resulting effect of the systematic modality and transitivity choices is the depiction of a protagonist experiencing inner conflicts regarding his attitude to and his treatment of women. On the one hand, there is Gabe, who seems to be sure of his love for the “independent” Charlie but at the same time feels overwhelmed by his inner obligation to marry her. On the other hand, there is another Gabe who cannot control himself and sexually abuses a woman who is entirely dependent on him for economic and security reasons while he cannot make sense of his taking sexual advantage of her. The analysis of the modality and transitivity in the text has provided solid evidence for Gabe’s conflicting gender ideologies.

In addition to arriving at conclusions about the novels' styles and their ideological implications, it is possible to draw conclusions about the writer's own style and themes with respect to the representation of ideology in her fiction. Firstly, Monica Ali's employment of the epistolary form in *Brick Lane* and internal focalization both in *Brick Lane* and in *In the Kitchen* allows for a representation of ideology from a particular consciousness. The absence of an omniscient narrator that evaluates the characters' attitudes or actions results in the fact that the novels do not expose the writer's own ideology but rather present arguments about different ideologies. Secondly, Ali's representation of both female and male consciousness allows the reader to delve into a female perspective in *Brick Lane* and a male perspective in *In the Kitchen*. Finally, in both novels, Ali explores the themes of agency, free will, fate, and desire.

Based on the characterization of the protagonists in both novels, it could be concluded that Monica Ali adopts a feminist ideology in her fiction. *Brick Lane* can be regarded as a 'feminist bildungsroman' as it presents Nazneen's emancipating herself from the patriarchal ideals of her home culture. Furthermore, through Hasina's story, Ali lays bare the oppression of Bangladeshi women by patriarchal society. By the same token, in *In the Kitchen*, the protagonist's acknowledgment of his abuse of a woman in the end may also be interpreted as his acceptance of his weaknesses as a male and his maintaining oppressive gender ideologies even if he considers himself a modern man holding progressive gender values. Consequently, in both novels, the protagonists experience self-awakening: Nazneen becomes aware of her power and Gabe comes to acknowledge his weakness.

This study concludes that the way language operates at the level of the clause to encode and convey values is worthy of attention in literary criticism. Thus, it is hoped that this research on the modality and transitivity systems regarding the representation of gender

ideologies in fiction offers insights into the functions of language at the level of the clause. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research inspires other critical-linguistic research into fiction to analyse the ideologies encoded in texts.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the way gender ideologies are represented in language through a feminist stylistic analysis of Monica Ali's two novels, *Brick Lane* and *In the Kitchen*. The characterizations of the protagonists are analysed in line with the arguments of critical linguistics, which highlights the close relation between language and ideology. The analysis was conducted at the level of the clause based on the systems of modality and transitivity, drawn from M.A.K. Halliday's functional grammar theory, and the findings were interpreted in accordance with the ideologies related with gender. The analysis of *Brick Lane* demonstrates that the fatalistic ideology, which is encoded in the deontic modality system (the expression of duty), makes women submissive and powerless; moreover, women's disempowerment is reflected in the transitivity choices (the encoding of experience). However, the analysis of the protagonists' language also demonstrates that it is possible to transcend these restrictive ideologies and adopt an emancipatory language. In a similar vein, the analysis of *In the Kitchen* reveals that contradictory ideologies on gender issues are encoded in the modality choices, and that an analysis of modality can uncover the contradictions in one's values and beliefs. Furthermore, the transitivity analysis exposes the questions of agency and free will with regard to acting in accordance with or against one's values related to gender issues. This study concludes that a systematic analysis into the modality and transitivity choices in texts can underpin and justify our interpretations concerning ideology.

Keywords: Feminist stylistics, language, ideology, modality, transitivity.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma Monica Ali'nin *Brick Lane* ve *In the Kitchen* romanlarının feminist biçembilim çerçevesinde incelenmesiyle cinsiyet ideolojilerinin dildeki yansımalarını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Romanlardaki kahramanların temsili, dil ve ideoloji arasındaki yakın ilişkiye odaklanan eleştirel dilbilimin öne sürdüğü görüşler doğrultusunda incelenmiştir. Analiz tümce düzeyinde gerçekleştirilmiş, M.A.K. Halliday'ın işlevsel dilbilim kuramına dayanarak metinlerdeki kip (modality) ve geçişlilik (transitivity) kullanımlarına bakılmış ve ulaşılan bulgular cinsiyet ideolojileri bağlamında tartışılmıştır. *Brick Lane* romanının analizi, gereklilik kiplerinde kodlanmış olan kaderci ideolojinin kadınları teslimiyetçi ve güçsüz kıldığını ve bu durumun metindeki geçişlilik yapıları tercihlerinde (etken, edilgen vs.) yansıtıldığını göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda kahramanların dil kullanımlarına bakıldığında, kısıtlayıcı ideolojileri aşmanın ve özgürleştirici bir dili benimsemenin de mümkün olduğu görülmektedir. *In the Kitchen* romanının analizi, birbirine zıt cinsiyet ideolojilerinin kip kullanımlarında kodlanmış olduğuna ve bu kip seçimlerinin incelenmesiyle insanların değer ve inançlarındaki çelişkilerin göz önüne serilmesinin mümkün olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Romandaki geçişlilik kullanımları ise kişinin cinsiyetle ilgili değerlerinin aksine veya değerleri doğrultusunda eylemde bulunması konusunda eylemlilik (agency) ve özgür irade meselelerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma ile metinlerdeki kiplik ve geçişlilik tercihlerinin analiz edilmesi sayesinde metinlerde söz konusu olan ideolojinin eleştirisinin desteklenebileceği ve gerekçelendirilebileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Feminist biçembilim, dil, ideoloji, kiplik, geçişlilik.