

**THE CHARACTERISTIC OF CARE-FOCUSED FEMINISM VALUES  
THEORY APPROACHED BY GILLIGAN THROUGH THE FEMALE  
CHARACTER NAZNEEN IN THE *BRICK LANE***

(2007)

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor  
Degree in English Literature**



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**YOGYAKARTA**

**2023**

**A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT**

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other researcher's opinion or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

Yogyakarta, 07/07/2023

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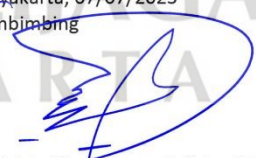
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Kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut dapat diajukan pada sidang munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami ucapkan terima kasih.

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## MOTTO

*Life can be heavy, especially if you try to carry it all at once, part of growing up and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch or release. What I mean by that is, knowing what things to keep and what things to release. You can't carry all things, all grudges, all updates on your ex, all enviable promotions your school*

*bully got at the bedge fund his uncle started.*

*Decide what is yours to hold and let the rest go.*

*- Taylor Swift -*



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## **DEDICATION**

This graduating paper is dedicated to my beloved parents,

Abdul Hakam Saifulloh and Isti Anamah

For their endless love, support and encouragement.



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First of all, I would like to say thank you to Allah SWT for all His blessing, help, and also His guidance in completing this graduating paper entitled “THE CHARACTERISTIC OF CARE-FOCUSED FEMINISM VALUES THEORY APPROACHED BY GILLIGAN THROUGH THE FEMALE CHARACTER NAZNEEN IN THE *BRICKLANE* (2007)”.

On this occasion, I specifically give my deep thanks and appreciation for those who help me. They are:

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Finally, I realize that there are many errors in the writing of this paper. Because of that, I really hope and allow all of the readers to give any suggestion to improve this paper.

Yogyakarta, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2023

Divla Fadila Rahma



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APPROACHED BY GILLIGAN THROUGH THE FEMALE CHARACTER  
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**(2007)**

By : Divla Fadila Rahma

**ABSTRACT**

In patriarchal culture, men hold all resources, and women have to take Care household and family; women have no right to vote and can obtain only low-paid jobs. This thesis analyzes the story of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi immigrant who enters into an arranged marriage with an elderly guy named Chanu Ahmed and how she shows the care-focused feminism values through the movie *Brick Lane*. This study aims to discuss how the character Nazneen survives on her own in London as a wife and mother. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the movie with Gilligan's Feminism theory with Care Focused approach. This thesis shows Nazneen's behavior as a feminist act to survive being a woman who pursue equality value in *Brick Lane*. Nazneen's path towards equality with her husband in the movie "*Brick Lane*" is portrayed through her pursuit of education, her involvement in the community, and her growing assertiveness. The care-focused feminism theory highlighted How Nazneen survived with her husband and children in Brick Lane, London.

**Keywords:** *women, care-focused, feminism, characteristics.*

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**ABSTRAK**

Dalam budaya patriarki, laki-laki memegang kontrol atas semua aset, dan perempuan harus mengurus rumah tangga dan keluarga; perempuan tidak memiliki hak untuk memilih dan hanya bisa mendapatkan pekerjaan dengan gaji rendah. Skripsi ini meneliti karakter Nazneen, seorang imigran dari Bangladesh yang terlibat dalam pernikahan yang diatur dengan seorang pria tua yang bernama Chanu Ahmed, dan bagaimana Nazneen menggambarkan konsep feminisme yang menekankan care-focused melalui film *Brick Lane*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas bagaimana karakter Nazneen bertahan hidup sendiri di London sebagai seorang istri dan ibu. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis film dengan teori Feminisme Gillian dengan pendekatan Care Focused. Skripsi ini menunjukkan perilaku Nazneen sebagai pelaku feminisme untuk bertahan hidup sebagai perempuan yang mengejar nilai kesetaraan di *Brick Lane*. Perjalanan Nazneen menuju kesetaraan dengan suaminya dalam film "*Brick Lane*" digambarkan melalui pengejarannya terhadap pendidikan, keterlibatannya dalam komunitas, dan ketegasannya yang semakin meningkat. Teori feminisme

yang berfokus pada kepedulian menyoroti bagaimana Nazneen bertahan hidup dengan suami dan anak-anaknya di Brick Lane, London.

**Kata kunci:** *wanita, care-focused, feminisme, karakteristik*



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

In patriarchal culture, men hold all resources, and women have to take care household and family. Women have no right to vote and can obtain only low-paid jobs (Iordache, 2013, p. 5). *Patriarchy* is a concept which men have more power than women, and men have more access to whatever society esteem (Jaggar, 1995, p. 82).

Nowadays, gender equality has been fought a lot, until even this very second. Feminism is a response to end Patriarchy. Feminism is a recognition of the imbalance of power between women and men, which is placed in a lower role (Hannam, 2007). According to Martin (1916), the essence of feminism is highlighting freedom, independence, and emancipation or equality between women and men in all aspects, such as; social, political, and economic. (Humm, 2002) stated that feminism is a movement to get justice for women's rights, and it is also a form of ideology to create a world for women. It means the world is free from oppression, exploitation, and male domination.

As a result of the assumption of men often being highlighted as solid characters in society, it is frequently found that the feminine character becomes the 'secondary' character in a movie. According to Sun (2022), the latest It is a

Man's (Celluloid) World report from San Diego State's Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film has found that male characters in films dominate the film industry where men outnumbered women on screen by a factor of 2 to 1 in 2021.

This study of women in television and film could help us understand women's representation and how they are presented in the mainstream industry. This proves that female characters are often underestimated, and male characters get more attention. However, in the film *Brick Lane* (2007), women's representation dominated the story through the characterization of Nazneen as a woman for the lead character and the main idea of the storyline. The characterization of Nazneen in the story becomes more absorbing because it does not only talk about women in general but, more specifically, women in people of race communities. The combination of her position as a woman within a hegemonic society and the problems inherent to the social environment of Indian society creates complex problems throughout the story.

In India, women still suffer from the social attitudes that occur through cultural and religious reasoning. In an Indian family (in general), different values are taught to young girls and boys from their early life (Aisha, 2021). The girl is taught to be more homely, timid, submissive, obedient, and sometimes even taught to dream only of being a good wife, mother, and homemaker (the ideal being one who does not raise her voice). Caregiving sectors are the scope of choices of careers for women who it often constrained by societal notions of what

is “suitable” for a woman and what is not. This is what defines the role of women in India and how limited their contribution to society will be.

On the other hand, males did not have to suffer from the same problems. These situations are portrayed in the film *Brick Lane* (2007). The way Nazneen, the film's main character, shows the characteristics of being homely, timid, submissive, and obedient as a wife and caring, gentle, and high feeling as a mother proved the stereotypes of women's status and condition in Indian households and society.

The film is one of the literary works often used as a bridge in literature to discuss problems around the environment, one of which is gender inequality. In this case, films as literature to analyze social phenomena will be discussed by the researcher, who will bridge the problems of gender inequality and feminism shown through the characterization of Nazneen in the film *Brick Lane* (2007). This film will help represent how female characters as the lead character were presented with their gender inequality problems in the film. The film has played an essential role in raising social issues in society. Therefore, films and literary works could be the medium to portray social issues and real-world problems. The role of literature in the discussion of gender inequality has broadly affected the more dynamic and various study fields.

The discussion about feminism and sociocultural point of view appears in the understanding of gender inequality and feminism values arise in the story of the film *Brick Lane* (2007). The feminine traits of gentle beings, who have high

feelings, and caring souls, have led the research topic to focus on care-focused feminism values portrayed in the film. The feminist ethic or ethic of care characteristics are shown in the characterization of Nazneen as a wife and a mother throughout the story.

Brick Lane is a lovely film with the potential to be even better. Sarah Gavron's film, based on Monica Ali's well-regarded novel of the same name, is about a young Bangladeshi woman named "Nazneen," who is taken to London as a teenager to marry a man she has never met. This movie highlights the feminist character of the female lead about how she survives in a new life with her husband in a new town.

The purpose of Feminism is to equalize the position between males and females. Feminism fights for the humanity of women, the struggle so that women become independent human beings, independent of themselves, and have the right to make their own choices. According to Bhasin and Khan (1995: 5), Feminism is a consciousness about systematic injustices for women in various sectors of life, as well as conscious actions by women and men to change that situation. Furthermore, care-focused Feminism emphasizes the psychomoral development of males and females rather than psychosexual—care-focused feminist points out that societal perspectives value gender-specific virtues that empower men and disempower women.

Care-focused Feminism is mainly based on how women are only seen as caregivers to their children, family, and elderly. Tong (2009) stated that care-

focused feminists regard women's capacities for care as a human strength rather than a human weakness, and this is found in a film called Brick Lane where Nazneen, the main character who is 17 years old, has to marry a 42-year-old man based on an arranged marriage, they have two children, and Nazneen works as a tailor because her husband lost his job. She carries a huge burden, such as having to provide for her husband and children, preparing daily needs, cleaning the house, and the dilemma between having to return to her hometown because of racism that occurred after 9/11 or continuing her life in London with another man who is radical and younger than her.

In this research, the Researcher is interested in analyzing a film titled Brick Lane. This movie was released on August 31, 2007. Brick Lane is a 2007 British drama film directed by Sarah Gavron, in her directorial debut and adapted from the 2003 novel of the same name by the British writer Monica Ali. Laura Jones and Abi Morgan wrote the screenplay. The Indian actress Tannishtha Chatterjee played the lead role of Nazneen. Brick Lane tells the story of a Bangladeshi Muslim woman named Nazneen who is betrothed to a man (Chanu) who is 20 years her senior. After marriage, her husband brought her to London.

She also went with her husband and left her hometown and the people she loved, including her only sister, Hasina. As a good Muslimah, she does not ask anything about her destiny and life. As a good wife, she tries to be submissive and obedient toward her husband. As a good mother, she tries to be caring and gentle toward her children. One day, she is involved in an affair with a handsome young

man (Karim) who is radical and younger than her. The film mainly talks about gender issues in Indian family households. The main character, Nazneen, was initially described as a woman who has a resigned character and only stays silent when she faces her life.

The strength of Carol Gilligan's theory of care-focused feminism lies in its approach that focuses on the ethic of care. Unlike other feminist theories that emphasize political aspects and gender equality, this theory highlights the importance of understanding and recognizing the values of care, empathy, and interpersonal relationships in ethics and morality. Gilligan emphasizes that women, in general, are more likely to use a care approach in dealing with ethical dilemmas, where they focus on maintaining healthy and supportive relationships. One of the strengths of this theory is that it provides a new perspective on how women can contribute to social change and moral values. By highlighting the importance of care as the foundation of moral action, the theory recognizes values that are often undervalued or forgotten in other feminist theories.

In addition, the theory of care-focused feminism also recognizes the importance of the complexity of interpersonal relationships and context in making ethical decisions. This makes room for more inclusive and contextualized judgments, which may be overlooked in more general feminist theoretical views. As such, it helps us understand the different experiences and perspectives of individuals based on their roles and responsibilities in caring for others. In terms of practice, the care-focused feminism approach brings awareness about the

importance of care work, both on a personal and social scale. It can help in fighting for public policy changes that are more favorable to care needs and equality in society.

Overall, the strength of Carol Gilligan's theory of care-focused feminism is that it draws attention to the ethics of care, the importance of interpersonal relationships, and the role of women in influencing morality and social change. In this way, the theory makes a valuable contribution in broadening our horizons and understanding of feminism and related social issues.

Based on the understanding of the story above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the film *Brick Lane* (2007) with the title of the research study “*The Characteristic of Care-Focused Feminism Values Through the Female Character Nazeem in Brick Lane (2007)*.” This research will be using the Gender approach, which suits the theme of this research where it was focusing on how the female character shows her feminist values through her personality traits. Therefore, the Gender approach is needed in analyzing the transformation of the cultural, economic, and political differences that create the conditions and position of the two genders, men and women, boys and girls, which cause inequalities and arise in discrimination social exclusion situations.

The further discussion of the topic will use the Feminist ethic or the ‘ethic of care’ theory by Carol Gilligan to understand the movie studies. The theory of ‘ethic of care’ by Carol Gilligan will be used to examine Nazneen’s portrayal and whether her care characteristics reinforce feminism. The movie studies such as



mise-en-scene and cinematography will be applied in the analysis of the film as the object of the study. The use of movie studies will help the researcher support the research arguments by mentioning how the data from the film as the object study justify the interpretations in the discussion.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher of this paper formulated a research question stating;

How does the Female lead's character, Nazneen, show the care-focused feminism values in Brick Lane (2007)?

## **1.3 Objective of Study**

Based on the problem statement above, the study aims to reveal how the main lead Nazneen as the female character shows the care-focused feminism values in Brick Lane (2007).

## **1.4 Significances of Study**

The significances of this study are as follows; First, this research can be shown as academic proof that the characteristics of care-focused feminism values in women show that women are not less morally developed than men.

Second, this research can break through the paradigm that the feminine nature of women's characteristics such as caring and gentleness are not seen as weak or low-gender personality traits.

## 1.5 Literature Review

Based on the researcher's research, this is the first researcher who has used the Brick Line film as their thesis topic. However, some articles use the Brick Line film as their topic. Other researchers examine the Brick Line Novel as the object of their research. The first is the thesis, *Identity Crisis: A Comparative Study between Antoinette in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea and Nazneen in Monica Ali's Brick Lane* (2016). The Writer's thesis is about a comparative study between Nazneen in Monica Ali's Brick Lane and Antoinette in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea. It investigates an identity crisis experienced by heroines and their struggle to overcome it in a society where they are triply marginalized by class, gender, and race. It explores the differences and the similarities between Antoinette and Nazneen in their search and struggle for an independent life and examines how they succeed or fail in articulating their identity.

To maintain a better understanding of the study using the feminist ethic or ethic of care theory in conducting the research analysis in literature, the journal study with the title *Care-focused Feminism, Care Ethics, and Feminine Artistry in Willa Cather's The Professor's House* by (Hyojeong Byun, 2021) from Daejin University. This journal research will help the researcher understand the use of ethics of care theory from a different point of view. However, differences are found between Byun's journal research and the researcher's research study. Byun's research uses Nel Nodding's ethic of care theory, while this research will use Carol Gilligan's ethic of care theory. In Byun's research, Nodding's ethic of

care theory explores how the feminized female characters in the novel *The Professor's House* practice their care ethics as caregivers, find a balance in their community and society, and restore their relationship with their surroundings. Therefore, the researcher will not use the same concept theory ethic of care by Nel Nodding because the researcher wanted to analyze how the lead female character Nazneen goes through a series of moral development. Thus, Gilligan's stages of the ethic of care will help the researcher better understand the analysis process.

The following research entitled 'Feminist Ethics of Care and Its Importance for Some Normative Questions in International Politics' was written by (Fatma Amargan, 2018); this article reviews some of the contributions that the feminist ethics of care framework has made to the study of ethics. In reviewing these different feminist approaches to the study of ethics, the article argues that in thinking about the questions of war and justice in the international realm, both care ethicists and their critique could be utilized for a more fruitful understanding of the ethical dimensions of our actions.

Another research about feminism approach related with Brick Lane are research with title "Female Independence As The Third World Women In Monica Ali's Brick Lane" written by Rahmita Andini (2022). The main objective of this study is to examine how Nazneen's independence is depicted as a central character in London. The author thoroughly explores and analyzes the portrayals of Nazneen's independence, taking into account both her life in Bangladesh and her experiences in London. Nazneen's experiences in both Bangladesh and

London provide a window into the depiction of her independence. In Bangladesh, her life reflects her struggles with her native culture, while in London, she grapples with the challenges posed by cultural differences between her original upbringing and the new environment. The portrayals of Nazneen's independence encompass various aspects, including her determination to fight for suffrage, her unwavering refusal to compromise on matters of injustice, her need to maintain a positive and open-minded attitude, and her independence in pursuing her professional career.

The last research entitled 'Care-focused Feminism, Care Ethics, and Feminine Artistry in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* was written by )Hyojeong Byun, Associate Professor, College of Creative Future Talent, Daejin University, Pocheon-si, South Korea, 2021). This article conveys Cather's capacity to serve as a healing and solidarity conduit and proves her creative force of care practice. These are examples of alternative caregivers who develop a connection-based relationship through their sincerity and attentiveness and cultural and social care. In their care, the author observes a spirit of self-sacrifice and the possibility of a true bond between them and others and their communities.

In this research, the author wanted to describe and explain how the main character 'Nazneen' developed care-focused feminism in her new life with her family in Brick Lane, London. The main topic that will be discussed is how Nazneen survived living with her husband and how she made herself have more value in her life by being a woman.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

In this research, the researcher uses the Feminist ethic or ethics of care theory by Carol Gilligan as the branch of the Feminist approach. Using movie studies such as mise-en-scene and cinematography will help the researcher to better understand the data analysis of the film as the object study. Based on Gilligan, care-focused feminism is an assessment of women struggling to get freedom and justice through a model of moral assessment (2009:164). Therefore, women's struggle starts by discovering their needs as the first step to unleashing the patriarchy. Then, it continues by deciding what women want to do as self-liberation and self-emancipation. The care-focused feminism focuses on finding the connection towards oneself as a form to fight the patriarchal social order. The theory divides into three stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional.

### **1.6.1 Feminist Approach**

Feminism is a series of social movements, political movements, and ideologies with the same goal: to define, build and achieve gender equality in the political, economic, personal, and social spheres. The definition of feminism itself, according to Najmah and Khatimah Saiddah in their book entitled Revision of Women's Politics (2003:34), states that feminism is an awareness of the oppression and exploitation of women that occurs both in the family and at work, as well as in society and the existence of conscious action of both men and women

to change the situation lexically. *Feminism* is a movement that demands full equality of rights between women and men.

### **1.6.2 Carol Gilligan's Feminist Ethic Theory**

In this research, the researcher uses the theory in analyzing moral development through Gilligan's stages of the ethic of moral theory. Feminist Ethics is an attempt to revise and rethink traditional ethics centered on masculinity traits. For instance, someone unemotional, rational, and logical is more favored by society as moral rather than emotional, compassionate, and nurturing. Thus, Feminist Ethics emphasizes women's traits and behavior, such as care and compassion, and the caregiving traits as moral. However, Ethics of care do not attempt to become the best ethics for humankind. There is no dichotomy between emotion and reason because some emotions may be reasonable for decision-making activities.

In Carol Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice* (1982), she emphasised that men's style of moral development involves fairness, justice, and rights. Meanwhile, women are linked with connections and relationship that shapes them to develop the style of moral reasoning that endure the needs and responsibilities of particular people. These binary societal norms against genders have shaped the perception and expectations of society for both sexes. However, between men and women, they are measured by the same norm, which is male norms. Male norms emphasize masculinity's characteristics, which resulted in women becoming the second sex based on their feminist traits.

According to Carol Gilligan's theory of the ethic of care, there are three stages in women's personal moral development. They developed in a way that focuses on connections among people (rather than separation) and with an ethic of care for those people (rather than an ethic of justice). The three stages of Gilligan's ethic of care are pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional.

**a. Pre-Conventional Level**

In this stage, the person focuses on themselves to survive. The personality trait shown in this stage is being selfish. This condition happens when the person finds the connections between themselves to others.

**b. Conventional Level**

In this stage, the person has a feeling of being responsible and shows care towards other people. Gilligan believes that this stage of moral thinking can be identified in the role of a mother and a wife. This personality trait led to ignorance of self.

**c. Post-Conventional Level**

In this stage, the care of themselves and others is accepted. The person has learned to see themselves and others as interdependent. They have control of their lives and take responsibility for their decisions, a big part of which is the choice to care for others.

#### **d. Movie Studies**

Besides the Feminist ethic theory, the researcher also applied movie studies to analyze the object. In this study, the researcher uses the movie studies such as mise-en-scene and cinematography.

#### **e. Mise-en-Scene**

According to Sikov in his book (2010:16), mise-en-scene describes the main features of cinematic representation. It is used as a first step to understanding how films generate and draw meaning. Can describe everything film can describe everything in a film with a mise-en-scene. Also written (2010:16), mise-en-scene consists of all elements placed before the camera to become a photo: settings, props, lighting, costumes, make-up, and behavioral figures (meaning actors, their gestures, and expressions).

#### **f. Cinematography**

Cinematography focuses on the process of the technical aspect of movie production. Some aspects of cinematography include lighting, framing, composition, camera motion, camera angles, film selection, lens choices, depth of field, zoom, focus, color, exposure, and filtration. According to Amy Villarejo (2007), every camera placement can be analyzed regarding the distance between the camera and its object. There are seven framing techniques mentioned by Villarejo: the extreme long shot (ELS), long shot (LS), medium long shot (MLS), medium shot (MS), medium close-up (MCU), close-up (CU), and the last one is the extreme close-up (ECU).



## **1.7 Methods of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

In this research, the researcher will use qualitative research, a method more focused on social phenomena; the data generated in qualitative research is descriptive data in the written objects or phenomena being observed.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The primary data from this paper is Nazneen as a female character in Bricks Line movie. The primary analysis focuses on the main character named, Nazneen. The author examines the direct and indirect speech about how Nazneen struggles in the patriarchal culture. The author will do a transcript from the Bricks Line movie to text so that the author can describe care-focused feminism related to the theory by Gilligan. The secondary data are the journals, books, theses, and other sources that support the formal object and theory.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

The researcher conducts two steps in collecting the data. The first step is watching the film to discover the data to analyze. The last step is classifying the data based on the Feminist ethic by Carol Gilligan. In taking this data, the researcher paid attention to every detail of the events and dialogues in the film and considered the film studies in the analysis process.

### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis is conducted in some steps after collecting the data. The first step is analyzing the data based on the Feminist ethic of the characters. The last step is conducting a conclusion toward the analysis.

### **1.8 Paper Organization**

This research contains four chapters. The first is an introduction that includes the background of the study, research question, literature review, study objectives, the significance of the study, theoretical approach method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter is about intrinsic elements of the film, for instance, character and characterization, theme, plot, summary, and setting. The third chapter delivers the analyses of Brick Lane through Feminist ethic theory and movie studies. The last chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

The researcher finds this movie highlighted Nazneen's behavior as a feminist act to survive being a woman no matter what it takes in Brick Lane. Being an independent woman since she was a child made her longing for a beautiful family on her own. According to Gilligans, women prioritize a caring orientation while making moral decisions, whereas males favor justice.

The care-focused feminism theory highlighted How Nazneen survived with her husband and children in Brick Lane, London. As we know, an unwritten rule says that a married woman must live with her husband. In this case, Nazneen did nothing of the kind. It can be said for the wife's right in the household, where the wife can also express her opinion about where they will live later.

As a woman, Nazneen tried to hold her position equal to her husband regarding opinion and household. Nazneen's path towards equality with her husband in the movie "Brick Lane" is portrayed through her pursuit of education, her involvement in the community, and her growing assertiveness. By challenging traditional gender roles and asserting her own agency, Nazneen gradually establishes a more equal footing within her marriage. Nazneen always respects her husband's opinion but never is looked down on him because Nazneen believes in equality.

## 4.2 Sugestion

Brick Lane is a movie about how women stand up for themselves even though they must fulfill their roles as wives and mothers. Nazneen represents a solid character to empower women all around the world. The researcher succeeded in analyzing the movie with a care-focused theory. However, this thesis could be better. For the next researcher, it is best to analyze this topic with gender equality theory or hegemony theory in the future.



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