

# **LIMINAL IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN IN WOMEN'S NARRATIVES**

**Author**

Yakut AKBAY



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## PREFACE

Yakut Akbay's study *Liminal Identities and Cultural Hybridity of Third World Women in Women's Narratives* focuses on three novels by three writers: Andrea Levy's *Small Island* (2004), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), and Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* (2012). All these novels and writers are significant in the field of contemporary diasporic literature. Levy, an English writer with Jamaican parentage, writes about the life of Jamaicans in Britain, the Bangladeshi British Ali depicts Bangladeshi immigrant lives in London, and the Nigerian American Sefi Atta's work deals with Nigerian experiences between London and Lagos.

Akbay's careful scrutiny of the novels is a valuable contribution to the analysis of diasporic, immigrant conditions of women. Akbay analyses the novels' women characters – especially the protagonists, Hortense, Nazneen, and Deola – and how they negotiate their hybrid in-between lives in London, a former colonial centre. The backgrounds, times, and conditions of the women are different, but they all face similar problems with adapting to their new environment. By locating the analyses of the novels in a postcolonial framework, Akbay is able to pinpoint the sore points of diasporic women's lives, and the causes of their resistance to assimilate.

Key terms in Akbay's analyses are Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and the Third Space, all of which define the conditions of diasporic life. The ways in which Hortense, Nazneen, and Deola navigate in-between cultures, between possibilities and constraints, demonstrate evocatively strategies of facing the difficulties of transcultural life. The answer is not a wholesale assimilation into the host culture, nor a nostalgic

return to the original roots, but an acceptance of an ambivalent hybrid identity.

Besides the thorough academic analyses, Akbay's text is also clear and pleasant to read. The detailed analyses in the chapters provide enlightening perspectives not only on the novels but, even more significantly, on the liminal identities and cultural hybridity of Third World women – just as the title of the book promises.

*Joel Kuortti*  
*Professor*  
*University of Turku*

To my mother, Almas – the diamond whose endurance,  
brilliance, and intelligence have illuminated, and will continue  
to illuminate, every step of my journey...

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