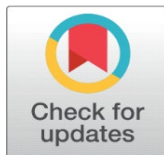


PERSPECTIVES ON MEMORY, POSSIBILITY AND REINVENTION OF LIFE IN MONICA ALI'S UNTOLD STORY

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ABSTRACT

The Untold Story begins with the life of the world's most famous woman and explores the past while imagining a future. The novel's protagonist, a fictional princess, reaches a breaking point and, certain that the Establishment is plotting her assassination, makes an irreversible decision: orchestrate her own death and begin a new life under an assumed identity. Diana's life and marriage were both fairytales and nightmares. Millions of people adored her, but she experienced heartbreak and betrayal in her personal life. She frequently felt confined and alone, despite her privileged lifestyle. She refused to follow the regulations, citing convention and history. Following a time of extreme turmoil, Lydia, as she is called, moves to a tiny American town and creates a shaky peace. It is endangered by memories of what she has lost her children, who have greater value than all the sparkle and Splendour of monarchy.

After changing her looks and ten years after her "death," she can rest easy knowing that her secret will never be discovered. She loses that assurance, though, when she meets a paparazzi by accident. Will he be able to identify her? Should she run away or keep her cool? Will she always be let down, or is there someone she can rely on? She loses that assurance, though, when she meets a paparazzi by accident. Will he be able to identify her? Should she run away or keep her cool? Will she always be let down, or is there someone she can rely on? The novel Untold Story explores themes of friendship and family, mystery and fixation, identification and its specific consequences, and the meaning of identity.

Keywords: Identity, loneliness, Happiness, Possibility, Reinvention



1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the role of identity and the concept of oneness in an individual's existence. Monica Ali was the most notable writer to be nominated for the Man Booker Prize in 2003. Her first work, *Brick Lane*, made her popular. Her most recent novel, *Untold Story*, was published in 2011. The plot follows Lydia, who attempts to flee from the paparazzi. This paper examines British Bangladeshi writer Monica Ali's novel *Untold Story*, focusing on self-exploration and the concept of singleness. Monica Ali uses the character Lydia to mimic Diana's life. The narrative centres on Lydia, who pretended to be dead in order to immigrate to America under a false identity. She examines herself as an ordinary person, and Monica Ali highlights the loneliness-related emotional experience. The primary theme remains the pursuit of identity. As a modern writer, Monica Ali emphasises the value of being oneself.

Monica Ali was born in 1967 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She relocated to Britain in 1971. She pursued politics, economics, and philosophy at Wadham College. Monica Ali started writing by sharing short stories online and receiving feedback.

She eventually established herself and achieved literary success through her writing. She currently resides in London with her family. In 2011, she wrote her debut novel, *Untold Story*, which depicted Princess Diana's life as a fairytale. As a British Bangladeshi writer, she addresses post-colonial, discrimination, and identity issues. Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* earned positive reviews in the US and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2003. Later, it was adapted into a film in 2007. She formerly worked as a publishing, design, and branding agency in the US.

The *Untold Story* explores the past and imagines the future by starting with the life of the most well-known lady in the world. At a breaking point, the novel's protagonist, a fictional princess, decides to orchestrate her own death and start again under a false identity since she thinks the establishment is planning to have her killed. Following a period of severe turmoil, Lydia, as she is known, moves to a tiny American town and creates a tenuous serenity. Thoughts of what she has lost threaten it her children, who are the most valuable thing she has lost, not the gloss and Splendour of monarchy. After changing her looks and ten years after her "death," she can rest easy knowing that her secret will never be discovered. She loses that assurance, though, when she meets a paparazzi by accident. Will he be able to identify her? Should she run away or keep her cool? Will she always be let down, or is there someone she can rely on? The novel *Untold Story* explores themes of friendship and family, mystery and fixation, identification and its specific consequences, and the meaning of identity.

Monica Ali makes some odd choices, to say the least. Following her Booker-shortlisted, best-selling debut, *Brick Lane*, she wrote a collection of short stories inspired by her second home in Portugal. Not every publisher's or reader's ideal follow-up. Then she decided to write about a hotel kitchen. This outstanding literary author has now written a novel about Princess Diana. The *Untold Story* tells the story of what might have happened to Princess Diana had she survived. Yes, the true Princess of Wales, Diana Spencer, Lady Di; she of the pie-crust collars and St Tropez yachts; the heir, spare, and landmines. What if, instead of dying in a car accident in 1997, Britain's Queen of Hearts, who had been hounded by the press and royals into panda-eyed madness, couldn't take it any more and disappeared on a dawn swim, allegedly drowned and devoured by sharks? Just suppose. Let the untold narrative begin. The tale begins in small-town America, where Lydia, as she is now known, leads a tranquil existence with a small group of acquaintances.

The scene opens up instantly, showing us three women a brunette, a blonde, and a redhead waiting for Lydia to arrive for her birthday dinner in the well-known suburbs of America. Thus far, so bizarre. It reads like a cross between Jonathan Franzen and Judith Krantz. the trashiest of notions cloaked in astute observation. Then, we find out exactly how this occurred. As scheduled, Diana-Lydia washes up on a beach in Brazil, where she was taken off for cosmetic surgery, hair colouring, tanning, and vowel roughening. Her abandonment of her sons has left her deeply and permanently saddened, but living in Blighty had become unbearable due to her belief that she would be rejected. Her lone collaborator, a devoted private secretary named Lawrence Standing, helps her navigate her metamorphosis into a long-haired brunette with glottal stops and an unclear past as a British divorcee before she seeks asylum in the US, the home of reinvention. She decides on Kensington, a sleepy townlet whose name appeals to her, and trains to be a dog handler at a sanctuary for stray animals. Monica, oh. Really.

Lydia has a wonderful lover named Carson, but he is never allowed emotional contact because of a humdinger of a secret hidden in her breast. Ali is uncomfortable with her transatlantic language, using too many "dang"s and "kind of schlubby"s. Since when did an American add the definite article to "Lincoln Centre"? But there's something lovely about Lydia's strong affinity with these ladies, the poor hunted Diana among them. However, the hard-earned peace is about to be destroyed. A sleazy paparazzo comes into view. After spending his early career shooting one Princess of Wales, John "Grabber" Grabowski is looking for a quiet place to work on a book. Also enamoured with the name Kensington, he arrives with his telescopic lens and an eye for a gorgeous lady, and is soon leching on attractive local Lydia, who has abandoned her disguise of brown contact lenses. Despite her "repertoire of self-adjustments," something about her ultramarine orbs, laugh, and stroll feels strangely familiar.

Grabber knows that face down the end of a lens too well to ignore those eyes and the characteristic little green circle around the right pupil. He has discovered his life's narrative. The novel exhibits psychological nuance that the potboiler it is modelled after could never have, and it is told in the third person as well as through Lydia's letters to Lawrence and Lawrence's diaries. Diana is portrayed by Ali as a complicated figure who must conceal herself behind her own mask in order to vanish. The tale takes on a thriller-like character once Grabowski sets out on his quest, with anxiety driving what is fundamentally a confusing but sporadically enjoyable read.

I got up at the crack of dawn to witness Diana's funeral, sixteen years after she died in a Parisian car crash. I was interning as a reporter in North Carolina, working a shift from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., having graduated from college a few

months ago. I would cry every time "Candle in the Wind 1997" came on the radio, which happened about every ten minutes, as I was driving around a new-to-me secondhand automobile in the days and weeks that followed the funeral. Of course, some have argued that the death of a spoiled, neurotic woman who was well-known for her beauty more than anything else was not very tragic, but isn't there room in the world for a variety of tragedies?

All of this is to imply that for someone like me, Monica Ali's latest novel, *"Untold Story,"* is irresistible: What if, Ali wonders, Diana had survived the accident? What if she feigned her own death and finally moved to America under an assumed name? Such a concept quickly accomplishes two things. It corrects the terrible wrong of Diana's premature death and creates, at least for American readers, the delightful idea that a princess may live among us. Regretfully, the most compelling aspect of *"Untold Story"* is its idea. It is unpleasant to criticise a writer with Ali's skill, especially after she gained popularity with her excellent debut book *"Brick Lane"* which chronicles the decades-long story of a Bangladeshi woman who moves to London to attend an arranged marriage. It's intelligent, ambitious, and both tragic and humorous.

Its thoughts are sympathetic and insightful, and its characters are multifaceted. It's obvious that Ali can write a novel about anything Diana included. However, *"Untold Story"* has come out incorrectly in some way. Ali has created a tale about Diana's retreat from public life, allowing Diana to escape the novel. Ali never uses the name "Diana"; the main character's name is Lydia Snaresbrook. And, because Lydia is a purposely bland woman who lives in the suburbs, Ali wrote a novel about a willfully bland woman living in the suburbs. In a recent editorial for the British daily The Daily Mail, Ali praised Diana's rebelliousness as well as her candour. Diana's paradoxes, such as being a vain clotheshorse who also battled against land mines, being visible but lonely, and being needy, adorable, fascinating, and challenging, are not addressed in these pages. When the novel opens in April 2007, ten years have passed since the most intriguing aspect of "Lydia's" story how she staged her death was told.

Now in her forties, Lydia has black hair and resides in Kensington, a town in Midwestern America, where she chose to live partially as a practical joke. Ali purposefully leaves the location of Kensington open-ended, which is another decision that doesn't add anything to the story. However, it's a wealthy area where Lydia has acquired a trio of American girlfriends, bought a house with a pool, and taken a job at a kennel a job that seems primarily meant to make people laugh, since Princess Di is seen rolling around with Rottweiler!. These girlfriends are the ones who raise red flags on the first page. To be fair, these are extremely cheesy Americans rather than ugly Americans. It's challenging to maintain their integrity. The fact that one is childless and single, the other is divorced and has kids, and the third is married and has kids appears to be their primary differences. When they're together, they enjoy sipping white wine and berating each other's bodies. They make statements such, "These Ruffles with less calories? I'm not going there, so forget it. Similar like Lydia's partner, the women are unaware of her true identity.

But someone may be on to her. A grizzled paparazzo named Grabowski, a relic from Lydia's past, is in the United States working on a photo book to be issued on the tenth anniversary of her death. By an unlikely coincidence, he winds up sleeping at a bed and breakfast in Kensington. When he recognizes Lydia's "mesmerizingly beautiful" blue eyes, a cat-and-mouse game begins. Though Grabowski regularly considers how massive the media frenzy will be if Lydia is indeed Diana, and how rewarding and lucrative it would be to divulge this secret, it does not feel massive.

It seems like he's pursuing a woman named Lydia. Ali gives hints about the potential for a richer, stronger story in a few different places. She devotes a few pages to the diaries of Lawrence Standing, a fictional private secretary and advisor who helped Diana stage her own death and was the only one aware of her scheme and who was dying of a brain tumour in 1998. The unsent letters Lydia wrote to Lawrence in the early years of her new life were later read to us. Ali used letters really well in *"Brick Lane"* so it's hardly surprising that Lydia's are charming and carry the central emotional thread of the book.

Less successfully, Ali addresses the question that must be answered on multiple occasions if the novel's premise is to be taken seriously: how could Diana leave her life in England if doing so meant forsaking her loving sons? Ali offers a two-pronged explanation: first, Lydia believed she would be killed or drives insane if she stayed, and second, Lawrence fostered Lydia's illusion that she would someday rejoin with her sons. Here, the book emphasizes its own absurdity while making an attempt to clear Lydia a little too much. The most poignant and unforgettable image from Diana's burial is one of the genuine details Ali uses in her fictional piece: the card with the sole handwritten word "Mummy" on it that was placed atop a bunch of white flowers over her coffin. The note served as a poignant reminder for those of us who are perhaps too naive in our appraisal of public figures that Diana, like all icons, was a person as well a lesson this book attempts to impart.

2. CONCLUSION

The novel's protagonist, a fictional princess, reaches a breaking point and, convinced that the Establishment is planning her assassination, decides irrevocably to orchestrate her own death and start a new life under a false identity. Diana's life and marriage were both fairytales and nightmares. Millions of people adored her, but she suffered heartbreak and betrayal in her personal life. The *Untold Story* opens with the life of the most famous woman in the world and explores the past while imagining a future. After changing her appearance and ten years since her "death," she can rest assured that her secret will never be found. She loses that confidence, however, when she meets a paparazzi by chance. The novel *Untold Story* delves into topics of friendship and family, mystery and fixation, identification and its consequences, and the definition of identity.

This article discusses the novel *Untold Story* by Monica Ali, a British Bangladeshi writer, with a focus on self-exploration and the concept of singleness. Monica Ali's character Lydia mimics Diana's life. The story revolves around Lydia, who pretended to be dead in order to travel to America under a false identity. Monica Ali explores herself as an everyday person, focusing on her emotional experience with loneliness. The search for identification continues to be the key focus. Monica Ali highlights the need of being authentic as a contemporary writer.

Beginning with the life of the most famous woman in the world, The *Untold Story* examines the past and imagines the future. The heroine of the book, a made-up princess, reaches a breaking point when she believes the establishment is out to get her and chooses to stage her own death and start over under a false identity. After a period of extreme upheaval, Lydia, as she is called, relocates to a small American town and establishes a precarious calm. All of this suggests that Monica Ali's most recent book, "*Untold Story*" is enticing to someone like me: What if Diana had survived the accident? Ali thinks. What if, in the end, she pretended to be dead and went undercover to America? Two things are swiftly accomplished by such an idea. It rights the horrible injustice of Diana's early demise and fosters the wonderful notion that a princess might indeed reside among us at least for readers in the United States.

Unfortunately, the concept of "Untold Story" is what makes it so engaging. Ali provides a two-pronged explanation: first, Lawrence encouraged Lydia's delusion that she would one day reunite with her sons; second, Lydia thought that staying would either kill her or drive her insane. Here, the novel tries a bit too hard to clear Lydia while emphasizing how ridiculous it all is. One of the real aspects Ali incorporates into her fictional work is the most moving and memorable image from Diana's funeral: the card with the single handwritten word "Mummy" on it, which was put atop a bunch of white flowers over her coffin. For those of us who are perhaps too innocent in our evaluation of famous personalities, the remark was a painful reminder that Diana, like all icons, was a person as well a lesson. For those of us who are perhaps too innocent in our evaluation of public personalities, the note was a painful reminder that Diana, like all icons, was a person as well a lesson this book aims to instill.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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