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Tracing The Narratives of Scapegoating: An Allportian Examination of *Brick Lane*

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Abstract

Brick Lane by Monica Ali centers on the themes of migration, displacement, institution of marriage, identity crises, misrepresentation and so forth. The work has been explored from these aspects but the new dimensions within this context have not been examined comprehensively. This paper aims to investigate the motif of scapegoating in the novel, which draws upon Gordon W. Allport's conception. Scapegoating, for Allport, manifests itself in different characters that project their failures and frustrations to other people who are powerless and silenced. In its South Asian backdrop, it is blaming, killing, or scarifying a person or a group of people for personal, societal reasons or to attain certain kinds of outcomes. In case of *Brick Lane*, Nazneen is scapegoated by her parents when they choose Chanu, forty years old and an ugly person, as her husband. The paper will attempt to go beyond the mythological implications of scapegoating by employing it as a theoretical framework. Moreover, the question of a human being, as a modern scapegoat, in the present time will be delineated. Scapegoating functions on different levels depending upon the contexts where it is exercised. The objectives of this study are to highlight the factors enhancing the victimization by blocking the ways of empowerment. The analytical mood of inquiry will be used to conduct the research.

Keywords: Allport, Brick Lane, migration, sacrifice, scapegoating, South Asian

Introduction

Scapegoating of an ethnic group or a weak subject, due to oppressive societal structures, echoes in South Asian fiction. This theme is prevalent in the fiction, written during or after the colonial period. Apart from religious and mythical implications, scapegoating, in its South Asian context is blaming, killing, or scarifying a person or a group of people for

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societal reasons or to attain certain kinds of outcomes. Scapegoating occurs, due to underlying injustice and power dynamics. It, therefore, prevents the powerful from suffering the consequences of their own sins or wrongdoings. However, they usually spare themselves by shifting the blame and its consequences to a powerless and marginalized person. These scapegoats may be of different kinds depending upon the groups they belong to. For instance, it can be either a divine animal or a human being. The objectives of this paper are to explore the effects of scapegoating on the personal growth and relationships of major characters in *Brick Lane* in addition to critically assess the underlying structures of scapegoating in the novel.

South Asia held a significant status for colonial powers. India, particularly, was rich in textiles, tea, spices and opium. Its agricultural potential and raw material was of special interest for European industrial economy. Moreover, strategically it was also significant to control the trade routes between Europe, Middle East and East Asia for the enhancement of global trade (Mishra, [2016](#)). The region was thickly populated; however, it attracted the colonial powers to sell their goods and consequently accumulate huge profits. Slowly and gradually the colonial powers subjected the region's culture to a change. Briefly these were the preponderating circumstances during colonial period but after that the indigenous people suffered from the issues like identity crises, migration, stereotyping, misrepresentation and so forth. The personal gains of the powerful overlooked the rest of the population. These are the focal concerns in the South Asian fiction.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* has been woven around the idea of migration wherein a Bangladeshi woman migrates to London along with her husband where she encounters a completely new world. Being a good Muslim girl, she has to accept things as such without being skeptical. The novel dramatizes two opposite characters and choices. First Nazneen, who is in her twenties, and agrees to marry a person who is her parents' choice, even though her husband, Chanu, is of double her age and not an attractive figure. Second, Hasina, the younger sister, who rebels against her parents to marry a person of her own choice. Finally, she elopes with her lover. Nazneen agrees to marry an ugly and over-aged person because of her parents. Since in traditional family setups, daughters are silent creatures; they ought not to go against family norms. Nazneen, internally, might not

have been satisfied because he was “At least forty years old. He had a face like a frog” she still seems thankful to her parents, “Abba, it is good that you have chosen my husband” (p. 16–17). This paper, therefore addresses the questions that in what ways does scapegoating influence personal development and relationships of the main characters in *Brick Lane*? Moreover, how does Monica Ali depict the consequences of scapegoating in the novel?

Historically the myth of scapegoating draws upon targeting silenced groups of society in order to get away with one’s sense of regret/guilt, anger and frustration through blame-shifting. The practice seemed to stem out of guilt after committing a sin. Usually an animal is scapegoated, however, Frazer’s examples show that the scapegoat can be a human being as well. At Ontitsha, on Niger, for instance, two human beings are scapegoated annually. It is believed that by doing so, the sins of the land can be got rid of. These scapegoats are purchased by the people who, during the previous year, committed adultery, theft, witchcraft and so forth, and contribute 28 ngugas (Frazer & Fraser, [1990](#), p. 1331). The money is used in purchasing two sickly persons, one for land and the other for the river. A man, then, is assigned the duty to put both of them to death. “On twenty-seventh of February” puts Frazer “the Rev J C Taylor witnessed the sacrifice of one of these victims...the sufferer was a woman, about nineteen or twenty years of age” (p. 1332). Similarly, ancient Egyptians used to sacrifice a bull by invoking all the evils upon its head and afterwards they would either sell the bull’s head to the Greeks or throw it into the river.

The history of scapegoating goes back to religious rites. Biblical myths, in this regard, may be helpful to track the evolution of the ritual. Calum Carmichael in “The Origin of the Scapegoat Ritual” brings forth the origin of the ritual. He largely draws upon Biblical myths to trace the origins of scapegoats. Quoting Ida Zatelli’s article, “The Origin of the Biblical Scapegoat Ritual: The Evidence of Two Elbaite Texts” where she goes to the ancient history by mentioning Eblaite purgation rite where people would tie a bracelet to a goat’s neck and send it as an offering. However, almost all the scholars of scapegoating history are agreed upon its complex origin/history. For Zatelli, biblical ceremony has its historical threads in more ancient non-Israelite cultures. Other scholars delineate the myth that when a sin bearing goat (a goat used as a means of transferring

the guilt and sins of an individual or community) was sent to Azazel to appease him but the counter part of this view negates this notion since for them Azazel is not “an angry deity” (Carmichael, [2000](#), p. 168). This is because, they argue, he has a characterless make-up.

It is rather, agreed upon by most of the scholars, that Levitical lawgiver constructed the rite of scapegoating. If this view is accepted, in the modern world, then, it is the religious authority that makes people believe that they can acquire purgation through different offerings. It becomes more relevant in South Asian contexts wherein people are emotionally attached to their religions. Therefore, molding these people through religious cards is easy once they are hooked on the idea of regaining lost innocence through alms and sacrifices. Removal of sins through slaughtering animals is still a very common ritual. However, the question of legality and authentication of such an action is another, and perhaps most ignored aspect of the rite. After all, how can a person or deity confirm the removal of sin, especially in case of a sinner who has exploited/victimized human beings? How can an outsider agency decide one-sidedly?

In the Book of Jubilees (xxxiv 18, 19), the rite commemorates a crucial occasion in the religious history when the brothers of Joseph threw him in a well and on return, they deceived their father by showing him a bloodstained coat. Actually, they proved to be disloyal brothers and sons at the same time. On their return, they slaughtered a goat and sprinkled its blood on Jacob’s coat to make their grieved father believe Jacob’s passing. The author of Jubilees connects the scapegoat ritual to the story of Jacob in the book of Genesis 37. Jacob’s brothers are said to have started the ritual of scapegoating. They were instructed, “They should make atonement for themselves with a young goat... on the tenth of the seventh month, once a year, for their sins; for they have grieved the affection of their father regarding Joseph, his son (Jub. Xxxiv 18)” (p. 170). In this myth, Joseph is punished for a crime that he had not committed and then a goat was killed for the justification of his brothers’ brutality. Here, the killing of a goat, first for cheating and then as an offering to get atonement is very much close to offer a bull’s head or throwing it into the river. Both the rites involve animals.

Analysis

The division between the powerful and its counterpart has always been problematic. It creates restlessness in a society by making room for hatred among people. In this tug of war of imbalance of power, the weaker undergoes more suppression. In Ali's *Brick Lane* the characters face many social and cultural conflicts that often result in scapegoating the individuals who do not conform to traditional hegemony of powerful people. This tension manifests in the marginalization, scarifying, silencing and unfair blaming of the powerless strata of society. Scapegoating, however, limits the opportunities of justice and development for the oppressed. Identifying and addressing these issues is helpful to bring positive change in the society. This paper aims to highlight scapegoating as an important part of marginalized people.

The phenomenon of scapegoating is a significant social and psychological mechanism where individuals or groups are unfairly blamed for misfortunes, often to deflect responsibility or simplify complex issues. This exploration is crucial, for it will contribute to literary studies by offering a detailed analysis of Monica Ali's work through the lens of scapegoating. It will reveal how literature can reflect and critique social issues, adding depth to the academic discussion surrounding *Brick Lane*. Moreover, the psychological aspects of scapegoating in the novel can provide valuable insights into human behavior, particularly how individuals and groups manage stress and conflict. This study is delimited to critically analyze Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* through scapegoating as a theoretical model proposed by Gordon W. Allport.

Ali's *Brick Lane* connects to the patriarchal oppression existing in the Indian subcontinent and shows the consequences as a result of it. Two scholars, Jahirul Islam and Md. Harun Rashid, from University Putra Malaysia, compared the novel with Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* on the grounds of inferior position of women in Indian subcontinent. The study of both the works, through radical feminist theory, examines the socio-cultural power codes, which train/force women to accept their marginal position right from their childhood. It is perhaps due to this monotonous behavior that even in educational spheres "women are considered worthless intellectually" (Islam & Rashid, [2022](#), p. 675). In the wake of all these patriarchal practices, women from different Indian regions rose up to question the hegemony of their counterparts. For

instance the women's movement in Bangladesh has contributed to a shift that built a narrative, which is constructed around the idea that femininity does not imply weakness. *Brick Lane* and *The God of Small Things* share similarities when they portray fates of females as weaker creatures. *Brick Lane* is based on the story of two women and their status in the society. They encounter different issues like suicide, violence, arranged marriages, polygamy and prostitutions. Similarly, the latter work depicts Ammu's life as a divorced woman living with her parents. Living in this way, as a single mother of two children, seems difficult.

The uncertainty prevails hard in the center of the migrants' experience when Chanu, husband of the protagonist in *Brick Lane*, puts a question,

Do you know how many immigrants populations have been here before us? In the Eighteenth century the French Protestants fled here, escaping Catholic persecution. They were silk weavers. They made good. One hundred years later, the Jews came. They thrived. At the same time, the Chinese came as merchants. The Chinese are doing very well...Which way is it to go? (Ali, [2003](#), p. 463–464)

Nadia Valman, delineates on the experiences of migrants trying to uncover the myth of immigrant self-betterment. For Valman, *Brick Lane's* insular domestic position “enables Ali to avoid confronting dark side of multiculturalism” (Valman, [2009](#), p. 4). In fact, the journey of newcomers spans over three centuries since the heyday of Victorian liberalism. It is this concern of the novel, which keeps it limited in the boundaries of most recent metropolitan postcolonial studies. Consequently, it avoids touching upon the unfamiliar and dark side of multiculturalism in broader sense.

Zannati Zumara discusses the issues of imposed negotiation of Muslim identity in the novel in graduate level dissertation at BRAC University. The Muslims, argues Zumara, cannot be separated from European history since they have been intertwined with each other for centuries. Muslims started migrating to Britain in 1950's and 60's and were welcomed open heartedly. But in the 80's, problems started emerging when the West waged a sort of war against Islam. The West initiated the war indirectly, mainly supporting the states fighting against Iraq, Chechniya, Afghanistan and Palestine. The events of 9/11 triggered the situation into a more drastic state. After all that, Muslims were no longer welcomed open heartedly. Consequently, the Muslim immigrants started negotiating with

their religious identities. Ali's characters, hence, follow moderate Islam (Zumara, [2020](#), p. 15). It is an attempt to fit in that society through a coping mechanism. They end up becoming more cultural and less practicing Muslims.

The question of bordering, border crossing, and compromising solidarities as a result of borders also echoes in *Brick Lane*. Sulgana Mohanty and Santosh Kumar Biswal explore the text through border crossing in their study. Women, when cross borders, experience “double colonization” (Mohanty & Biswal, [2021](#), p. 307). The cosmopolitan Women, carrying the luggage of their fragmented identity, cross the border in order to get sexual, physical, spiritual and psychological liberation. But going there does not justify their central position, rather; it creates a distinction between the center and the periphery which is not merely a matter of geographical division. One may act as a colonial center from within the colonial periphery but it is not a vice-versa process because a colonized subject, when goes to a metropolitan culture, will remain on the periphery. This in-between condition of living, pains the migrants and finally they rebel. Nazneen is a fine example of this type because even her migration to the metropolitan center is unable to mitigate her problems. However, Michael Perfect ([2014](#)), in his *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism: Diversity and the Millennial London Novel*, comes up with a counter argument that the novel celebrates integration instead of destabilization of stereotypes (p. 116).

Marilyn Schwinn Smith connects the novel with Virginia Woolf's Dalloway's mystique. The novel shows the transformation of its main character Nazneen, born in rural Bangladesh, showing slow awakening. However, their approaches to the life expectations are different. Nazneen, therefore, makes a slow move from her flat to the larger world. The experiences of Nazneen are very much in line with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Because for Smith “*Brick Lane* exposes what Dalloway would hide” (Smith, [2007](#), p. 106). The British seem invisible/absent in Ali's case but Woolf mirrors the conditions of colonials in her text.

Studies in scapegoating take into account all kinds of sacrifices through which the major powerful strata of society benefits. In the modern times, for instance, cyberbullying is a tool for powerful to exercise scapegoating. According to James O'Higgins Norman and Justin Connolly, “scapegoats are identified and victimized within defined

populations” (Norman & Connolly, [2011](#), p. 287). The researchers connect the cyber-attacks and suicides as their outcome, to Girard concept of scapegoating where human beings replace their aggression by scapegoating a weak being in a society. Scapegoating is done to justify the violence.

Wolfgang Palaver in “Mimesis and Scapegoating in the Works of Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant” draws upon the political philosophy. He claims that though scapegoating is “less visible” than mimesis but it cannot be excluded when it comes to the origins of violent human culture (Palaver, [2003](#), p. 127). Additionally, the difference between Girard’s idea of scapegoat, and Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant’s has been drawn by understanding that the former emphasizes Bible in identifying scapegoats and the group of latter philosophers represent modern neglect of the Bible. However, Rousseau’s thoughts on “general will” and need of its conformity pave the way for scapegoating. Because it can marginalize dissenting voices that can be made scapegoats for societal discord. Therefore, for Palaver, Rousseau’s philosophy “is not really detached from scapegoating” (p. 136). He comments that conflicts and hatred led by mimetic desires can be turned into peace. Mimetic desire for him can be turned into patriotism where all live and die for their country. Kant similarly seems to be aware of scapegoating since building on Kant, Hannah Arendt defines extreme form of power as “All against one” (p. 137).

In the modern world, most people live and think in terms of material conditions. It is therefore crucial to look at scapegoating in the context of economic gains. Business-oriented minorities, for instance, are invited warmly and treated well for the sake of business purposes. But they are scapegoated when a discontent grows in the market. Yann Bramouille and Pauline Morault, however, comment, “Scapegoating may emerge for purely economic reasons” ([2021](#), p. 728). In the Middle Ages, for example, European rulers attracted the Jews, borrowed from them and taxed their activities. Later they were either expelled or forced to be converts. This kind of scapegoating can be called as instrumental scapegoating. Amongst this tug of war between rich ethnic minority and poor majority, a third force, a political elite, appears and scapegoats both the parties. He does that quite cleverly when the risk of violence is high

and he has incentives to offer to prevent social integration between the two groups.

For Sarah Brouillette, *Brick Lane* is a tale of gentrification. Gentrification, for her, contextualizes what happens when middle-class landlords and homebuyers go to the different parts of London that have stocks of residential buildings, mostly dilapidated. These immigrants, when go there, are attracted by the historic building features. All this contributes to incensement in housing costs and displacement of working class. Ali, paints the whole tale in this backdrop, when she depicts the inner life of a young woman who moves to England and further into Bangladeshi-dominated Tower Hamlet and sets up a garment factory. After that, she has an affair with a younger and exciting man than her husband. At the end of the novel, even when the major character returns to Bangladesh, Nazneen decides to live there all alone. She, perhaps for the first time in her life, achieves what she had been longing for. Here she, maintains Brouillette, “transforms into the protagonist” (Brouillette, [2009](#), p. 428). That is how she is subjected to change, the change, which attracts the owners of properties. The novel’s reception is also very suggestive in this context since Ali sets it in East end’s gentrification. Though Ali, as reported by a wide range of resources, never lived there herself.

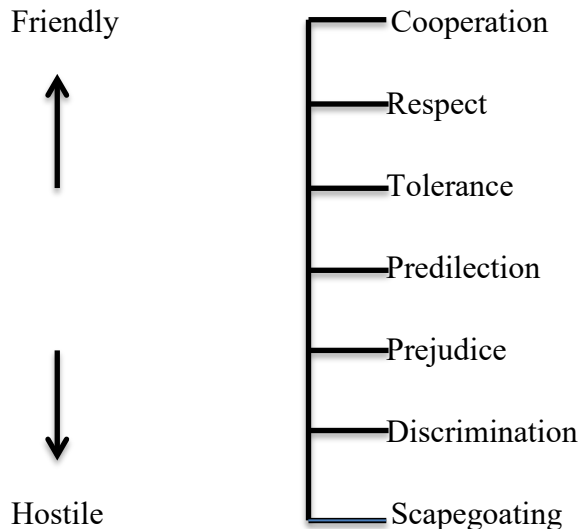
Mrinalini Chakravorty, criticizes Ali for winking at the major incidents happening in *Brick Lane* in the April of 1999. Interestingly, it was the time of Bengali New Year when there was a bomb attack outside Naz café on Brick Lane. It was reported as part of a series of targeted hate killings, which wounded seven individuals. It was not the only attack of its kind, just a week before this attack a similar massacre rocked Electric Avenue in Brixton, which injured forty-five people. In the same way, by the end of April, a homemade device was installed in a pub in Soho, which resulted in three deaths and sixty-five injuries. In the wake of these instances a 23 year old David Copeland was arrested who had connections with ultra conservative British Nationals and National Socialist parties. He, during his investigation, said that he believed in a “master race” so he targeted minorities (Chakravorty, [2012](#), p. 503). Life was disrupted badly due to these attacks but, the scholar comments that it is curious that the riot episode in *Brick Lane* stands outside, which eclipses its historical implications. Whatever is witnessed by Chakravorty is an instance of

scapegoating itself since the minorities are targeted to support the ideology of a master race.

Scapegoating is a broader term ranging from the pre-Israelite history to the present time, covering psychological aspects. This paper uses Gordon W. Allport's model of scapegoating, which connects the attitude of shifting blames to one's psyche. He, in *ABC's of Scapegoating* defines the term as "A phenomenon wherein some of the aggressive energies of a person or a group are focused upon another individual, group or object; the amount of aggression and blame being either partly or wholly unwarranted" (Allport, 1948, p. 10). However, scapegoating is not an extraordinary attitude, for Allport it emerges out of normalities, attitudes, biases, prejudices and so forth. Therefore, it is, he points out, "the opposite end of the scale from friendly, cooperative behaviors between groups" (p. 10). He shows the steps leading to scapegoating through a model which depicts scapegoating as a normal attitude. However, the degrees of hostile relationships are distinguishable.

Figure 1

Allport's Model of Steps Leading to Scapegoating



Predilection is an attitude of preferring one culture, one language, one skin color as opposed to another. Predilection is a natural process but it is

the first step towards scapegoating. If people turn more biased, they become prejudiced, which is the extension of predilection but in a severe form. It carries rigidity, inflexibility and so forth. A prejudice, then resides in a closed mind. It goes a step ahead by making prejudgments. In other words, it feeds upon stereotyped judgments, which are hard to change. For example, all women are inferior to men. If a prejudice is not acted out, it leads to discrimination. It is different from scapegoating in its extent of aggression. It works on an advanced level, which includes separating forcibly from one's vocation, neighborhood, country and so forth. Finally, comes scapegoating through which one shows aggression in words or deeds. In this scenario "the victim is abused verbally or physically" (p. 11). In response to it, the victim cannot fight back due to its being weaker than the oppressor.

Allport also provides the motivation behind scapegoating. For him, people who are usually deprived of what they want, end up in anxiety that leads to aggression. This aggression is not against their desire, which remains unfulfilled, rather the things which are happening conveniently. For example, a hectic day in the office may result in kicking a cat at home. In times of social crises, however, the deprivation and aggression work on higher scales. Allport maintains "...multiplied many times: prices are high, so too are taxes, war threatens, we grow fearful. There is no direct action we may take to do away with these deprivations and threats, therefore we respond to our frustration by scapegoating" (p. 12). It occurs due to severe impact of hardships and frustrations. There are, opines Gordon W. Allport, two versions of the scapegoat theory: Biblical and psychological. The latter follows the following sequence,

Figure 2

Allport's Model of Psychological Scapegoat Theory

Frustration → Aggression → Displacement

"Frustration generates aggression; aggression becomes displaced upon relatively defenseless 'goats'; this displaced hostility is rationalized and justified by blaming, projecting, stereotyping" (Allport, [1954](#), p. 350). The concept of aggression has been drawn upon by Sigmund Freud when he writes, "Men do not find it easy to do without satisfaction of this tendency to aggression that is in them" (p. 354). Following this idea some psychoanalysts have studied the predominance of aggressiveness in

infants, interpreting the act of feeding as destructive devouring and sucking as an attack. Displacement, however, is interchanged with projection, which is defined as “the tendency to attribute falsely to other people’s motives or traits that are our own” (p. 382).

Emile Durkheim, however, takes all the human beings as sacred. In other words, for Durkheim scapegoating, in its all the forms, is a taboo. He puts in his essay “Individualism and the Intellectuals” which is considered as the sociological critique of the rite of scapegoating, “And since each of us incarnates something of humanity, each individual consciousness contains something divine and thus finds itself marked with a character which renders it sacred and thus inviolable” (Doubt, [2007](#), p. 215). Rights cannot be violated even by the state since rights are above the state. Because the best and most efficient and rational way of governing people is to respect their human rights.

Scapegoating oscillates between being a mere ritual to an ideological pattern in Charlie Campbell’s hand. It is, as he comments “no longer a way of safeguarding a community, but instead one that protects one or two people. Every time there is a catastrophic event, the majority finds a minority to blame” (Campbell, [2012](#), p. 17). In the introductory chapters, he builds a connection of scapegoating to Adam and Eve. “In the beginning there was blame. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent” (p. 1). For him, our refusal to accept our responsibility is our genuine sin. The very exile from the Garden of Eden confirms it. However, no one can be blamed because the blame game is an inbuilt system, which allows a subject to spend an unexamined life by deflecting the guilt elsewhere. In his conception, too, a minority is a hub to exercise scapegoating. “We blame...targeting minority and marginalized groups when things go wrong” (Campbell, [2012](#), p. 1). Interestingly he attacks all the fields by pointing out their spear headers’ blame shifting attitude, “Marx blamed the capital system, Dawkins religion, and Freud thought it all came down to sex. Larkin blamed our parents, Atkins the potato, and Mohamed Al Fayed still says it’s all Prince Philip’s fault” (p. 1). In his approach too, scapegoating emerges out of blame shifting first and operates on a higher level.

Ali’s novel embodies scapegoating first when Nazneen moves to London along with her husband, Chanu. It is a clear instance of predilection, which Allport calls the first step towards scapegoating.

Interestingly, the family's journey to London is very much in line with the steps of scapegoating pointed by Allport. Nazneen's journey from passive acceptance to self-assertion is punctuated by instances of scapegoating, both internal and external. She, in the beginning of the novel accepts, "What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne" (Ali, [2003](#), p. 16). It from here that the anxiety and frustration start accumulating in Nazneen which ends up in "the unchanging nature of what lay beneath" towards the end of the novel (p. 492). First, she tries to internalize the frustrations of her controlled life, affected by her husband Chanu who scapegoats British society for his failure. Chanu embodies Allport's idea that when individuals face personal challenges stemming from socio-economic frustrations, they may shift blame onto an 'other', in this case. Later, the new society proves discriminatory and oppressive for them.

Chanu discusses with Nazneen,

It is the white under class...most afraid of people like me...people like him, we are the only thing standing in the way of them sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, they are above something. (Ali, [2003](#), p. 38)

It is the voice of a member of a minority group, whose function is to hold the powerful high. Moreover, the conflicts within the Bangladeshi community, particularly in response to the rise of fundamentalist ideologies represented by characters like Karim, depicts how internal scapegoating exists. The community's struggles with integration, identity and economic hardship lead to a fragmentation where blame is directed towards those who either assimilate too much or too little. Karim's radicalism is like an attempt to redirect the community's anxieties away from internal problems and towards an external scapegoat, which is Western cultural imperialism and political oppression.

Gender is an important axis of scapegoating in *Brick Lane*. Weak agents like Nazneen and her sister Hasina undergo blaming and victimization within the context of conventional patriarchal society. They are seen responsible the male failures and frustrations. The very aspect of the novel shows connection with Allport's idea that the process of scapegoating does not only operate on intergroup relations level but also impacts intragroup conflicts where less powerful or weak strata of society

faces first blame and later aggression. Ali, however, paints scapegoating as a multi-layered function or/and process that is pointed out by Allport. It revolves around how economic, gendered and cultural failures and frustrations are shifted towards fragile, silenced and vulnerable groups that, in final stage, lead to social fragmentation and personal turmoil. This analytical aspect develops and advances our understanding of the novel's engagement with the outcomes of displaced aggression in othered groups and societies. Moreover the immigrants' experience of cultural dislocation in the novel is common with systemic frustrations, which caters social marginalization and economic instability. These factors and stressors provide a fertile ground for scapegoating that is depicted by Karim and Chanu in the novel. Chanu's continuous failure to achieve his most wanted destination finally ends up in blaming the British society, which shifts his attention from his personal disqualifications to other less important things.

Karim, by using religious radicalism, performs a more authentic form of scapegoating. More specifically, his fundamentalist religious ideas are celebrated among down trodden people who feel alienated, oppressed and so forth, and are the easy targets of those more powerful. This aspect encapsulates Allport's idea of the exploitation of group frustrations in the hands of religious and political leaders in order to direct anger towards a third party or an external enemy. It is the most dangerous form of scapegoating for side by side, it maintains purpose and unity within the targeted groups but also perpetuates division and conflict in the larger societal backdrop. In *Brick Lane* scapegoating operates also on intra communal level. The immigrant community's internal struggles, for instance, the tug of war between pressures of assimilation and traditional values, ends up in frustration and blaming. Broader cultural frustrations and anxieties prey, most often, on women. Nazneen's and Hasina's experiences are vocal of the gender dimensions of scapegoating, where societal and familial negative outcomes are often shifted onto females. It comes very much near to Allport's commentary that within any frustrated group, the weak and silenced people often defined by age, gender or social and economic status become an easy prey for blame and failure.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the theoretical application of Allport's idea of scapegoating to Ali's *Brick Lane* enriched understanding of the socio-psychological, economic, political, religious and so forth aspects of the

novel. More specifically, it projected the new dynamics of the novel's depiction of different immigrant communities in a foreign land. Allport's theory maintains that scapegoating results from aggressions and frustrations, often pushed towards a less powerful individual or group who is scapegoated for broader societal or familial benefits or blamed for failures. This framework can be seen in how certain characters in the novel attribute their personal and communal difficulties to other members of their community, or to broader ethnic and racial groups. Nazneen's marriage to a person who is in his forties is the first instance of scapegoating in the novel. Hasina tries to disrupt scapegoating by going against the traditional role assigned to her as a daughter. There are many instances of scapegoating in the novel. However, in the context of diasporic literature, it would be a novel scholarship if further studies are conducted through Allport's idea of predilection, which triggers the process of scapegoating. The very act of moving from one's own country to a strange place is simply an act of preferring one culture over others. Here, the immigrants scapegoat their government, country, land, culture and so forth to justify their migration. The cycle repeats itself when the migrants become a periphery and are scapegoated by the center because they are minorities.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data availability is not applicable as no new data has been created.

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