

**A STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MIGRANT IDENTITIES AND THE
PSYCHOANALYTIC ROOTS OF NON-BELONGING IN MONICA ALI'S *BRICK*
*LANE***

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BY

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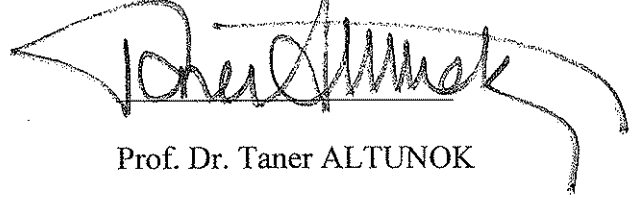
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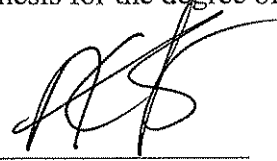
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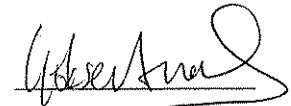
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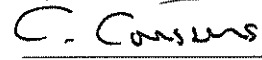
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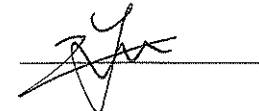
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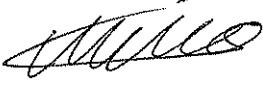
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STATEMENT OF NON-PLAGIARISM

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MIGRANT IDENTITIES AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC ROOTS OF NON-BELONGING IN MONICA ALI'S *BRICK LANE*

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Monica Ali's novel, *Brick Lane* (2003) has become the subject of a critical controversy concerning Ali's depiction of a migrant diaspora living in London. Ali has been criticized for writing about a community she does not truly belong to or understand. The novel has therefore been judged in terms of its integrity as a post-colonial text. However, this thesis will demonstrate that rather than attempting to construct a postcolonial critique of migrant experience the novel constructs a detailed exploration of the psychological responses of particular individuals to the traumas of migration and marginalization, alongside an investigation of the psychological roots of the current conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups. The thesis represents an interdisciplinary study, combining a detailed reading of *Brick Lane* with recent psychoanalytic analyses of personality development and the effects of geographical displacement and migration on the individual and collective psyche. The introduction will present a brief discussion of recent literary and political debates concerning *Brick Lane*. The rest of the thesis will

analyze the novel through the ideas of three contemporary psychoanalytic theorists. In Chapter 1, Salman Akhtar's work on the psychological causes and consequences of migration will be used to interpret Ali's depiction of the characters' complex and diverse responses to their situations. In Chapter 2, Vamik Volkan's exploration of the psychological factors behind the identification of enemies and allies in collective thinking will be brought to bear on the novel's treatment of group conflict. Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the major characters through the work of another recent theorist, J. F. Masterson, whose studies of the roots and consequences of disorders of the self have widened the field of theories of personality to include ways in which unresolved hidden conflicts, especially in childhood, may manifest themselves as disorders of the self in later life. In uncovering the connections between the psychological and political issues raised in the novel, the thesis will offer an original contribution to the debate concerning *Brick Lane*'s status in what has been termed the "new English literature."

Keywords: Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*, Psychoanalysis, Migration, Identity, Conflict.

ÖZ

MONICA ALI'NIN *BRICK LANE* ROMANINDA KİMLİK VE KARMAŞANIN PSİKOLOJİK KÖKENLERİ

ÇAKMAKTEPE, Müzeher

MONICA ALI'NIN *BRICK LANE* ROMANINDA AİT OLAMAMANIN PSIKOANALİTİK KÖKENLERİ VE GÖÇMEN KİMLİĞİ ÜZERİNE PSİKOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMA

Monica Ali'nin *Brick lane* romanı eleştirilenlerce kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Ali tam anlamıyla ait olmadığı ya da anlamadığı bir göçmen grubu hakkında yazmakla eleştirildi. Bu yüzden roman sömürgecilik sonrası döneme ait bir eser olarak ele alındı..Ancak bu tezin gösterdiği gibi roman göçmen deneyimini sömürgecilik sonrası eleştiriye tabi tutmaktan çok, bireylerin göçe ve yabancılaşmaya verdikleri psikolojik tepkileri detaylı bir şekilde ele almaktadır. Bu tez, *Brick Lane* romanındaki kişilik gelişiminin yakın zamanda geliştirilmiş psikoanalitik kuramlarla incelemesini sunan ayrıca, göçün ve coğrafik yer değiştirmenin birey ve grup psikolojisi üzerine etkisini içeren interdisipliner bir çalışmadır. Bu tez *Brick Lane* romanının politik ve edebi eleştirilerini göz önüne sermekle birlikte romanı üç çağdaş psikoanalitik teorisyenin öne sürdüğü düşünceler çerçevesinde de inceleyecektir. Birinci bölümde Salman Akhtar'ın göçün psikolojik nedenleri ve sonuçlarıyla ilgili eseri Ali'nin karmaşık görüntü sergileyen göçmen karakterlerinin, durumlarına verdikleri farklı tepkileri analiz etmek için

kullanılacaktır. İkinci bölümde Vamik Volkan'ın grupsal düzeyde düşman ve yandaş belirleme üzerine düşünceleri romandaki grup çatışmalarını açıklamak için kullanacaktır. Üçüncü bölümde romandaki ana karakterlerin kişilik analizi, kişilik bozukluğunun nedenleri ve sonuçları üzerine çalışmaları olan James F. Masterson aracılığıyla gözler önüne sunulacaktır. Masterson'un, özellikle çocuklukta anneye olan çözümlenmemiş çatışma ve bastırılmış duyguların ilerki yaşantıda kişilik bozukluğu olarak ortaya çıkabileceği üzerine çalışmaları, bu alandaki çalışmalara kapsamlılık kazandırmıştır. Romanda belirtilen psikolojik ve politik meselelerin aydınlatılmasıyla birlikte bu tez, İngiliz edebiyatında Brick Lane'nin yeri üzerine yapılan tartışmalara katkıda bulunacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*, Psikoanaliz, Göç, Kimlik, Çatışma.

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1. INTRODUCTION

MONICA ALI'S BRICK LANE: CONTEXTS AND DEBATES.

Since the Second World War the English literary scene has undergone a radical transformation, as authors formerly associated with the margins of society and culture have come to occupy an increasingly central position. The new writing produced by migrants from Britain's former colonies and their descendants has introduced a new dimension to fiction focusing on new subjects and genres, so that it has been termed by some critics the "new English literature" (King, 2004). As Bruce King has emphasized, this change can be traced to the post-war wave of immigration to Britain:

Unlike previous period changes this one had its basis in a large influx of peoples from elsewhere, especially those of non-European origins, which resulted in the literature of England taking different perspectives from those in the past, having new concerns, and often being focused on the immigrants, their children, and their place in society. (1)

After the arrival of the Empire Windrush, the first ship to bring migrant workers to England in 1948, the number of immigrants coming to Britain drastically increased. Works of literature belonging to this era contrast dramatically with those by earlier writers like Rudyard Kipling, who described colonial life from the perspective of the white imperialist. King divides the literature associated with this transformation into three different phases. In the early phase, mourning for the motherland, nostalgia, and fantasies about going home are dominant themes; in the second phase, authors frequently explore problems of integration into

host culture; finally, the authors of the third phase, which is still in progress, are mainly concerned with the struggles to be accepted as part of British identity and history (8). The most recent published works dealing with the subject of ethnicity and migration can be associated with this category. Many of these works examine the nature of migrant diasporas within the host culture. Important examples include *Sour Sweet* by Timothy Mo (1982), *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith (2000), *Small Island* by Andrea Levy (2004), and *Brick Lane*, by Monica Ali (2003), which represents the focus of this thesis.

Many critics have identified these novels with a tradition of post-colonial literature (Fernandez, 144; Sariarslan, 8). However, the novels of Ali, Levy and Smith differ from those of the earlier postcolonial tradition in the sense that their position as British-born writers situate them at the core of British society and its literary production (Fernandez, 144). Nevertheless, they describe the struggle of first and second-generation migrants to find a space in British society. *Brick Lane* attracted a lot of attention from critics when it was first published, because of the author's mixed ethnic background as well as its theme. Monica Ali was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, but grew up in London, but resists being labelled as a black or Asian British novelist (Ali, "Where I'm Coming From," 4). Ali has been discussed both as a "black British" author (Weedon, 17-35), she is also sometimes described as simply British (Fernandez, 145). Nevertheless, like Smith and Levy, Ali is normally studied in the light of colonial and postcolonial theory (ibid; Upstone, 336-349; Boehmer, 230). *Brick Lane* explores such issues as discrimination, integration, the notions of belonging and exclusion, and racial and ethnic tensions. The novel is mainly concerned with the personal development of

a Bangladeshi woman, Nazneen, in England. The name “Brick Lane” refers to an area of East London where many immigrants have settled from diverse countries, and in which there are many conflicts between different ethnic groups. According to Yasmin Hussain, Brick Lane represents a transitional place where people either manage to succeed in overcoming their problems and stay in Britain, or fail and eventually leave (94).

Brick Lane explores the theme of migration, describing the shock of arrival, the process of settlement, and the subsequent problems involved in the transition from one country to another, as well as from a rural environment to an urban (Hussain, 94). Ali demonstrates the impact of migration on women’s lives in particular, and the wider changes families and individuals undergo after migration. Nazneen is forced to come to England because of an arranged marriage. Her younger sister, Hasina, has run away to make a love-marriage without her father’s permission, so Nazneen’s father finds her a husband in England and sends her away. Nazneen is nineteen and Chanu is forty when they marry. In England Nazneen experiences many problems. First she does not know the language; secondly, the Bangladeshi community in Brick Lane is very strict, so she is initially not allowed to go out alone. She is very homesick, and longs for her village. She also misses her sister deeply, and is distressed when Hasina writes to tell her that she has run away from her abusive husband, and is struggling to survive alone in Dhaka. Nazneen feels very isolated, partly because her alienation from her environment leads her to resist engaging with others, and partly because of Chanu’s inability to empathize with her. She loses her first baby, Raqib, but then gives birth to two girls, Shahana

and Bibi. While raising her children she learns English from them. She tries to mitigate her sorrows with her daughters.

However, her life changes when she falls in love with a young British-born Bangladeshi, Karim, and has an affair with him. For the first time in her life she feels that someone cares for her. It makes her excited but at the same time she feels guilty because she is committing a sin. As their affair progresses, she realizes that Karim, like Chanu, is trying to dominate her life. She understands that he does not recognize her true identity, but just sees her as a naive village girl: he calls her “the real thing” (*Brick Lane*, 320), alluding to his image of her as a true Bangladeshi woman, unspoilt by the West. Eventually, Nazneen builds a life for herself by rejecting both Chanu and Karim: she chooses not to return to Bangladesh with Chanu, and also refuses to marry Karim.

Brick Lane was phenomenally successful, and was made into a film in 2007. It has been widely discussed by critics because of its intense exploration of the experiences of a minority (Bangladeshi) culture in Britain. However, it has also become the subject of a heated debate concerning its complex political position as an exploration of a marginalized diaspora in Britain, comprising a formerly colonized people, and a narrative which has seemed to some to valorize Western modes of thinking over Eastern. Ali herself has come under attack as a Westernized woman seeking to represent a culture she no longer belongs to or understands. The following section will describe and evaluate some of the critical arguments concerning *Brick Lane*. The rest of the thesis will go on to suggest ways in which a focus on Ali’s sophisticated use of psychological realism may

allow a deeper understanding of the novel's world and her achievement to emerge.

A major aspect of the controversy surrounding the novel concerns Ali's treatment of Bangladeshi culture and characters. Ali has been criticized for negative and sometimes stereotypical depictions of Bangladeshis (Perfect, 110; Hiddleston, 57).¹ In postcolonial discourse, the ability of the formerly colonized but Westernized other to inhabit the language and literary traditions of the oppressor has been termed "mimicry" (Ashcroft et al, 142). Michael Perfect has argued that rather than representing attempts to propagate and strengthen stereotypes, Ali's criticism of Bangladeshi culture and society functions to create an alternative, positive perspective on the experience of migration and diaspora living, (Perfect, 110). By tracing Nazneen's unexpected progress towards integration into the British culture and community, Nazneen's story represents a celebration of individual resourcefulness, and can therefore be seen as a form of bildungsroman, or narrative of development (ibid). *Brick Lane*'s intensive focus on Nazneen's self-actualization, and eventual acceptance of life in Britain, associates it with this traditional Western genre, particularly as it traces Nazneen's story from her early childhood onwards (Perfect, 109).

Alistair Cormack has also discussed the novel's use of the realist tradition, specifically its linear narrative, focus on individual growth, "linguistic transparency, and [...] invitation to the reader to 'identify' with the characters"

¹ For a survey and discussion of this debate, which attracted the attention of the media when street protests disrupted the filming of *Brick Lane* in 2006, see Appignanesi's article for English PEN.

(696). Cormack suggest that Ali's use of a traditional Western technique is problematic in the context of the new multicultural English literature:

On the one hand, realism ceases to be traditional, because it is called on to depict this new social juncture; the form's limits become visible, as do the presumptions by which it works. On the other...what I will term the 'doubleness' of hybrid cultural and psychological structures is flattened when it is represented in a form that stresses linear development towards self-awareness. (696-697)

Cormack suggests that this conflict means that "the novel's narrative voice is unable fully to map the consciousness of the central character, Nazneen" (697). In other words, there is a fundamental conflict between the confident representation of reality and psychological experience associated with the Western realist technique and the more complex and unstable notions of reality and subjectivity associated with post-colonial writing. This thesis will deal with some of these issues by analyzing the ways in which Ali subordinates straightforward political critique to an intensive focus on complex psychological responses to phenomena.

Unlike Cormack, Perfect does not regard the novel's double perspective as problematic, describing *Brick Lane* as a "multicultural bildungsroman", or a deliberate fusion of Western novelistic tradition and the postcolonial literary tradition in which formerly silenced or marginalized 'others' claim a central role and voice (109-110). Similarly, Jane Hiddleston suggests that the novel does not merely represent a 'Westernized' narrative of an individual triumphing against adversity, but can also be read as a postmodern and deliberately subversive intervention in the Western Orientalist discourses that, according to Said and other postcolonial critics, made the East appear exotic and unknowable. Hiddleston suggests that the narrative's persistent use of images of "shapes and shadows" in depicting her characters and their perceptions (for example, characters frequently

glimpse the outside world, and are in turn glimpsed within the narrative, through curtains, windows and shadows) “announces Ali’s daring attempt to give form to the hazy figures that flicker behind the surface of persistent stereotypes and misconceptions” (58). Hiddleston suggests that Ali’s “gesture of pulling back the curtains can be seen as the latest, modern version in a series of endeavours to unveil the mysteries of an ‘Eastern’ culture [...] invit[ing] us to discover the occluded lives of the disenfranchised, while also, paradoxically, showing the pervasive influence of myth in our apprehension of ‘Eastern’ cultures (59-60). Ali’s attempt to shed light on hidden, particularly female, lives, therefore, can be associated with a postcolonial agenda, while also making her novel a postmodern text, “whose metatextuality absolves it from charges of cultural commodification” (Hiddleston, 71).

As this thesis will show, Ali places her local and particular narrative within the political context of the world-wide conflict between East and West, Islam and Christianity. The events of 9/11 are viewed through the eyes of characters who are caught within this conflict, regarded as the dangerous other by the host culture, and at the same time attempting to deal with the growing radicalization of their own community. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 3 below.

Critics have therefore been divided in their responses to the novel; while one group sees it as a Westernized betrayal of Eastern experience and perspectives, another regards it as innovative in its attempt to create a new kind of genre, fusing postcolonial discourse with Western literary tradition. However, this persistent focus on the political status of the novel has tended to overlook what this thesis will suggest is Ali’s main achievement: a detailed exploration of the relationship

between psychological development and cultural experience, an analysis of the psychological causes and consequences of migration, and an attempt to relate individual psychology to the psychological identities of broader groups and communities. As this thesis will show, Ali's attention to psychological conflicts reflects recent theoretical developments in the fields of migrant psychology, the evolution of group allegiances, and the effects of culture and personal history on individual personality formation.

This thesis represents an interdisciplinary study, combining a study of *Brick Lane* with recent psychoanalytic analyses of personality development and the effects of geographical displacement and migration on the individual and collective psyche. In particular, the thesis explores the characters in terms of the psychic structures underlying their representation in the novel, as well as the processes of mourning they undergo. The novel examines the problems experienced by immigrants living in a new culture, issues of integration, the relationships between first and second-generation immigrants, and the migrants' attitudes towards and relationships with the host culture and their own diasporic and native communities.

The novel's main characters, Nazneen, Chanu, Shahana, Bibi, Nazneen's friend, Razia, and Chanu's friend, Doctor Azad, are carefully differentiated in psychological terms. Ali shows how the stages following an immigrant's first steps in a different land, and the problems of integration and diasporic living, have a profound effect on his or her psychological well-being, but can also be associated with his or her earlier cultural and familial experiences. For example, Nazneen grows up and marries into a culture within which women are devalued and treated as commodities. Moreover, in exploring the unconscious lives of the

characters, their dreams, fantasies and compulsions, Ali attempts to penetrate beneath the surface of postcolonial critique and extend the boundaries of realism.

Brick Lane also examines the current international problems stemming from globalization, the conflict between different ethnic groups, and resistance to cultural difference, in psychological terms. Today's world is getting closer with the effects of globalization; distances between countries and communities have become smaller, and states have become far more heterogeneous than in the past. Critics have therefore read Ali's novel as an interrogation of the effects of globalization. Françoise Kral has examined the consequences of what she describes as the "new geographies", in which people are brought together because of increased mobility and communication, but may also suffer a growing sense of in-betweenness and unbelonging (65). Alfred Lopez has also associated *Brick Lane* with what he calls the "postglobal" era, in which "globalization as a hegemonic discourse stumbles when it experiences a crises of setback" (509). According to Lopez:

As the aftermaths of each of the global catalysms of the last decade have amply demonstrated, it is the poor, the disenfranchised and marginalized who bear the brunt of suffering and anxiety set in motion by the economic, political and cultural changes unleashed by globalization at the level of neighbourhoods and communities. (510)

Lopez associates the novel with the post 9/11 era. After the September 11th attacks on the United States in 2001, and the July 7th attacks on Britain in 2005, the divergence between the Western and Eastern (especially Muslim) worlds deepened. On the one hand, America and Britain's invasion of Iraq, and the

Intifada in Palestine, caused great uneasiness within the Muslim world, and the repercussions from these events did not take long to reach the Muslims in the West. These attacks led those Muslim immigrants who already felt marginalized to become more attached to their religion and ethnicity, and in this way find the opportunity to express their problems through violence and political actions.

According to psychologists of migration, second-generation immigrants are especially affected by these phenomena, as they need more support for their personalities, which have not become established (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 142). In *Brick Lane* the character of Karim, Nazneen's young lover, demonstrates the ambiguity of second-generation migrants concerning where to belong, and their search for identity through religion, and through emphasizing the differences between themselves and members of the host culture. Karim becomes increasingly radicalized after 9/11. From this point of view, the novel demonstrates the way in which the attacks raised the question of how to be a Muslim and live in the post-global world (Lopez, 523).

This thesis presents a close reading of the novel through the work of three contemporary psychoanalytic theorists: Vamik Volkan, Salman Akhtar, and James F. Masterson. The works of these theorists sheds light on different aspects of Ali's novel, illuminating issues surrounding personal development, the effects of migration, the circumstances of marginalized groups and migrant women in the West, and the complex reasons for social membership of groups. In their intensive focus on the ways in which psychoanalytic techniques can unravel the complex psychic structures affecting notions of cultural belonging or unbelonging, responses to migration and forms of oppression, and finally, the personal

responses and choices that affect the outcomes of people's lives, the works of these theorists can be read fruitfully alongside one another.

Chapter 2 will explore the treatment of the psychological experience of migration in the novel, with reference to Salman Akhtar's work on the the psychological effects of immigration. This discussion includes phenomena such as nostalgia, doubleness, 'going home' syndrome, mourning and rehabilitation. The main study used here is Akhtar's *Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and Transformation* (1999); however, some of his other works will also be referred to. Chapter 3 will read the novel in terms of Volkan's theories of the psychological issues that lie behind collective conflicts, and in particular the reasons for and contexts of the alienation of the migrant (both first and second generation) from the host culture. The two main studies used here are *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies* (1988) and *Killing in the Name of Identity: A Study of Bloody Conflicts* (2006). Chapter 3 will examine some of the psychological characteristics of the characters in terms of Masterson's identification of three main disorders: schizoid, narcissistic, and borderline. The chapter will also discuss the connections between these disorders of the self and the characters' personal histories and cultural, social and gendered positions, to which Ali gives careful attention.

Overall, the thesis will argue that critical readings of the novel which focus on the author's own ethnic and cultural background, or which attempt to read *Brick Lane* only in terms of postcolonial "writing back", are inadequate to understand Ali's achievement. The novel represents a careful psychological study in which different personalities and their different histories and choices are put under the microscope. The novel also demonstrates that circumstances of ethnicity and

migration are important factors in constructing the sense of self. The differences between the characters also relate to wider theories concerning the psychological roots and consequences of identifying what Volkan terms “enemies and allies.”

CHAPTER 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON IMMIGRATION AND IDENTITY IN *BRICK LANE* (THE THEORIES OF SALMAN AKHTAR)

2.1. PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION.

The following chapter will explore *Brick Lane* in terms of recent theories concerning the psychological motivations for, and effects of, migration. An important early study of the psychology of immigrants is *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Immigration and Exile* by Leon and Rebecca Grinberg (1984). The Grinbergs themselves lived in three different countries, so had the opportunity to contribute their own experiences to their study. They discuss both normal and pathological reactions to migration, and the mourning process immigrants frequently experience in exile. They describe the early consequence of migration as the phenomenon of “disorienting anxiety”, which arises from:

[p]roblems in differentiating one’s feelings about two subjects of interest and conflict: the country and people one has left behind and the new environment...The emigrant experiences this as if his parents were divorced, and he engages in fantasies of forming an alliance with one against the other. Confusion increases when culture, language, place points of reference, memories and experiences become mixed up and superimposed on one another. Confused states also result from defensive attempts to stave off persecutory anxieties in the face of the unknown. (87-88)

The Grinbergs use Melanie Klein's theories concerning guilt (1948) to explore the mourning process of immigrants, and the guilt they feel concerning those left behind. Klein described this guilt as either paranoid or depressive: in paranoid guilt the self is perceived as an innocent victim, and the 'other' (the host culture and its people) is seen as an oppressor. Mistrust, fear, rage, greed, and ruthlessness predominate. In the depressive position, the self is aware of the losses and accepts them, but demonstrates mending mechanisms, such as seeing the self and other as not wholly good or bad (Grinberg and Grinberg, 89).

A more recent study of immigration and exile has been conducted by Salman Akhtar, who is also an Indian immigrant living in America. While the Grinbergs' study is based on Kleinian analysis, Akhtar deploys Margaret Mahler's theory of the separation-individuation process (1999, cited in Volkan, *Killing in the Name of Identity*, 98). He describes the achievement of the immigrant's acculturation as the "third individuation", the first occurring in early childhood, and the second during adolescence (ibid). In this chapter, Salman Akhtar's research into immigration psychology will be analyzed in detail, and used to illuminate aspects of *Brick Lane*.

In his work *Immigration and Identity* (1999) Akhtar begins by noting that even under the best circumstances immigration is a traumatic experience, before going on to discuss the factors which affect the psychological outcomes of immigration (6). These have several dimensions, such as whether the immigration is going to be temporary or permanent, the degree of choice in leaving one's country, the possibility of revisiting the home country, and the reasons for leaving one's country (7). It cannot be denied that the immigration of a temporary ambassador

to a country and sudden exile from one's country for political or economic reasons are not the same. Similarly, those who can easily and frequently visit their countries of origin suffer less than those who are barred from such cultural and emotional refuelling. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen suffers from being unable to visit her country, especially since she comes to England against her will as a result of an arranged marriage:

She looked and she saw that she was trapped inside this body; inside this room, inside this flat, inside this concrete slab of entombed humanity. They had nothing to do with her. For a couple of beats, she closed her eyes and smelled the jasmine that grew close to the well, heard the chickens scratching in the hot earth, felt the sunlight that warmed her cheeks and made dance patterns on her eyelids. (*Brick Lane*, 61)

Nazneen experiences her first months in England as a form of imprisonment, in a strange country, an apartment block which she sees as a tomb, a room which she regards as hostile, and finally a body which she regards as no longer her own. At this point in the novel Nazneen's experience of the new country does not extend beyond her immediate environment and bodily sensations. Her only means of escape is by returning to her home environment through fantasy. These mental returns to her home country occur in both waking fantasy and dreams, and are much more colourful and immediate than her perceptions of life in England:

Nazneen fell asleep on the sofa. She looked out across jade-green rice fields and swam in the cool dark lake. She walked arm-in-arm to school with Hasina, and skipped part of the way and fell and they dusted their knees with their hands. And the mynah birds called from the trees, and the goats fretted by, and the big sad water buffaloes passed like a funeral. And heaven, which was high above, was wide and empty and the land stretched

out ahead and she could see to the very end of it, where the earth smudged the sky in a dark blue line. (*Brick Lane*, 16)

Akhtar emphasises that immigration is a complex experience which must be analyzed from several perspectives. To begin with, he suggests that the individual's age on migration is important. Old people are more vulnerable to the traumatic changes caused by immigration than the young (1999, 11). Although young, Nazneen has been forced to migrate against her will. However, her youth means that she is eventually able to reconcile herself to life in England.

Nazneen's children, who have never been to Bangladesh, resist Chanu's attempts to force them to identify with his homeland. According to Grinberg and Grinberg, children are hardly ever immigrants in the true sense of the word: "Parents may be voluntary or involuntary emigrants but children are always 'exiled': they are not the ones who decide to leave and they can't decide to return at will" (125). Migrant children might either identify themselves with the host culture, like Nazneen's eldest daughter, Shahana, or turn to a mythologized ideal of their homeland, like Nazneen's lover, Karim, who has also never visited Bangladesh. Shanana attempts to reject her Bengali heritage:

Shahana didn't want to listen to Bengali classical music. Her written Bengali was shocking. She wanted to wear jeans. She hated her kameez and spoiled her entire wardrobe by pouring paint on them. If she could choose between baked beans and dahl it was no contest. When Bangladesh was mentioned she pulled a face. She didn't know and wouldn't learn that Tagore was more than poet and Nobel laureate, and no less than the true father of her nation. Shahana didn't care. Shahana didn't want to go back home. (*Brick Lane*, 147)

Within the novel, Shanana frequently complains about her lack of agency: she tells Chanu that she did not ask to be born in England, and does not want to leave the country; she even tries to run away. The character of Shahana demonstrates

the pressure children of migrants may be placed under by their parents to preserve their culture and religion:

Parental expectations about transmitting their religious faith to their children can present an undue pressure on the children who are living in Western culture. The pressures children feel have increased even more, in lieu of more recent increases in racism and religious hatred toward Moslem families. In addition to their normal developmental tasks, these children have to witness parental mourning of their lost motherland. They are expected to learn religious principles, as well as practising them on a daily basis. (Mann, 183)

According to psychanalytic theorists of migration, having been exposed to a greater than ordinary difference between the familial and host cultures, the adolescent immigrant carries a double burden (Martinez, 1994; Mehta, 1998; Phinney et al, 1990). As Akhtar has said, s/he may find her/himself oscillating between the norms of the home culture and those of the host culture. At home s/he is burdened with the cultural obligations which s/he finds hard to rebel against, feeling assimilated to the culture at large, in comparison to her/his parents, but regarded as too ethnic by her/his peers (*Immigration and Identity*, 144).

Akhtar also suggests that the pre-emigration character of the immigrant plays an important role in determining his or her response to migration. People who lack rootedness (particularly those with schizoid characteristics), those who possess great ambition (narcissistic individuals), those who love novelty in life (anti-social individuals), and those who wish to get away from perceived persecution by others (paranoid individuals), are more prone to migration (*Immigration and Identity*, 16). These categories of personality disorder and differentiation will be discussed in more depth in relation to *Brick Lane* in Chapter 4, below. However, if we look briefly at the subject from the perspective of Chanu's personality, he has chosen to come to England and formed high expectations about his future,

such as a good career and income. Since he considers himself an important intellectual he wants to communicate this to the English; but since he puts too much value on himself he becomes disappointed, and finally decides to return home.

The psychological outcome of immigration is also related to the nature of the country or region one has left behind. Migration from a poor country may trigger an unconscious guilt. For example, refugees may feel guilty for surviving while others have not, a phenomenon known as “survivor guilt” (Awad, 6). On the other hand, migrating from an affluent country to a less affluent one may also be related to an unconscious guilt. Guilt is common among immigrants from Israel, for example. They feel guilty for leaving ‘the Promised Land’, and believe that sooner or later they will go back (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 18). In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen continually feels guilty for leaving Hasina in Bangladesh: “What was Hasina doing? This thought came to her all the time. *What is she doing right now?* It was not even a thought. It was a feeling, a stab in the lungs. Only God knew when she would see her again” (*Brick Lane*, 16).

Another factor which influences the psychological outcome of immigration can be related to cultural differences between the adopted and the home countries. As Griberg and Grinberg have said: “Clearly, the immigrant must give up part of his individuality, at least temporarily, in order to become integrated in the new environment. The greater the difference between the new community and the one to which he belonged, the more he will have to give up” (90). Prominent differences may include attire, food, language, music, wit and humour, political ideologies, degrees and varieties of permissible sexuality, extent of autonomy

versus familial enmeshment, the premium upon self-assertion versus self-effacement, subjective experience of time, and the extent and nature of communication between sexes and generations

(Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 19). A male immigrant coming from a Muslim country in which there is little interaction between men and women to a Western country may find women's behaviour towards him inappropriate. Also, the concept of punctuality may be perceived differently between Eastern and Western cultures, since for the former time is associated much more with sharing something with others, while for the latter it is related with gaining commodities or wealth, as a consequence of capitalism and industrialization:

For the East, relatively speaking, past, present, and future merge into one another; for the West they are discrete entities. For the East experience in time is like water collected in a pool (stagnant perhaps); for the West time is more like water flowing in a stream, and one is acutely aware that what flows away, flows away forever. (Pande, 428-429)

Nazneen's fantasies of her homeland represent a return to a past she feels remains constant: "In Gouripour, in her dreams, she was always a girl and Hasina was always six...When she woke she thought *I know what I would wish* but by now she knew that where she wanted to go was not a different place but a different time" (*Brick Lane*, 35).

According to psychoanalytic theorists, differences concerning food and language stand out to be the most important ones to affect the immigrant's life:

Food takes on special relevance because it symbolizes the earliest structural link with the mother or the mother's breast. Thus the immigrant may vehemently reject the new country's local dishes and nostalgically seek out the foods of his own country... refuge in food [is sought] to ease the anxiety, thus recreating an idealized breast that is generous and inexhaustible, with which he tries to compensate for the many losses

during the move. He usually eats those meals in the presence of co-nationals, [and] they constitute a type of memory rite. (Grinberg and Grinberg, 79)

In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen remembers breaking down when the staff on the airline as she travels to England offer her breakfast cereal, a hitherto unknown food. Food plays a major part in the novel. For example, Nazneen first begins to be reconciled to Chanu when she discovers that he can cook. When they visit Dr. Azad and his wife, they are deeply shocked when they are served British convenience food.

Perhaps the language barrier is the most difficult one. The inability to speak her mother tongue gives the immigrant pain. According to Julia Kristeva, the migrant has:

[t]o live with sounds, logics, that are separated from the nocturnal memory of the body... You learn to use another instrument, like expressing yourself in algebra or on the violin... You have the impression that the new language is your resurrection: a new skin, a new sex. But the illusion is torn apart when you listen to yourself. (20)

In *Brick Lane*, however, Nazneen's integration into British culture is delayed by her lack of opportunities to learn English. When she tells Chanu that she would like to learn he tells her "It will come. Don't worry about it. Where's the need anyway?" (*Brick Lane*, 28). Nazneen's fragmented experience of English emphasizes her alienation from British culture: "Pub, pub, pub. Nazneen turned the word over in her mind, Another drop of English that she knew" (*Brick Lane*, 28). For Nazneen, gradual entry into the new culture and language, rather than depriving her of her true self, enables her to realize a new, more powerful identity.

For the immigrant, these factors increase a sense of cultural unbelonging and desire to search for his or her roots. The greater the difference between his or her

country of origin and country of adoption in this regard, the harder it is for the immigrant to mend his or her lacerated self (Akhtar, 1999, 20). The following poem by Nishat Akhtar expresses this phenomenon:

You wake up every morning to the reminder of God
The sun has cracked the East once again,
But your desire is for the West.
And shortly after people flood the market and streets,
The dirt begins to rise into the dry atmosphere.
You lean on the iron railing to your balcony,
Neglecting its intricacy.
Overlooking the palm trees.
Smog and overpopulation disgust you.
One day you will leave this place, in search of something better.
You will be surrounded by
Spotless suburbs,
Fresh air and
A naively cruel ignorance of the Other.
But you will convince yourself happy.
No longer will the indigenous call to prayer be your awakening,
Now it will be tormented cries of your future,
Lost in the colour of your skin.
And the sun sets in the West,
You will shed a tear,
Longing to be back in the East
Immigrant. (quoted in Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 20)

Here, the poet tries to express her difficulty in integrating her Eastern and Western identities, a conflict which causes the feeling of unbelonging. Nazneen's young lover, Karim, also experiences this feeling of unbelonging, and shows his inner conflicts through vacillations in his speech, clothing and ideology:

Karim had a new style. The gold necklace vanished; the jeans, shirts and trainers went as well...Karim put on panjabi-pyjama and a skullcap. He wore a sleeveless fleece and big boots with the laces left undone at the top...Nazneen felt that Karim did not want her to mention the new clothes. The matter was either too trivial or else too important to be discussed (*Brick Lane*, 312).

Reception by the host population is another influential factor in shaping the outcome of migration. The more monoethnic the society, the more difficult it is

for the immigrant to integrate into that community. Before the post-war immigration wave, the British community was a broadly homogenous culture. Therefore, the first major wave of post-war immigrants faced a lot of obstacles. As Akhtar has said, the newcomer might be seen as an interloper who will deprive the natives of economic opportunities and life resources, or, may be seen as the ones who provide work force for the country (*Immigration and Identity*, 23). The result may be prejudice and xenophobia on the part of the host culture. In *Brick Lane*, activists representing two different ethnic groups, the Bengal Tigers and the British Lion Hearts, always fall into disagreement. For example, in one of their leaflets the Lion Hearts write:

...And in religious instruction what will your child be taught? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? No. Krishna, Abraham and Muhammad. Christianity is being gently slaughtered. It is “only one” of the world’s “great religions”. Indeed, in our local schools you could be forgiven for thinking that Islam is the official religion. (*Brick Lane*, 207)

This quotation emphasises the group’s struggle to keep the society homogenous, an aim that can also be related to Volkan’s theory of “the need to have enemies and allies”, discussed in Chapter 3, below. As *Brick Lane* emphasizes, the children of immigrants are affected badly by these conflicts. Because of the double stress stemming from their seclusion from the host culture, and accusations of cultural or religious disloyalty from home, they may turn to drugs or alcohol. Nazneen’s friend, Razia, is unable to accept that her son is a heroin addict, even though the other Bangladeshi parents express their concern about it:

“Well, Jorina’s boy is in trouble. I heard that he drinks alcohol every day, even for breakfast. He can’t get out of bed unless he has a drink first, and then he’s good for nothing,” Razia shivered her large bony shoulders. “It makes me fear for my own children.” (*Brick Lane*, 38)

Akhtar also identifies the experience of efficacy in the new country as a factor accelerating the integration process: if the newcomer feels efficient in the new land, he or she may be more willing to integrate into the new community (1999, 25). The reverse will cause lots of problems. Unemployment, or working in jobs without maintaining a professional identity, are major problems for immigrants, and the consequent frustrations may cause autoimmune and psychosomatic disorders (ibid). In *Brick Lane*, Chanu regularly complains about his ulcer: this may be because disappointment about his career has triggered a stress-related illness:

... Do you know in six years I have not been late for on one single day! And only three sick days even with the ulcer. Some of my colleagues are very unhealthy, always going off sick with this or that. It's not something I could bring to Mr. Dalloway's attention. Even so, I feel he ought to be aware of it (*Brick Lane*, 25)

According to Akhtar, children who are born in the new land help the parents to develop ties to the adopted country by bringing the norms of the new culture home, especially when they begin to go to school (*Immigration and Identity*, 26). Akhtar also states that before they start school, story books and fairy tales originating within the host culture provide immigrant children with access to it, while later, music and television shows become more influential (ibid). Parents can also learn the adopted language from their children: Nazneen learns English from her children: "...it was the girls who taught her. Without lessons, textbooks or Razia's 'key phrases'. Their method was simple: they demanded to be understood" (*Brick Lane*, 159). Also, Nazneen's eventual decision not to go back home is mostly shaped by Shahana's fierce objections.

Akhtar also analyzes the effects of bodily characteristics on responses to migration. Firstly, if there is a great difference of skin colour, eyes and body between the newcomer and host community then the immigrant's acceptance by the host group will be slower. Abbasi notes that:

...there can be hardly be a more striking example of the negative power of blackness than the current plight of the black Ethiopian Jews in Israel...These are Jews who were brought back to Israel in 1991 and were extended full citizenship. However, their condition in Israel is already complicated by the development of ghettos, welfare dependence, and poor education. Even as a Jew, being black has become a problem for these people in a country that ostensibly welcomed them home. (138)

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu complains about the double standards of his boss concerning promotion, and says he will not be promoted unless he paints his skin pink and white (*Brick Lane*, 58). Although there may be other factors related to his failure to be promoted, he might also reflect the true circumstances.

Second, the degree to which one uses one's body and the functions it is asked to perform vary from culture to culture. People who are relaxed, and used to living in hot climates with their tradition of the 'siesta', may be regarded as lazy and ineffective in countries where there is a more athletic culture and cooler climate (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 27). Third, the degree to which body parts can be exposed, or conversely have to be covered up, varies from culture to culture. While swimming suits or bikinis may be welcome in Western cultures, they may be regarded as disturbing, or even obscene, in some sexually repressive cultures. Similarly purdah, the chadar, hijab, sari or kimono may be seen as restrictive and silly in Western cultures. In such circumstances the newcomer pays attention to such bodily signs as gestures and facial expressions. If enough attention is not paid, communication between members of the same genders may also cause

uneasy consequences. In some cultures, two males' displays of intimacy, like hugging or kissing, may not be welcome. In *Brick lane*, Nazneen is surprised at the Westernized appearance and confrontational speech and behaviour of Dr. Azad's wife, who deliberately rejects the Bangladeshi female code of deference to the male: "Mrs Azad switched on the television and turned the volume up high. She scowled at Chanu and her husband when they talked and held up her hand when she wished to silence them altogether. She drank a second glass of beer and belched with quiet satisfaction" (*Brick Lane*, 89)

Akhtar emphasizes the importance of gender in influencing the outcome of migration. As the main protagonist of *Brick Lane*, Nazneen represents the immigrant woman's struggle in Western society. From clinical and social studies, it has been proved that women adapt much better to immigration than men if equal opportunities are given (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 29). This is partly because they have much more capacity to endure pain. Akhtar suggests that migrant women are more successful than men at developing intimate relationships; motherhood can also bring mothers from different backgrounds together (ibid). However, the burden that social norms load on to women can sometimes be very heavy in an immigrant community. In *Brick Lane*, the female characters, such as Razia, Nazneen, and Azad's wife are more successful at adaptation. However, Azad's wife achieves autonomy by rejecting both her husband and her roots; Razia only becomes independent after the death of her husband and her subsequent development of her own dress-making business, and Nazneen only becomes comfortable in England once she rejects both her husband's commands that she return home with him and Karim's insistence that

she marry him, and finally finds a way to become economically independent by working with Razia. Ali's novel suggests that women migrants from can adapt to and benefit from the host culture more easily without the pressures associated with their gendered, marital roles.

The novel therefore emphasizes women's resourcefulness in difficult circumstances; Nazneen eventually makes a success of her life in England once she makes contact with others outside her home. However, many studies of women's lives after migration suggest that women are frequently doubly disempowered in diasporic communities: first as migrants within the wider society, and secondly, within their own community, a devalued other (Baluja, 41-49 and passim). Women are subject to intense pressures: girls' styles of dress are of great concern to parents and husbands, while they often do not care about boys'. As Laurie et al have shown, in Eastern migrant diasporas even younger brothers can make trouble for their sisters at home: when interviewed about this subject, young British Asian girls living in London describe their problems:

I had all these split ends and I asked one of my friends to cut my hair and she trimmed it for me. When I got home my mum noticed and she had a fit. My brother was sitting there, he's a year younger than me, and he started saying, "you'd better control this girl. She's getting out of hand. She's cut her hair. She might start wearing mini skirts tomorrow and going out with boys." (141)

In *Brick Lane*, Bangladeshi women, especially the older ones, support the oppression of women in their culture. The rich moneylender, Mrs Islam, continually attempts to control Nazneen, especially by trying to take over the upbringing of her baby son. When Nazneen stands up to her, she accuses her of rebelliousness, and suggests that she is being influenced by English culture: "They do what they want. It is a private matter. Everything is a private matter. That is

how the white people live” (*Brick Lane*, 60). In their article, “Islam, Sex and Women”, Siassi and Siassi suggest that Islam’s rules about sexuality and cultural norms are interpreted differently within different cultures, and are frequently distorted; however, elderly women are often the first to inhibit the sexuality of younger women, and to insist on masculine supremacy (152). As Nazneen’s mother tells her: “If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men” (*Brick Lane*, 53).

Ataca and Berry have also suggested that immigrant women are more liable to experience depression than men; some of the reasons for this may be their lower level of host language knowledge, their tendency to come from rural regions with a lower standard of education, and physical isolation from social networks of support, particularly female (13-26). In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen suffers a lot from isolation during the early stages of her life in England:

What she missed most was people. Not any people in particular (apart, of course, from Hasina) but just people. If she put her ear to the wall she could hear sounds. The television on. Coughing. Sometimes the lavatory flushing. Someone upstairs scraping a chair. A shouting match below. Everyone in their boxes, counting possessions. In all her eighteen years, she could scarcely remember a moment that she had spent alone. Until she married. (*Brick Lane*, 18)

In *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (1999), Susan Okin has argued that immigrant women in Western societies need to be under careful supervision because they may face certain problems, no matter how liberal their host culture is. They may face more pressure because of the immigrant communities’ fears of assimilation. As one of the interviewees in Laurie et al states:

If you go out you know someone always sees you and “Oh God, look at her, she is out there, let’s go and tell her parents.” And you get home and before you get home the gossip is around the whole town, you know...I

mean even if you are not doing anything wrong... People are just looking for an excuse to wave their tongues about. (140)

The social role of women changes with the changes in society. With more freedom, women have found more opportunities to satisfy their real selves instead of being trapped by conservative values. In this sense, *Brick Lane* represents a feminized text which emphasizes the success of women who undergo a harsh battle to achieve their own freedom (Preston, 16). The novel sheds light on how, after migration, the position of women in families and in the wider community undergoes considerable transformation. Most of the characters in *Brick Lane* are female. If we categorize them as weak or dominant, we see that the dominant ones (such as Mrs Islam), or those who become powerful later (such as Nazneen and Razia) achieve their goals by gaining economic independence from men. There are two solutions to this gender problem: bringing up psychologically and intellectually educated women, and providing a means for their economic freedom. Like Akhtar, therefore, Ali suggests that if they are given the chance women are more successful in acculturating than men. Nazneen integrates more successfully into British society than Chanu after she begins to work. This suggests that, if they are given opportunities rather than being insulated from society, women can be much more successful than men at setting targets and achieving them in immigrant societies.

2.2. AKHTAR'S FOUR TRACKS IN IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION FOLLOWING MIGRATION: A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF MIGRATION.

Akhtar explains the psychological motivations and responses of immigrants in terms of Margaret Mahler's theory of separation-individuation, which refers to the process undergone in early childhood, up to the age of thirty-six months. According to Mahler, an infant must take five steps in order to develop his or her psychic separateness and individuality: differentiation (occurring between five and nine months), practising (occurring between nine and eighteen months), rapprochement (occurring between eighteen and twenty-four months), object constancy (occurring between twenty-four and thirty-six months), and separation-individuation (the final stage) (Mahler et al, 1975, cited in Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 52). According to Mahler, when the infant reaches the age of eighteen months he believes he recognizes himself, both in the mirror and in the personal pronouns used to refer to him. This new sense of separateness also initiates the "rapprochement" subphase, in which the child both manifests his selfhood and clings to his mother for reassurance (ibid). These oscillations end with the stable support of the mother, and finally the child reaches the stage known as "object constancy", or a sense of the continuity of the images even if they are not actually there. If the child gains object constancy he will go on playing contentedly for some time, even when his mother is not near him. The attainment of object constancy will help the child constitute a true identity. In psychanalytic terms, this phase involves the first stage in the individuation of the child. The second stage takes place in adolescence, and Akhtar identifies the immigration process as a third stage of individuation (*Immigration and Identity*, 78). He draws attention to the similarities in the psychic structures between these phases, analyzing them under four titles. Below, these categories will be discussed alongside an analysis of *Brick Lane*.

“From Love to Hate to Ambivalence”: Fluctuating Perceptions of the Host Culture in *Brick Lane*.

According to Akhtar, like the rapprochement subphase infant and the transiently regressed adolescent, the immigrant tends to use a splitting mechanism to define himself in relation to the new and old cultures (*Immigration and Identity*, 79). In this phase the child cannot integrate the good and bad images of his mother: when the mother becomes angry with him, the child sees her as totally bad, without considering her good parts, or vice versa. This period lasts until the child reaches the age of three years. According to Akhtar, the immigrant uses the same kind of splitting mechanism. For an East-to-West immigrant, the West is devalued and associated with greed, sexual promiscuity, violence and disregard of generational boundaries, while the East is valued and seen as a cradle of contentment, instinctual restraint, love, humility, and respect for the young and old (80).

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu is the most outstanding character who uses this splitting mechanism to define his role in England:

If you have a history, you see, you have a pride. The whole world was going to Bengal to do trade. Sixteenth century and seventeenth century. Dhakka was the home of textiles. Who invented all this muslin and damask and every damn thing? It was us. All the Dutch and Portuguese and French and British queuing up to buy. (*Brick Lane*, 150)

Later, Chanu emphasizes the impoverishment of British culture compared to Bangladeshi: “...our own culture is so strong. And what is their culture? Television, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball. That is the white working-class culture” (210). For an immigrant who moves from West to East, however, the

associations may change: the East might be characterized by indolence, filth, superstition, subservience, and pathetic withering of instincts, while the West is viewed as industrious, conscientious, orderly, instinctually gratifying, and encouraging of self-actualization (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 80). However, these split views may be changeable; that is, one day the country of origin might be idealized and the country of adoption devalued, while the next day the reverse may occur. In *Brick Lane*, when Chanu is not pleased with his own community he makes his daughters wear Western style clothing, but when he is angry with the British he makes them wear traditional dress:

It depended where Chanu directed his outrage. If he had a Lion Hearts leaflet in his hand, he wanted his daughters covered. He wouldn't be cowed by these Muslim-hating peasants. If he saw some girls go by in hijab he became agitated at this display of peasant ignorance. Then the girls went out in their skirts. (*Brick Lane*, 219)

This confusion may stem from a defense against guilt. Chanu may feel guilty for his failures, and use either the host community or his own community as a container to externalize them. By projecting all the guilt and blame on to his host community or his own community, Chanu can regard himself as free from all faults and regard himself as integrated. Chanu feels relaxed when he finds the other people guilty.

“From Near to Far to Optimal Distance”: The Search for Home in *Brick Lane*.

Mahler's theory of separation-individuation states that after the symbiotic phase, during which the infant and mother cling to each other, the child begins to search

for some distance from his mother in order to explore the outside world. He may be indifferent to the mother's presence for some time, but finally goes to her as a home base. This rapprochement period can be handled healthily if the mother remains emotionally available, despite the child's oscillations (Akhtar, 52). This kind of ambiguity may also be observed in an immigrant's life:

The immigrant finds himself "too far" from his country of origin, a distance that he, like the practising-phase toddler, might greatly enjoy for some time. Sooner or later, however, the anxiety of having exceeded the symbiotic orbit surfaces. The immigrant's ego loses the support it had drawn from the familiar environment, climate and landscape – all unconsciously perceived as extensions of the mother. (Krystal and Petty, 118-133)

In terms of immigration, according to Akhtar "[a]ttempts at restoration of such ego support may lead the immigrant to seek a climate and ethnic surrounding much like his original, and [he] may become involved in a life-long attempt at symbolic restitution of his motherland" (*Immigration and Identity*, 85). As a result of this need for the mother country, "Going Home Syndrome", the conviction that a return home will heal the self, may emerge. However, it is not always possible to return: there are jobs to be finished, children going to school, or debts to pay. Going home may be postponed for another year. In *Brick Lane*, the conversation between Chanu and Dr. Azad describes this phenomenon:

Chanu: "And when they have saved enough money they will get on an aeroplane and go?"

Dr. Azad: "They don't ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here." (*Brick Lane*, 24)

Akhtar also describes this phenomenon as "ethnocentric withdrawal", which involves clinging to an idealized view of one's earlier culture (*Immigration and Identity*, 87). The immigrant thinks: "if I am not going home, I will built the same

society here.” Ethnocentric withdrawal may appear as the outcome of stress, stemming from fluctuations between extremes of distance from the immigrant’s native self-representation and his newly emerging self-representation as a resident of the adopted country (ibid). The immigrant who feels ethnocentric withdrawal generally eats only his traditional food and associates only with his own ethnic group. Chanu criticizes this kind of immigrant, as if he were not one of them:

Most of our people here are Sylhetis. They all stick together because they come from the same district. They know each other from the villages, and they come to Tower Hamlets and they think they are back in the village. Most of them have jumped ship. That’s how they come. (*Brick Lane*, 21)

Although Chanu devalues this group in order to feel better about himself, he is no different from them. He decides to go sight-seeing in central London thirty years after his arrival, and when someone asks him where he is from, he replies “from Bangladesh”, while Shahana says: “I’m from London” (*Brick Lane*, 245). Therefore, Chanu demonstrates that he is not integrated. On the contrary, in his final months in England he becomes more nationalistic, and to strengthen his views develops new prejudices against the English, emphasizing the superiority of Bangladeshi culture and devaluing the West.

The reverse attitude to ethnocentric withdrawal can be described as counterphobic assimilation, which involves rapid incorporation with the host culture and renunciation of the original culture (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 87). In *Brick Lane*, the most representative figure who is under the influence of counterphobic assimilation is Dr. Azad’s wife. When Chanu tries to talk about the dangers of racism and cultural assimilation she responds angrily:

...Assimilation this, assimilation that! Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: We live in a Western society. Fact: Our children will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes! (*Brick Lane*, 93)

According to Akhtar, as long as the immigrant receives comfort from recognition of his/her ethnic or national origins, for example in the workplace, the reality-governed rhythm of refuelling through international phone calls and visits is established, and/or the immigrants become parents in the adopted country and find ways to adjust their own culture to the host culture for the sake of their children, the effects of ethnocentric withdrawal or counterphobic assimilation can be soothed (*Immigration and Identity*, 88). Visits to the homeland represent an important means of refuelling for immigrants if they cannot return to their original country permanently (ibid). They may bring presents for their relatives, and may also bring cultural artifacts back to the new home. However, sometimes the immigrants undertake serious financial burdens in order to prove their success to their families, for example, by taking credit to pay for their expenses, or sending large sums of money to their families. In *Brick Lane*, Razia criticizes her husband for sending money home for the construction of a mosque, although her children have to beg for second-hand toothbrushes (77-78). For migrants, sending money back to the homeland may be the result of guilt arising from leaving the others back home, a way of boasting about their success, or justifying their decision to migrate.

“From Yesterday or Tomorrow to Today”: The Process of Settlement in *Brick Lane*.

According to Akhtar, the separation-individuation phase always contains elements of mourning: although this phase implies emerging identity, deeper object relations and autonomy for the child, there is also a parallel loss of infantile omnipotence and symbiotic bliss, what Freudian theorists describe as the 'real' (*Immigration and Identity*, 89). In Mahler's terminology, in this phase the child realizes that he will not be able to sustain this symbiosis with his mother: somehow they must become different identities, and their points of view will not always be the same. This development of knowledge is necessary for psychic growth (ibid, 90).

According to Akhtar, the immigrant also experiences a similar sequence of loss and restoration. Unconsciously, a person may use the adopted country and its culture as a container for unexpressed feelings. When we look at one of the objects from our childhood or a deceased person's belongings we remember how we felt in the past. Therefore, an immigrant may be affected deeply by the loss of recognizable environmental surroundings. He may look for the same kind of buildings, roads, rivers or animals he remembers from his past. This impulse becomes more powerful if the immigrant moves from a rural to an urban environment, or the reverse. For this reason he idealizes his past, so that even the bad aspects of life at home are remembered as good. Often such idealizations centre more upon memories of places than of people. In time, if the immigrant confronts the facts of his existence and stops living in the past he can be successful at integrating with his new life (*Immigration and Identity*, 92).

In *Brick Lane*, as we have seen, in her early months in England Nazneen is continually distracted by memories from her village, and mourns for her previous

life. However we understand from Hasina's letters to Nazneen that Bangladesh is not a perfect place to live in. Conditions are hard and there is much discrimination against women. Gradually, Nazneen stops living in the past and begins to forget her homeland. Later, she is successful at establishing a life for herself with her children and her friend Razia.

“From Yours or Mine to Ours”: Achieving a Sense of Belonging in *Brick Lane*.

According to psychoanalysts, as the child develops, he comes to differentiate between the terms “mine”, “yours”, and finally “ours” (Akhtar and Kramer, 1-24). The capacity to share parents, and, in the oedipal phase, a healthy growing awareness that “my mother is also your wife, or your husband is also my father” is a sign of the capacity to share, showing that the real “we” follows “mine” and “yours” (Akhtar, 1999, 96). For some time after his arrival the immigrant may follow the same sequence: at first, everything is seen as “mine” or “yours” (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 96). If the immigrant begins to enjoy these new differences (for example, food, traditions, music, cinema) a new kind of “we-ness” may appear, and the immigrant's acculturation process begins (ibid). This process can be traced in *Brick Lane* through Nazneen's fascination with ice-skating on television during her early months in England:

...A man in a very tight suit (so tight it made his private parts stand out on display) and a woman in a skirt that did not even cover her bottom gripped each other as an invisible force hurtled them across an oval arena. The people in the audience clapped their hands together and then stopped...The couple broke apart. They fled from each other and no sooner had they fled than they sought each other out. Every move they made was urgent, intense, a declaration. (*Brick Lane*, 27)

The scene on television is familiar in the Western World, but for an Eastern person like Nazneen it is extraordinary. Nazneen is not successful at translating the culture, but the narrative voice constructs a bridge between Nazneen's perception and the Western reader's knowledge of what she is watching (Cormack, 709). Peter Preston has described this passage in terms of the narrative strategy Russian formalist critics called "defamiliarization", the technique of "making strange" what is familiar and known (17). However, in psychoanalytic terms, the episode may also be interpreted as an attempt to constitute "we-ness", as the narrative tries to explain the unknown in terms of the known.

Similarly, almost everything Nazneen encounters during her first journey through East London is defamiliarized by her perception; the narrative depicts the things she experiences through her point of view, by using images from her home culture. For example, a car horn blares "like an ancient muezzin ululating painfully, stretching his vocal cords to the limit" (*Brick Lane*, 38). According to Lopez, this technique of narrative defamiliarization serves to emphasize the degree of Nazneen's accomplishment when she is able to adjust to the bewildering new environment enough to interact with others and find her way home when she is lost in the East End (520). However, in psychonalytic terms, explaining something unknown in terms of the known may accelerate the process of developing a sense of individuation, following the sequence of "mine" "yours" and "ours" (Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity*, 98). The use of the new language of the host culture can affect this process a great deal. Nazneen's gradual capacity to speak the language becomes an instrumental tool in integrating her with her adopted country.

2.3. THE MOURNING PROCESS IN BRICK LANE.

In his book, *Life After Loss: The Lessons of Grief* (1993), Vamik Volkan defines mourning not only in terms of response to the loss of a beloved person, or a traumatic event like divorce, but also suggests that even losing a simple object, like a car key, may cause mourning. Mourning is a process in which we try to make a consensus between our inner world and reality. Grief is the outcome of the mourning process, and we feel it after a loss, whether it is of an earring, a hope, a home country, an old identity, a past life or a lover (Volkan, *Life After Loss*, 76). Mourning can also be defined as an involuntary human reaction to changes that occur when the loss of possessions, or objects of either affection or hate, is either threatened or actually takes place (ibid, 155).

However, not everyone can mourn in a normal and healthy way. Normally in mourning people at first feel anger towards the lost object: this is a kind of manifesto saying “How dare you leave me?” and a denial of the loss (Volkan, *Life After Loss*, 158). As a second stage, the mourner recalls memories of the deceased and of his own experiences with him or her; later, the person accepts the loss and may internalize and remember the good parts of the object of mourning while forgetting the bad parts; finally, the loss is remembered on special occasions like anniversaries or birthdays (ibid). However, some mournings may not come to an end: there are side-effects of completed and uncompleted mourning. According to Volkan, factors determining whether these will be experienced include personality type, other uncompleted mournings (for example, prior loss of parents), a culture

which enables or prevents externalization of grief, and the type of relationship with the deceased (ibid, 8).

In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen undergoes a series of complicated mourning processes for her homeland, her mother, her sister, and her first child. Nazneen comes to London from a village in Bangladesh with green fields, rivers and lots of animals. The average acceptable environment is very different from that of Brick Lane. Mentally, as we have seen, Nazneen continues to inhabit Bangladesh during her early years in London. However, she gradually overcomes the grief of dislocation: “The village was leaving her. Sometimes a picture would come. Vivid; so strong she could smell it. More often she tried to see and could not” (*Brick Lane*, 179).

As well as mourning her exile from her own country, Nazneen also has to mourn the loss of her mother, who commits suicide before Nazneen reaches adulthood. For Nazneen, this represents a complicated form of mourning, so she cannot mourn for her mother healthily: she suppresses her anger and grief stemming from this loss, and also from her mother’s implicit rejection of her. According to Volkan, showing anger is very important after a loss, because it shows that the person is able to accept reality (*Life After Loss*, 27). However, Nazneen’s personality, and her mother’s way of dying, hinders this process. Nazneen’s nature (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, below) and cultural background prevent her from showing her feelings openly. Nazneen represses her feelings about her mother, rather than analyzing them, and in England she continues to be afraid to confront the facts of her mother’s death. According to psychoanalytic theory, in complicated mourning there are two types of internalization of the lost person or object. The first is “in-toto internalization”

(Ritvo and Solnit, 1958; Smith, 1975). In this process, first described by Freud in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), the mourner identifies with both good and bad representations of the deceased, and subsequently feels himself in a battle-ground, leading to melancholic or depressive responses.

In the second type of internalization of representation of the lost person, the mourner does not identify with him/her but accepts him/her as a foreign body inside himself. In psychoanalytic terms, this body is called “introject” (Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, 161). Forming an introject causes the mourning process to be suspended, a phenomenon which is called which is called “pathological mourning” (Volkan, *Life After Loss*, 27). In this form of mourning, the mourner establishes an inner (sometimes hostile or confrontational) dialogue with the deceased. Throughout *Brick Lane* we see these kinds of dialogues between Nazneen and her mother, which will be discussed further below in Chapter 4. However, it is important to state here that, in psychoanalytic terms, Nazneen’s apparently supernatural dialogues with her mother in the novel represent her unconscious attempts to repair the broken structures of their relationship and end the mourning process begun with her mother’s death and her own forced exile. In her dreams and visions she discusses the issues which she could not before with her mother, and therefore attempts to finish the uncompleted aspects of their relationship. She eventually achieves this by showing her anger to her mother and challenging her. As will be discussed below in Chapter 4, this ability to “speak out” is a very important achievement for Nazneen’s kind of personality. In one dream-vision, Nazneen’s mother rebukes her for the death of her first child, Raqib:

“You thought it was you who had the power. You thought you would keep him alive. You decided you would be the one to choose...When you stood between your son and his Fate, you robbed him of any chance. Now say this to yourself, and say it aloud, I killed my son, I killed my son.” “No!” screamed Nazneen. (*Brick Lane*, 362)

In this vision, Nazneen conflates her guilty mourning for her mother with that for her first child, who dies of meningitis in infancy; Nazneen recalls her mother’s warning that people should not try to oppose their fate, since it is decided before birth. Nazneen has been brought up with the philosophy that taking initiatives in life means rebelling against Fate, so by bringing Raqib to hospital she attempts to confront and question her mother’s authority, and then believes that her mother is punishing her.

Nazneen also has to endure her guilt concerning those she has left behind, particularly Hasina. She is very anxious about Hasina’s safety, because Hasina has to deal with the problem of being a lone woman in Bangladesh. Nazneen feels guilty because she is physically safe and her sister is not. According to psychoanalytic theorists, the symptoms of this kind of depressive guilt are anxiety concerning objects and ego, pangs, nostalgia and a sense of responsibility (Grinberg and Grinberg, 79). When Nazneen learns that Hasina has run away from her husband, her feelings of guilt, anxiety and responsibility increase, and lead her to try to suffer like her sister. This is most clear when she runs away during her early months in London, and gets lost in the maze of streets: “She had got herself lost because Hasina was lost. And only now did she realize how stupid she was. Hasina was in Dhaka. A woman on her own in the city, without a husband, without family, without friends, without protection” (*Brick Lane*, 46). The character of Hasina is only conveyed through the letters she sends to Nazneen (presented in italics in the novel). These letters function as “linking objects” for

Nazneen. In psychoanalytic terms, linking objects are physical possessions which are related to the lost one, and are therefore used to mitigate the pain the mourner feels (Volkan, 1993, 99). Nazneen reads and touches Hasina's letters again and again as if there are holy objects, since they help her to construct a bridge to connect her with Hasina.

Nazneen is finally able to overcome the trauma of dislocation, and also to come to terms with the unfinished aspects of her relationships with her past to complete her mourning process. She plucks up the courage to confront the facts about her relationships and situation, and in this way establishes a self-awareness instead of suppressing it. Unlike Chanu she is able to accustom herself to the realities of the host culture, and eventually she can speak out for herself: "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" (*Brick Lane*, 337).

However, Chanu is not as successful as Nazneen in getting over his mourning. He has come to Britain with high expectations but comes to realize that it is not so easy for him to achieve his aims. Gradually, he begins to lose the hope of having a good career, and begins to mourn for this:

Sometimes I look back and I am shocked. Every day of my life I have prepared for success, worked for it, waited for it, and you don't notice how the days pass until nearly half a lifetime has finished. Then it hits you- the thing you have been waiting for has already gone by. And it was going in the other direction. It's like I've been waiting on the wrong side of the road for a bus that was already full. (*Brick Lane*, 265)

In psychoanalytic terms, to escape these feelings of stress and despair, people may use "transitional objects" (Winnicott, 1953; Greenacre, 1969). Greenacre defines a

transitional object as “a temporary construction to aid the infant in the early stages of developing sense of reality and establishing his own individual identity” (334). For example, a teddy bear may enable a child to go to sleep by alleviating anxiety. Transitional objects help the child to regulate tensions stemming from problems with his outer environment. Looking at the character of Chanu from this point of view, his certificates from the different courses and night classes he has taken, prominently exhibited on the walls during Nazneen’s early years in England, but later hidden away as he begins to lose hope of succeeding in the host country, help him to protect his sense of differentiated self, and enable him to pamper his narcissistic personality. They act as transitional objects, but are finally not enough to ease his pain. Chanu never feels that he belongs in England. Rather, he is like a tourist: his visiting the sights of London thirty years after his arrival is proof of this.

Akhtar’s description of the process through which the migrant comes to identify herself with the host culture rather than her native culture alone sheds light on Nazneen’s final decision to remain in England. At the beginning of the novel, Nazneen’s fascination with watching ice-skating on television enables her to escape from her sense of imprisonment in a life she has not chosen. However, by the end of the novel, she has accomplished a form of integration and unity with her host environment, demonstrated when she goes ice-skating with Razia wearing her sari:

Nazneen turned around. To get on the ice physically- it hardly seemed to matter. In her mind she was already there. She said, “But you can’t skate in a sari.” Razia was already lacing her boots. “This is England,” she said. “You can do whatever you like.” (*Brick Lane*, 413).

The novel ends with Nazneen's preparation to get on to the ice, symbolizing her gradual sense of personal confidence and liberation from her past. Early in the novel Nazneen watches the ice-skating as something entirely outside herself, leading to a sense of temporary alienation from her own body. However, by the end of the novel, in feeling she is already on the ice Nazneen appears to have achieved a sense of reconciliation between her different selves, as well as her past and pres

CHAPTER 3

THE NEED FOR ENEMIES AND ALLIES: UNDERSTANDING COLLECTIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL IDENTITIES AND THEIR CONTEXTS IN *BRICK LANE* THROUGH A READING OF VAMIK VOLKAN'S THEORIES.

3.1. Psychoanalytic and Historical Roots of the Construction of “Enemies and Allies”.

Since immigration has become more common in the globalized world, it has become unavoidable for people whose origins and ethnicities are different to live together. However, the consequences of this merger are not always positive. The September 11th attacks and July 7th bombings, and similar terrorist attacks, have frustrated the efforts made to construct dialogue to solve these conflicts. *Brick Lane* depicts some aspects of the lives of Muslim Bangladeshi immigrants in British society; Ali presents the struggles and integration problems of these people, and draws attention to the tensions between Bangladeshi people and the host community. To shed light on these conflicts this chapter will explore the novel through the theories of Vamik Volkan concerning group identities. Volkan's work is particularly useful here because of his use of psychology to discuss the roots of political and ethnic conflicts.

Volkan argues that there is a close relationship between individual and group responses and behaviour when it comes to identifying those we define as either enemies or allies. Volkan discusses this issue in his book, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies* (1988). He uses Mahler's theory of separation-individuation to explain how we form images of ourselves and others in early life, but widens the subject by applying it to groups as well as individuals (27). Volkan emphasizes that anger or hatred towards, or idealization of, others, originate in infancy. At first the infant cannot integrate what Volkan terms the "good-self" and the "bad-self", either of himself or others. For example, if he is hungry he feels "bad", and if the mother delays feeding him, he also associates her with the "bad self"; however, once he is fed he feels good, and associates his mother with this "good self" too (29). Following Freud, psychoanalysts have said that this stage persists until the age of thirty-six months, when the child is able to perceive the "good mother" and the "bad mother" as one person. The object representations, the first impressions of objects on the infant, and how they make the infant feel, cause this phenomenon. As the child grows up, his ego is shaped and separates from his id, so he is able to integrate his own "good" and "bad" selves, as well as those of his mother and other people (32). An integrated self, therefore, can recognize that people have both good and bad characteristics.

However, Volkan suggests that this process of integration is not always completed: it might be that not every part of the child becomes integrated, so that some "good" and "bad" selves may remain unintegrated as the child grows into

adulthood (30). To come to terms with this dilemma and feel himself integrated the individual may project his unwanted self on to others who remind him of it: this “other” may be a group or an individual. He learns the mechanism of ‘splitting’, or identifying someone or something as either all good or all bad. According to Volkan, the maturing ego may push its unintegrated parts to the id, thereby repressing it, while other unintegrated images promote the completion of super ego formation (ibid). The super ego is established by ethical norms concerning what is good or bad, which are generally shaped by the child’s primary caretakers. In this way, the child forms new idealized images of himself, externalizing the new unintegrated good and bad images produced by his cultural environment: these externalizations are called “suitable targets of externalization”, and Volkan suggests that they play an important role in forming the concept of political and social “enemies” or “allies” (32).

The main purpose of this externalization is to establish an unwelded self, which in turn serves to form an integrated self. If all members of a group respond in the same way, the integrity and cohesion of the group is established. As well as bad representations (images of objects), good representations can also be externalized, for they also cause conflict if they stay unintegrated within the psyche. These good representations are those, influenced by the moral values of our own culture, ethnicity, and caretakers. The main purpose of externalizing both the good and bad units is to remove from the child unwelded representations and to help him maintain cohesion of the integrated self and object representations retained within (32). Volkan gives an example of this phenomenon:

A Greek child in Cyprus learns from what his mother says and does that the neighbourhood church is a good place; he unconsciously invests in it

his unintegrated good aspects and feels comfortable there. The same mechanism, fuelled by his mother's influence, makes him shun the Turkish mosque and minaret, in which he deposits the unintegrated bad aspects of himself and imported others. He is more himself when playing near his church and distancing himself from the mosque, and his Greek playmates feel the same way. (33-34)

Volkan suggests that this psychoanalytic model can be applied to the phenomenon of racial or ethnic tensions. The members of a host culture may attribute their economic and domestic problems to immigrants; to escape from this "bad self" they may use immigrants as a reservoir to empty it into. If they insist on this process of externalization for long enough they create powerful stereotypes, which in turn lead to discrimination (ibid). As Padilla and Perez emphasize, the more discriminated against immigrants feel, the more difficult it is for them to acculturate: trying to distance the bad self is a defence mechanism to make sure the enemy is kept away; so accentuating differences is a way of rejecting the negative "other" (5). These externalizations may be transferred from generation to generation through stereotypes.

Homi Bhabha has emphasized the importance of stereotypes in maintaining distinctions between self and unwanted other in colonial discourse:

...stereotype gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it...The stereotype, then, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both colonizer and colonized, is the scene of a similiar fantasy and defence - the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture. (*The Location of Culture*, 107)

Bhabha focuses on the role of stereotypes in maintaining the unstable power relations between colonizer and colonized. Similarly, Volkan argues that by focusing on differences we try to distance 'the other', whom we identify with our

unwanted self. Identifying differences rationalizes this act of distancing. In *Brick Lane*, Chanu focuses on the historical conflict between Christian and Muslim, West and East, arguing that the Western version of medieval history is inaccurate:

I will tell you something. All these people who look down on us do not know what I am going to tell you...Who was it who saved the work of Plato and Aristotle for the West during the Dark Ages? Us. It was us. Muslims. We saved the work so that your so-called St Thomas could claim it for his own discovery...Dark Ages? This is what they are calling it in these damn Christian books. Is this what they teach you in school? It was the Golden Age of Islam, the height of civilization. (*Brick Lane*, 215)

It can be suggested that the roots of the current problems of the Christian and Islamic worlds lie in history and have been passed on from generation to generation. Therefore it is necessary to consider history in order to understand the contemporary conflict that the novel engages with. Both the East and the West have inherited stereotypes from history. Some of these are documented by a chronicler of the First Crusade of 1097, concerning the conflict in Anatolia:

With the advances of our knights, Turks, Arabs, Saracens, Angulans and all other barbarians ran away to the passages of mountains and plains. Excluding the Arabs, whose numbers only God would know, our enemies, Turks, Persians, Saracens, Pavlicians, Angulans, and other idolators were a total of 360.000 people...We killed them all day long, amassing gold, silver, donkeys, camels, sheep, cows and numerous other things that we had no idea about...With the help of God, they will never never defeat people as great as us. (Kayatekin, 200)

As the Turks were Muslims, and were much closer to Western nations than other Islamic countries, they were the ones on to whom Western anger and hatred were projected. In the following centuries, the Ottoman Turks became the leaders of the Islamic world. In psychological terms, Europe suffered a narcissistic injury with the conquest of Constantinople. Until that time, Constantinople was the symbol of Western power. As Ottomans entered the city and turned Hagia Sophia into a mosque, Ducas, a historian, wrote:

He (Mehmet II, the Ottoman Sultan) summoned one of his vile priests who ascended the pulpit to call out his foul prayer. The son of iniquity, the forerunner of Antichrist, ascending the holy altar, offered the prayer. Alas the calamity! Alack the horrendous deed...Woe is me. What has befallen us? ... Because of our sins the temple, which was rebuilt in the name of wisdom of logos of God and is called the Temple of the Holy Trinity and Great Church and New Scion today has become the Altar of barbarians and has been named and has become the house of Mohammed. (Wheatcroft, 2004, 194-195)

For this chronicler, the Europeans' defeat by Muslim Turks is seen as a punishment from God for their sins. Martin Luther also identified Turks as God's punishment of the Christian world (Wiener, 50). The grandiose self-image (an omnipotent, self-confident image), can be perceived in Sultan Suleiman's definition of himself when the Ottoman Empire reached its zenith:

I am Suleiman, Sultan of Sultans, sovereign of sovereigns, distributor of crowns to the lords of the surface of the globe. I am Suleiman, the shadow of God on earth and commander of the Faithful, Servant and Protector of the Holy places. I am Suleiman, ruler of the two lands and two seas, Sultan and Padishah of the White Sea and of the Black of Rumelia, of Anatolia, of Karamania, and of the land of Rum. (Kayatekin, 203)

From this speech it can be understood that the sultan identifies himself with the grandiosity of the Empire. After the Ottoman conquest, Europeans portrayed their enemies as violent Barbarians and sodomites (Kayatekin, 203). In Volkan's analysis, the Westerners' image of the Ottomans represented a bad target of externalization. By trying to devalue the Ottomans, the West tried to reject its "bad self", which stemmed from its defeat; but at the same time it attempted to identify with its aggressor. Although Turks were deemed barbarians, Suleiman was called "magnificent." As a symbol of power, the turban became very fashionable in Europe (Kayatekin, 205), just as someone today might say "I hate America" but at the same time wear Nike shoes. During the Reformation and Enlightenment periods, this grandiose self image deterred Ottomans from industrializing. They looked down on the inventions of Europe, and claimed that

Europeans could not teach them anything. Europe became more powerful due to industrial and technological development, and began to defeat the Ottoman Empire in both scientific and military fields. At this time, they defined the Ottomans as “inferior, primitive and different: something to be curious about” (Kayatekin, 205). Therefore, in this period, Westerners established a grandiose self-image. With the development of Western imperialism, this narcissistic character became more dominant.

This kind of narcissistic self-assertion is a dominant aspect of Chanu’s personality in *Brick Lane*. According to Chanu, the West has continually denigrated the Eastern other, and the power struggle has never been resolved. Chanu tries to re-assert his culture’s power over the Western imperialist ideology that took over his country before the twentieth century; he demands that others take notice of him, and continually emphasizes the richness of Bangladeshi culture and history. However, he also yearns to be accepted and approved by the host culture, and continually asserts his competence within it:

This Wilkie, I told you about him. He has one or maybe two O levels...No way is he going to get promoted [...] I don’t have anything to fear from Wilkie. I have a degree from Dhaka University in English Literature. Can Wilkie quote from Chaucer or Dickens or Hardy? (*Brick Lane*, 29)

In his fluctuating allegiances (his angry resistance of the West, and simultaneous attempts to “mimic” Western codes of behaviour) Chanu therefore embodies the effects of imperialism.

3.2. The Contexts of Group Conflict in Brick Lane.

Today, Europe and the United States, two leading powers in the world, experience high levels of immigration. Many European countries are concerned about their growing Muslim populations (Kayatekin, 213). The United States is also facing problems associated with its growing Latino population. The self-image of the United States as white and Protestant, and Europe as white and Christian, relies on the process of externalizing Latino and Muslim ‘Others’ in order to feel themselves integrated; they want immigrants to assimilate to their culture or leave it (Kayatekin, 215). Conversely, immigrants in the host culture feel strongly that they are the “the other.” Therefore, they have more need to emphasize their identity in the Western host culture than the native population does. For example, in Zadie Smith’s novel, *White Teeth* (2000), two Bangladeshi brothers are separated in childhood in order to prevent them both from becoming Westernized. Magid, who is sent to Bangladesh, becomes attached to British culture and values, and Milat, who is left in London, becomes an Islamic radical, since he feels marginalized in British culture.

Brick Lane’s depiction of the newly radicalized Bangladeshi community in East London in the aftermath of 9/11 confronts the implications of Samuel Huntington’s thesis, “The Clash of Civilizations”, which suggests that different religious and ethnic allegiances result in conflicting world views. According to Huntington, until after the Cold War there were important conflicts within Western Civilization. However, after this era the conflicts shifted to those between East and West, as non-Western cultures began to exercise more influence in the world:

With the end of the Cold War, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its centrepiece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations. In the politics of civilizations, the peoples and governments of non-Western civilizations no longer remain the objects of history as targets of Western colonialism but join the West as movers and shapers of history. (23)

Michel Foucault, in a study of power relations and colonialism, also tried to find an answer to the questions: “What are the borders of our system of thinking?” and “How do we contemporary Westerners perceive the facts?” (1926; Merguieur, 46). According to Foucault, no subject is free, since his point of view is shaped by dominant ideologies. This may be achieved through the use of binary oppositions, language in books, or slogans or advertisements involving idealistic elements. In this way the colonizer maintains his power over the colonized. Edward Said agrees with Foucault, stating in *Orientalism* (1978) that the misrepresentations of Eastern culture, supported by science, philology, history, philosophy, anthropology and literature, led to the construction of the East as “the other” in the Western imagination (Said, 1978).

Huntington argues that future conflicts will occur between different cultures, religions and civilizations. In Volkan’s terms, this is an outcome of the externalization of the unwanted self. To create an integrated identity, groups identify enemies outside it. It can also be suggested that stereotypes cause people to see another group as more homogenous than it really is, a factor which is also due to the splitting mechanism. Other side-effects, such as education and economic problems, make the condition worse. Therefore the minority group begins to feel under pressure and discriminated against. In order to get away from this anxiety, its members build ghettos in which only the same ethnicities or groups live, and in which they feel integrated, since they do not have to meet the

norms of the host culture and its members. Generally, the host culture members also prefer this situation, for they also do not want to mix with the immigrant group, and this reinforces discrimination. In fact, discrimination does not have to be experienced by the minority group itself. Any kind of discrimination or violence perceived to be imposed on a particular ethnicity, nation or religion, anywhere in the world, may be enough to initiate aggressive attitudes or reluctance to conform with the host culture (Padilla and Perez, 5-6). As a result, immigrants may become increasingly attached to their own values.

For example, when Tony Blair said of Britain: “Our tolerance is part of what makes Britain Britain. Conform to it; or don’t come here. We don’t want hate-mongers, whatever their race, religion or creed” (The Guardian, 9 December 2006), Muhammed Abdul Bari, the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, responded that he “couldn’t agree more” with Blair’s positive remarks on multiculturalism and integration, but added that:

It was disappointing to see that the PM continues to see the phenomenon of terrorism as a clash of values rather than being prepared to examine whether some of our misguided policies in the Middle-East have contributed greatly to exacerbating the threat from extremist groups. It was also worrying to see the PM using emotive language such as Britain “being taken for a ride”, or its good and tolerant nature being “abused”, that can only help reinforce a “them and us” attitude when the reality is that there is a tiny group of people - from various different backgrounds - that commit criminal acts and should be dealt with firmly using due legal process. (ibid)

On 1st September 2005, a tape featuring one of the London underground bombers, Mohammad Siddique Khan, justifies Bari’s statements. In this tape, he explains:

I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe... Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel

security you will be our targets and until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation...ask yourselves: why would thousands of men be ready to give their lives for the cause of Muslims? (Al-Jazeera tv -1st September 2005)

This shows that ethnicity and religion need not recognize geographical borders. In *Killing in the Name of Identity*, Volkan explains this sense of cohesion, using the tent as an analogy (97). From our childhood onwards we wear two layers of cloth. The first layer fits us tightly and resembles our identity; the second is baggier, and represents our ethnic, religious and cultural identities. Everyone who belongs to a large social group wraps this tent fabric around him or herself. The tent symbolizes the larger group identity. People live unaware of this, unless “the other” from outside harms, degrades or humiliates their group. This causes anxiety, hatred and rage, and they look for leaders to save them from this situation. In such a case the second layer of cloth (the group identity) gains more importance than the first. The concept of “us” becomes more dominant than that of “I”, as the individual identifies himself with his group and invests in it more decisively in the anticipation of attacks from other groups (87). When ethnicity, nation or religion is at issue, those under this tent may identify with one another, despite the fact that they never meet. Millions of people feel themselves as equal within their own group, because of the binding ties of religion, ethnicity, and national identity (ibid).

In *Brick Lane*, the effects on the Muslim community in London of the September 11th attacks are powerfully depicted. Although Britain was not attacked, the white British react as though they were also affected, as hostility towards Muslims becomes more overt and aggressive. This shows that common ethnicity, cultural and religious ties play important roles, despite geographical distances:

A pinch of New York dust blew across the ocean and settled on the Dogwood Estate. Sorupa's daughter was the first, but not the only one. Walking in the street, on her way to college, she had her hijab pulled off. Razia wore her Union Jack sweatshirt and it was spat on. "Now you see what will happen," said Chanu. "Backlash." He entangled himself with newspapers and began to mutter and mumble. "It is time to go. Any day, any moment, life can end. There has been enough planning." (*Brick Lane*, 400)

Brick Lane focuses intensively on the perspective of the Muslim diaspora, and white British characters are never directly encountered. The host culture's alternative perspective (the hostile reactions of members of the host culture to what they perceive as the threat of Islam) is only encountered indirectly, through the printed pamphlets produced by the white English group, the Lion Hearts, who campaign against Islamic incursions into British culture. These pamphlets are intercepted and read by the Bangladeshis who form themselves into a counter-group, the Bengal Tigers, to try to assert their own cultural and religious identity within the community.

Volkan has attempted to understand such group allegiances by connecting them with individual psychological development. Focusing on suitable targets of externalization emphasizes the shared values of a group. For a Bangladeshi, for example, curry might be a "good" target of externalization, and "bacon" may be a "bad" one. Through preferring or rejecting the same things, the members of a group learn to identify with one another. These targets of externalization develop over the course of time, and may be rooted in distant history. In short, the enemy is the reservoir of unwanted self images. Group members try to maintain ego syntonic targets, whereas they externalize ego dystonic targets. The recent ban on minarets in Sweden is a proof of this. By making minarets visible, Muslim citizens would make their Muslim minority identity visible too. Europeans are

concerned about being invaded by Muslims, again because of their historical heritage and recent events like September 11th or July 7th. The same is true for Turkey, with the opening seminary. Muslims dislike having Christian symbols close to them. However, the enemy's existence is necessary because, although it constitutes a threat, it is also instrumental in the shaping of the opposing group's psychological borders, and continually influences the group's affective nature. When conflict issues or objects stand together, aggression and hatred may follow.

In *Brick Lane*, the effects of slogans, leaflets and advertisements are clearly seen in the battle between the white English group, the Lion Hearts, who campaign against Islamic incursions into British culture, and the Bangladeshi group, the Bengal Tigers, who try to assert their cultural and religious identity within the community. The Lion Hearts associate Islam with aggression and violence. For example, they write in one of their leaflets: "All over the country, our children are being taught that Islam is a great religion. But the truth is clear. Islam burns with hatred. It gives birth to evil mass murders abroad. In our town, it spawns vicious rioters" (*Brick Lane*, 444). The Lion Hearts identify Islamic teaching, mosques, and women's head-coverings as bad targets of externalization, and the topless pictures of women they display in their community hall, which the Islamic group tears down, as "good targets of externalization", representing Western sexual liberation. Despite their threatening discourse, the Lion Hearts are never really encountered in the novel, except through their pamphlets and the threats of a planned confrontation, which never really materializes. This distancing technique renders the the white community insubstantial throughout the novel; however,

their hostile discourse threatens the Bangladeshi community and emphasizes its marginalization within mainstream British culture.

These conflicts are paralleled in Chanu's shifting attitudes towards the host culture. He accuses British people of being imperialists and racists, but at the same time cites Shakespeare and Chaucer with admiration. He also drinks alcohol to demonstrate his Westernization when he and Nazneen visit Dr. Azad. Chanu devalues the English because he has not been welcomed by them as he expected; however, he also admires them. By accepting details, but refusing to accept Western civilization as a whole, Chanu's behaviour can be associated with the phenomenon of mimicry (Ashcroft et al, 142; Mannoni, 23). Chanu's conflicting and shifting attitudes to his homeland and to Britain shows his self-division.

However, stereotypes or discrimination may not be rooted in ethnicity alone. In his article, "Many Forms of Culture", Adam B. Cohen argues that cultural difference should not only be conceived of in terms of the East-West dichotomy; there are many other kinds of cultural difference, including religion, social class and geographic region (Cohen, 2009). Socio-economic reasons may also be an important factor in constructing stereotypes within ethnic groups. In *Brick Lane*, Chanu demonstrates the importance of economic status, both in defining diasporic identity and shaping the host population's perceptions of ethnic others:

You see...it is the white underclass like Wilkie [Chanu's rival at work], who are most afraid of people like me. To him and 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 then they are above something. If they see us rise then they are resentful because we have left our proper place. That is why you get the phenomenon of the *National Front*. They

can play on those fears to create racial tensions, and give these people a superiority complex. The middle classes are more secure, and therefore more relaxed. (*Brick Lane*, 21)

When immigrants fail to be accepted by the host culture, either because of racial or ethnic stereotypes or acculturation problems, they may feel devastated. To get rid of this unwanted self they externalize it and pour it into the host culture; they see the host population as homogenous, and fear assimilation. In psychological terms, this phenomenon is called “out group homogeneity”: members of one group see those of others as less diverse than themselves, clustered closely around one standard profile. While we see members of our in-group as having varied behaviour and characteristics, we tend to see members of an out-group as having little variation. In other words, we come to view these others less as individuals and more in terms of stereotypical group features.

In *Brick Lane*, Mrs Islam, an elderly money-lender and self-appointed matriarchal leader of the Bangladeshi community in Brick Lane, warns Nazneen against assimilation: “...if you mix with all these people, even if they are good people, you have to give up your culture to accept theirs. That’s how it is” (*Brick Lane*, 22). Migrant subcultures perceive Western culture as narcissistic; therefore, minority groups use splitting mechanisms in order not to feel bad, and instead tend to externalize the host culture. However, an integrated group psychology succeeds in seeing both good and bad aspects of the host culture. Razia, Nazneen’s friend, is an example of this integrated point of view:

Ask him [Chanu], is it better than our country, or is it worse? If it’s worse, then why is he here? If it is better, why does he complain? ...Something else: if you don’t have a job here they give you money. Did you know

that? You can have somewhere to live, without any rent. Your children can go to school. And on top of that they give you money. What would happen at home? Can you eat without working? Can you have a roof above your head? (*Brick Lane*, 59)

Razia's dress: a mixture of Asian and Western clothes, including a sweatshirt with the Union Jack on the front, is an outward example of what Bhabha has called "hybridization", or the individual's ability to combine aspects from different cultures in a positive way to achieve change, rather than, like Mrs Islam, rejecting all negotiation with the host culture. Bhabha sees hybridity as a means of achieving positive change by creating a "third space" that results in the emergence of new cultural forms (Bhabha, *passim*). He supports integrating the values of home and adopted culture: in this way the immigrants' feeling of "belonging nowhere" will be soothed. Bhabha also emphasizes the importance of interaction between different cultures and nations, and suggests that instead of totally rejecting what the colonizer offers, it is better to renew it within the culture of the colonized, and by this way constitute a new and hybrid culture. This represents an answer to the mainstream belief that suggests that there is no unique entity of cultures, rather they are formed from interactions from each other. Therefore, past events and differences should not be accentuated, and ways of initiating dialogue should be found; both sides should be willing to communicate.

Volkan's analysis of the psychological reasons for such conflicts sheds light on both the characters' individual responses and the wider group context. An exploration of the historical conflict between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds also demonstrates the ways in which psychoanalytic mechanisms of splitting have functioned to define identity in terms of religious, ethnic or national allegiance.

The novel emphasizes the effect of 9/11 in polarizing ethnic and especially religious groups in Britain.

CHAPTER 4

DISORDERS OF THE SELF IN BRICK LANE: MASTERSON'S CONCEPT OF THE REAL SELF.

4.1. MASTERSON'S APPROACH: THE SEARCH FOR THE REAL SELF.

Masterson's studies go back to the 1970s, and are mainly concerned with what he describes as the emergence of the "real self" (Pearson, "Masterson's Approach", 17). What he means by "real self" is the theoretical position from which comes the spontaneous gesture and personal idea: the spontaneous gesture is the true self in action (Winnicott, 148). It is the outcome of free will and thinking, without the desire to please other people. Furthermore, the real self has the ability to learn from early childhood that objects are whole and incorporate both good and bad aspects (Masterson, *The Search for the Real Self*, 35). This ability allows the child to recognize people's good and bad sides, as a result of which he does not become so frustrated. Masterson suggests that the real self should be capable of setting realizable targets, self-recognition, forming intimate relationships (which means being able to develop relationships without fear of abandonment or engulfment), and creativity (ibid, 43).

Masterson believes that the self is shaped during the first three years of childhood. He states that disorders of the self in future life are related to these first three years, unlike Freud, who believed that problems with the self occurred during the oedipal phase (Ozakkas, 20). In this respect, Masterson, like Akhtar and Volkan, refers to Mahler's theory of "separation-individuation" (Masterson, 55). He suggests that if the mother hinders the child's self-actualization (for example, if she perceives the child as an object to be used to mitigate her own feelings of depression concerning separation), the child may suppress his own wishes, feelings and activities in order to continue to receive love and comfort from her (ibid). This suppression of feelings may cause what Masterson calls "abandonment depression" (Pearson, "Masterson's Approach", 40). In this state, the child may experience six different emotions, which Masterson called "the six horsemen of the apocalypse": these are "suicidal depression", "homicidal rage", "panic and anxiety", "emptiness and void", "shame and guilt", and "hopelessness and helplessness" (ibid).

Since the child cannot tolerate these feelings, he prefers to give up his attempt at self-actualization, which in turn results in the reinstatement of "defensive acting out" (the inappropriate behaviour that generally stems from personality disorder pathology) (Pearson, "Masterson's Approach", 18). Masterson calls this vicious circle "[t]he disorders of self Triad" (ibid). This means that self-actualization ends with abandonment depression, which has certain consequences that in turn lead to disorders of the self.

4.1.1. Socio-Cultural Factors in the Development of the Real Self.

According to Masterson, socio-cultural values also play important roles in the process of self-actualization. If the cultural norms emphasize individual freedom and rights as well as responsibilities then the infrastructure of the real self becomes stronger than when this is not the case (Masterson, *The Real Self*, 145). If the responsibilities are not emphasized enough in comparison to freedoms and rights, a narcissistic personality, whose mentality can be expressed as “what is in it for me?”, may emerge (ibid, 145). On the other hand, if the responsibilities are emphasized more than freedom and rights, a situation in which there is little opportunity to express the real self can develop (ibid).

The infrastructure of British culture is in parallel with the first type: since it is the individuals that are seen to constitute society in the West, individuality and self-interest are important. Consequently, in such societies the incidence of narcissism, which will be discussed below, is more common than in Eastern cultures. If the colonization process is also taken into account, we can still see its tracks in the Western society. The notion of “my gain is the most important one” is valid for the relationships between immigrants coming from former colonies and the host culture. This means the majority of the members of the host culture may see immigrants as servants to exploit for their own gain.

In Eastern cultures attempts to activate the real self are deemed undesirable and rebellious. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen has inherited this kind of culture. Early in the novel her agency is limited, not only because of her personal traits (discussed below), but also because of her culture. People brought up under the influence of

Eastern values tend to obey the rules which are predetermined by sociocultural norms. They win approval when they adhere to the norms of society. When they exhibit what Masterson describes as “real self activations”, they might be denounced. In Japan, for instance, people are not encouraged to express their real selves: rather they are praised if they act in accordance with the group and society. In this way, people satisfy their need to be approved and valued (Masterson, *The Real Self*, 139).

Masterson’s approach goes deeper than many psychoanalytic studies, by illuminating developmental and structural issues, including individuals’ internalized self and object representations, ego functioning, and ego defenses. Intra-psychic structure is more important in Masterson’s approach than symptoms (Pearson, “Masterson’s Approach”, 21). Masterson therefore deals with the reasons for these disorders of the self. The rest of this chapter will explore the major characters in *Brick Lane* through Masterson’s approach.

4.2. MASTERSON’S ACCOUNT OF SCHIZOID PERSONALITY DISORDER.

The following section will discuss Masterson’s concept of first group there is schizoid personality disorder, which can also be related to the concept of the master-slave relationship. Schizoid personality has been explored by two paths in psychoanalytic theory (Masterson and Klein, 4). The first is descriptive psychiatry, which focuses on behavioral, describable, observable symptoms, and is generally found in the fourth edition of DSM VI. The second is dynamic psychiatry, which is interested in the exploration of unconscious motivation and

character structure (Masterson and Klein, 4). In this study, the theories developed by W. R. D. Fairbairn, Harry Guntrip and Salman Akhtar, and Ralph Klein will be explained, and used to analyze the character of Nazneen in *Brick Lane*.

According to the Masterson Approach, this personality disorder may emerge if the child is frequently faced with lack of empathy from, or domination by his caretakers (Cassidy, 66). As a result, he may begin to see them as masters who try to use him as a slave. Since the child is not taught how to put limits on the wishes of other people, he prefers to stay away from them, to provide himself with safety and space. However, he retains a deep need to be loved in his future life. What Masterson describes as “borderline personality disorder” also involves a desire to stay away from others (Masterson, *The Personality Disorders*, 239). The difference between them is that a schizoid person can never feel fused with or close to others, while a “borderline” personality can. Klein and Masterson also describe the “secret schizoid”, who may manifest outgoing and sociable behaviour, while inwardly feeling lonely within the crowds (17).

W. R. D. Fairbairn carried out prolific research into the schizoid personality. His “Schizoid Factors in the Personality” (1952), described three prominent characteristics of schizoid personalities: an attitude of omnipotence, an attitude of detachment, and a preoccupation with fantasy and inner reality (6). Fairbairn states that because of the neglect of the mother the child believes she dislikes him (Masterson and Klein, 23). According to Akhtar, in his article “Schizoid Personality Disorder: A Synthesis of Developmental Dynamic and Descriptive Features”, the person with schizoid disorder often manifests an overtly aloof and self-sufficient appearance in his or her outer persona, while internally

experiencing feelings of heightened sensitivity and emotional neediness (499). Akhtar also suggests that the schizoid personality's overt manifestation of aloofness is a defence against "anxieties emanating from the underlying sensitive and hungry self-representation that is still hoping, albeit passively, for a loving rescue by an omnipotent, all-good symbiotic object" ("Schizoid Personality Disorder", 500). The mother-child relationship of a schizoid person is described below:

When I was a kid I always had the feeling that I was a burden to her, and she literally couldn't bear me. She used to shut herself in her room away from me. I wanted to be near her, so I sat on the other side of the door, but I would never let her hear me and eventually, I just gave up. I learned to keep my feelings to myself and stayed in my room. (Pearson, "The Fortress of Solitude", 128)

Harry Guntrip (1968) is greatly influenced by Fairbairn's ideas, and describes nine fundamental characteristics of the schizoid personality: these are introversion, withdrawnness, narcissism, self-sufficiency, superiority, loss of affect, loneliness, depersonalization, and regression (38). The personality traits of Nazneen in *Brick Lane* strongly resemble the features of the schizoid personality. Some of Guntrip's criteria will be used while describing her character.

4.2.1. An Interpretation of Nazneen in Brick Lane.

As has been suggested, the characters in *Brick Lane* represent powerfully individuated psychological portraits rather than generalized depictions of members of an ethnic group. Ali gives a lot of attention to precise depictions of

the characters' personalities, through careful attention to their speech, behaviour and responses to others. She also presents clear physical descriptions in order to allow us to visualize their appearances, gestures, facial expressions and body language. The whole novel is focalized through Nazneen's perceptions and reflections, through the use of free indirect discourse, with an intensive focus on her inner life, dreams, and imaginary conversations with others (Preston, 11).

In the early stages of the novel, Nazneen exhibits aspects of the schizoid personality in terms of the approach outlined by Masterson. Ali begins the novel with the birth of Nazneen, and how she is "left to her own Fate" (*Brick Lane*, 10). Nazneen owes her passive personality to her mother's early influence. Her mother insists that personal destiny is written, and therefore cannot be changed: "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*, 3). Nazneen's mother says this after Nazneen is born prematurely, and is so weak that the midwife offers to take the baby to hospital. Her mother refuses to intervene in her child's destiny. Nazneen's mother is portrayed as a depressive character, who later commits suicide. She is only capable of dealing with her own sorrows and anxieties, and therefore neglects Nazneen's needs, and does not give her the care she should expect from her mother. Her mother's point of view and emotional withdrawnness strongly affects Nazneen's personality later. The following represents an outline of Guntrip's and Masterson's concepts of the schizoid personality in comparison with the character of Nazneen.

The first feature is "introversion: when the outer world appears unresponsive, unsafe or dangerous, turning inwards is the best way. Schizoid people have

found that they cannot expect any support in critical moments. As a consequence they begin to rely on internal feedback rather than external” (Cassidy, 66). In the novel Nazneen’s introversion is emphasized in a comparison of her personality with Chanu’s:

All the while, when Nazneen turned to her prayers and tried to empty her mind and accept each new thing with grace or indifference, Chanu worked his own method. He was looking for the same essential thing. But he thought he could grab it from outside and hold it against his chest like a shield. The degrees, the promotion, the Dhaka house, the library, the chair-restoring business, they were his self-fashioned tools. With them he tried to chisel out a special place, where he could have peace of mind. Where Nazneen turned in, he turned out; she strove to accept, he was determined to struggle; where she attended to dull her mind and numb her thoughts, he argued aloud. (*Brick Lane*, 84)

The second characteristic Masterson identifies is “withdrawnness” (Cassidy, 66): as the schizoid person feels used and uncared for, she sees people as potential exploiters. Consequently she tries to be aloof and detached. Nazneen is initially portrayed as a calm, naive village girl who does not interfere with other people’s business. She generally listens to others, and hesitates to express her own ideas. To escape from her unease and unfulfilment she imagines herself back in her village, or loses herself by watching ice-skating on television. As we have seen, for Nazneen, ice-skating becomes an escape from the reality of her life:

Sometimes she switched on the TV and flicked through the channels, looking for ice-skating...while she sat she was no longer a collection of the hopes, random thoughts, petty anxieties and selfish that made her, but was whole and pure. The old Nazneen was sublimated and the new Nazneen was filled with white light glory. But when it ended and she switched off the the TV the old Nazneen returned. (*Brick Lane*, 24)

It is clear from this quotation that Nazneen is searching for some relief. Since she cannot find it in other people, whom she always thinks of as a source of danger,

she tends to dream. Although she is longing for a close relationship she is unable to achieve this.

Masterson also suggests that the schizoid personality exhibits a form of narcissism: however Masterson's concept of the narcissism exhibited by schizoid personalities is different from the concept of the wholly narcissistic personality. Schizoid people's narcissism is not expressed in a desire to show off or gain attention; their love-objects are internal, so they do not need other people to show that they can handle most of problems by themselves. They exhibit a kind of pride, which suggests "I don't need help as often as other people do" (Cassidy, 66). Soon after her arrival in England, Nazneen asks Chanu to help to find Hasina and bring her to London, because Hasina is trying to survive alone in Dhaka. Chanu responds angrily and rejects her plan:

'Shall I pack a suitcase? Perhaps you have prepared one. I shall go to Dhaka and pluck her instantly from the streets and bring her back to live with us. On the way I could pick up the rest of your family and we could make a little Gouripur right here. Is that what you have in mind?'

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 the whole of London, although I didn't 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, 50)

Nazneen feels proud of herself, for she has been able to find her way home; however, she speaks these words inwardly, not to Chanu's face, whereas a wholly narcissistic personality would speak these thoughts aloud.

A fourth characteristic Masterson identifies is self-sufficiency: schizoid people experience anxiety about forming relationships due to their fear of engulfment, they try their best to be self-sufficient. In this way, they do not have to expose themselves to the potential dangers stemming from dependency. Nazneen is very anxious and hesitant about asking Chanu to help to find Hasina. She does not demand that he help her, and when he refuses she does not argue with him. Moreover, for a long time after she comes to London she resists forming close relationships with her Bangladeshi neighbours.

The fifth feature of schizoid personality is depersonalization: this mechanism is brought into service when the option of physically escaping is not available (Cassidy, 67). The schizoid person follows events as if she were an outsider. This condition happens when the feelings are too overwhelming for her. During her early months in England, Nazneen constantly feels remote from her own life and surroundings:

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...She saw the pink dressing table with the curly-sided mirror, and the monstrous black wardrobe that claimed most of the room. (*Brick Lane*, 13)

During her childhood Nazneen is taught not to spend any energy in expressing or exploring her feelings, or in trying to change other people's behaviour. By the time she reaches adulthood she believes that the surest way to get away from the danger other people represent is to stay away from them as much as possible: therefore she is nervous about communicating with others, and never learns how

to put limits on their demanding behaviour. Nazneen is afraid to go too far with her relationships, because for her personality it is like being a slave to someone else. The schizoid personality becomes exploited because she does not know how to put limits on others' demands, but rather tends to conform to others' wishes in order to be accepted. As Guntrip has said, when their emotions become too intense, schizoid people try to deny them and become numb (27). Nazneen struggles to numb her feelings, but her body reacts against this suppression and she feels stifled:

...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, no more missed prayers... (*Brick Lane*, 83)

In order to escape from her sense of oppression, Nazneen turns to compulsive behaviour, such as disordered eating and escape into fantasy. According to Masterson, if a child's mother or care-taker does not sympathize with the child's feelings, the child may later learn to become self-sufficient; but at the same time s/he longs to be loved. Therefore Nazneen's numbness becomes a defense mechanism: she just performs her duties: cooking and cleaning and raising her children. For her there is no way to connect to others without becoming a slave, or entering what Guntrip calls the "master/slave relationship" (Cassidy, 70). Nazneen is frequently passive in her response to Chanu. When he does not accept to find Hasina in Bangladesh, she says nothing to his face but drops Chanu from her prayers, folds his socks unwashed into his drawers and puts red chilipeppers in his sandwiches (*Brick Lane*, 41). This strategy is unsuccessful, since he never notices, and she abandons her rebellion against him until she meets Karim. The

novel traces Nazneen's psychological development in terms of a progression from passivity to agency:

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 a mantra, fettle and challenge. So that 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 couldn't wait for the 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*, 11)

4.2.2. Nazneen's Relationship with Karim in Brick Lane: A Search for Belonging.

Some of the most significant aspects of the novel are those dealing with the relationship between Nazneen and Karim. For Nazneen, Karim represents someone who has a place in the world. His British-born confidence influences Nazneen a great deal: Karim calls England his home. He also represents forms of hybridity: he wears jeans and Western clothes, while at the same time carrying salat alert on his mobile phone, which announces the time for prayer, as there is no Ezan. Nazneen hopes to find a bridge through Karim between herself and the outer world, which she does not yet know. However, Karim is also an alienated figure. He has never been to Bangladesh, and stammers in Bengali, while seeming to Nazneen to express himself confidently in English (*Brick Lane*, 173-174). Cormack argues that the death of Karim's mother is linked in his mind to his separation from an authentic Muslim community: for him Nazneen represents a maternal pre-oedipal space (Cormack, 704). Therefore, for Karim Bangladesh may symbolize maternity and tenderness, while Britain may symbolize a paternal

authority to rebel against or disagree with. Karim wants to recover the roots of his Bengali identity through Nazneen. Another factor influencing his choice of Nazneen is her passivity and compliance: she seems easy to manipulate. When Nazneen asks why he has chosen her, he answers:

Well, basically you've got two types. Make your choice. There's your Westernized girl, wears what she likes, all the make-up going on, short skirts and that soon as she's out of her father's sight...then there is your religious girl, wears the scarf or even burkha. You'd think, right, they'd be good wife material. But they ain't. Because all they want to is *argue*.
(*Brick Lane*, 320)

When Nazneen asks Karim how he sees her, he says: "You are the real thing" (*Brick Lane*, 320), and goes on to explain that he can bring another girl from the village in Bangladesh, but he will not be sure how she will be. Nazneen remembers hearing Chanu describe her as "[a]n unspoilt girl from the village. All things considered, I am satisfied" (*Brick Lane*, 16). Eventually, she realizes that Karim does not love her for herself but rather for her compliant character.

On the other hand, Nazneen falls in love with Karim because he represents an opportunity to know the outer world and escape from the pressures and limitations of her domestic life. He is a relief. Eventually, Nazneen understands this: "from the beginning you weren't you and I wasn't me. We have made each other up" (*Brick Lane*, 380). Nazneen tries to find a new world in Karim, and Karim tries to discover his roots through Nazneen. He wants to see her as "an idea of home." When Nazneen realizes this, she feels engulfed and exploited again; she decides to change in favour of choosing her agency, to avoid feeling like a slave by conforming to Karim's wishes. In refusing to marry him, she is protecting herself from being moulded by his image of her. Karim leaves no opportunity for her to shape her own identity, which is very uncomfortable for a schizoid person. She

realises that he will manipulate and dominate her if she marries him, and does not believe in her own power to stop this.

Another question that arises is whether it is because of Karim's attitude that he tries to dominate her, or whether her own personality, attitudes, expressions, appearance and responses, have allowed this situation: would it be the same if Nazneen had not changed her point of view, and had found another partner after she left Karim? The answer would probably be yes, because as long as someone sends out the message that they will be in compliance with another every time, whatever s/he says the other person will not care about her/him. However, other factors are also important: Nazneen's attitude is not only linked with her personality, but with her family, genetic heritage, culture, gender and religion.

4.3. NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER.

This section will outline Masterson's concept of the narcissistic personality, particularly in relation to the character of Chanu in *Brick Lane*. The term 'narcissism' comes from the Greek myth of Narcissus, in which a young man falls in love with his own reflection, mirrored in a lake; unable to pull himself away from the contemplation of his own beauty, he eventually starves to death and falls into the water (Masterson, 1988, 92). Heinz Kohut was an important theorist who made great contributions to the understanding of the narcissistic personality. According to Kohut, a narcissistic pathology occurs when there is a defect in one of the two lines of normal narcissistic development: self-esteem, and guiding

ideals derived from internalization of the idealized parent image (*The Restoration of the Self*, passim). In case of a failure of maturation of either or both of these lines there emerges a fragmented self, defended by avoidance, denial, grandiosity and idealization (Katz, 84).

According to Masterson, a narcissistic personality disorder has two key features: firstly his utter engrossment in his own perfection, and secondly, his striving for the narcissistic supplies that he needs to keep his image full-blown and intact (Masterson, *The Real Self*, 92). Masterson also added the category of “Closet and Devaluing Narcissistic Disorder” to this analysis (Ozakkas, 12). The aim of the narcissistic personality is always to demonstrate his superiority. The “closet narcissist”, however, idealizes others and establishes an identification with their success, revealing this attitude by sacrificing himself for others, and then saying: “Look how strong I am; I endured all the difficulties.” On the other hand, the exhibitionist narcissist emphasizes his own value. The “devaluing narcissist” always devalues others, and in this way tries to nurture his grandiose self (Pearson, “Masterson’s Approach”, 27). This kind of narcissist has the least control over the ego, as whenever he feels himself devalued he begins to devalue others. The problem is that this may occur even if no one tries to make him feel bad. Consequently, a devaluing narcissist may devalue the other even if he is not faced with a narcissistic injury. In *Brick Lane*, the character of Chanu exhibits many of the features Masterson identifies with narcissistic personalities.

4.3.1. An Intepretation of Chanu in Brick Lane.

In *Brick Lane*, Chanu represents a disappointed figure. He has established an aspirational Englishness in his identity, partly through his study of English literature. However, at the same time he has to accept that he is nothing more than a working-class man in England. Finally, to escape from the reality of life in Brick Lane he decides to return to Bangladesh, which he idealizes as a place such as that described in the poetry of Bangladesh's famous poet, Tagore. Chanu often exhibits devaluative narcissistic perspectives. According to Masterson, the devaluing narcissist is less able to demonstrate self-aggrandizement or self-idealization than other narcissists (Katz, 88). This kind of individual prefers to stay in the aggressive unit to defend himself. He follows the motto: "the best defense is a good offence" (Daws, 98).

Throughout the novel Chanu tends to devalue people in order to make himself feel better. His favourite target is English people, who do not pamper him and make him feel valued. When he is not promoted at work he is infuriated, and immediately devalues his boss and his colleagues. As Nazneen tells her friend, Razia:

My husband [Chanu] says they are racist, particularly Mr Dalloway [his boss]. He thinks he will get the promotion but it will take him longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem. Chanu had begun, she had noticed, to talk less of promotion and more of racism. (*Brick Lane*, 58)

According to Masterson, narcissistic personalities experience abandonment depression when the environment does not provide support for his grandiose self-idealizing needs, a situation which creates a profound sense of damage or devaluation (Masterson, *The Real Self*, 92). To escape from this feeling of humiliation, Chanu uses his children as a narcissistic extension of himself. When

his son, Raqib, is born he attempts to satisfy his need for self-aggrandizement through him:

For him the baby was a set of questions, an array of possibilities, a spark for debate and for reflection. He pondered on Raqib. He examined, from a distance, his progress, and made plans for his future. The baby opened up new horizons and closed others; he provided a telescope and a looking glass. What did Chanu see when he looked at his son? An empty vessel to be filled with ideas. An avenger: forming, growing. A future business partner. A professor: home grown. A Chanu: this time with chances seized, not missed. (*Brick Lane*, 67)

Not only does Chanu make plans for his son, but he also tries to impose his dreams on his daughters. On account of his failure to achieve his ideal place in the West, he forces his children to aspire to this. In regarding his children as extensions of himself, rather than separate personalities, he demonstrates a significant symptom of the narcissistic personality disorder (Daws, 96).

Chanu also forces his daughters to help him maintain a link with his native culture (Fernandez, 152). He insists that they recite Tagore's poems, and if they fail to do this properly he beats them. However, he does not simply do this to assert his devotion to Bengali culture: he also does it as a reaction to and form of revenge against English culture. Similarly, he regards Nazneen as his own commodity, telling her: "Why you should go out ? [...] if you go out ten people will say I saw her walking on the street. And I will look like a fool. Personally, I do not mind if you go out, but these people are so ignorant. What can you do?" (*Brick Lane*, 27). It is not Chanu, but Nazneen who may be judged by the local community, but he associates her image with his.

Chanu uses another immigrant, Dr. Azad, a materially successful but unhappily married Bangladeshi doctor, to try to establish his own superiority. There is a

hidden contract between them, although they do not really like one another. Chanu associates himself with Azad as an intellectual (“We intellectuals must stick together”, *Brick Lane*, 19), lending him books and forging the illusion of a mental bond between them, despite the fact that Azad despises him. Dr. Azad enjoys seeing Chanu, since he is looked down upon by his own wife and daughter, and visits Chanu in order to feel a sense of superiority. Chanu also devalues Dr. Azad, since lacking a successful career in England himself, he seeks to repair his narcissistic injury through disparaging another:

...But what is a doctor, really, when you think about it? He memorizes everything from books: broken legs, colds and viruses, eczema and asthma, rheumatism and arthirits, boils and warts. It’s learning by rote. Symptom and cure. Hardly an intellectual pursuit. No. He’s just a finger blown up to the size of a banana tree. Let him guard his house, put some barbed wire around it too. I am not interested. (*Brick Lane*, 72)

Narcissistic personalities tend to wish to be seen as grandiose, unique and important by other people (Masterson, 1995, 90). Because Chanu is disregarded at work, and more generally by English society, he tends to devalue people or things that make him feel abandoned or unimportant. For Masterson, “abandonment depression” occurs when a person’s expected needs are not met (Katz, 49).

In psychological terms, Chanu’s ambiguous attitude to English culture demonstrates a splitting mechanism: sometimes he praises his own culture and devalues the adopted culture, and sometimes he does the reverse. When Chanu seeks to devalue his own culture, he distinguishes himself from other Bangladeshi immigrants in order to feel superior: “These people here don’t know the difference between me, who stepped off an aeroplane with a degree certificate,

and the peasants who jumped off the boat possessing only lice on their heads” (*Brick Lane*, 26). Chanu looks for admiration for his skills, symbolized in the many certificates he displays on his wall, which are eventually relegated to the cupboard. These certificates play an important role in the novel, functioning as “transitional objects” (Winnicott, *passim*). Transitional objects act as mediators between the individual’s wishes and reality, helping the child to accept the realities of the life (*ibid*). For example, a teddy bear helps the child to go to sleep and relieves him from the anxiety associated with separation from his mother. If the child becomes accustomed to having these kinds of objects, later he may want to follow the same principle with different kinds. Transitional objects may be material things, such as cars, or other objects (*ibid*). Early in the novel, Chanu refers often to his certificates:

He took down his framed certificates and explained them to her. “This one is from the Centre for Meditation and Healing in Victoria Street. Basically it is a qualification in transcendental philosophy. Here’s the one from Writers’ Bureau, a correspondence course. I applied for some jobs as a journalist after that [...] Now this is not a certificate as such. It’s from Morley College evening classes on nineteenth-century economic thought, and it’s just directions to the school, but it’s all they gave out... (*Brick Lane*, 33)

Chanu wants to be pampered and taken into account. When his short story is rejected by a local newspaper, he behaves as though he has been praised:

...I have a letter from the Bexleyheath Advertiser somewhere. I’ll look it out for you. It says, “we were most interested in your story, ‘A Prince Among Peasants,’ but unfortunately it is not suitable for our publication.” It was a nice letter, I kept it somewhere. (*Brick Lane*, 32)

The title of Chanu’s story, ‘A Prince Among Peasants,’ shows that he defines himself as superior to other people in his group. He continues to demonstrate his narcissistic tendencies by keeping the refusal letter, for this is proof that he has

been taken into account. However, all his struggles to be recognized turn out to be in vain, since there are lots of people in Britain like him. In the end, Chanu realizes that he cannot get what he wants from Britain, and decides to return to Bangladesh. He thinks the problem stems from external reasons alone, but in fact it is also caused by those desires and resentments which we internalize once and then externalize.

4.4. MASTERSON'S CONCEPT OF BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER.

The last type of the disorders of the self identified by Masterson is Borderline Personality disorder. According to Masterson, borderline pathology occurs during the 'rapprochement' subphase of the period of separation-individuation (Pearson, "Masterson's Approach", 22). The rapprochement subphase occurs between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two months (Masterson, *The Personality Disorders*, 60). During this time the child gains some individuation and separation from the mother, but still turns to her to seek help and encouragement. According to Masterson, the developmental arrest might be a result of failures in nature, nurture and fate (60). What is meant by "nurturing" failure is that the maternal libidinality is not sufficient to support the child, both for the process of individuation and the emotional needs.

A "borderline" mother may cling to the child and reward him or her for regressive behaviour. For example, a son might want to go to university in another city, but his mother might discourage him from leaving her; therefore he might decide not

to leave home and to find a school in his hometown. Consequently, the mother might become very happy and reward him, by saying how good he is or how lucky she is to have a son like him. This is called “rewarding object relations unit” (RORU) (Pearson, “Masterson’s Approach”, 22). However, if the son does not comply with his mother’s wishes she might become angry, accuse him of being selfish or try to upset him. This is called “Withdrawing Object Relations Unit” (WORU) (ibid).

Conversely a borderline mother might be uncomfortable with her child’s dependence on her, and promote premature separation (Masterson, *The Personality Disorders*, 60). This may also cause a borderline pathology in the child. The mother’s difficulty in supporting the child’s emerging self during the rapprochement subphase is a key element. Of course, other issues associated with nature or external circumstances, such as illness, culture, gender or accidental events, can also influence development, regardless of parental effectiveness. The Borderline mission in life is to avoid the feelings of abandonment depression and keep the rewarding unit constantly activated (Pearson, “Masterson’s Approach”, 41). However, it is a high price to pay. This kind of personality cannot cope with the realities of life with their real self: they always need some support to lead their lives. Therefore, they use a false, defensive self, which is the outcome of the vacillation between RORU and WORU (Masterson, *The Personality Disorders*, 55). This means that they regulate themselves in parallel with other people, and become fused with their partners in relationships. However, Masterson claims that they then also feel themselves engulfed because of this excessive clinging, and subsequently try to escape the relationship. Therefore, border people have

problems with intimate relationships. However, similar behaviour can result even if they do not have a partner. The term is also applied to behaviour, usually self-destructive, that represents a defense against abandonment depression. Alcohol, drugs, excessive work habits and other addictive activities can serve as distractions from depression (Masterson, *The Search for the Real Self*, 78). Individuals may try to repair their ego defects with defense mechanisms.

4.4.1. An Interpretation of Hasina in Brick Lane.

In *Brick Lane* the character of Hasina demonstrates some of the intimacy problems that a borderline personality suffers from. Hasina does not appear directly in the novel, but is only encountered through her letters to Nazneen. When Hasina's first marriage fails and she runs away, she begins to work at a garment factory in Dhaka, but is fired because she is seen walking home with one of the male workers. Since she does not have any money she cannot pay her rent, and is later raped by her landlord. For some time she works as a prostitute, and later begins to live with another man. However, this relationship also fails, and she leaves again. She finds a work as a babysitter in a rich family's house, but finally she absconds again with the cook of the house. Hasina initially seems to have more agency than Nazneen, since she chooses her husband and her job. In this sense she may be perceived as more independent and self-confident than her sister. However, her tendency to run away can also be associated with her borderline personality.

Borderline people always feel that they have to obey others in order to make themselves feel good. In exchange they require their partners to take responsibility for them (Masterson, *The Search for the Real Self*, 113). This, however, leads them to fear engulfment, and they may subsequently try to free themselves from the relationship. Subconsciously, they cast their partners into the role of oppressor, making them exceed their personal limits, so that they believe they have to leave them. Hasina behaves in accordance with this theory in that at first she does whatever her partners wish, and then subsequently she feels engulfed because her partners do not treat her well.

Hasina also uses the mechanism known as “splitting.” At first she regards every person she meets, especially the men she falls in love with, as perfect and good: “*Even we have nothing I happy. We have love. Love is happiness. Sometime I feel to run and jump like goat [with happiness]*” (*Brick Lane*, 19). Describing her first husband to Nazneen, Hasina writes: “*He is a good man and very patient. Sometime I make him lose patience without I mean to*” (*Brick Lane*, 37). This demonstrates Hasina’s desire to receive constant approval from others, and also her failure to confess to herself the true nature of the relationship. This is also a characteristic of borderline personality disorder: her letters unintentionally betray her sorrow and anxiety. Eventually, however, everything changes, and she begins to see the negative side of the relationship:

Now I have news. In morning soon as husband go out for work I go away to Dhakka. Our landlady Mrs. Kashem is only person who know about it. She say it is not good decision but she help anyway. She say it is better get beaten by own husband than beating by stranger. But those stranger not saying at same time they love me. If they beat they do in all honesty. (Brick Lane, 46)

Hasina's main problem is that her false self does not let her behave the way she wants; instead, she feels an obligation to act in parallel with other people's wishes. The reason why she sees her partners as infallible stems from her tendency to comply with people in order to achieve a good self-image. In one of her letters she describes a beggar woman who tries to resist what is demanded of her, and admits that she envies her behaviour, since she cannot show such resistance in her own relationships:

Every evening I go up on roof. There is beggar woman lie on the street corner. Body is snap shut. If she sit on behind she can look only at ground. It like big big foot press on the back. Any time she wanting to look higher she roll on side. She move along with shuffling and use hands as paddle. After it get dark man come and put on hand cart and take somewhere. One time he come and she do not want to go. She start shuffling back away and about. She get far as coconut vendor at other corner. I like to watch this woman. She have courage. (Brick Lane, 46-47)

In her relationships, Hasina first fuses herself with her partners, and then distances herself from them. As a defence mechanism she often picks out partners whose personality traits make any kind of relationship difficult. First she is very happy with her husband, but then he begins to beat her. The same vicious circle works with her next lover: first he is extremely loving towards her. Again, she feels happy and secure: "...In afternoon we are together. Always he watching me with love. If I move he move. If I go to wash he follow. And he keeps hand on me" (Brick Lane, 140). However, her lover changes his attitude towards her: "He say things not in good order any more even I do always try to keep it good ordered like anything. 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, 143).

In the end she feels she has to leave again: *“Where I can go sister? I run away from my husband. And I run away from him also. Now I am afraid to run again”* (*Brick Lane*, 135). She also rationalizes her landlord’s close attention to her, saying: *“he is father to me”* (*Brick Lane*, 130). The landlord forces her to sleep with him when she is unable to pay the rent. She suggests that her misfortunes are the result of her own bad choices, but fails to realize that others are abusing her: *“Everything has happen is because of me. I take my own husband. I leave him... I let Abdul walk with me. I the one living here without paying”* (*Brick Lane*, 135). Therefore she continues to embark on similar relationships. In short, first Hasina is very happy in her relationships. She sees her partners as caring and loving, and fuses herself with them. Then everything changes, and she sees them as cruel. This situation arises because she always acts in parallel with the wishes of others, and puts no limits on their behaviour. Therefore she changes her opinions and feels engulfed: the result is that she has to escape again and again.

Ali’s depiction of Hasina is controversial: as Perfect has stated, many critics have argued that her character represents a gendered and racial stereotype (111). The language of Hasina’s letters has also led to extensive debate. Cormack has stated that “[i]t is hard to know exactly what we are reading- whether the letters represent inept attempts at English or a free translation from illiterate Bengali” (715). Perfect concludes that the letters cannot be written in English, because at the beginning of the novel the reader is told that Nazneen knows virtually no English (112). Hiddleston suggests that the broken, “pidgin” English Hasina uses represents her growing despair and vulnerability (62).

Ali has been criticized for reproducing Western preconceptions about women's subjugation in Bangladeshi society. Hasina tells Nazneen about her friend, Moju, whose husband and sister-in-law attack her by pouring acid over her when she refuses to submit to their demands. Moju later dies in hospital. Hasina also discusses the current situation in Bangladesh, where conflict seems to be everywhere. Universities are closed, or the professors sell the exam questions to students. Hasina's letters can be said to reinforce stereotypes about the conditions of Bangladesh. For this reason, Ali received a complaint from the Greater Sylhet Development and Welfare Council, condemning her depiction of Bangladeshis as backward and uneducated (Hiddleston, 57). As has been discussed in Chapter 1, above, Ali has been accused of writing about a community she is not part of. She answers these accusations in her essay, "Where I'm Coming From" :

How can I write about a community to which I do not truly belong? Perhaps the answer is I can write it because I do not truly belong. Growing up with an English mother and a Bengali father means never being an insider. Standing neither behind a closed door, nor in the thick of things, rather in the shadow of the doorway, is a good place from which to observe. (1)

It can be argued that Hasina's letters play an important role in making Nazneen aware of the real conditions in Bangladesh. Without this alternative narrative, Nazneen might make a different decision because of her longing for home, which causes her to idealize Bangladesh, remembering only good things and forgetting the bad. Hasina's letters prevent Nazneen from falling into this delusion.

In conclusion, a close analysis of the major characters in *Brick Lane* demonstrates Ali's careful attention to psychological phenomena. Rather than a straightforward attempt to depict a conflict between an ethnic minority group and the Western

other, Ali creates characters from the same ethnic group who are strongly differentiated. Nazneen, Chanu, Karim and Hasina each demonstrate varying responses to difficult circumstances, while also representing deeper, more individuated psychic portraits. Masterson's analysis of disorders of the self provides a valuable tool with which to uncover these differences. Ali's focus on the intersection between these personality differences and the characters' individual experiences emphasizes her desire to subordinate postcolonial critique to psychological realism.

CONCLUSION

This thesis represents a contribution to the critical debate about *Brick Lane*, one of the most influential novels to be published in England in recent years. Technological and political changes in society have resulted in increasingly fluid and mobile geographical communities. With mass migration into Western societies, problems concerning immigration and integration have emerged. Subjects such as racism, discrimination, assimilation and stereotyping have come to dominate discussions of migration. As a consequence, multiculturalism has come to occupy an increasingly important place in literature.

Although *Brick Lane* has frequently been analyzed as a postcolonial text, this thesis has attempted to read the novel from an original perspective, to demonstrate that it reflects the hidden psychological aspects of immigration, including survivor guilt, integration problems, conflicts between groups and the reasons of these conflicts, mourning process, the meaning of dreams, the factors affecting migration, the living conditions of female immigrants and the roots of the personality disorders represented in the major characters. It can be said that Monica Ali deliberately draws attention to these issues by exploring the psychic structures of immigrants.

The three theorists studied here, Salman Akhtar, Vamik Volkan and J. F. Masterson, can be connected with one another, since they each focus on individual, psychoanalytic responses to specific events and circumstances. In the first chapter, Akhtar has studied the psychological causes and effects of migration

on individuals, In the second chapter ,Volkan has examined the group, specifically ethnic, conflicts in the light of psychoanalytic theories of identity, and lastly in the third chapter, Masterson has explored the effects of early life events on the individual's ability to develop an integrated sense of self. The work of these theorists can enable a more profound understanding of *Brick Lane* to emerge. Psychoanalytic theory helps to illuminate the differences between the characters, who despite coming from the same broad community are strongly differentiated in terms of their personalities and the experiences that have shaped them. An understanding of the psychoanalytic background to the process of grief and mourning is also vital for a true understanding of the novel, since Nazneen is not only an immigrant, Muslim or Bangladeshi grieving for her homeland, but also a grieving daughter, mother and sister, who has not been given the opportunity to come to terms with her losses. Volkan's analysis of the psychological reasons for group identification of enemies or allies illuminates the treatment of cultural, religious and ethnic conflict in *Brick Lane*, and the sense of anguish Chanu, and Nazneen's lover, Karim, experience when they are unable to decide where they belong. Masterson's theories of personality development, which he portrays as a quest for a "real self", are also particularly important for understanding Ali's characters. Nazneen's early life and cultural inheritance have formed her in terms that strongly resemble the 'schizoid' character who withdraws from contact with others, and retreats into fantasy and self-reliance in order to survive. Nazneen's sister, Hasina, is also strongly depicted in psychological terms. She is never directly encountered in the novel but only through her letters, which are written in a kind of broken language that has confused some critics. Like Nazneen, Hasina's life choices are partly dictated by her gender. Her attempts at self-determination,

for example, by choosing her own husband and then choosing to leave him, fail partly because of her cultural environment. However, they also fail because of her personality, which is strongly contrasted with that of Nazneen. While Nazneen keeps her psychic self apart from Chanu, Hasina is unable to resist fusing her identity with others: the men who finally betray and reject her. The broken language of Hasina's letters, rather than reinforcing a gendered and racial stereotype, as some critics have suggested, expresses her damaged self, which she never gains insight into, and is therefore never able to repair. Nazneen and Hasina are contrasted in the novel partly in terms of their circumstances and environments, but also in terms of their personalities and responses: Nazneen has internalized the message her mother gave her: "don't try to resist your fate." However, Hasina has rejected her family's outlook and attempted to forge her own path. Ironically, it is Hasina who is destroyed while Nazneen eventually succeeds.

Chanu's continual attempts to gain attention from others reflect his search for belonging and recognition, and his divided allegiances between British and Bangladeshi culture express his own search for a real, integrated self. His narcissistic characteristics can be connected with his subjectivity as a formerly colonized other trying to live in the West. At the end of the novel, Chanu feels that he must leave Britain, despite his years working to establish an identity there. However, Nazneen, who early in the novel has felt herself completely alienated from the British environment, is finally able to construct a hybrid self capable of a form of integration. It is this seeming praise of the West that has alienated some of Ali's critics. However, rather than celebrating the superiority of the West over the

East, the novel shows the impact of situations and events on specific, different personality types. This thesis has attempted to explore what I believe to be Ali's most important achievement: a form of psychological realism rather than political polemic.

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APPENDIX

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