

PSYCHOANALYTICAL ANALYSIS OF MIGRANT MINDS IN THE NOVELS OF M.G. VASSANJI

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ABSTRACT

The human mind in many migrations was studied by M.G. Vassanji. In most of his works, an estrangement from the migrating nation, community, and culture arises as a result of suppressed emotion and dreams, and an unconscious play of mental agony resulting in a disrupted common thinking pattern. Every story that Vassanji tells is purposefully meant to depict psychiatric disorders brought on by unrealized potential, achieving psychoanalysis for his neurotic condition. Along with migration comes a process of change, one that is frequently upsetting to a previously stable mind due to changes in cuisine, language, culture, surroundings, and interpersonal acceptance. A migrant's intellect carefully examines the new society and contrasts it with the one from which he came. Every event and experience he has serves as fodder for a comparison between the past and the present, between his current state and his previous one, and between natives and his natives. One of M.G. Vassanji's major accomplishments is his in-depth account of the consequences on migrants and his careful exploration of their thoughts.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Migration, Alienation, Culture, Language, Society

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalysis is a collection of theories and therapeutic approaches that address the unconscious mind in part and collectively provide a means of treating mental illnesses. Later, psychoanalysis evolved in a variety of ways, including psychoanalytic literary criticism, the study of films and fairy tales, philosophical viewpoints like Freud-Marxism, and other cultural phenomena. Psychoanalytic criticism uses the same "reading" techniques that Freud and other theorists used to analyze texts. One may psychoanalyze a specific character in a literary work, but it is typically thought that all such characters are projections of the author's psyche. This argument suggests that literary pieces, like dreams, reveal the author's hidden unconscious wants and worries.

Psychoanalysis critically looks for signs of ambivalence, guilt, psychological conflicts, and unresolved emotions. The behavior of the characters in the literary work will reveal the author's own suppressed feelings, experiences, and

situations. Principles like "symbolism," "condensation," and "displacement" are used in psychological material to convey information in an indirect, concealed, or encoded manner.

The majority of the characters in M.G. Vassanji's literature are from Indian communities who traveled to East Africa in the late 19th century as part of the British Empire's labor mobility. Indian populations in East Africa were marginalized and their status became untenable in post-colonial times. Due to social stress, East African Asians were compelled to migrate westward as part of the International Diaspora. When immigrants arrive in the West, they encounter a very harsh and terrible reality; they are victims with no choice but to continue living there and learning new things every day about what the West has to offer. These characters experience anxiety when they recall and reflect on their existence.

This way of thinking causes feelings of freedom and responsibility, which makes it difficult for the person to live a meaningful life and find a purpose. A feeling of loneliness and estrangement from the outside world might also result from it. The realization that what they believed to be true about the world isn't true is what causes their worry, dread, agitation, nausea, and agony. The characters' constant fear is caused by their suppressed emotions and repressed fears, which causes them to become neurotic. This way of thinking causes feelings of freedom and responsibility, which makes it difficult for the person to live a meaningful life and find a purpose. A feeling of loneliness and estrangement from the outside world might also result from it. The realization that what they believed to be true about the world isn't true is what causes their worry, dread, agitation, nausea, and agony. The characters' constant fear is caused by their suppressed emotions and repressed fears, which causes them to become neurotic. At the center of Vassanji's fiction is the Indian community. The members of this community make their first voyage to East Africa in the late 19th century as part of the labor mobility within the British Empire, working as semi-skilled laborers, small traders, and junior colonial functionaries. Starting as shopkeepers and businessmen sitting on the coast of British East Africa and German East Africa, they possessed the necessary linguistic and political inside knowledge to assist the colonial administration in ruling an inaccessible and unruly hinterland.

Being marginal males gave them the freedom to act as cultural interpreters and as a barrier between the colonial government and the native African population. The situation of the Indian populations in East Africa grew intolerable in the postcolonial era. With the nationalization of rental properties, the postcolonial administration pushed East African Asians into the foreign diaspora, further marginalizing them. M.G. Vassanji describes the second voyage, which started in the 1960s, from postcolonial Africa towards Europe and North America. He does this by drawing on his own experiences, the in-between subjugated fate, and his ongoing efforts to keep an eye out for unfulfilled aspirations.

His novels' characters attempt to pursue the illusion of a world with musk-scented floors, silver pillars, and gold walls. However, they eventually come to the terrible and brutal realization that Canada cannot appear as a new land. The narrative follows the lives and destinies of a cast of unforgettable individuals who have been members of the Asian community in East Africa for more than 70 years. An account of the individuals who departed from Indian coasts in pursuit of an Eastern African dream. The history of Indian colonies is essentially covered by Vassanji, from their inception until their near-destruction.

Amriika, Vassanji's fourth book, is a superb account of the experience of immigrants. The condition of life in exile is examined. Unavoidably, Vassanji has centered his most recent story on the themes of displacement, migration, longing, and exile. It is told from the perspective of Ramji, a member of the Cutchi Ismaili Muslim community and a third-world immigrant from Dar es Salaam, East Africa. M.G. Vassanji chronicles the diasporic journey of an immigrant in America, from Gujarat, he never knew Dar es Salaam he grew up in America he adopted it as his home. It is a gripping tale of displacement and its aftermath.

An Inside Look at Vikram Lall's World The most intricate analysis of an immigrant, narrator Vikram Lall, a dubious middle-aged businessman, from his new residence on the Canadian coast is written by Vassanji. The epic saga of contemporary Kenyan history, *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, is set during the Lall family's significant transplanting. Before relocating to Nairobi, the country's capital, Vikram's father, Ashok Lall, operated a grocery store in the town of Nakura in central Kenya. As an adult Vikram is compelled to escape from this nation, which is now independent and run by a group of nepotistic politicians, due to Kenya's anti-corruption laws. Lall is a fugitive, not from justice, and he has no place of origin. He is now lost and alone in frigid Ontario, neither Asian nor African nor Canadian, neither innocent nor guilty, nor suspended between several worlds.

Literary critics have examined Vassanji's works in great detail and examined their sociological setting. To determine the behavioral patterns and mental processes of the characters in the condition of migration, the current study looks at and analyses a selection of fiction from a psychoanalytical standpoint. The main characters are forced to examine their

lives to determine their identity and meaning because migration alters how their minds function, causing them to become neurotic. Analyzing the autobiographical elements in M. G. Vassanji's writings that have mostly gone unnoticed by literary critics is the other aspect of this study. Exile, memory, diasporic awareness, yearning for return, alienation, and identity exploration are all topics that M.G. Vassanji consistently addresses. Since they migrated from Asia in the late 19th century to Africa and then to the West in the 1960s, all of these traits have found a special way to express their repressed fears. The novelist offers a perceptive look at the psychological makeup of a certain set of Indians who were born and raised in East Africa in the middle of the 20th century. M.G. Vassanji seems to make the argument that each human mind must have a unique identity while multiple diversity coexists. However, the harsh brutalities become rampant when this identity is forced upon a certain individual based on their ethnicity, color, and religion.

Vassanji's portrayal of each character's thought process is based on the principle of discriminating. Perhaps by making this observation, Vassanji highlights both the conditions in which Asian Africans developed their interstitiality and the fact that they no longer feel that they have a secure identity; instead, they have an identity of the in-between space, one that is incomprehensible in a world that is interpreted in terms of black and white. The original ideas of the home, which are repeatedly imagined in various ways across borders and boundaries, become ambiguous in Vassanji's case because neurotic identities are continually ruptured along with their language, class, race, and gender denominations, and they are mutated as well as reconstituted in the trans-local spaces.

Diasporic people move on, much like their homes do, like tortoises and their shells, after being uprooted from their alleged place of birth and left with no emotional, political, or cultural links to territorially restricted, static locales. Unsatisfactory outcomes, including psychological disruptions to one's sense of self and social standing, arise when these personalities fail to live up to the expectations that were dreamed before the migration. It indeed appears that M.G. Vassanji incorporated biographical elements into his fictional characters because he immigrated to Canada from Africa, and his ancestors, who immigrated to Africa from Asia, may have been in a chronic neurotic state and may have unintentionally or intentionally imposed similar circumstances on the characters he created.

Vassanji's 1991 novel *No New Land*, set in Toronto, depicts a group of immigrants from East Africa and other nations as they try to adapt to life in a foreign land. With a focus on the Lalanis and their aspirations for the past, present, and future, the book portrays a range of immigrant experiences. Vassanji is a member of the second group of migrants who describe their experience of migration as being in a liminal area. Among the more significant topics he discusses are history, diversity, colonialism's effects, personal identity, and community values. Vassanji's novels may offer the most thorough and accurate examination of African life that hasn't been found in previous works.

My research aims to investigate the idea of multiculturalism and how M.G. Vassanji's *No New Land* portrays it. Although, indeed, Canada is sometimes referred to as a "country of immigrants," this is more a reflection of the circumstances or status of the immigrants than of the immigrant community itself. In addition to welcoming immigrants, refugees, and exiles from throughout the globe, Canada's multicultural policy supports its social, political, and economic development. One of the primary concerns that immigrants in host nations see is the preservation of their original language, customs, religion, and culture. Immigrants usually compromise and lose the previously listed identity-related elements due to the host countries' many expectations.

This tale of global dislocation and unpredictable migration is dramatized in Vassanji's *No New Land*. The author illustrates what occurred to Asian Africans in Canada with this case. This book's characters search for the illusory world with its silver pillars, musk-scented floors, and golden walls. But the harsh and terrible reality they face makes them realize that Canada cannot be viewed as a foreign country. Although they are compelled to stay in Canada and learn more about it every day, Vassanji portrays the victims of immigration as vigilant observers who feel victimized in the end: "We are but creatures neither of our origins, and however stalwarts we march forward, paving new roads, seeking new worlds, and the ghosts from our pasts stand nor far behind and are not easily shaken off" (Vassanji, 09). People began attacking immigrants even after they were refused acceptance into the host society as their country. "Paki, what do you have there? Hello, hello? "Paki-paki-paki." "Save me, save me, I have done nothing," Esmail cried in terrible, pitiful groans after being pounded in the stomach and flung to the ground. Encouragements were yelled: "Get up! Get up! Esmail, however, was unable to rise (Vassanji, 96). Before arriving in Canada, most immigrants dreamed of a prosperous life and thought that their circumstances would improve. However, they realized their error when they got to Canada.

To assist Indians recover their cultural past and define their African identity, Vassanji's *No New Land* serves as a tool for self-discovery. He seems to suggest that one needs a unique identity in this example, a feeling of being in-between to coexist with people from different cultural backgrounds. In *No New Land*, Vassanji examines how Canada's

multicultural patchwork has changed as a result of emigration trends. During the English colonial era, many Africans and Asians who had been uprooted sought refuge in Canada. There was a severe labor shortage on plantations producing sugar, tea, cocoa, and rubber after slavery was abolished in Europe and its colonies. Because of this, Indians who worked on public projects like roads, harbors, ports, and other offices in other countries came under scrutiny by the British.

About a million individuals moved to various colonies as a result of this scheme. Esmail, Jamal, and Nanji embody the main theme and heighten the experience as the plot centers on the Lalanis. The protagonist's father, Haji Lalani, immigrated to Zanzibar in 1906 when he was just sixteen years old. He worked as a manager for an Indian company while attempting to make a name for himself in East Africa. His land, "the land of birth which they had left of long ago, to which even the longing to return had been muted, although memories persisted," remains vivid in his memory even after he has secured himself and established his identity (Vassanji10).

Even though Haji Lalani has many chances in this new country and has been successful in preserving his religious identity and cultural heritage, he still has a strong desire to go back to his native country. Vassanji illustrates the difficulties of multiculturalism and the characteristics of a diasporic writer through his characters. Nurudin Lalani, the son of Hanji Lalani, who migrated to East Africa during the colonial era, is the book's main character. He works as a salesperson and runs a shop where people congregate because he is unable to manage the family after his father passed away: "The shop remained open to give the old man something to do, for which the elderly who had come to depend on it over the years were grateful." Talking about religion was the only thing he still enjoyed (Vassanji, 19).

In their host countries, immigrants are always viewed as foreigners. The public views them as competitors in the job and real estate markets. After his father's reign ended, Nurudin also decided to move. However, his move was also forced, just like his father's. All minority immigrants to Canada, especially those who are recent arrivals from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, are represented by the Lalanis, a fictional Asian-African shopkeeper community known as the Shamsi. These immigrants often feel like outsiders because of the strange and dangerous nature of their new environment. Even before they arrive in Canada, the Lalanis are anxious about their future, which is exacerbated by their humiliation in London and their following journey to Canada.

As they adjust to their new house, they fear that every step will be a mystery and a trap. Their difficulties stem from their unfamiliarity and cultural alienation because of their unique appearance and lifestyle. Their lifestyles are very different, and they are afraid of the new traditions of their adopted country. But in their quest for better chances and possibilities, the Lalanis transcend their fear. The Lalanis family's home in Toronto is a microcosm of the greater Asian community in Canada.

The Lalanis live in a small, multicultural suburb called Rosecliff Park, which is mostly populated by Asian immigrants from Africa. This multicultural neighborhood makes an effort to live an Asian way of life. Despite their diverse religious beliefs, the people of Rosecliffe Park loved to gossip, argue, and have delicious snack parties. They also live secular lifestyles and adhere to their values. No New Land shows how one culture's traditions are modified to fit a completely different cultural setting. The little snack stand in Rosecliff Park looks a lot like the classic Indian tea shops and dabhas. Vassanji uses food as a kind of cultural capital throughout the book. Tea, samosas, and chappati tiffins are just a few of the delectable images that abound throughout the novel.

In addition to confirming the identities of the people who live in Rosecliffe Park, it also symbolizes a way of life, a religious taboo, and a sense of community solidarity. Food sales are important because they represent the subsistence of both the buyer and the vendor. Rose Cliffe Park's liberal and secular cultural values are reinforced by religious observances, Indian festivals, and a few other cultural observations. No New Land looks closely at how each character's psychological makeup has been influenced by Canadian society. Among the various manacles, Jamal and Nanji, two intelligent people, came to Canada from Africa in quest of opportunities.

To control his life, Jamal skilfully adapts to the changing demands. At times, he does this by making appointments to meet with individuals, and at other times, he uses his position to sell samosas. As an idealist, Nanji sees underlying problems and disinterest in his new nation. Two notable instances of racism are presented in No New Land. Esmail, a minor figure from the East African Asian Shamsi community, is the subject of the first. When he is leaving work at the Toronto tube station, white boys physically attack him and treat him harshly. The dominant ideology and the locals' perception of immigrants as rivals for their jobs and other political and social positions are the two main causes of this. "Esmail was being abused by the three louts who had approached from behind. One of them said, "Paki!" with excitement. Esmail looked scared and turned to face them. "Paki, what do you have there? Hey, hello? "Paki-Paki-Paki." They snarled and jeered as they pressed closer to him on the front and the tube tracks behind him. ... "Save me, save me, I have done

nothing," Esmail cried in terrible, pitiful groans after being pounded in the stomach and flung to the ground. Encouragements were yelled: "Get up! Get up! Esmail, however, was unable to rise (Vassanji 96). Other immigrants become uneasy and worry about their safety in Canada as a result of the Esmail incident. The immigrants worry that more harsh circumstances like these may arise in Canada.

Vassanji's narration demonstrates how Canada's multicultural patchwork has expanded with the arrival of new cultural enclaves. Throughout the book, there are additional supporting characters that represent various social and cultural clans. The girl, who was born in Portugal, lives in a district full of fishermen and butchers and accuses Nurudin of rape. Susheela and Ramesh, who immigrated from another part of Africa, are representatives of the Hindu community in Toronto. Canada has a rich history and is home to people of various identities. However, Vassanji also humorously recounts his immigration experience to Canada as being marked by several unfavorable incidents, including snowfall, a friendly white man, Roshan and her husband Abdul appearing exhausted, and taking a bus rather than a taxi, all of which helped Nurudin and his family understand that life in Canada is not easy.

Canada is frequently preferred by third-world immigrants because of its multicultural policies and ambiguous definition of nationality. However, in reality, there are too many differences. The main character of *No New Land*, Nurudin, swiftly discovers the realities of Canada. In spite of his eight years of work, he was overlooked due to his lack of "Canadian experience."

During his job interviews, Nurudin heard the phrase "Canadian experience" most of the time. Although Canada offers many opportunities, it also becomes a location where cultures are uprooted. A person's skin tone is frequently preferred over their appearance. "You take the bus to confront the jobs head-on after frantically checking your mail. You feel guilty for coming in the winter on these initial days. You beat the pavements in the bitter cold, looking for openings.

Yonge Street is followed by Bloor, Dundas, Queen, the East End, and finally the West. I used to be a salesperson, and I still am. Give me a chance, please. Why don't they realize that we are capable of doing the job? They always invoke "Canadian experience," to which you can't respond. Instead, you have plenty of solutions, but you don't tell anyone but your fellow immigrants at Sixty-nine. Vassanji, 44 Nurudin eventually found employment, although it had nothing to do with his position. Nurudin's sickness was shared by many immigrants, including Romesh, Nanji, Abdul, and many more. Because the host community feels insecure, immigrants often shy away from assuming more significant positions in society. People worry about the potential effects of their sociopolitical perspective on newcomers.

The jobs that immigrants accept offer them hope for a future that never comes. Linguistic diversity is another important component of Vassanji's multicultural literature. Even if he uses various colloquial languages in his writing, English is the language he uses for his literary works. According to Vassanji, English's widespread reading over the globe aids in the growth of his culture. Vassanji's writings incorporate a variety of African and Indian vernacular languages. The usage of Indian dialects, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Sanskrit, and Kutchi, particularly interests him. He also likes Swahili, an African language. Canada is a multicultural nation that celebrates all religions because of its broad immigrant population, which includes people from many different cultures and religions.

However, it can be challenging to preserve one's heritage and customs. Immigrants thus find it difficult to distinguish themselves from other cultures as well as to blend in with Canadian society. Rosecliffe Park is a representation of openness and variety. It is a mosaic-style setting that represents plurality and diversity. The residents speak a variety of languages and are from a wide range of racial backgrounds. When a society emphasizes diversity above homogeneity and is made up of people from many religious, ethnic, and cultural origins, the idea of multiculturalism is accurate. Culturally diverse communities are known as multicultural societies. Eventually, Canada became the home away from home for long-lost emigrants. Canada is well-known for its bilingual system, provinces, and multicultural mosaic. As racial and cultural diversity rises, so too will the need for tolerance and openness.

Vassanji has extensively depicted the period of transition in a person's life as it is interwoven with Canada's multicultural milieu. The synchronic structure of the book guides the reader from the present to the past and to experience domains beyond the current referential context. Vassanji has expanded on the many facets of multicultural Canada, such as its function as a refuge for foreigners and a location where the homeless can find a place to live. The way the Canadian government is viewed and its position towards the Indian and other minority communities has changed significantly over the last few decades. In addition to protecting these communities from racial, ethnic, and other types of discrimination, multiculturalism, and related laws and policies also assist immigrants in their attempts to preserve

their own cultures, faiths, and customs within Canadian society. Vassanji primarily draws attention to the ongoing efforts made by immigrants to create their identities in a mixed society.

2. CONCLUSION

The Indian population in East Africa and their subsequent migration to other regions are the primary psychological subjects of Vassanji's novels. His books explore the effects of migration on people's lives when their emotions are repressed and the ongoing unconscious quest for identity that these uprooted people experience. In light of the psychoanalytical analysis of a selection of M.G. Vassanji's fiction, the study aims to investigate the effects of migration on the characters that are positioned as a buffer zone between the native Africans and the colonial government. Due to their lengthy history of multiple migrations, the neurotic characters in Vassanji are doubly estranged and detached from their cultural cognitive process, trapping them in the maze of identification. When Vassanji returns to his roots, he purposefully imprints his features on the characters, which is what motivates him to describe the members of his community, which is a minority inside a minority. Vassanji has a strong sense of duty to write about the character of the community he belongs to.

The study made an effort to look at the experiences of African and Asian immigrants in Canada as well as how they coped with cultural and environmental conflicts. Through its research of M. G. Vassanji's *No New Land*, the paper emphasized the immigrants' efforts to find a balance between assimilation and the preservation of their cultural identity. One important subject discussed in M.G. Vassanji's *No New Land* is cultural diversity. The host culture and the immigrant culture are nearly always significantly distinct in multicultural Canada and Africa. Creole culture was adopted by Indian immigrants to Africa because they had no other choice.

They are in a very different position in Canada, though, as they are continuously caught between embracing their own culture and their host nation's. Nurdin and his family provide the clearest example of someone suffering when they are not at home. People must balance their cultures during several migrations, which can be challenging. Numerous migrations caused people to think about their identities in both their new country and their home country. The problems of adjustment and the role that society plays in immigrants' journeys were also discussed in the study. This study concludes by emphasizing the need to understand the complexities of immigrant experiences and the need for a more accepting society that values and embraces cultural diversity.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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