



## PORTRAIT OF A TRANSPLANTED COMMUNITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF INSECURE MINORITY IMMIGRANTS IN M.G.VASSANJI'S "NO NEW LAND"

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Article Info:

Article Received:01/04/2015

Revised on: 11/04/2015

Accepted on: 16/04/2015

### ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Vassanji's 'No New Land', portraying different incidents caused by racial, discrimination, explores through the characters the psyche of rootless, frightened and insecure minority immigrants who are pitted against the hypocrite fanatic majority. It is the best example to reveal the aspect of multiculturalism. It explores the social, cultural, racial and political issues that the white experienced when ruled. Vassanji's main concern is not political but racial and cultural. It is a poignant story of the immigrant experience. It creates a rich portrait of a transplanted community. Vassanji appears as a keen observer of lives caught between one world and another. Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with exile, memory, diasporic consciousness, longing for return, alienation, nostalgia, search for identity and sense of belonging. Such traits are evident in the works of M.G.Vassanji.

Key words: immigrants; culture; experience; diaspora; M.G.Vassanji;

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But just because all rapists are it doesn't follow that all men are rapists, you tell yourself...How can you like men?...Still, you continue to believe it can be done. If not all men, at least some, at least two, at least one. It takes an act, of faith

-Margaret Atwood

'No New Land' is the best example to reveal the aspect of multiculturalism, is written by

M.G.Vassanji. It explores the social, cultural, racial and political issues that the white experienced when ruled. Vassanji's main concern is not political but racial and cultural. It is a poignant story of the immigrant experience. The novel opens in Lalanis home sixty-nine RosecliffPark, in Don Mills, a suburb of Toronto. Nurdin Lalani is the protagonist of the novel. He belongs to the double immigrant family-

Asia to Africa to Canada. His wife Zera and their children-Fatima and Hanif live in Canada.

The novel, 'No New Land', opens in Canada where Lalanis family shown in the grips of a big tension and panic because Nurdin Lalani has not come back home from work. It moves in flashback of incidents and event which Nurdin belongs to East Africa and his father Hazi Lalani leads business successfully. After his father's death, his business sunk. In postcolonial regime marginalized the Asians of East Africa, forced into the international diaspora. Many families were flying to Canada for better prospects and to become rich.

There was excitement, restlessness in the air. Canada, someone must have whispered the world somewhere. What was Canada – a distant place most did not know where, a pink mass on the map beside the green of Greenland. Suddenly everyone was talking of Canada; Visas, medicals, interviews, "Landed". In Canada they needed plumbers, so those who did not know one end of a spanner from another, school teachers, salesman, and bank clerks, all joined plumbing classes and began talking of wrenches and discussing fixtures they had never seen in their lives. (NNL28)

Zera's sister Rosan lives Canada. Rosan and her husband Abdul urge Nurdin and their family comes and settles Canada. Rosan compels Nurdin to stay with her in Toronto. Nurdin with his family takes a flight to London. The situation of Nurdin in the plane becomes an objective Correlative and also it predicts the predicaments which he has to suffer in Canada. Nurdin is on the night plane with his family. The plane has magical lights. It reveals the in Canada.

The first thing Zera's sister did when the preliminaries were over was to pass around a pack of Chewing gum. "This is Canada", She said, as if mouthing a credo, which indeed it was for her, as they would soon realize. (NNL, 35)

At Toronto airport, Roshan and her husband receive the Lalanis. Roshan gives them a pack of chewing gum. In a way Roshan tells all about the 'multiculturalism' of Canada in a symbolic way.

They compare with the chewing gum in life of the immigrant. Immigrants are struggling against the problems that never come to an end like a chewing gum.

In Canada, Nurdin and his family stay with Roshan's home. Nurdin struggles hard to find a decent job. But he fails. His efforts become futile. He remains unemployed for a long time that adds to his misery. His wife, Zera gets a better job as a receptionist in doctor clinic. It makes to reduce the economic pressures of Zera's sister. But as the children of both of the families land up fighting most of the times, a severe quarrel between Zera's family and Roshan's family arose.

In such quarrels, where he was obviously at fault, Abdul had a simple stratagem. He would go out and sulk in the corridor. In Dar, he would go for a drive, leaving Roshan extremely worried, since it was usually at nighttime.

"Leave him alone", said Zera. "Let him be", said Nurdin. But for how long? Finally, to save embarrassment, Roshan went out to her husband, and the two talked in whispers for close to half an hour, huddled like young lovers, before Abdul agreed to come back inside. It turned out that he had grievance against the Lalanis for not contributing to household expenses, and letting Fathima bully his children. (NNL, 39)

One Friday evening, when Roshan was ironing her husband's pants, the children of Zera and Roshan started fighting. Both mothers ran to pacify the quarrel. In the mean time, the iron burnt a leg of the pant. Abdul became furious, and in anger, slapped his wife seeing her sister being slapped by Abdul. Zera could not control her rage and she lunged at Abdul with the hot iron. Nurdin came in between to block Zera's way and Abdul was saved. A loud quarrel ensued. Threats and abuses were exchanged, and the two families separate.

The Lalanis move to sixty-nine RosecliffPark, in Don Mills, a suburb of Toronto, Lalanis have a contact with other inhabitants of sixty-nine RosecliffPark. They meet Jamal who is the lawyer; have an intimate friendship with Lalanis. They have close relationship with the baker named

Esmail. Esmail sells snacks and samosas. Gradually Lalanis mingles several other people from the East Indian community. Nanji, a young professor, becomes a very good friend of Lalanis children. Fathima and Hanifa. They lead their life in RosecliffPark. It makes the sense of sharing their emotions in between immigrant families.

Nurdin tries to get a job but he fails. He spends an unhappy days and yearns the delightful environment. One day, Nurdin was returning home in the night time. He meets an Indian couple Mohan and Laxmi. He goes forward to help them on seeing them; he realizes that they belong to India. Their car breaks down and so they were not able to be there because of her pregnancy. Nurdin feels pity for the couple so he brings them home to stay overnight. Zera takes motherly care of Lakshmi and serves them food also. Next day Mohan informs his brother, Romesh. His brother comes takes them away. Mohan and Romesh feel very thankful of Nurdin's help. They wish him to offer any help. Nurdin informs his unemployment to Romesh. Then Romesh helps Nurdin to get a job in Ontario Addition centre. Nurdin keeps touch with Romesh who gives him confidence; he had lost during the period job hunting in Toronto. He felt a sense of enjoyment in the company of Romesh.

Nurdin felt a sense of enjoyment in the company of Romesh. He starts adopting himself in the unfamiliar environment. Romesh helps him in searching his familiar place. Thus the relationship with Romesh makes him confident and acquainted with the unfamiliar surroundings.

In the Ontario Addiction centre, Nurdin meets Sushila, the daughter of Narendas, for whom his elder brother, Akbar had an amorous feeling in adolescence, She had played with Nurdin develops a clandestine relationship with Susila. He makes it a point of meeting everyday at her house in Kensington Market. Nurdin finds a satisfying companionship with her.

One day when Nurdin was wrapping up his work in the Ontario Addiction centre, he sees a white woman in distress. He puts his hand forward for help.

As he approached the small lobby facing the two elevators, he saw in front of him a girl in blue jeans sitting on the floor, leaning against the side wall. Her legs were drawn up in front of her, her hands hung limp on the raised knees, and her head was lowered. Obviously she had been crying, the blonde hair was disheveled, the face- what he could see of it- was puffy and red. Instinctively he hurried towards her, parking the trolley on the way. "Madam-Miss-is anything wrong? Can I be of any help?"(NNL 178)

Nurdin asks questions, but the girl sobs, He wouldn't understand her behavior. He finds no response from her. "Rape!" she cried. "He's trying to rape me!".... "There was an oppressive empty feeling in the pit of his stomach which was to stay with for a long time to come". (NNL 179)

Nurdin rushes Romesh and he tells about his helplessness. But unfortunately, he was arrested with the charge of sexually assaulting the white woman. The novel ends with an optimistic note. The white woman drops the charge of rape against Nurdin. Once again the Lalanis start living a smooth life. But it remains dilemma whether such things will not happen again.

'No New Land' denotes beneath the surface to create a compelling and poignant portrait of human displacement. Vassanji beautifully portrays some Indian tradition and customs. He tries to formulate the conflict between traditions and culture. The quest for identity is the one of the important issues in the writings of diasporic writers. M.G.Vassanji's 'No New Land' is not an exception..In this novel Vassanji attempts to explore the quest for identity through the character of Nurdin Lalani.

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