

Glimpses of Alienation leading to Fear, Hallucination and Liminality in Gurnrah's *Cages*

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Abstract

Alienation, a sense of rootlessness, apprehension of the unknown, and liminality of migrants have all been examined in depth in psychology, sociology, literature, and philosophy. These problems of migrants, immigrants, and refugees have been addressed often and unflinchingly in modern literature. The estranged protagonist appears often in twentieth-century American and European fictions. The migrant, Hamid, the protagonist of Gurnrah's short story hoards a variety of psychological worries, which are probed in this study. This qualitative descriptive study discovered that migrants have psychological concerns such as apprehension, which is not a permanent state of mind, and that such psychological anxieties are not equally widespread in both genders.

Keywords: *Cages* Liminality, apprehension, fear migrant Gender Differences

Introduction

Alienation is a prominent subject in the modern epoch's human predicament. It's only natural that such a prevalent issue as alienation has left such an indelible mark on modern writing. In both internal and extrinsic perspectives, alienation occurs as a natural result of existential crisis. Migrants, immigrants and refugees are the prey to this. Alienation has been addressed in existentialist writing in numerous forms. Loss of identity results in alienation. The quest for identity by a dispossessed individual is a prominent topic in contemporary fiction. Man today, fails to see the meaning of life and the significance of his presence in a harsh environment. "Man suffers not only from war, persecution, and oppression in our day," Edmund Fuller observes. Famine and destruction, but due to internal issues-Isolation, unpredictability, and a conviction of isolation "In his manner of life, there is no meaning."

The issue of migration in the protagonist Hamid from *Cages* will be discussed and analyzed in this article.

Migration

The transferring from one nation, area, or place of residency to another is termed as migration.

According to the UK Office of National Statistics, (Census, April 2001) the minority ethnic population in the UK swelled by 53% during 1991 and 2001, from 3 million to 4.6 million individuals. Pakistanis, individuals of mixed ethnic origins, black Caribbeans, black Africans, and Bengalis were the dominant minority groups. There are various reasons why people migrate. Some of the causes for migration to the United Kingdom, according to Bhugra D. (2001), are as follows: People were recruited from the West Indies to fill low-paying jobs, Indians for educational and economic reasons, and people expelled by Idi Amin's government came from Uganda. People from all over the world chose to migrate to the United Kingdom and other developed countries, both legally and illegally. In a nutshell, Economic, educational, social, and political factors have all been linked to cross-national migration. Many of Gurnrah's protagonists and as well as minor characters are migrants. According to Bhugra D. (2004), transformation, assimilation, and cultural identification may all play a role in the link between migrants and psychological problems.

Liminality in Migrants

Shure, Charles La (2012) explains the cat on the wall position of migrants quoting Victor Turner(1974): "Marginals like liminars are also betwixt and between, but unlike ritual liminars they have no cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity" (1974: 233). Shure, Charles La evidences with his own example that if one does not really belong to any place and is "betwixt and between" It's real trauma for few humans can live forever without experiencing like they fit someplace, at certainly to some level. Shure, Charles La adds that liminality is not a permanent state of mind.

Eisenbruch M. (1991) says that "the experience of the uprooted person - or group - resulting from the loss of social structures, cultural values, and personality: the individual - or group - tends to live in the past, is visited by supernatural powers from the olden days while sleeping or fully conscious, undergoes sense of guilt over renouncing society and native land, gets depressed if memories of the past wane, but reveals perpetual visuals of the past .(including trauma)"

Kristen looked into the painful reality that many refugees, immigrants, and their children were experiencing one or more of the following common mental states: feeling like a stranger, loneliness, missing, sense of loss, guilt, shame, separation and loss, sorrow, language diminishment, value deterioration, low self-esteem, and a sense of alienation, a sense of non-identity, rootlessness, bitterness, distrust, and prejudice, to be biased, to feel prejudiced, and to be the scapegoats the following figure details.

Abdul Razak Gunrah

Gurnah, who was born in Zanzibar in 1948 and has lived in England since immigrating as a refugee in the 1960s, is one of our contemporary world's most nuanced and astute novelists. His novels have woven an enticing, complicated labyrinth of colonialism, uprising, migration, and migration for years, spanning from German-occupied Tanganyika in the early nineteenth century to 1970s Zanzibar and modern England. Gurnah portrays characters who have traveled to England as well as those who have relocated inside Africa. Gurnah's protagonist of the short story *Cages* is a migrant. *Cages*

Cages

"Cages" is a smart title for the story where everyone is feeling alienated. Hamid, is imprisoned in his shop, where he not only works but also sleeps and rarely ventures outside. One of his customers, Mansur, is enslaved due to blindness, physical debility has confined, Fajir, the owner, to the bed in the shop. Rukiya is enslaved by her male expectations.

The present study sets to explore

1. Are there any refugees, migrants/ immigrants in Gunrah's short story *Cages*?
2. If so, whether there are differences in the states of mind in the protagonist and other migrants of the story?
3. Is the fear in the character/s is permanent or as the Psychological studies define a temporary one?
4. Is the protagonist as a migrant and whether he exhibits any signs of liminality?.

Methodology This qualitative study will extract utterances from the short story and having them as data would analyse whether the characters show any sign of mental illnesses as proposed by psychologists and always depicted by Gunrah about his characters.

Results: The Characters especially Hamid of *Cages* are imbued with all the mental illnesses of the migrants as Gunrah's fictional characters do.

Various Mental Illnesses

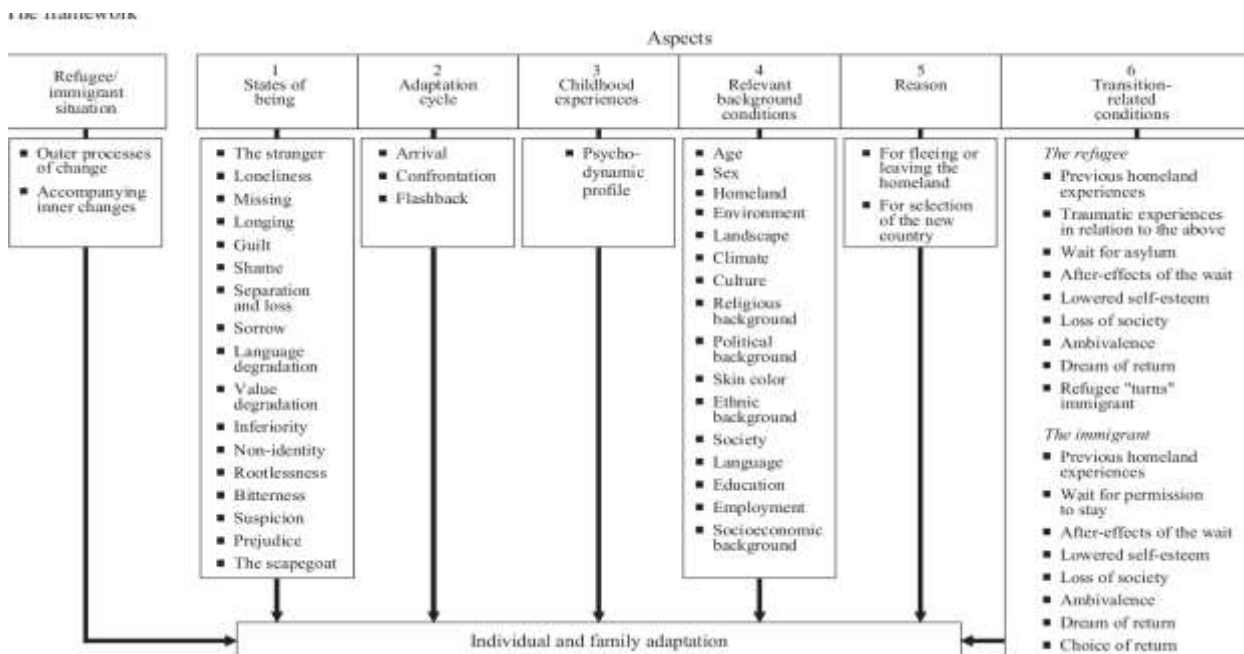


Figure 1.1 A schematic model, derived from extensive clinical experience, for understanding the refugee/immigrant and for application in psychotherapy and support work.

Fig.1 A schematic model, derived from extensive clinical experience, for understanding the refugee/immigrant and for application in psychotherapy and support work.(Adapted from Kristal-Andersson, B. (2000). Psychology of the refugee, the immigrant and their children)

As Kristol –Anderson (2000) lists the various psychological mental illnesses following the suit of Seeman,(1991) who offered six key varieties of alienation to address this requirement (powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, social isolation, and cultural estrangement) to combine multiple interpretations of the notion. Always there were many studies on Alienation, because alienation is a multi-dimensional issue, there seems to be a desire to unravel its different connotations. This study also probes to find in the characters the traces of such mental illnesses.

True to this, Gurnah develops fictitious characters that are always negotiating the old and new, past and present, their homeland and the new milieu in order to establish new identities that match their current surroundings. Their stories are all based on the character's identities being shattered as a result of moving to a new social and spatial situation.

Cages as a Cage

Cages tells the narrative of Hamid, an émigré who has relocated from his country to the metropolis. The old guy who welcomed him and provided him with job as a shop keeper is sick and dying. Hamid has not once left his kiosk but has always fantasized what life is like outside the dwellers' camp's spreading darkness. Then one day, a lovely girl walked into his store to purchase goods; the next day, the next day... and the next incident was that Hamid had grown to love with her but have been unable to tell her. Hamid crossed the imagined borders one evening and plunged into the darkness beyond.

This narrative might be interpreted as a metaphor for life, in which a person holds back his potential because he is terrified of living the life he is worthy of living. It also indicates the kind of lifestyles that some members of the urban population lead, particularly those who have relocated to cities in search of greener pastures. Most people quickly discover that living in the city has not been smooth.

Stranger Forever

Even after living in the new town for more than a year to Hamid of *Cages* the life in the new town. 1. will only make him feel *lonely and dirty* 2. *the streets of this town are strange* 3. and he imagines an unfamiliar girl Be his savior.

One day he ventures out the streets alone but,

He was afraid of the people living in the dark shadows on the other side not only because they looked at him, but also because they knew where he was, but he didn't know where he was.

To him, the city seems weird, and the inhabitants live in darkness. He's terrified that they'll find out about him and where he lives. He is still unfamiliar with the map of the city. He gets lost in the city since he is a newcomer with no knowledge of the streets.

1. *The lights flickered on the dam, and the dots of light formed a line in the darkness. Who lives there? He thought to himself. He shuddered from fear. He didn't know how the people living on the other side of the city lived.*

2. *A strong man with a disgusting face appeared in his mind, and he was looking at him and laughing wildly. Hamid believes the others are powerful, and he suffers because he believes he is weak.*

Gunrah further narrates how Hamid suffers extreme pitch of hallucination. Hamid feels as a stranger, concealed ghosts await him in the poorly lighted woodland clearing. They are staring at him and giggling hysterically. All men and women crowd in after a time. Since the blood of their adversaries is pouring further into packed terrain, he senses their pounding strides in old religious rites, as well as he hears their triumphal yells.

After moving to the City, Hamid used to go out only to the Mosque, that also, he was accompanied by Fajir. After Fajir had become bed-ridden, Hamid hadn't been out, caged himself for about a year, looking after the shop as well as Fajir. Then when he met Ruqia, he comes out of his shell.

He walked slowly to the nearest street lamp, and then to the next one. To his surprise, he didn't feel scared. He heard something, but still kept his eyes open. Since you don't know where you are going, there is no need to be afraid, anyway, anything can happen.

Thinking like this, Hamid became calm.

This says that he is not afraid all the time. These psychological problems are momentary.

He turned and walked back. In any case, he finally took the first step and did what he didn't dare to do before.

As it's told by the psychologists immigrants take some time to get used to the milieu and then are able to their new environment. Hamid gains courage to venture alone into the town.

Self Degradation

Migrants feel that they don't possess anything. Hamid's confession to Ruqia: "I have nothing," he said, "nothing here belongs to me," is a typical example to it.

Powerlessness

Whenever he wanted to talk to Ruqia, his mouth gets dried. He goes into this state of speechlessness many times. "For her, she must be praised, she must be won by showing her strength and courage. But neither the half-blind Manser nor Hamid had this ability." He thinks that he doesn't have the ability to offer her compliments and he thinks that that is the reason for not winning over Ruqia still. Once again Gurnah brings out the migrant's disbelief in their abilities.

Homelessness and Liminality

Oneday when he ventures into the new town, he heard new sounds. But he was not scared, Gumrah retells, which tells the volumes of immigrants' fear. The boldness he had at the start gets weakened and his fear gets mounted as he gets lost in the dark amidst strangers.

In spite of hoarding strange fears about the new world, Hamid feels that he does not belong to his hometown too. The nostalgic moment of his hometown is brushed aside: 'That is no longer his home,' So, where he can have the sense of belonging, nowhere. That's the plight of migrants, according to psychologists.

Past and Present

The sea breeze brings back fond memories of his father's homeland. That little community is likewise located on the coast. Like other youngsters, he often used to roam on the shore and in the shade of trees. However, his village is no longer his point of connection.

Cultural estrangement

Isolation, according to Seaman, is to blame for this variance, which is manifested in reward values, in which isolated individuals place a low value on goals or beliefs that are highly valued in the given community. The converse is also true: Hamid, who anticipated Rukaiya to share his beliefs, was disillusioned by the town's fragility.

Hamid doesn't want to believe his colleague's insight into the character of Ruqia. He laughed at Manser's gibberish about Ruqia. He expected Ruqia to possess the same cultural values he and his rural society valued. He gets embarrassed at her offer for a big gift of herself as he was warned that she would be ready for anything for money and was disappointed at her cultural values.

Gender-wise Dissimilarity

Ruqia is another migrant, who has moved in to the same town like Hamid. We find in her a different personality. If Hamid's personality is portrayed with all the mental illnesses of timidity and apparitions Ruqia is painted with harshness and a rude attitude. She gives "a look of disgust" at Hamid. She is hostile to him, 'impatient', and 'unwilling to look at him'.

Tina Steiner (2013) in her interview with the great novelist questioned Gurnah whether the migrants are 'in some ways haunted by the story of those who have been left behind.' While replying Gurnah says: *I don't know whether the regrets and the benefits would be the same for a woman leaving, I don't know. I suspect it would be a different battle, or entail a different way of coping.*

Discussion

Though Ruqia is also a migrant who has recently moved into the same town, and though she has prejudices, she seems to have been affected less by the new milieu. Perhaps, the fact that she has moved in with her family and working in a big hotel are the reasons for her better state of mind, whereas, Hamid is confined to the shop and hardly moved out of his cell like accommodation.

Conclusion

The study's findings once again highlighted how the life of migrant is awful and miserable and it is highly recommended that the natives should be humane and should do the needful instead of showing their hatred or providing a hostile milieu. In practice, it is envisaged that the dissertation will aid in the establishment of educational, therapeutic, and preventative programs for refugees, immigrants, and their children to ensure excellent psychological state and better situations. As a result, they may be able to adjust better and have a better social condition in their new nation. Moreover, it is envisaged that the cognitive information gained would be useful.

Recommendations

The problems of migrants/ immigrants as portrayed by Abdul Razak Gurnah is a common theme for research studies. Future studies can deal with the other short stories of Gurnah and also compare intertextuality between his novels and short stories.

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