

**THE BELONGING- DISJUNCTURE DOUBLE BIND: FRAGILE  
IDENTITIES IN LITERARY WORKS OF EAST AFRICAN ASIANS**

**BY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree or diploma in any other university or institution.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents and to my siblings

Thank you!

To the strong women in my life:

Doris Muthoni Nthuku (Mama Lewi)

I treasure you, always will

In memory of my mother

Florence Nekesa Makhakha

Mayi, your legacy lives on

To my generation Lewis, Lincoln, Shiphrah, Shayne... with love.

To the future generation that will be after we are gone.

Keep on moving.....

## ABSTRACT

The East African Asians have played a significant role in the political, social, economic as well as literary transformation of the region. Their long history and immense contribution in East Africa, has led to many scholarly works being written about them mainly focusing on the historical accounts and genealogy. However, emotions of fear and anxiety, which form a crucial motif in the literary experiences of East African Asians, have not been adequately captured. Using Bahadur Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, M.G Vassanji's *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Yusuf Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* and Imam Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, this study therefore analyzes the tropes of fear and anxiety in the literature of East African Asians as sampled from a group of twenty texts. This study focuses on the above authors because of their geographical location, thematic concerns raised through characterization and the period of production of their works, which highlights the transient nature of fear and anxiety. The main aim of this study is to explore the depiction of the discomfitures of identity and belongingness in the selected works of East African Asians. It interrogates the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their sense of identity as demonstrated in the selected texts. The study further examines the place of fear and anxiety in the quest for identity in the literature of East African Asians. It then examines how East African Asians negotiate their belonging and difference in their respective countries as depicted in the selected texts. This study uses both Psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories in engaging with the texts owing to the emotional issues of fear and anxiety that feature prominently in the selected texts as well as the historical experiences witnessed by the characters. The psychoanalysts focus on the fragmented image of the world and explore the alienated individual consciousness such as the interstitial position that the East African Asians find themselves in. Postcolonial theory draws attention to aspects of identity in relation to broader national histories. This research adopted an analytic research design which involves the identification of categories, themes and patterns from the primary texts to enable the researcher arrive at certain deductions. For instance, that history, serves to both alienate and give the Asians a sense of belonging to the East African region. It further concludes that fear and anxiety serve as unconscious mechanisms for the negotiation of Asian identity in the East Africa such that, to them, aspirations to a strong national identity must be firmly rooted in an authentic communal identity. Finally, the study concludes that the aspirations of Asians to attain a sense of belonging within the East African context is characterized by a feeling of ambivalence since they simultaneously nurture cosmopolitan visions as well as a desire for difference. The East African Asians encounter loss, fear, anxiety and nostalgia about their homeland when in the host countries which leads to their dislocated identity. They feel uhomely as a result of the cultural identity crisis encountered in the host country. The study therefore, contributes to the understanding of the role of fear and anxiety in identity formation process among the East African Asian communities.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Asian immigrants have lived in East Africa for many years, during which they have contributed a lot of ideas towards the political and socio-economic development of the region. In the East African context, 'Asians' is a broader term used to refer to all people whose origin is traceable to the Asian continent. They include the Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Pakistanis among others. The East African Asians are sometimes referred to as 'Asian Africans' or 'East Africans of South Asian descent.' These terms are used interchangeably as a 'political act of underscoring amoebic nature of the community and the dangers of applying fixed nominal tags on the diverse and complex community' (Makokha, 2007). The term 'East African Asians' is further used to refer to East African based descendants of the Asians who came to Kenya in the 1890s to construct the Kenya-Uganda railway, and who still retain historical and cultural attachment to Asia.

The Asians trace their existence in East Africa back to the British colonial empire when the British government brought them in large numbers to build railways, bridges and other infrastructural projects in the countries in order to enlarge their colonial empire. The Indians came in as free labourers who had escaped poverty and starvation in India, but had heard about opportunities to grow rich in East Africa. The Asian men came and helped build the Kenya-Uganda Railway because they knew that the best way to fend off German imperialism was by making East Africa accessible to themselves. One of the ways was to build a Railway line. Since Africans had no prior knowledge in railway construction and were regarded as "improbable, unreliable and inefficient" (Nowrojee, 2014. P.42) the British settled on the Indians. This also was so because they already

had a large railway network and their labour was cheap. After the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway, a number of Asians returned to their country, while about 6700 of them chose to stay back for better opportunities in business (Aman, 2013).

This study conceives East Africa as encompassing the three countries Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania which formed the original East African Community in the 1970s. The East African region is therefore perceived as a product of multiple processes and experiences gained from migrations and transformations of its inhabitants. It is noted that all the groups occupying East Africa migrated there at different times, beginning with the Black Africans who form the majority, then Arabs, who were closely followed by Indians and then the Whites (Were & Wilson, 1972). These migrations were characterized by conquests and assimilations among other dynamics that have defined the nature of the region's population over the years.

Before the coming of the colonialists, Africans also had their own literature that was in form of oral literature. The oral traditional art of Africans came in various forms-what was sang (poetry), what was spoken (prose) and what was acted (drama). The African literature existed where African value systems were transmitted to the community through narration and oral performances. Most of the East African literature performed before colonial era was in indigenous languages. According to Gikandi (2004), the first attempts to produce an East African literature in English were made in inter-hall competitions at Makerere University. Some of the literary texts written were Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), Okot P'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* (1966), Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and Grace Ogot's *Land Without Thunder* (1968).

### 1.1.1 East African Asian Literary Production

The East African Asian writers contributed a lot in the development of East African Literature especially during the first fifteen years after independence. According to Gregory (2010), the East African Asian writing rose to prominence to replace the European writing which had been dominant in the colonial era but slowly started diminishing in the last years of colonialism towards independence. Such writings as Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa* (1937), Elsbeth Huxley's *The Flame Trees of Thika* (1959) and Robert Ruark's *Something of Value* (1955) had slowly began to wane with the coming of independence. During this period the writings by indigenous Africans in both Kiswahili and English, which had been on the rise since independence, had now taken over as the dominant written literature in East Africa with writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Grace Ogot, Okot P'Bitek, Shaaban Robert, Mohamed Said Ahmed and Euphrase Kezilahabi among others taking the central position.

It was also during this period, that the first East African Asian novel written in English- Behadur Tejani's *Day after Tomorrow* was written, although it still did not gain visibility due to the dominance of other writings within the region (Gregory 2010).

The written East African Asian literature, like the rest of writings across East Africa, has been done in many genres, highlighting tropes of fear and anxiety as a motif through characterization and style. These include fiction prose like Peter Nazareth's *The General is Up*, non-fiction prose like Yusuf Dawood's *Nothing But the Truth, The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives*, drama like Kuldip Sondhi's *The Undesignated* and poetry like Shailja Patel's *Migritude*. Prose fiction has led to establishment of careers for writers like Bahadur Tejani, Peter Nazareth, Moyez Vassanji, Jameela Siddiqi, Jules Damji, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Shailja Patel, Sikeena, Karmali, Sophia Mustafa and

Rasna Warah. This study looked at the selected works of prose that have been written in English by East African Asian writers.

### **1.1.2 Narratives of Anxiety**

Emotion is a crucial part of literature and literary experience (Ekman 1999). As expressed through the fictional characters in texts, emotions in turn have an effect on real people, who are the authors themselves as well as the audience. Fear and anxiety are part of the experiences that human beings go through in the world. The two concepts are related but different in meaning depending on the cultural contexts and languages. According to physiological psychologists, fear refers to a form of relating to a concrete object/event in the world which signals real danger to a person (the possibility of dying). Anxiety on the other hand refers to a fearful way of being in the world in relationship to no specific object/event (Beshara 2014). Fear is regarded as one of the six basic emotions human beings are born with (Ekman 1999). Darwin (1859) regards fear as part of the human make up because of its survival value, such that when encountered with a dangerous situation, fear motivates them to respond instantly according to the circumstance- fight, flight or freeze response. Human beings may also experience phobia, which is a stress response to an imagined object or event that does not signal danger in any concrete or immediate way.

Therefore, fear is a generalized response to a known external danger, while anxiety focuses on an unknown threat or internal conflict. However, the two emotional states may overlap in the brain and behavioral mechanisms, and as Steimer (2002) puts it, anxiety may just be a more elaborate form of fear, as it provides the individual with an increased capacity to adapt and plan for the future in order to protect one from an

immediate danger that has been somehow ‘recycled’ to develop the sophisticated systems.

Freud (1949) differentiates between two types of anxiety as automatic anxiety and signal anxiety. The former “relates to a traumatic experience of total disintegration leading to possible annihilation, consequent on being flooded by overwhelming quantities of instinctual tension”, while the latter, he describes, as “a signal occurring in the ego of an anticipated instinctual tension.” (Beshara 2014). According to Freud (1949), the prototype of anxiety is the experience of being born, which he views as traumatic since it is a physical separation from the mother. This could be the kind of anxiety experienced by the East African Asians when they find themselves living away from their ancestral home.

Many minority communities in the world have experienced collective fear and anxiety as a result of their placelessness/ dislocated identities. In the USA for instance, the Black minority have historically grappled with the issue of racism as a result of their being a minority community within a dominant white population. This has led to their living in fear because of racial discrimination. As a way of fighting for survival, the minority Blacks have had to demand for equal rights over the years. Literature has remained an important tool in the process of expressing the concerns, anxieties and fears of the Black community in the United States over the years.

In Africa, there have also been cases where minority communities have had to grapple with fear. South Africa for instance, went through a period of torture and suffering during Apartheid where the Whites openly discriminated against the Blacks, Asians and Coloureds (mixed race people). This experience was shared in texts written by various

Asian immigrants in South Africa such as Singh (1960), Essop (1978), Sam (1989), Goonam (1991) among others.

East Africa also has not been spared in the narration of minority experiences, being one of the most multicultural and multiracial regions in Africa, comprising of native East Africans, Africans of South Asian descent and Whites. The Europeans have also manifested anxieties as a result of their minority status in East Africa, which highlights their sense of fear in the midst of a foreign community. This is observed in the texts such as Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa* (1937). This gives the region a cosmopolitan outlook as it is entrenched in a history of migration, identity formation and transformation.

### **1.1.3 Changing Trends of Anxiety among East African Asians**

The sense of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians has been observed over a long period in history, only taking different forms at a time. As described by Ojwang (2000), the periodization is important for unlocking the question of the changing, complex nature of racial imagineering. This imagineering is the process of identity formation in the East African Asians as a result of translocation and dislocation. For instance, when the Asians first arrived in East Africa during the precolonial period to participate in the construction of Kenya- Uganda railway, they were anxious about how life in East Africa would turn out to be. However, their source of fear was the hostile environment they encountered away from their familiar home. In her work, 'From Jhelum to Tana' (2007) Kapur Dromson presents characters faced by attacks from the man-eaters of Tsavo, infections with malaria, sleeping sickness, elephantiasis and cholera, bites from jiggers, scorpions and snakes. The Asian labourers also encountered attacks from hostile communities like the Kamba, Kikuyu and Nandi warriors who were

armed with machetes and spears, determined to stop the railway line from passing through their land. The other source of fear was the numerous accidents during the construction that claimed many lives among the workers (Nowrojee, 2014).

The colonial period also saw the East African Asians experience another form of fear and anxiety. This was the colonialists' divide-and-rule policy which sought to discourage any form of cross-racial engagement in order to maintain the status quo. This classification led to the dispossession of African land by white settlers and Asian traders (Munos & Pandurang, 2018). The colonial regulations limited the contact between Asians and members of the local African communities leading to a 'system oiled and lubricated by the colonial myth of European superiority over Africans' (Malack & Ondieki, 2017). Under this three-layer racial hierarchy:

Africans were subjected to open discrimination by white settlers and Asians. Africans were forced to live in their own spaces, separate from Asians and white settlers, go to their own separate schools, attend religious services in their own separate religious grounds, and lead their lives in their own separate residential quarters where the standard and quality of life was low, poor, and abysmal. (67)

The nervous condition during this period came as a result of the Asian dilemma on whether to follow the colonialist ideology and continue enjoying the privileges or be part of the African process of agitation for independence, which was a rocky path. The Africans had begun fighting for independence through protests and guerilla warfare since the racial policy was against them.

The British had also caused terror to both the Africans and Asians, as they carried out massacres, forced people to swear allegiance as well as carried out questionable trials (Nowrojee, 2014). Owing to their in-between position in the racial hierarchy, the Asian

community in East Africa too occasionally became victims of such terror activities, for instance, raids were regularly carried out in the Asian quarters to get out Mau Mau rebels which left several Asians injured (Vassanji, 123).

These freedom fighters found themselves among the Asians because of two reasons. One is that some Asians offered the Mau Mau refuge, as they assisted them in fighting the colonial government in the fight for independence. They would go ahead and get guns for the members of group which were used in the war.

Secondly, some Asians employed the Africans innocently without knowing that they had taken an oath as members of Mau Mau. Those Asians who happened to be pro the colonial government found themselves in trouble, as they were secretly reported by their African workers, ear marked and later attacked by the terror group at night. All the two scenarios left the Asians living in constant fear, whether from the colonial government if discovered that they were colluding with the rebel movement or the Mau Mau rebels if found to be collaborators with the government.

The East African Asians also feared that they would lose their cultural traditions, which fostered a deep sense of community, to the racial assimilation introduced by the Europeans. Faced by this dilemma, they chose to pursue business, a trait that led them to be known as *dukawallahs*- often referred to as the 'local Jews' of Africa (Ojwang 2013). *Dukawallah* was a stereotypical term used by Africans to refer to Asians with exploitative connotations. *Duka* is a Kiswahili word meaning shop, which was the kind of retail business mostly associated with Asians. The Asians stocked their shops with items that were needed by both Europeans and Africans. The shop is used as a metaphor to show a close association of Asians with Europeans. The business community

however, came to be associated with economic exploitation in addition to being seen as non-assimilative, which impacted heavily on the social interactions between the Asian diaspora and the local community.

The dawn of independence raised the expectations especially for the Africans and some Asians who had participated in fighting for independence. However, there was bad news for those East African Asians, who seemed to have benefited from the caste system of the colonial rule, as they did not know how the new regime would treat them. This was a period marked by a feeling of fear, anxiety and betrayal from the Asians, some who had contributed in the fight for independence and some having been promised hefty rewards after Uhuru. The period therefore introduced another complex form of fear and anxiety within the East African Asians.

When the East African countries attained independence, they first secured the borders, hence there was no crossing over to another country without identification and checks (Simatei, 2000). The Asian traders therefore became the first casualties because of their nature of operation which involved crisscrossing East Africa in search of trading opportunities as well as driven by wanderlust. As Simatei (2000) observes, although colonialism allotted space racially, it allowed both unlimited movements across its vast empire and the existence of autonomous cultural enclaves within its imperial boundaries which favoured the Asians. However, after independence, the restriction on the boundaries instilled a sense of loss to the East African Asian business opportunities as well as created anxiety concerning the future of their business ventures across borders.

Then there arose African Nationalism which was followed by strong anti-Asian sentiments based on suspicion and mistrust of the Asians' role as middlemen during the

colonial era (Munos & Pandurang 2018). In Uganda for instance, General Idi Amin singled out Asians, blaming them for the country's economic and political problems. He later expelled them from the country in 1972, which created fear and anxiety among the Asians within the region. As Shah, a 31-year-old lawyer commented, "Everyone is frightened. What has happened in Uganda has brought home how extremely vulnerable we Asians are in East Africa," (*The New York Times*, August 29, 1972). There was on the one hand the fear that all the Asians in East Africa would be expelled by the postcolonial African regime for being exploitative and discriminative to the natives, while on the other hand they had the anxiety of not knowing where to go, as they formed part of the third generation since the immigration of Asians to East Africa, after being expelled and how they would be received. It turned out that the expelled Asians would come to Kenya, go to Britain, Canada and United States of America.

As the fear and anxiety increased, the Kenyan Asians flocked the British High Commission offices in Nairobi, requesting for application forms to emigrate to England. They suspended further expansion of their business in Kenya, some sold their investments to "liquidize their assets," and sent money to accounts in London or Geneva (*The New York Times*, August 29, 1972).

The emigration by the South Asians in East Africa to Britain as a result of fear and expulsion from Uganda, developed them into a transnational Asian-African community (Oonk, 2013). A triple heritage (Mazrui, 1986) emerged which consisted of three elements, one was being born in an Asian family, learning the values and traditions of the Asians; two being influenced by the Islamic culture, and third was being influenced by the western culture where they emigrated to.

Warah (1998) explores the issue of triple heritage further when she researches on the history of the Kenyan-Asians to help her understand her place as a person with multiple heritages. She begins to question her status as a Kenyan immigrant when she goes to study in the United States of America and is asked how come she is Kenyan yet she is brown and not black. Warah has multiple identities as an Asian, African, and American. First, she is a member of an immigrant Asian family tracing the genesis of her multiple heritage to 1897 when her great grandfather left India to work in East Africa. Secondly, she is born and brought up in Kenya in her early years and thirdly, she goes for further education in the United States. The triple heritage therefore, refers to her multiple experiences as a member of Indian, Kenyan and Western cultures.

The aspect of 'triple heritage' is rooted deeply in the African-Asian community forming part of their unwritten history; their undefined identity that is neither Asian nor African or British. Nevertheless, as Oonk (2013) avers, this heritage is part of a strong oral history, and is a fascinating heritage with no reference into national histories, museums or sites of remembrance. That this history is talked about with pride and, at times, with reluctance. Pride is demonstrated when the Asian families tell the stories of their ancestors who 'came in dhows' and when they elaborate on the 'Asian contribution' to East African history in terms of charities, their role in the independence movements and their contributions as major employers and tax payers. While there is some reluctance, when the issues of the nationalization of houses, buildings and industries on themselves as Asian-African families, as well on East African countries as a whole, are raised (Oonk, 2007).

Again, the bitter stories of expulsion and the loss of property and securities are heart-breaking to the East African Asians. The anti-Asian riots, the fear and trauma of

expulsion of Asians from Uganda are central in the writings by East African Asian authors such as Peter Nazareth, M.G Vassanji, and Yasmin Alibhai Brown, among others.

Over the years, there have been attempts by the East African Asians to assert their citizenship to East Africa where they (mostly the third and fourth generation) have been born and bred but at the same time; the force to reconnect with India, their home of origin has seemed to be stronger. As Singh (2013) puts it, “The consciousness of always being in exile, estrangement that we belong but no longer do and a compulsion to return to the point of origin (which proves to be chimera) shape the fictional and non-fictional worlds of M.G. Vassanji.” (123).

This sense of multi-consciousness appears to result from anxiety among the East African Asians resulting in a form of double bind. Ojwang (2013) asserts, “the Asians’ claims of belonging in the region have historically been denied or denigrated...the Indians have been labeled as ‘birds of passage’ or ‘paper citizens’ whose professed attachment to countries of their adoption is a ruse for further economic exploitation.” (68). There is fear and anxiety among the Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian Asians against becoming Africans (blackness) although they claim to be natives through history. This is depicted in their literary works where the protagonists lose their sense of self coming in touch with the two worlds of the old (Asian) and the new (African). This loss is caused by their frequent migration and immigration from one country to the other which makes them retain neither their old identity nor adapt to the new situations.

The aspect of representation of the Indian Ocean and association of black with darkness in their literary work tends to point at the East African Asians’ racial consciousness that contributes to their dislocated identities. Although partially integrated, members of the

East African Asian communities continue to practice cultural and religious beliefs imported from Asia. This study therefore investigates their in-between sense of being as manifested in characters in the selected texts. It is this fear and anxiety of becoming 'Black' that contributes to the East African Asians dislocated identity. They are in a dilemma as a diasporic subject whether to discard their own culture and embrace the culture of their host or keep holding onto their Asian culture even when in a strange land. Racial identity is highlighted in the selected texts as a major cause of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians.... the fear of being integrated in the African society and being regarded as part of it. They fear being considered fully African due to the feelings of colonial superiority as opposed to the loss of their unique identity.

Although the East African Asians seem to have adopted a cosmopolitan identity and accepted to participate in nation building as argued by Siundu (2009), their literary works tend to suggest that there is still an aspect of fear and anxiety emerging from their history of dislocation/ placelessness. The race relations between Asians of East Africa and the native East Africans have for long been a contentious issue. In fact, as Cho (2017) puts it, racial bias and tensions between black and South Asia communities remain a contemporary global reality.

The selected texts in this research therefore, problematize this fear and anxiety as part of identity formation process. As Simatei (2011) postulates, such writers as Vassanji, Nazareth, Siddiqi, and Kapur-Dromson, profile the old diaspora as a community whose in-between existence as neither colonizer nor the colonized (though aspiring to the privileged position of the former), and its self-portrayal as a guest community valuing myths of cultural purity, homeland and return, complicates its entry into the emerging postcolonial nation. This seems to suggest that the state of anxiety problematized in the texts is as a result of contradiction of East Africa as both home and a place of expulsion

and pain. This study underscores the fact that colonialism does not just mediate the Asian presence in East Africa but also shapes the very character of the diaspora such that the Asian diaspora enjoys and aspires to continue enjoying the privileged position of the colonizer rather than the colonized.

This study further explores the history of the Asian immigrants in East Africa and the formation of multiple consciousness in their quest for identity as narrated in the selected texts. “They may want their children to prosper in their adopted countries, but at the same time they may prefer them to adopt Asian family values, marry other Asians, and share their common culture” (Oonko, 2007. P35). This points to the desire by the East African Asians to have their children on the one hand, enjoy the privilege of being natives, but on the other hand retain their Asian identity through cultural affiliation which is paradoxical.

The contemptuous manner in which the Africans treat East African Asians especially after independence, contributes to the latter’s state of fear and anxiety. For instance, at one time Kenya’s first president referred to them as ‘guest race’ during one of his speeches (Warah, 1998). Such comments create a feeling of alienation and nostalgia for the past in the East African Asians. It is this sense of dislocation and rootlessness that gives rise to the notion of double consciousness and unhomeliness in the community.

The two notions are aptly analyzed by Tyson (2006) as follows:

Double consciousness and unhomeliness are the two features of postcolonial diasporas. Double consciousness’ or unstable sense of the self is the result of forced migration colonialism frequently caused. In the diaspora this feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither, rather than to both of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from

some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives is referred to by Bhabha and others as ‘unhomeliness’. To be ‘unhomed’ is not the same as being homeless. To be unhomed is to feel not at home at even in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee, so to speak. (421)

The East African Asians develop double consciousness first because of colonialism when the colonial masters place them in a stratified class system where they are placed above Africans but below the whites. Secondly, when the community finds itself in a foreign land faced with the imminent danger of being displaced culturally. It is the fear of cultural displacement that pushes the Asian community in East Africa to develop double consciousness as a survival mechanism.

As Aciman (1997) puts it, “what makes exile the pernicious thing is that it is not really the state of being away, as much as the impossibility of ever not being away—not just being absent, but never being able to redeem this absence” (10).

Identity is also an issue that is raises concern in postcolonial studies. Smith (1990) explains national identity as the “production and reinterpretation of the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions that form the heritage of the nation, and the identification of its members with that heritage.” (175). The explanation shows how key negotiation is when people are engaged in the production of a national identity. During the process, there may be challenges such as varied ethnic groups, races, languages, religious and political affiliations produced by members of a country. It is for this reason that the study was set. It investigates how emotions of fear and anxiety influence the formation of identities among the East African Asians.

#### **1.1.4 Negotiating Belonging**

Despite being regarded as non-citizens by some Africans, the East African Asians have survived by situating themselves strategically in the countries of migration. They have worked hard towards establishing themselves in the region economically, socially, politically and intellectually. Their contribution has gone further to make them be involved in the sociopolitical activities of the host countries such as being appointed as heads of government institutions and state agencies. There are also Asians who have been involved in the political affairs of the countries, since 1950s. People like Pio Gama Pinto, Makhan Singh, A.R. Kapila and Fitz de Souza were actively involved in writing political newspapers, setting up trade unions, and offering legal services to those accused of Mau Mau links respectively.

In Kenya currently, there are several members representing people in parliament from different regions of the country such as Nairobi, Meru, Kisumu and Eldoret. Also in Tanzania people like Urmila Jhaveri became the only non-African member of the Central Committee of Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and travelled across Tanzania, committed as she was to the economic improvement and education of rural women (Munos & Pandurang 2018).

The contribution of East African Asians has been visible socially, economically, politically and academically. Socially, their role has been felt through the introduction of some foods regarded as 'Asian' but which have since become the favourite of natives, such as *chapati*, *pilau*, *mandazi*, *samosa* (Ojwang, 2013). This is a way of asserting occupying spaces to which the East African Asians have migrated. Food, as Ojwang (2013) observes, marks the borders between these communities and also acts as one of the most important ways of building bridges between hitherto hostile groups. By virtue of it being embraced by the native community and incorporated in their daily

meals, indicates that there is a form of acceptance and recognition accorded the community. Waliaula (2012) comments that a bulk of loan words in Kiswahili originate from Asia, for instance words like *hundi* (cheque), *chai* (tea), *bajia* among others.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017, the Kenyan government announced through the acting Cabinet Secretary for Interior Coordination, that the Asian community would officially be recognized as the 44<sup>th</sup> tribe in Kenya, based on their contribution to the national development since its inception (Kenya Gazette notice no. 7245 p.4621). This may be a step towards acceptance, recognition and accommodation of the East African Asians by the host countries after years of resentments. However, this has equally served to reinforce their stereotypical perception by the native communities as paper citizens (Oonk, 2010) because, the recognition is merely political when looking at the context in which it was effected, the country was about to go into national elections. Therefore, the issue of Asians in Kenya being recognized as a tribe was more political than social based on their persistent reluctance to be fully Africanised. They are more inclined to retaining their identity than being Africanized, as displayed in their racial and social exclusiveness (Bahmanpour, 2010).

The East African Asians have also established themselves as a powerhouse economically by establishing thriving businesses in the region and beyond. East Africa region prides itself in such names as Aga Khan, Manu Chandaria, Jevanjee, Allidina Vishram among others when it comes to business and investment. This aspect of asserting themselves in the host countries has made the East African Asians develop a cosmopolitan identity, where they have viewed themselves as citizens of the world.

However, it is the fear and anxiety that has led the East African Asian community to insulate itself against other cultures, becoming unwilling to be integrated in the society as natives despite spending many years in the country of emigration. This is also reflected in their distinct culinary practices which they have retained over generations. Ojwang (2013) comments “on the one hand, what the immigrant characters in the literature eat or drink may indicate their resistance to the dominant systems that try to assimilate them, while on the other hand, it may act as a sign of their capitulation to undesired cultural influences.” (78)

Racial and historical identities are the major issues that seem to feature in the prose works of the East African Asians for decades even after the attainment of self-rule. According to Makokha (2014), the image of the Asian African’s racial awareness after independence in East Africa appears to be connected with the interstitiality of the community in the colonial past.

The selected texts talk about issues to do with migration which leads to a placeless generation. The placeless are faced with several challenges, as Giridharadas (2010) comments:

Officialdom struggles to process people without a place. Census forms don’t understand them. Commercial television and cinema create few characters in their image. Tax collectors insist that they choose one of their many countries as the real one. Politicians represent particular places, not ideas or industries or genders, and so if you are a Somalian-born American working in Paris for Nissan, you live in a democracy but without meaningful representation, with no public servants driven to take up your battles. But the problem is not just

external. The placeless often also suffer a gnawing tension within, a love-hate relationship with roots. They find that their connections can run worldwide but only an inch deep. They may find it easier to ask friends in five countries for a favor than to ask a neighbor for sugar. They may know something of the foods of every continent but be unable to cook expertly in any one cuisine. (125)

As indicated, the placeless generation which appear to develop a cosmopolitan identity encounter such challenges as convincing the authorities where exactly they belong as citizens, as they may still be regarded as aliens by the hosts. Convincing the governments of the host countries that they belong there is a complex issue, especially when they lack adequate numbers for representation in the legislation. The East African Asians had initially wrestled with the issue of representation because of the less numbers that they had, as well as their insulation against being integrated fully in the African society. This caused the native Africans to create misconceptions towards the community, leading to an ambivalent relationship. Again, the East African Asians had psychologically unsettled in the foreign land they occupied because of their connection with their original land in Asia. This caused fear and anxiety concerning the future of their cultural identity as such, the Asians in East Africa had to handle cosmopolitanism with a lot of care.

After independence, sexuality also appeared to play a key role in heightening the East African Asian anxieties. The native African men now took keen interest in the female Asians. As things turned out, none could be more incompatible than the union of an Asian woman and an African man (Makokha, 2003). This incompatibility was not natural but fueled by racist ideologies, stereotypes and cultural differences. The Asians felt superior to the native Africans that they thought it was demeaning to have sexual

relations with them, which caused fear for the loss of dignity. Cultural differences between the Asians in East Africa and native Africans also contributed to the anxiety in the former. For instance, among the Hindu, there was the practice of dowry payment as opposed to bride price as was common in African society. According to the African society, it is the man who pays the bride price to the woman's family, but in the Asian culture, the woman's family pays the dowry to the man's family. The difference in cultural practices caused incompatibility between the two races. The East African Asians regard themselves as aliens because of their history of social exclusion which contributes to the misconceptions from the Africans.

The Asians developed a lot of fear of losing their men and women to native Africans. This obsession with sexuality seemed to reflect on the Asian anxieties around the shifting of power to African political actors. Ojwang (2000) comments, "Through the definition of African males as sexually dangerous and of Asian women as chaste (and 'sweet'), an allegory of race is created within which African 'excess' is posited as the stark opposite of Asian 'modesty'" (56).

The aspect of sexuality is also witnessed in the post-independent East African Asian literature especially in the political discourses where African leaders such as Tom Mboya have been quoted on issues to do with sexual access to Asian women, which emphasizes the perception that African men are aggressive (Bharat, 1972). Amin also complained that the Asians 'were not integrating, not allowing their daughters to marry Africans' (Vassanji, 1989). More recently, was the case of a young man from Western region of Kenya (Webuye) who made headlines in the news when he married an Asian girl, the daughter to his boss. The union caused the bride's family sleepless nights, as opposed to the groom's (Standard newspaper, September 2015). This could be as a

result of the racial ‘imagineering’ within the Asian community, such that the community feared being swallowed up by the native African community. The union was short-lived as the parents of the girl put so much pressure on their daughter that the couple had to eventually breakup.

However, there are some successful unions that have emerged between the East African Asians and the native Africans to dismantle the stereotypes. For instance, there is a member of parliament for Kisumu East constituency in Nyanza region of Kenya who is an Asian but married to an African woman of the Luhya tribe.

The contemporary East African Asian identity is located in-between the political elite, who are seen as either economic partners or competitors, and the native Africans as consumers. It is the in-between nature, whether real or imagined, that forms the location of cultural ambivalence which is the hall-mark of its occupants and is always portrayed as one with its own deficiencies (Makokha, 2014). This in-betweenness leads to the state of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians, as they are faced with the dilemma of whether to follow the political elite, or the native Africans who are the consumers. The kind of dilemma emerging here impacts the community negatively because they find themselves lacking in trust from both parties, what Warah (1998) describes as lacking the authority of the oppressor as well as the humanity of the oppressed. Their aloofness does not only contribute to their marginalization, but also problematizes their respect and commitment to the new nation, which leads to their being susceptible to ‘hate politics’.

The imminent danger of losing their sense of self and gaining another identity after coming in touch with two worlds, the old (Asian) world and the new (African) one may be one of the causes of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians. As Ojwang

(2013) puts it, the sense of displacement and estrangement is one of the most enduring subjects of East African Asian fiction. That the fiction presents images of wandering through strange territory, flight from undesirable homes, expulsion from spaces held dear, the scattering of communities and attempts to restore a sense of wholeness amidst the threat of alienation. This study explores literary works by East African Asians that emerge at various historical moments, representing a wide range of experience, from pre-migration from the subcontinent to the present, showing how memory and identification processes are determined by contemporary realities of fear and anxiety.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The East African Asians have played a significant historical and contemporary role in the political, social, economic as well as literary transformation of the region. Despite their long history and immense contribution in East Africa, there is a feeling of anxiety and fear that has persistently engulfed the community over the years after leaving their home. This is manifest in the discomfitures of their identity as predominantly depicted in their selected literary works. However, the fears and anxieties that form part of these discomfitures have tended to be downplayed in previous research in favour of historical accounts, genealogy and their relationship with the original homeland. This study therefore, examines how selected East African Asian writers present emotions of fear and anxiety in their texts in a manner that frames their fragile identity in both the present and future. The study is further interested in investigating how the selected writings problematize anxiety and how they function in relation to the construction of a diasporic imagination.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The general objective of this study was to explore the depiction of the discomfitures of identity and belongingness in the selected literary works of East African Asians.

Specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Interrogate the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their identity in the selected East African Asian literary works.
- ii. Examine the place of fear and anxiety in the quest for identity among East African Asians in the selected East African Asian literary works.
- iii. Examine how East African Asians negotiate their belonging and difference in their respective countries as depicted in the selected East African Asian literary works.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What is the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their identity in the selected East African Asian literary works?
- ii. What is the place of fear and anxiety in the quest for identity among East African Asians in the selected East African Asian literary works?
- iii. How do the East African Asians negotiate their belonging and difference in their respective countries as depicted in the selected East African Asian literary works?

### **1.5 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

This study concentrates on the aspects of fear and anxiety as depicted in the selected texts of East African Asians. It is mainly concerned with how the discomfitures of identity and belongingness are highlighted in the selected works through

characterization, leading to a community with a fragile identity. It further investigates how the East African Asians manage to survive amidst challenges of disintegration.

The study examines Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, Vassanji's *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* and Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*.

### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

The East African Asians have been around for a long time and contributed much in socio-political activities of their host countries but are still apprehensive when it comes to being fully integrated in the East African community. This study therefore focuses on the portrayal of fear and anxiety by East African Asians in their literary works, based on the reasoning that these emotions form part of significant issues reflected in East African literature.

East African Asians have written in different genres including poetry, drama, short stories, prose fiction and non-fiction. The study settled on prose fiction as an elaborate and exhaustive genre that gives sufficient room for the expression of the writer's thoughts and imagination. Mikhail Bakhtin (1990) observes, the novel "is the only genre that was born and nourished in a new era of world history and therefore it is deeply akin to that era. It reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding [and] it is the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it" (7). This explains how the novel explores the histories of East Africa in an exhaustive manner compared to other genres.

This study investigates how the East African Asians behave because they feel that they are racially distinct and superior to the native Africans. It looks at the tropes of fear and

anxiety among East African Asians, and how these contribute to their reluctance in being fully integrated in the East African society despite their shared history.

In exploring the ‘imagineering’ process, this study engages the period from 1971 with the publication of Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow*, the first novel by East African Asian written in English, to 2016 with the publication of Verji’s *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall* to explain how different times of narration highlight the different shades of anxiety.

This study left out other works of fiction by East African Asians and only focused on the above because of the thematic concerns raised through plot, characterization and style, as well as the period of production of their works, which highlights the transient nature of fear and anxiety.

There is need to look at the emotional issues of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians in order to understand the fragile nature of their identity. This will assist in unravelling the reason behind their reluctance to be integrated in the native African society. As Ojwang (2013) argues, ‘the presence of Asians in Kenya and East Africa is often explained in historical terms as though the present and therefore the future were secure.’ This study therefore, is premised on the idea that fear and anxiety have been at the centre of East African Asian identity for a long time, as reflected in the selected work of fiction, but little attention has been given to it. The study helps to understand the contemporary Asian identity in East Africa as well as examine their future.

Monaco (2016), also comments, ‘storytelling is an essential tool for bearing witness to the traumatic events that shape the migrants’ lives.’ From this statement, it is apparent that the East African Asians resort to narration to express their sense of anxiety and feeling of fear as immigrants.

The authors under study represent different generations of the Asians in East Africa whose works explore self-identity and racial perception at various stages in history as characterized by the tropes of fear and anxiety which is the focus of this study. In addition, the selected authors deal with issues of multiple displacements and estrangement experienced by the East African Asians, their migration from Asia, alienated life within East Africa, and eventual departure by some to Europe or North America where the sense of alienation continues (Ojwang 2013).

This research is therefore, geared towards exploring how the complexity of contemporary race relations between the Asians of East Africa and the African communities, which is driven by fear and anxiety, find expression through literary narratives.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that informs this study is the psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories. The tenets of the psychoanalytic theory engaged in the study are Freud (1920) and Lacan (2002). The theory is considered relevant to the study as it focuses on the distinction between the conscious and unconscious mind in the interpretation of selected literary texts. The strands of Psychoanalysis pay close attention to the unconscious feelings and motives of either the author or characters depicted in the work. As fronted by Barry (2002), psychoanalytic critics identify a psychic for the literary work, at the expense of social or historical context, privileging the individual psycho-drama above the social-drama of class conflict. Barry says:

When some wish, fear, memory, or desire is difficult to face, we try to cope with it by repressing it, that is, eliminating it from the conscious mind. But this doesn't make it go away: It remains alive in the unconscious, like radioactive

matter buried beneath the ocean, and constantly seeks a way back into the conscious mind, always succeeding eventually. (100)

As observed above, the fear and anxiety experienced by the characters in the selected East African Asian texts, could be attributed to conflict between competing desires within the East African Asian community as they struggle for identity. A similar view is held by Monte (1997), that the psychoanalytic theory assumes the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate an individual's actions. This study therefore, investigates how the conscious actions of the characters in the selected East African Asian texts are motivated by feelings of fear and anxiety stored in their unconscious mind.

Freud (1923) outlines the structure of the mind (psyche) as containing the id, ego and super ego, which are conceptualized as essential parts of the human personality. The three structures represent the conscious, preconscious and unconscious parts of the mind respectively. The id refers to a selfish, primitive childish pleasure-oriented part of the personality with no ability to delay gratification. It operates at the unconscious level based on the pleasure principle. The id is made up of two biological instincts (drives) namely, Eros and Thanatos (Freud, 1949). Eros is the life instinct that helps an individual to survive in the world. It directs life sustaining activities such as respiration, eating and sex in individuals. The energy created by life instincts is known as libido.

Thanatos or death instincts are a set of destructive forces present in all human beings (Freud, 1949). The energy created by Thanatos is directed outwards towards through aggression and violence. Freud believed that Eros instinct is stronger than Thanatos, as it always helps people to survive rather than destroy themselves (Freud, 1991). The id is the conscious stage where one takes information and transforms it to be perceivable.

It points to the irrational, illogical impulses that drive one to seek pleasure and avoid tension and discomfort.

The ego develops from id during the process of infancy. Its goal is to satisfy the demands of the id in a safe and socially acceptable way. As opposed to the id, the ego operates on the reality principle where it considers the sense of time, place or aspect of rationality. The Ego rationalizes and regulates the thoughts and behavior involved mostly with the external world. It therefore operates in both the conscious and unconscious mind, providing exhibition of defense mechanisms such as repression, displacement, sublimation, rationalization, projection, denial, and regression, (Freud, 1936). All these aspects of human behavior are displayed through character formation of an individual in different social contexts.

The superego is developed in early childhood through parental guidance to ensure moral and social values are followed. This takes place in the pre-conscious stage where the child strives to internalize what they think is socially acceptable by their society, (Freud, 1963). The superego operates on the morality principle and encourages the child to behave in a socially responsible and acceptable manner. The term psychoanalysis, in this study is understood as a system of school of psychology which has crystallized itself into a series of important and systematized theories as a result of using psychoanalytic therapy, (Sharma et al, 2000). This study therefore, focuses on the meaning of psychoanalysis which holds the belief that the true meaning of a text may be understood from the point of view of the unconscious and early childhood experience (Barry, 1995). The characters in the selected texts display actions acquired from their childhood experiences and therefore end up disagreeing with their children, who form a new generation. The issues of fear and anxiety in the selected texts are therefore analyzed from the perspective of the unconscious mind of the characters. The theory

further emphasizes on motives with a clear focus on hidden or disguised motives which help to clarify literature on two levels; the level of writing itself and the level of character action within the text, (Hossain, 2017).

According to Freud (1901), psychoanalysis distinguishes automatic anxiety from signal anxiety noting that the former relates to a traumatic experience of total disintegration leading to possible annihilation, consequent on being flooded by overwhelming quantities of instinctual tension, while the latter, he describes, as a signal occurring in the ego of an anticipated instinctual tension. Freud (1949) gives the prototype of anxiety as the experience of being born, which he views as traumatic since it is a physical separation from the mother. This is the kind of anxiety experienced by the East African Asians when they find themselves separated from their ancestral home, giving them a feeling that haunts them for many years.

Lacan (2002) also believes that the unconscious greatly affects our conscious behavior. He asserts that the unconscious is structured in the same way language is, and therefore, can be systematically analyzed. According to Lacan, all individuals are fragmented, and no one is whole, hence the reason individuals are seeking wholeness, which is elusive. This sense of fragmentation is what this research study looks into, while focusing on the identity of East African Asians. It is interested in the state of double-consciousness in the East African Asian community leading to their fragile identity, as reflected in the selected literary texts.

Psychoanalytic theorists have characterized the individuality of character as a derivation of drives and internal structure, an expression of defenses and neurotic needs, supra-ordinate organizing principle and manifestation of ties to internalized objects, (Mcarthy, 2015). This suggests that a child's character is greatly influenced during

adolescence when characterological tendencies are consolidated in a relatively fixed direction. This study therefore looks at the behavior of Asian characters in the selected texts and how it influences (and is influenced by) individual development and psychic functioning of their mind as embedded in their culture and society. The study is based on the argument that psyche is shaped within the social context, and the society is molded by the individual psychic dynamics and unconscious processes of their members, (Loeffler, 2014).

Hossain (2017) postulates that psychoanalytic theory and criticism can focus on one or more of the following in the literary analysis of a text; the author, whereby the theory is used to analyze the author and his/her life in a text; then the characters, who are explained in terms of their behavior and motivations; followed by the audience, where it explains the appeal of the work to those who read it; and finally the text, we attempt to analyze the language and symbolism in the text as well as their socio-cultural context.

Postcolonial theorists argue “all assertions of a cultural group about itself (i.e., values, traits, identity) are constructed under specific socio-historical conditions” (Pilario, 8). The theory focuses on colonialism as a destabilizing experience that changes how the colonized and colonizer view themselves. For instance, this study examines how the East African Asians were influenced by the British with regards to their relationship with Africans.

Baldick (2011) describes postcolonialism as a theory that, “considers . . . cultural-political questions of national and ethnic identity, ‘otherness’, race, imperialism, and language, during and after the colonial periods. It unravels the complex relations between imperial ‘centre’ and colonial ‘periphery’. . .” (265).

As Ashcroft et.al (1989) argue, postcolonial literature can use words based on a given cultural experience but the meaning of the text in which such words are used is independent of the experiences. Therefore, one does not need to share in the experiences in order to interpret the text. Such explanation allows the researcher to articulate the experiences shared in the selected texts based on their context and not origin.

Postcolonial theory foregrounds questions of cultural difference and diversity and examine how they have been used in different literary works. According to Barry (2002), postcolonial critics celebrate hybridity and cultural polyvalency, a situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture. This is the situation encountered by the East African Asians. This study therefore, set out to investigate the underlying issues contributing to the communities' chronic nervous condition. The postcolonial theorists further argue that the subjects develop a perspective whereby states of marginality, plurality and perceived 'otherness' are seen as sources of energy and potential change, which is what the study delves into.

Postcolonial literature can therefore be more profitably analyzed by avoiding referential approach to analysis of words because of its intercultural nature (Mwairumba,2015). The text now becomes the guide to meaning and not just abstract knowledge mentioned by language.

Based on this view, this study adopted psychoanalysis and postcolonial theories to analyze the characters in the selected texts and the style used in the texts in order to interrogate the concept of identity in East African Asians. The two theories relate in the sense that they question certain ways of knowing and describing the world like in the production of literary works. They then provide alternative ways of reading literary texts and analyzing the narrated experiences of the characters.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the historical experiences of the East African Asians and their contribution to the community's fragile identity, and how they negotiate around the hostile environment to become a formidable and dependable community in the region. The Asian presence in East African region has encouraged a lot of research and scholarship in various fields such as History, Sociology, Anthropology and Literature among others. This study therefore, explores how selected narratives grapple with the issues of fear and anxiety that have been acquired from lived experiences, but tend to be suppressed by historical and genealogical perspectives.

The issue of identity among the East African Asians has attracted a number of scholars across the world. For instance, Kahyana (2002) is concerned with how indigenous Africans in Uganda look at Ugandans of Asian origin as reflected in their poetry and fiction. Whereas Kahyana (2002) focuses on indigenous Ugandans' perspective towards Ugandan Asians, this study looks at the East African Asians' feelings of fear and anxiety as a result of their relationship with the native Africans. Kahyana also looks at how Ugandans of Asian origin identify themselves, that is, whether as Ugandans or only conduct themselves as such politically, economically and socially. Kahyana later notes that the Ugandan Asians identify themselves as racially distinct and sometimes superior to indigenous Africans. Although Kahyana (2002) uses poetry and fiction when looking at the Ugandan Asian identity, this study focuses specifically on fiction by the East African Asians as it looks at the new forms of fear and anxiety emerging within the community through their interaction with the native Africans.

The East African Asians, like many other communities in the diaspora globally, have had a complex history as far as identity is concerned. The community has experienced problems associated with the 'Asian Question' which includes political emasculation, socio-racial victimization, social demarcation and cultural marginalization (Makokha, 2007). Such experiences evoke emotions of fear and anxiety in the East African Asian community especially as it concerns their fragile identity and belonging, just like what Mamdani (1998) asks rhetorically, 'when does a settler become a native?', and then gives the answer, 'from the point of view of ethnic citizenship, NEVER.' This points at the dilemma in which the East African Asians find themselves, as not achieving the 'native' status despite spending many years in the host countries. It further elicits anxiety and fear concerning their future in those countries.

Over the years, the East African Asians have attempted to assert their citizenship to East Africa where they (mostly the third and fourth generations) have been born and raised, but the force to reconnect with their home of origin, has seemed to be stronger. As Singh (2018) puts it, "The consciousness of always being in exile, estrangement that we belong but no longer do and a compulsion to return to the point of origin (which proves to be chimera) shape the fictional and non-fictional worlds of M.G. Vassanji." (p.64). The sense of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians, as reflected in the works of Vassanji, Tejani, Nazareth and Patel among others, appears to contribute to this concept of multiple consciousness.

Despite their immense contribution, the Asians have been accused by scholars of being unable to properly integrate within the East African society. For instance, Warah (1998) criticizes these people for their social and cultural isolation which leads to their being stereotyped by the native East Africans as economic exploiters. Waliula (2012) also

raises the same issue by asking questions as to whether it is writers who have been alienating the East African Asians or is it the Asians themselves who have chosen to be alienated, remaining inassimilable and retaining their alterity. This study therefore, seeks to examine the depiction of fear and anxiety in selected works of East African Asians in order to understand the contemporary Asian identity.

The study examines how anxiety contributes to the conflict between citizenship and descent with regard to identity of East African Asians, as reflected in their texts. It highlights how the writers portray the challenges that the characters go through while living in a 'Third Space' where two or more cultures meet, leading to a loss of self.

The East African Asian writers, like other writers, present history using varied narrative perspectives. According to Simatei (2011), the various perspectives presented by these writers, Asians included, reflect the complex nature of East Africa's postcolonial identity. Whereas Simatei focuses on both the Black and Asian writers of East Africa presentation of a consciousness of how their communities have been racially oppressed, this study focuses on the East African Asian writers' portrayal of anxiety and fear which eventually leads to multiple consciousness.

The study examines the influence of fear and anxiety in the search for identity by the East African Asians as portrayed in the selected texts. Gilroy (1993) suggests that East Asian consciousness demands specific forms of double-bind: that is to say, striving to be Asian in East Africa demands specific forms of double consciousness. It attempts to show that East African Asian consciousness, which is already inscribed by global modernity, has been cultivated historically by the national and regional specifics. As argued by Cho (2007), the East African Asian consciousness is constructed within a culturally imagined regional boundary within which historic memories and modernizing desires are shared.

The presentation of journey motif, flight from undesirable homes as well as the expulsion from spaces held dear (Ojwang, 2003) as presented in their works, tends to point at the East African Asians' sense of anxiety. This study therefore, examines selected literary texts by East African Asians with the premise that the writers form the pioneer authors of Asian literature in East Africa, at different periods in history whose works explore displacement and estrangement, as characterized by the tropes of fear and anxiety which is the focus of this study.

In the sections that follow, the first part of the literature review explores the relationship between the history of East African Asians and their fragile sense of identity as highlighted in the selected texts. It looks at how the transition of East African Asians running through migration at different periods in time, from precolonial, colonial and post- independence, contributes to their complex and dislocated identities. These identities experienced through complex relationships are associated with emotions of fear and anxieties within the community. Second, the literature review explores the place of fear and anxiety through interaction between the races, especially in the post-independence dispensation, which ultimately influences the process of identity formation. Third, the literature review examines how East African Asians negotiate their belonging and difference through participation in the social, economic and political affairs of their respective countries as depicted in the selected texts. The literature review then concludes that the ambivalent relationship between East African Asians and the native Africans has been contributed by colonialism. The issue of victimization of the East African Asians by the host countries especially in the wake of post- independence, is attributed to culture, racism and ethnicity.

## **2.2 History and Fragile Identity of East African Asians**

Scholarly works on East African Asians have been published since independence, mostly problematizing their history as a migrant minority community in the region. Such scholars as Mamdani, Ghai, Oonk, Gregory, among others, have attempted to remember and re-member the history and genealogies of various sub-groups that form the East African Asian community to the national (hi)story of East Africa against the backdrop of postcolonial discourses (Makokha, 2007). In remembering, memory plays a key role in recollecting past experiences (history) of a community. Memory is a collective activity such that, it is shaped and passed on by a community through occasions, rituals and practices.

The process of re-membering is also crucial because, it involves putting together of the dismembered past to make sense to the trauma of the present (Bhabha, 1994). Such a painful exercise is what leads to the evolution of a fragile identity among East African Asians, as discussed in this study. This study emphasizes on ‘re-membering’ rather than ‘remembering’ to clearly outline that this is more than memory processes. As used in this study, re-membering encompasses all the processes and practices such as cultural signification, created through dislocation. As Ocita (2013) puts it, the severance of diasporic subjects from the —motherland, the sense of cultural loss and the resultant anxiety, produce in them the need for cultural authentication. This study is focused on anxiety and fear in East African Asians generated from various experiences as mentioned above and how the community strives to re-member itself. Immigration leads to cultural dismemberment of the diasporic community, hence, re-membering may be one way of mitigating the sense of unhomey.

Mamdani (2018) looks at the issues affecting the relationship between colonialists and the settlers particularly in South Africa and Uganda. While focusing on the concept of

'citizen' and 'subject', Mamdani comments, "Citizenship would be a privilege of the civilized; the uncivilized would be subject to an all-round tutelage" (2018, p.18). This statement clearly indicates that there were two classes of individuals in the colony, the civilized and the uncivilized ones. According to Mamdani, the uncivilized (Blacks, Asians and Coloured) were not full citizens and therefore, would have few civil rights but none of the political rights, while the civilized ones (citizens) were entitled to full rights. This form of discrimination among the subjects introduces the concept of placelessness and later fragile identity among the Asians because they develop a feeling of not belonging anywhere. Mamdani therefore explains how the colonial subjects were governed through harrowing territorial segregation in colonial South Africa and Uganda.

The Asian Diaspora trace their existence in East Africa back to at least 500 years ago. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Mozambique, Mombasa and Malindi in 1498, he was surprised at the number of Arabs and Indians he found there who were already doing business (Oonk, 2003). In the late nineteenth century the Asian traders and farmers found East Africa a new opportunity, although they had no intentions of settling there permanently as noted by the British Consul of Zanzibar, Sir Bartle Frere in 1875:

They [the Asians] never take their families to Africa; the head of the house of business always remains in India, and their books are balanced periodically in India. The house in Africa is merely a branch house, though many of those people will assure you, and they give very good evidence of the fact, that they have had branches in Africa for 300 years, and possibly for much more. (145)

As stated above, the Asians found a great business opportunity in East Africa. However, the fear and anxiety of the unknown future in the region forced them to

maintain their contact with India. In 1896, the British government brought a large number of Indians to build railways, bridges and other infrastructural projects in Kenya in order to enlarge their colonial empire. It captured men from India to come and help build the Kenya- Uganda Railway. Britain knew that the best way to fend off German imperialism was by making East Africa accessible only to themselves. One of the ways was to build a railway line. Since Africans had no prior knowledge in railway construction and were regarded as “improbable, unreliable and inefficient” (Nowrojee, 2014) the Indians were chosen. This was because the Indians already had a large railway network, their labour was cheap, the distance from Kenya to India was relatively shorter, just across the Indian Ocean and also, they were already in the capitalist economy mindset, unlike the locals in Kenya and Uganda.

It was that from Uganda to Mombasa, every stationmaster, rail-guard, engine driver, and coolie was an Indian (Jen, 2011). Indian indentured labourers consisted of Punjabi Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They were recruited as labourers in the construction of the Kenya- Uganda railway line, which was to transport goods for purpose of furthering British colonial interests. Of these Indian indentured labourers, 2,493 died, some 28 being dragged away by lions and 6,454 were seriously injured. While many returned, around 6,700 chose to stay back for better opportunities in business (Aman, 2013). It is therefore clear that the forefathers of the present East African Asians were the oil that lubricated the colonial machinery and drove the British imperial project in East Africa (Seidenberg, 1997). However, the feeling of fear and anxiety followed the East African Asians from the time they set their feet in East Africa, till present. From the historical narration above, it apparent that the life-threatening experiences encountered by the Asian community inflicted nervous conditions to them which stayed for a long time.

Ocita (2013) looks at representations of migrations by South and East African Asians from Africa to Europe, the US and Canada between 1960 and 2010, as explored in their narratives. Using literary texts that include prose, poetry and plays, Ocita explores the role of memory in the quest for legitimation and unlocking meaning to the Asians' marginalization in the diasporic sites. This is important because the texts narrate the history and genealogy of East and South African Asians. While Ocita explores the migrations of the South and East African Asians, this study focuses on the changing complex nature of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The major issues addressed by the South and East African Asian writers in their work which lead to migrations, as highlighted by Ocita include, citizenship and legitimation. It is these issues that bring about fear and anxiety, which this study explores, among the South and East African Asians.

Historically, racial tensions between Asians and Africans in East Africa have been attributed to colonial hierarchies which were put into place from the late nineteenth century onwards in which the Europeans were placed at the top of the social ladder, followed by Asians and lastly the Africans at the bottom. This, as Waliaula (2012) observes, is a paradox that Africans remain at the bottom of the hierarchy in a country considered to be rightfully theirs. The situation was further made worse by the divide-and-rule policy set by colonialists and which sought to discourage any form of cross-racial engagement.

The ambivalent relationship between East African Asians and the native Africans spans decades in history. These racial tensions can historically be attributed to the British colonial hierarchies which were put into place from the late nineteenth century onwards which constructed a three-tiered society with the Europeans at the top of the social

ladder, followed by Asians and lastly the Africans at the bottom. Kahyana (2003) points out the three main issues that cause the acrimony between Africans and the East African Asians, first is the Asian racial and social exclusiveness, secondly the Asian economic exploitation of Africans, and thirdly the Asian identification and collaboration with the British colonists.

Kahyana (2003) examines the Asian identity question in the fiction of East African Asians in a bid to debunk the claim of their contribution to the ambivalent relation with the native Africans. He goes further to analyze their contribution to the East African literature as a way of asserting their presence in the region. While Kahyana (2003) focuses on the image of East African Asians in their literature, this study is concerned with the emotions of fear and anxiety as depicted in the selected texts of prose fiction by East African Asians and how they influence the process of identity formation. The study looks at how these emotions shape the Asian world in East African literature through plot, characterization and imagery.

Based on the in-between position in the racial hierarchy, the Asian community in East Africa developed a feeling of anxiety, that they would lose their cultural traditions, which has fostered a deep sense of community, hence leading to a fragile identity. The fear and anxiety is about losing their identity as Asians, and at the same time, acquiring a new identity that is African. This fear and anxiety runs as a motif in the fiction of East African Asians through different periods in time. Therefore, the racial and social exclusiveness forged by the East African Asians leads to misconceptions about the community and ultimate attitude of resentment from the native Africans.

This classification further led to the dispossession of African land by white settlers and Asian traders (Munos & Padurang, 2018). The white settlers allocated themselves land

situated in the fertile highlands where they established ranches, while the native Africans were left to occupy the poor grasslands that could not yield much. The colonial regulations limited the contact between Asians and people from the local African community leading to a “system oiled and lubricated by the colonial myth of European superiority over Africans” (Malack & Ondieki, 2017). Under this rigid three-layer racial hierarchy, Malack and Ondieki observe:

Africans were subjected to open discrimination by white settlers and Asians. Africans were forced to live in their own spaces, separate from Asians and white settlers, go to their own separate schools, attend religious services in their own separate religious grounds, and lead their lives in their own separate residential quarters where the standard and quality of life was low, poor, and abysmal. (17)

The position occupied by the East African Asians in the racially layered colonial system was more a part of the colonizing structure than a colonized people (Simatei, 2000). This is reflected in Vassanji’s texts such as *The Gunny Sack* and *The Book of Secrets*. Tejani, Nazareth and Vassanji highlight the fear and anxiety expressed by the East African Asians from the apprehension with which they (Asians) anticipate independence to the subsequent first exodus immediately after Uhuru. They found it hard to accept the fact that Africans who were their servants, are now their masters, what Uncle in Vassanji (1989) comments, “the world has changed so rapidly for us.... we have decided to go to Lourenco Marques.... We cannot watch our servants turning around and throwing insults at us” (165)

After a lot of hardships and struggles, Asian communities in Kenya formed itself as a middle-class business group in the country. Most of the Asians became traders, artisans, lower level administrators and professionals like engineers, doctors and so forth. Over

the time, Asian community in Kenya increased their contacts and linkages and made their mark in the field of business and achieved greater economic success in comparison to native Kenyans (Deka 2016, p.758). This produced tensions and resentment among Kenyan Africans and they soon began to create troubles for the members of the Asian community.

Amidst this situation, some of the East African Asians decided to travel to nations like U.S.A and U.K. for stable life, adventure and better opportunities. This caused them to have a 'Triple heritage' a term introduced by Mazrui (1986), such that these people belonged to the Indian family and race; were born in East Africa as their country of birth but had to travel to the West for adventure, education and safety from hostility hence they had to learn the culture of the West. The Asian Diaspora in East Africa has remained as an integral part of industrial development which has also enabled them gain a meaningful political presence in the region.

However, over the years, there have been attempts by the East African Asians to assert their citizenship to East Africa where they have been born and bred but at the same time; the force to reconnect with their home of origin has seemed to be stronger. As Ojwang (2013) puts it, "the Asians' claims of belonging in the region have historically been denied or denigrated...the Indians have been labeled as 'birds of passage' or 'paper citizens' whose professed attachment to countries of their adoption is a ruse for further economic exploitation" (17).

The Asians are still considered by native Africans as interlopers, a 'muhindi' even a kind of economic colonialist (Deka 2016, p 758). It is this negative attitude directed towards the East African Asians by the native Africans, that increases their feelings of fear and anxiety, which this study looks at.

In a paper comparing the writings of Vassanji, Nazareth and Singh, Ojwang (2000) examines their representation of race and ethnicity, while focusing on Africans in the literature of the Asian Diaspora. Looking at Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack*, Ojwang comments that there is a racial separation between the native Africans and the Asia-Africans represented by a number of symbolic practices that are engaged by the characters. Some of these symbolic practices include the 'invention of exclusivist and often anxious understandings of the home.' (44).

The East African Asian characters use imperialist language in describing non-Western societies, which is similar to Edward Said's 'orientalism'. This aspect of racism and ethnicity points to the history of African slavery in the Middle East which may have been entrenched in the Asian continent for a long time.

Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack* narrates history that spans from 1880s to 1970s, through Shamsi (the protagonists) and the East African coast. The history of East African Asians as narrated in the text gives clear insights into the genesis of African image as perceived by the East African Asians. Ojwang also observes the language used in the literature as being psychosexual, such that Africa is made to occupy a 'feminised' subjectivity, while India takes the masculine role, "a phallic entity, a wielder of the law whose paternal authority means that it can write its subjectivity on the prostrate African country." (48). The coastal trading centre is described as a bush, only waiting for the "penetrative activities of the immigrants." (Ojwang, 48) It is this perception that haunts the community many decades later leading to their inability to be integrated in the native African society.

Mukherjee (1994) also comments on the feminization of Africa in *The Gunny Sack*, where India which was initially regarded as a 'Mother' by colonialists, suddenly turns around and becomes a male while Africa female. She further argues that the feminizing

of Africa is ‘an allegory of exploitation’, ‘a trope for Indians relationship to their adopted land.’ (175). Because of a history of racial segregation, the Asians find themselves promoting the ideology of racism, which leaves the Blacks relegated to level of ‘subalterns’ as postulated by Spivak (1988) in the literature of East African Asians. Although he looks at character perception in the texts by the three writers, the aspect of emotions of fear and anxiety, which fuel racism and ethnicity, is not fully explored.

### **2.3 Fear, Anxiety, and Quest for Identity**

The motif of fear and anxiety runs through the East African Asian literature as reflected in a number of their literary prose. Homi Bhabha argues that there is a cultural transformation that takes place during the process of movement, that is, translocation and migration. This movement makes the process of cultural translocation a form of identity formation that is complex. Therefore, the movements by the East African Asians from South Asia to East Africa results in interaction with different cultures hence forming a complex identity that is haunted by fear and anxiety.

Omuteche (2011) contends that feelings of belonging and citizenship are ambivalent in the post-colony, whereby identities keep on shifting as a result of the shift in loyalties and power. The shift here is brought about by the change in government from colonial to post-independence periods. While looking at the relationship between identity formation and geographical space in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood* and Moyez Vassanji’s *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Omuteche argues that the two authors can help scholars analyze the complexities of identities and belonging in post-independent countries. It is the cause of these complexities of identities in relation to the East African Asians that this study investigates. The thesis focuses on tropes of fear

and anxiety as crucial factors that contribute to the fragile identities experienced by the East African Asians.

The East African Asian writers further highlight issues to do with memory and home. Simatei (2011) attempts to disambiguate the disjunctions that problematize the relationship between nation and diaspora by analysing texts by East African Asian writers. He looks at texts by Moyez Vassanji and Jameela Sidiqi to show how their works lean towards the diasporic imagination while still coming back to the nation to enact the difference of the diasporic subject. Simatei goes further to discuss how the writers deal with the fact that the Asian attempt to relate to the national memory in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda is often surrounded by the perception that they do not share, in equal measure at least, the experiences of colonial oppression and the history of decolonization. This feeling of suspicion contributes to the marginalization of the East African Asians that ends up making them develop a feeling of insecurity. The insecurity pushes them further into isolation hence making them misunderstood by the Africans. The fear and anxiety surrounding the ambivalent relationship between the East African Asians and the native Africans is what this study sets out to investigate.

The East African Asian identities are located in-between the White and Black identities. Naipul (1978) points out at the existence of Asian Africans that can best be described as “caught in-between the master and the slave.” This points to the interstitial position occupied by the community given that they were placed slightly below the Europeans who are the masters, and above the Africans who are the slaves, in the colonialist racial hierarchy. It is the in-between nature, whether real or imagined, that explains the manifestations of fear and anxiety among members of the Asian community in the region. This racial discrimination forms the location of cultural ambivalence which is the hall-mark of its occupants and is always portrayed as one with its own deficiencies

(Makokha, 2014). The in-betweenness results in anxiety among the East African Asians, as they are faced with the dilemma of whether to follow the White identity who are the colonizers, or the native African identity who are the hosts. This form of dilemma impacts negatively on the Asian community as they lack trust from both the whites and the Black Africans, and as Warah (1998) puts it, they lack the authority of the oppressor as well as the humanity of the oppressed, making their future uncertain hence the anxiety. However, the in-betweenness also had some benefits for the Asian community in the colonial context. For instance, politically, they were ranked above the Africans which meant they enjoyed some privileges which the native Africans never did.

While interrogating issues of representation of Asians in African literature, that is South and East Africa, Sarvan (1985) comments that Asians are mostly referred to unfavourably. He further comments that these references though brief, are able to unravel attitudes that would not be revealed through 'sustained, self-conscious studies. Although Sarvan focusses on the perception of Black characters towards Asian characters, he does not look at the Asian perception towards Black characters as well as themselves. It is the perception mentioned that leads to emotions of anxiety and fear among East African Asian characters, in relation to native Africans and themselves that this study investigates.

The Asian question in East Africa is further seen in the call for integration by Warah (1998) to the grandmother who is described as, "...a living symbol of the stubborn durability of Indian culture and habits. Indians in Kenya, unlike their counterparts in Britain or West Indies, have remained fairly insulated against the culture of the country

of their adoption.” (p.12). The grandmother forms part of the Asian community that insulates itself against interaction with native Africans.

The East African Asians developed a ‘middleman minority’ syndrome. According to Bonacich (1973), the middleman minorities display certain characteristics that make them alienated from the rest of the society. For instance, they begin as sojourners in the land of immigration, holding onto the ‘myth of return’, and not planning to stay permanently. They also show resistance to marriage outside the community, residential self-segregation, the establishment of separate schools for their children, the maintenance of distinctive cultural traits, and a tendency to avoid involvement in local politics except that directly affect their group (Herzig, 2006). This clearly points at the East African Asian mannerism that makes it hard for them to interact with native Africans, as depicted in the selected literary texts. Bonacich goes further to describe them as a highly organized community that resists assimilation (p.584-586).

This whole issue of insulation among the East African Asians was given a shot in the arm by the colonial regime, when it advocated for social stratification and discouraged integration among races. As argued by Bhabha,(1986), “Colonial authority requires modes of discrimination that disallow a stable unitary assumption of collectivity”(172). This points to the fact that the social stratification ideology seemed to work too well with the East African Asians given that they had a history of social isolation. Ghai and Ghai (1970) also comment, “the notion of social exclusiveness within a framework of commercial and administrative relations came naturally to them. To refuse to integrate with neighbors of a different race or religion did not seem to them to indicate lack of patriotism or lack of a commitment to a political system.” (11). According to the statement, the East African Asians are influenced by the history of social exclusion,

such that their ancestors came to the region and developed a culture of keeping to themselves as they did their businesses.

Therefore, the East African Asian community was used to isolationary existence, such that when the colonial government imposed the racial/cultural exclusivity policy in East Africa, it did not matter to them much and as a result, was adopted without question. Simatei (2000) argues that the presence of the old diaspora into the emerging postcolonial nation is complicated by “its essentialist and regressive self-portrayal as a guest community, determined as it is to insulate itself from the rest of the East Africans in the hope of returning to the —homeland untainted” (58). These arguments indicate that there is a reason behind (source of) the feeling of isolation among the East African Asians.

Fear and anxiety are argued in this thesis as possible reason why the East African Asians are unable to be fully integrated in the African society. Being a highly organized community, they fear losing their treasured culture through interaction with other communities. The anxiety is further fueled by the post-independence policies of African nationalism which threatens to do away with racial segregation that had favored the Asians. Given that the East African Asians were used to the colonial system of social isolation, they find it hard to adjust to the new political process, which lead to their being marginalized. Independence therefore disorganizes them such that the East African Asians are historically regarded as ‘exploiters and opportunists’, which deepens the conflict between them and the native Africans. This is reflected in both *The Gunny Sack* and *The Book of Secrets* where fortunes enjoyed by the Asian community during the colonial era come tumbling down with the coming of independence.

The attainment of independence within the East African states causes disintegration and dislocation of identity among the East African Asians. The fear and anxiety brought about by the emergence of a new government formed by the native Africans is enough to destabilize their identity. The East African Asians are forced to leave their host countries for somewhere safer, since they cannot come to terms with the establishment of new government led by native Africans, who were initially their inferior during the colonial era.

Pile and Thrift (1995), opine that identity and space are regarded as fluid and lacking stability, such that a subject is defined by the space they occupy. This can be contested because, looking at space occupied by the East African Asians, would qualify them to be regarded as East African citizens, but this claim has been denied by the native East Africans for a long time. However, Pile and Thrift later acknowledges that identity can be (and is) contested because, ‘understanding it means rejecting some earlier notions of reality’ (5-6). The East African Asians therefore develop a dislocated identity as a result of holding onto their memories of home and away. Both they and the native Africans are not willing to reject the past reality. Pile and Thrift further identify the two main approaches involved in the identification process as dynamic and psychological.

While looking at the works of East African Asians, Blacks and Whites Mwairumba (2015) points out identity and space as important issues in the East African literature, since they reflect on the nature of contemporary social relations in the region. When looking at the five texts, Meja Mwangi’s *Going Down River Road*, Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye’s *Homing in*, M. G. Vassanji’s *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Peter Nazareth’s *In a Brown Mantle*, and Arthur Gakwandi’s *Kosiya Kifefe*, Mwairumba

(2015) argues that place and place meaning play a significant role in the process of identity formation. However, the scholar does not address the issue of emotions of anxiety among the East African Asians as a significant issue in identity formation. The current study therefore uses the psychological approach as opposed to Mwirumba's dynamic approach in revealing the identity formation process, as postulated by Pile and Thrift (1995). Whereas Mwirumba adopts a more general approach to the three races that occupy the East African region, this study focuses on the discomfitures of identity and belongingness among the East African Asians.

The aspect of anxiety in the East African Asian literature is further explored by Ocita (2013) when looking at the question of home and negotiation of belonging in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* and Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack*. Ocita comments that the interstitial spaces occupied by the Asians are critical to understanding not only the anxieties that migration and relocation produce but also the subsequent question of affiliation and its determination in a post-colonial context. (56). This argument is relevant for this study in the analysis of how migrations and relocations to new spaces contribute to the construction of anxieties and fear among the East African Asians.

As observed in the selected texts, fear and anxiety in human beings are not static. They have been evolving over time, from instinctual behavioral responses and survival skills, to social survival responses, where people are now concerned with what others think about them. These traits are regarded as conceptual, neural and behavioral defensive mechanisms released by organisms towards any source of danger that they may be facing (Cisler et al, 2010). For instance, the East African Asians develop certain traits in order survive when encountered with the danger of animal as well as human attacks.

The aspect of in-betweenness, interstitiality and middle man minority syndrome in the selected East African Asian texts, is crucial to the articulation of fear, anxiety and belonging. This study delves into the in-betweenness of the East African Asians because of the identity formation process that they go through while under the influence of fear and anxiety. It further looks at the position occupied by the community and how it contributes to their developing a sense of anxiety and fear. As a way of circumventing the chronic condition, the East African Asians devise a survival mechanism.

#### **2.4 Negotiating Belonging and Difference**

In spite of their being regarded as a minority, the East African Asians have survived by situating themselves strategically in their countries of migration. They have worked hard towards establishing themselves as formidable group in the region. This is part of the process of re-membering and remembering cultural identities that had been dismembered by anti-colonial and postcolonial forces (Makokha, 2007). The process has been made possible by their forging an Afropolitan identity. Mbembe (2006) describes Afropolitanism as:

Awareness of the interweaving of the here and there, the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa, the relativisation of primary roots and memberships and the way of embracing, with full knowledge of the facts, strangeness, foreignness and remoteness, the ability to recognize one's face in that of a foreigner and make the most of the traces of remoteness in closeness, to domesticate the unfamiliar, to work with what seems opposites-it is this cultural, historical and aesthetic sensitivity that underlines the term *Afropolitanism*.'

According to Mbembe therefore, there is no such thing as 'African authenticity' in a continent that is connected both physically and historically to the rest of the world. This

is the kind of identity that the East African Asians forge through social, cultural and literary production in order to survive in the region during this era of globalization.

Selasi (2005) also uses the term Afropolitanism when referring to a generation of the diaspora whose parents had left Africa in the 1960s to 70s and who had consequently grown up several global metropolises, speaking multiple languages, engaging with both African and non-African cultures. Mbembe argued that the meaning of 'being African' be dislodged from race, native traditions and be opened to 'the flows of global networks and worldly hybridities (54).

The denial by native Africans that the East African Asians are fellow citizens on the one hand contributes to their sense of placelessness and interstitiality, but on the other hand, gives them more strength, as it strategically places the East African Asians more as global citizens as opposed to being local. Their work, in the opinion of Makokha (2016) transgress and transcend national spaces of narration once privileged by the earlier generation of writers such as Achebe and Ngugi. As Makokha puts it, the protagonists in these works are always the exiled, the displaced, the traveler and the migrants whose cross-border tendencies, various travels, and/or heritage of dislocation/migration bequeath them as a congenital cosmopolitan bent of mind.

The global aspect of belonging enables the Asians to move freely as they interact and transact business with the rest of the world. Siundu (2009) also avers that East African Asians enjoy privileges such as economic dominance because of their touch with histories of the region, contemporary geopolitics and the thinning of boundaries that have allowed them to formulate multiple consciousness in the construction of their identities. He regards the study as an example of how immigration can be advantageous

as it places the subjects in a better place than what the home offers. However, in as much as the East African Asians devise their survival mechanisms, their literature persistently suggests a sense of insecurity and anxiety while in the host countries as depicted by the Asian characters in their literary texts.

The economic establishment of the East African Asians in the region cannot be ignored. Backed by a history of business from the first generation of Asians in East Africa, the community has done a lot to assert its presence in the host nations. Their dominant role in the economy of East Africa was triggered by the fact that, their security depended on their ability to “negotiate mutual economic interests with rulers.” (Oonk, 2010). Since the colonial era of *Dukawallas*, the East African Asians have grown and expanded their business empires having established vast companies and industries. They have invested a lot of money on charities, education, temples, mosques, hospitals and media among many other sectors. This demonstrates the formation of an Afropolitan identity by the community through such investments with the hope that they could now be accepted as part of the East African citizenry.

At one point, Naipaul (1978) accused the East African Asian community of ‘near total absence of imagination’ in literary production on their part as a result of too much concentration on business. Naipul’s comment came as an emphasis on the earlier observation by Taban (1969) about the literary barrenness of East Africa. While urging his fellow East Africans to be aware and overcome it, Taban had specifically singled out the East African Asians, “Our citizens of Asian origin have been taking more care of family businesses than engaging in literary works,” (34). He further challenged community and religious leaders like Aga Khan to contribute in fostering a cultural

renaissance in East Africa (Desai, 211). There was a renaissance in Asian literary works which started emerging in the nineteen sixties hence forth.

The emergency of literary production did not kill the knack for business entrepreneurship among the East African Asians. On the contrary it is the same business that was earlier used to promote literariness within the community, with religious leaders and entrepreneurs such as Aga Khan and Kalidas Mehta respectively contributing towards the establishment of a National Cultural Centre in Kampala, holding a 'national theatre, a language hall, and many other offices for promotion of a variety of arts including film production.' (Gregory, 442).

Since then, the East African Asians have made milestones in business establishment in the region. Although, Oonk (2010) argues that despite running the business empires for decades in East Africa and helping to establish the region as a business hub, the East African Asians realize that their effort is never enough for them to be accepted as locals. That they are still regarded as strangers. This is also what Mamdani (1998) earlier asserted when commenting that a settler will never become a native from the point of view of ethnic citizenship. This attitude could have informed the expulsion of Asians from Uganda in the 1970s by the Amin regime. The community had dominated the commercial sector in the country for decades, providing skilled labour, capital and entrepreneurship (Waliaula, 2012). As a result, they reaped resentment from the native Africans who felt that they were being re-colonized and therefore needed 'economic liberation' (Jamal, 1976). This resentment culminated in expulsion order by the Ugandan president to all Asians in Uganda, as the first phase towards economic liberation. The second phase was the allocation of Asian businesses to Africans (p.602).

As satirically suggested by Jamal, these rewards reaped by the Asians in Uganda included resentment from Africans.

Maganda (2012) observes that the Asian community's political participation in Kenya has been steadily going down despite having an outstanding history of political involvement. Maganda's argument contributes to the political history of Asians in Kenya, and by extension, East Africa. Further, the appointment, election and active participation of the Asians in political affairs of the country points to the fact that the community has started negotiating towards citizenship and belonging.

Intellectually, the East African Asians have also played a critical role in the development of East Africa. They have been involved in carrying out research and publishing papers on their culture which have received a commendable audience from both readers and scholars. For instance, in Kenya, there are two journals, *The Asian Weekly* and *Awaaz*, that are published in an attempt to negotiate the relations between the Asians and Blacks. In an article on the two publications, Siundu (2011) highlights the attempt by the Kenyan-Asians to create an alternative space in which there is a representation of both Asian and Black with the intention of bridging the gap between the past and the present by both archiving and reimagining the labour, intellectual and social heritage of Asians in Kenya.

Most of the East African Asian authors who belong to the third and fourth generations that immigrated to East Africa have not been to their ancestral countries. However, those countries feature in the selected literary texts creating a sense of nostalgia and homesickness. This is also observed by Simatei (2011) when looking at the writings of the East African Asian Diaspora, where the authors problematize the idea of home and belonging, identity and citizenship and also the relationship between space and time.

Whereas Simatei's work majorly involves locating new voices and orientations that enter into a dialogue with the established identity politics of nation formation found in the national literature, this study focuses on emotions of fear and anxiety in the East African Asians leading to their fragile identity as depicted in their texts.

The hostility from Africans provokes the East African Asian longing for home despite being born and raised in East Africa. As Ahmed (1999) puts it, it is ironical that the 'real' home, the very space from which one imagines oneself to have originated, and in which one projects the self as both homely and original, that is the most unfamiliar: it is here that one is a guest, relying on the hospitality of others.

Various scholars have researched on the national identities of the East African Asians as narrated by the authors using different approaches. For instance, Kahyana (2003) looks at the concept of National identity and tries to analyze how this identity is narrated in the East African Asian prose. Although he describes the idea of 'National identity' as the 'post-colonial identities' while focusing on how writers use different approaches in discussing the multiple identities of East African Asians through different generations, this study looks at the concept of fear and anxiety as exhibited in the East African Asian fiction as part of their identity formation process.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In respect to the above review, there are many studies carried out on East African Asian Literature especially after independence. The scholars have studied on various themes including alienation, exile, modernity, migration, diaspora, memory and nationalism which suggests that East African Asian writers have used literature as a mode of representation to communicate their forgotten (hi)story, culture and migrant minority identities. The presence of East African Asians in post- independent East Africa is felt

through the significant number of literary works which have been produced over the years. However, this study acknowledges the fact that the issues of identity, migration and alienation among the East African Asians is fundamentally informed by underlying emotions of fear and anxiety which need to be properly put into perspective. It goes ahead to examine how the authors problematize notions of fear and anxiety as a concept and a marker of identity. This perspective is significant in understanding identity formation as a process that is influenced by various factors including emotions.

The genealogy of East African Asians runs slightly more than a century back with the construction of Kenya-Uganda railway, where the British made a decision to recruit Asian labour given that the 'Asian already had a large railway network which meant that there was a vast pool of skilled labour, familiar with railway construction.' (Warah, 1998). The railway workers then later formed a bulk of the future generation of the Asians in East Africa. Even before the period of construction of Kenya- Uganda railway, it is argued that East Africa was already occupied by Asians.

This review also looks at how the East African Asians have survived in the region for such a long period of time despite being regarded as minority community. They have managed to cope by situating themselves strategically in their countries of migration through social, economic, intellectual, cultural and political engagements. This is evidenced by their establishment of business empires in the region cutting across different sectors of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing, industrial, education and media.

The study argues that in spite of the previous longstanding ambivalent relations between the native Africans and the East African Asians, there has been remarkable

gradual improvement in attitude evidenced by the inclusion of the community in issues of national development.

(Oonk, 2010) attributes the East African Asian dominant role in the economy of East Africa as triggered by the fact that, their security depended on their ability to negotiate mutual economic interests with rulers. That their hard work in business is motivated by the sense of security attached to their investment.

The next chapter describes the research design that was used in the study including the method of data collection and analysis so as to provide reliable research findings. It also outlines the target population from where the texts were derived, the data sampling method applied, and data collection procedures then the analysis of data.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research design that was used in the study. It then explains the method of data collection and analysis so as to respond to the research questions and be able to provide reliable research findings. It also outlines the target population from where the texts were derived, the data sampling method applied, and data collection procedures, before finally looking at data analysis.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted an analytic research design. Analytical research, as a form of qualitative inquiry, refers to a non-interactive document research that describes and interprets the past or recent past from recent sources, whether documents preserved in collections, participants' oral testimonies, or a literary text (Macmillan & Schumacher, 1997). An analytical research design is appropriate for this study because, as Babbie and Mouton (2001) put it, it assists the researcher to find patterns among voluminous details describing the subject matter of the study. The patterns being researched on are fear and anxiety among the East African Asians. The phenomenon of fear and anxiety is discussed in the light of the pattern that revolves around it. This design enabled the researcher to develop a new understanding of the research problem, which is, the issue of fragile identity in the literary texts by East African Asians and also explains why the situation exists.

The analytical research design was critical in achieving the main objective of this research study, which is to explore the depiction of the discomfitures of identity and belongingness in the selected works of East African Asians. The design played a big role in highlighting the trend/pattern of chronic nervous condition that haunts the East

African Asian community from the time of immigration to present, as brought out in the selected texts. From anxiety and identity formation among the East African Asians, the design further helped in understanding the images used by the authors like travels in strange territories, expulsions from places regarded as home and scattering of the communities, which are essential in this study.

### **3.3 The Study Area**

The thematic area of this study is fear, anxiety and belonging as highlighted in the selected East African Asian texts through characterization. The study looks at how Asian characters in the selected texts manifest fear, anxiety and belonging in their interaction among themselves and with native Africans through dialogue and actions, while occupying new spaces in East Africa.

The geographical study area of the study is Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, which formed the original East African Community founded in the early seventies. Countries like Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan that currently form the East African Community have been left out since they do not share a similar colonial history with the three countries that formed the original union, hence would not offer relevant perspectives on the Asian question under investigation in the study.

### **3.4 The Study Population**

The target population for the study comprised twenty prose texts written by East African Asians. The texts were written in English language by authors who are of Asian descent but born and raised in East Africa. The characters in the texts are of mixed races but emphasis was on the Asians and native Africans. The study also looked at the period of production of the written Asian texts as ranging from colonial to millennial period.

The text population included Bahadur Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow* (1971), Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* (1972), *The General Is Up* (1975), Yusuf Dawood's *Return to Paradise* (2002), *Water Under the Bridge* (1991), *Eye of the Storm* and *The Last Word* (2012), Rasna Warah's *Unsilenced* (2005), *Triple Heritage: A Journey to Self Discovery* (1998) and *War Crimes* (2015), Yasmin Alibhai Brown's *No Place Like Home* (1996), Pheroze Nowrojee's *A Kenyan Journey* (2019), Neera Kapur Dromson's *From Jhelum to Tana* (2007), Moyez Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack* (1989), *The Book of Secrets* (1994), *The In-between World of Vikram Lall* (2003) and *Nostalgia* (2016) as well as Jameela Sidiqi's *The Feast of Nine Virgins* (1995) and Sofia Mustafa's *In the Shadow of Kirinyaga* (2002) and Imam Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall* (2016). The identification of the study population consists of Asians who represent the East African region.

### **3.5 Data Sample and Sampling Procedures**

The study employed purposive sampling, a sampling technique which enabled the study to rely on the researcher's own judgment when sampling members of population to study (Dawson, 2009). The technique was appropriate for this study since it did not seek generalizations but rather an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The selection of the texts considered the author's race, characterization in the texts, thematic concerns, period of publication and the texts' setting. This would assist in the analysis of representation of fear and anxiety in the literary texts by the East African Asians. Focus was placed on five texts that dwell on the issues of representation of fear and anxiety in the East African Asian community.

The criteria for sampling the texts as used in the study included, the period of production of the work and the issues dealt with (fear, anxiety and belonging). It further looked at the author's relationship with East Africa either by birth, marriage and/or citizenship. This choice of authors is intended to provide accounts, perceptions and portrayals of the continent from individuals who have intimate knowledge of Africa. These texts therefore, were selected on the basis that they are set in similar geographical location, that is, East Africa. They also share the same period of production, the millennial which reflects a contemporary Asian identity.

Since all the selected authors have written more than one text, the choice of the writer's text studied was purposeful, the rationale being the period of production of the text, the text's setting and the presence of characters from the Asian and native African races. The specified period of production (from colonial to post-independence period), was to help in understanding the transient nature of fear and anxiety in the East African Asians while in East Africa, which forms the setting of the texts. The presence of the Asian race would enable a successful analysis of representation of character perception that results in nervous conditions among the East African Asian community.

Based on periodization of the literary texts, Tejani's *Day After tomorrow* was selected on the basis that it was the first novel written by an East African Asian in English. It addresses the issues of citizenship and legitimation in the East African Asians, which is the basis of this study. Peter Nazareth is one of the pioneer Asian authors and scholars in East Africa having researched and written widely on the Asian question. Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* was also selected, as it looks into the Asian colonial and post-colonial experiences focusing on transitions and transformations that problematize the notion of home and belonging, which is the major concern of this study.

Vassanji, a scientist-turned author, has contributed a lot in the understanding of the East African Asian identity through literature. Having written over ten novels on East African Asians with several winning awards, Vassanji stands out as one of the most famous Asian writers in East Africa and globally. Vassanji's selected text, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, concerns itself with the interactions between the East African Asians and native East Africans as well as the colonial administration. Another famous East African Asian author who is a surgeon is Yusuf Dawood. Dawood juggles between two professions, a trained medical surgeon as well as an accomplished author and has excelled in both. Dawood has penned down eleven novels that deal with racial as well as medical issues, hence his work is sometimes regarded as medical literature (Karanja, 2013). Therefore, his selected text, *In the Eye of the Storm*, was written against the backdrop of psychoanalysis where the protagonist has to grapple with fears and anxieties in his sub conscience. Verji's selected text, *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall?* is one of the latest works of literature written by an East African Asian highlighting the contemporary trends of fear and anxiety within the community. The selected texts therefore portray the East African Asians' legitimacy as 'largely ambiguous often involving competing tendencies of affirming or disavowing belonging simultaneously.' (Ocita, 2013).

After an exploration of twenty novels, five were selected as primary texts and considered for analysis in this study. The five texts include Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, Vassanji's *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* and Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*. The selected texts problematized fragile identities and demonstrated how migrations and relocations to new spaces contribute to the construction of anxieties and fear among the East African Asians.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Primary qualitative data was collected through close and critical reading of the sampled novels. This was necessary in order to create an informed base for research. Close reading, according to Allen (2017) involves investigating the relationship between the internal workings of discourse in order to discover what makes a particular text function persuasively. It attempts to “reveal the detailed, often concealed, tools that give a particular text stylistic consistency and rhetorical effect.” (p.177).

Close reading approach was appropriate for the researcher to read through the texts with specific attention paid to the components that offered the requisite descriptive data, (Dawson, 2009). Through close reading analysis, hidden thematic concerns that had been overlooked or underestimated such as fear, anxiety and fragile identity in the East African Asian literature, were given attention. The three mentioned aspects formed the initial coding and categorization of data.

Secondary data was collected through library research by reading relevant literary articles, books, internet and other relevant publications on movement, diaspora, memory, identity and cosmopolitanism. Materials for the research were accessed through the public and private libraries as well as websites with relevant information. All the information obtained touched on the issues of identities of East African Asians linked to colonial history, Africanization and citizenship.

A close reading of the selected texts was undertaken and notes made on the issues concerning the study such as fear, anxiety, fragile identities and Afropolitanism. Various relevant sections of the texts were identified and picked using extraction method. The identification was specifically based on the objectives laid down and the data was later subjected to critical analysis.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The study applied critical content analysis as a preferred method in the analysis of collected data. This involved the interpretation of the texts depending on the analyst's intention as a researcher and the context of the study. According to Short (2016), the purpose of the reading of the texts influences the meanings that are constructed as research findings. Critical content analysis locates power in social practices to challenge issues of inequity. Utt and Short (2018) emphasize that critical content analysis can result in profound analysis of complex issues of power and oppression when taken up with depth and thoughtfulness. That is what this study endeavored to do.

Utt and Short (2018) provide an outline that guides the researcher in using critical content analysis as a research methodology. The outline involves first, deciding on a research purpose, questions and texts. Secondly, selecting and reading deeply within a critical theory frame. Thirdly, reading related research studies which for the literature review. Fourth, is selecting and reading texts for the purpose of analysis. Fifth, involves identifying theoretical tenets to frame close reading of the selected texts. Then sixth is conducting close reading using the identified theoretical tenets. Finally, is revisiting the theory and the selected texts to develop themes.

Based on the above guidelines, this study had a research purpose, as mentioned in the previous chapters, of investigating the belonging-disjuncture double bind in the literary works of East African Asians. It therefore, focused on the identification of categories, themes and patterns from the primary texts that enabled the researcher to evaluate and analyze in order to determine the adequacy, credibility, usefulness, consistency and validation of the hypotheses (Mugenda, & Mugenda, 2003). It therefore, focused on thematic analysis, which is anchored on character relationships, to analyze the data.

Being a qualitative research, the study identified, analyzed and reported patterns, called themes within data by organizing and describing data set in rich detail to interpret the issue under study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis of fear, anxiety and belonging in selected texts by East African Asians, provided the researcher with a process of segmentation, categorization and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation (Grbich, 2007, as cited in Ross & Matthews, 2010).

Critical content analysis gives a detailed and in depth exploration of the research topic in selected texts. The selected data, which is in form of statements, is analysed, evaluated and compared within and between texts in relation to fear, anxiety and identity in order to determine the perception of character. These statements are analyzed in two contexts, the immediate and the overall textual contexts. According to Richards (2009) there are certain principles under which a literary text should be critically analyzed, which include guarding against ‘stock responses, mnemonic irrelevancies and doctrinal adhesions.’ (12). Also the text should be capable of ‘sensuous apprehension, be able to embrace a feeling, tone, intention and silence the prior demands made upon [text] as a result of theories — conscious or unconscious — about its nature and value’ (15).

Meaning was generated from the collected data through inductive and deductive analysis process. During inductive process, the researcher had to approach the data with an open mind, carefully identifying the relevant information according to the research questions and stated objectives. The identified information which included themes and patterns, was then noted and initial organization of material done. Using the accumulated information, a coding system was generated based on the three aspects, history of East African Asians, depiction of fear and anxiety, and negotiation of

belonging by the East African Asians. The study was inclined more towards deductive analysis as information gathered was weighed and judgement given concerning given understandings.

When analyzing fear, anxiety, identity and belonging in the selected texts, the study focused on the main characters and their antagonists. The characters, whether main or minor, were selected based on race as assigned in the selected texts using such words as black/African, Asian/Indian, and white/European. This was to ensure a balanced representation of putative communal perspectives.

While interpreting the thematic pattern of identity, the study specifically looked at the nouns that designate race, nationality and ethnicity as forms of belonging. In order to consider whether the nouns used have the same conceptual meanings as used in different texts by several characters, at least two passages on a minimum of two characters were selected in each text.

Critical content analysis therefore was critical in reinforcing the interpretation of the selected texts in the light of fear, identity and belonging. The collection, analysis and interpretation of data in this study was guided by the theory of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis deals with issues concerning the conscious and unconscious mind in the interpretation of a literary text, with a close attention to the unconscious feelings and motives of either the author or characters depicted in the work. It was employed to help bring out issues of fear, anxiety, identity and belonging, in the East African Asians as proposed by Freud (1949).

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

This study did not involve dealing directly with respondents hence, did not pose any serious ethical challenges to the researcher. As much as most of the texts were fictional,

the researcher acknowledged the fact that some of the texts were autobiographical hence present real details of the lives of the writers. Care was taken not to misrepresent the facts in a manner that compromises the rights of the characters involved in the texts.

The research study further commits itself to ethical issues such as acknowledgement of cited sources since it does not deal directly with the respondents. The study was subjected to evaluation by the Ethical Review Commission to ensure that it meets the required academic standards. The work was further taken through the plagiarism checker to confirm that the information contained in the research study is original. A research permit was also obtained from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and from the government licensing authority NACOSTI (National Commission of Science, Technology & Innovation) as a requirement for conducting research in the country.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORY AND FRAGILE IDENTITIES IN SELECTED EAST AFRICAN ASIAN FICTION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter problematizes the nexus between history of East African Asians and their fragile sense of identity, as represented in the selected texts. It chronicles the Asians arrival in East Africa and the subsequent struggle for identity and belonging as highlighted in Bahadur Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, M.G Vassanji's *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Yusuf Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* and Imam Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*. The texts are written in the context of quest for a definite history that reaffirms the legitimacy of East African Asians in the region, as well as reduce the tension between the Asian community and the native Africans, which is a recipe for fear and anxiety in the former. Ashcroft et.al (2009) explains transculturation as a phenomenon of the contact zone, where desperate cultures meet often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination. The selected texts by Tejani, Nazareth, Vassanji, Dawood and Verjee show traces of transculturation, as they portray an encounter between different cultures that have diverse histories.

The study examines how history unveils the anxiety of dislocation and fear of cultural alienation that prevails among the characters in the selected East African Asian texts. Chambers (1994) explains the role of history in the search of truth and assertion of power:

History comes to us not as raw, bleeding facts but in textual production, in narratives woven by desire (for truth) and a will (for power). What are transcribed and translated are traces, residues, shadows and echoes.... there is

no obvious clarity to be narrated but rather a continual sorting through the debris of time.(97)

According to Chambers in the above statement, facts or past events can be used to narrate history through textual representation.

The physical and psychological dislocation that immigrants experience, as narrated in the selected texts, cause a sense of alienation in their children, who are also regarded as ‘The Nowhere Men.’ (Parameswaran, 2007) whose identity is suspended in mid-air. The history of East African Asians is critical in reaffirming their effort to relate to the national memory in the region. Kumar (2014) concurs with this by postulating that narratives of migration and exile are often seen through the acts of personal and collective memory. Therefore, by writing through memory, the East African Asians have asserted their presence in the region as well as, ‘attempted to uncover connections to histories of resistance, that usually get suppressed when the stereotype of Asians as collaborators of colonialism is amplified within the official discourses of nation building.’ (Simatei, 2011).

The chapter begins with the discussion on the historical events that shape the identity of East African Asian community with the argument that it is the events, that give rise to psychological issues of fear and anxiety affecting the community. It further looks into the meaning attached to these events by different characters in the selected texts through identifying the activities carried out in relation to fear and anxiety.

#### **4.2 East African Asian (Hi)story and Post-Colonial Discourses**

East African Asian writers have come up with a dynamic literature that focuses on the struggles and efforts involved in locating themselves in the new surrounding and culture. They appropriate history as well as their story, hence the (hi)story, as reflected in the selected texts, giving precedence to movement, memory and the formation of migrant subjectivities. This is a way of keeping their diasporic identity, as Singh (1976) maintains, “Diasporas must keep a collective memory of their past, and keep their links with the motherland alive so that they can qualify for a Diasporic identity.” (65) The colonial history of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania serves as a backdrop to the selected East African Asian texts.

The Asians connect with the colonial history of East Africa, having migrated to the region during the period of the construction of the Kenyan-Uganda railway as indentured laborers. The British made a decision to recruit Asian labourers given that the “Asians already had a large railway network which meant that there was a vast pool of skilled labour, familiar with railway construction.” (Warah, 18). The railway workers then later formed the bulk of the future generation of the Asians in East Africa. However, even before the construction of the Kenya- Uganda railway, some Asians had already made an entry into the East African region. As Were and Wilson (1972) acknowledge, Blacks, Arabs, Asians, and whites migrated into the region in this order albeit at different times.

Whereas a significant number of Asians born and bred in East Africa have settled in the region, some members of this immigrant community later underwent a second migration to Europe, Canada, or the United States. Therefore, the Post-Colonial East African Asian fiction narrates the arrival of Asians in East Africa through the Indian Ocean and their association with the British colonialists, which later triggers “post-

independence political backlashes, dispersing them to metropolises across Europe, the US and Canada.” (Ocita, 20). After being brought to East Africa by the British colonialists, the Asians find themselves entrenched between the Africans and Europeans, an arrangement that makes them comfortable.

#### **4.3 Travel Motif as Sojourner’s Consciousness**

Migration has been part of human history for a long time, and always involved the creation of multiple affiliations and identities. Rushdie (1991) refers to the migration process as the actual condition of change through movement. This points to the fact that movement necessitates change of identity through the cross-border experiences. Migration can be both physical and psychological making the identity formation a production, which is never complete, always in process (Hall, 1990).

Travel occupies a special place in the East African Asian fiction, as it contributes to the construction of a sense of belonging in the community through focusing on different paths used in the region such as water, railway and roads in entering into various East African territories. To understand the migrant life, one has to take into account the idea of movement, the reasons for journeying and also the representation of these journeys.

Steiner (2014) describes the role played by travel in the East African Asian fiction, as propelling the characters into a world with shifting borders and regimes that become navigable and inhabitable by particular modes of transport. Travels in this case, facilitate movement to new places, allowing characters to claim belonging. For instance, Bahadur Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow* opens with the story of Samsheer, a boy who has an Asian father and an African mother. Tejani also introduces the history of Asians arrival to East Africa through the Indian Ocean. This is told by Mr. Mohamedali when narrating the story of his life to the son, Samsheer. He is full of pride when talking

about how life was tough in India until he one day found himself aboard a ship bound for the coast of Africa. The journey motif gives rise to dislocated identities among the East African Asians, such that during migration to the new lands, they tend to lose their original identity and in return acquire new identities. Tejani, like other writers, captures the history of trade between India and Africa with the Indian Ocean acting as the bridge.

The journey over waters also brings into perspective the issue of colonialism and its effect on the native Africans. For instance, Samsher, as a young boy, witnesses the Europeans clobbering Africans back into the water as they struggle to get into the departing steamer to ferry them to Kampala. The boy is so disturbed that he asks his father why the Africans were not allowed to board in time. The father tells him, “because they are Africans. Third class passengers,” (Tejani, 27-28). The remark comfortably made by the father really hurts Samsher, evoking some inner hatred for his Asianness. What disturbs Samsher, is not just the treatment given to the Africans by the Europeans, but as put by Ocita (2013), the complacency with which Asians enjoy their position of relative privilege as a buffer between the Africans and the Europeans. This complacency later comes to haunt them when the Africans take over leadership role after getting independence. They develop anti-Asian feelings, viewing the community as traitors and collaborators. This attitude later elicits fear and anxiety among the East African Asians resulting in the first exodus of Asians from East Africa.

The journey also contributes to the understanding of the insular nature of the East African Asians, that hinders them from freely integrating with the rest of the Africans. Tejani illustrates this through the mythologized voyage by Vasantlal:

To understand the pioneering fortitude of the Indians of those days, one had to only think of Vasantlal’s journey. Lions, unknown countries, the wilderness, do

not shake him. The sea and its might do not move him. There he sits in one of the seventeen dhows, his brown face and hands mingling intimately with the sun-scorched sail. Smoking peacefully on the hookah, he looks ahead, rocking gently in the motion of the sea, his wife sits next to him creating anew the peace of domesticity which they have left behind. Like Janaka's daughter, Sita, she would walk to infinite eternity with her man. (Tejani 32)

This account explores the Asian experience across the Indian Ocean to the coast of Africa while looking for new opportunities. It makes a hero out of Vasantlal by highlighting the voyagers' strong sense of wanderlust. This image portrays the Asian migrants as adventurous people who are ready to settle and make it anywhere. It is Tejani's way of depicting the East African Asians as adventurers through the creation of utopia. Vasantlal is painted as a relaxed man who is neither worried nor anxious of the future as he leaves his ancestral land enroute an unknown destination along the East African coast. Tejani attempts to paint the feeling of utopia as overriding the anxiety that comes with encountering new spaces.

Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* also gives an account of the journey motif. The novel presents D'Souza, the protagonist, who is narrating his life story from London where he is exiled. The text is characterized by mobility on the western Indian Ocean to East Africa and later to the West as a result of post-independence backlashes. It constructs the western Indian Ocean region as a site for the confluence of African, Asian and European cultural streams (Ocita, 2013).

The Goan history as depicted in *In a Brown Mantle* is that of pain and endurance due to multiple colonization in their homeland and later, embarking on both physical and psychological journeys of shifting allegiances for survival in the face of successive

imperialism, before they eventually cross over to East Africa. The Goans originate from the larger Asian continent together with the Ismaili, Punjabi and Sikh, among others. Their experience with multiple colonization is captured in the beginning of the novel when the narrator comments:

Hardly anybody paid any attention to Goa until India decided a few years ago to reconquer it from the Portuguese who had ruled it for four hundred and fifty years. The world cried "Aggression" against India. Then the world started crying "Aggression" on behalf of India against China who, it was said, had attacked India at the border on the pretext that the land was originally Chinese. Meanwhile, having got used to the idea of being Indian once again instead of Portuguese, Goans started wondering what it would be like to be Chinese. (Nazareth, 2-3)

As mentioned in the excerpt, the multiple experience of imperialism leaves a psychological impact on the Goans. It creates a state of constant fear and insecurity from attacks. As a result of fear and their state of defenselessness in the face of colonial aggression, the Goans chose to yield to the colonial authority for security. This loyalty to successive colonial masters later dictates their next journey, that makes the Goans want to run away from their home for fear of an eminent colonization. The journey begins in Goa, through Bombay and finally culminates in London. This is executed by D'Souza's father who leaves Bombay, while getting away from his two brothers said to have 'no staying power' and settles in Abala (fictional for Kampala) where he joins the British Colonial Service.

M. G. Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003) also tackles the issue of migration by focusing on a number of mobile characters within what is referred to

Asian's 'new diaspora'. As the title suggests, this is a text dealing with the question of belonging and identity crisis. The novel refers to the migration from Asia to East Africa by the old generation, and subsequent movements to the British metropolis by both the old and new generation. Both the journeys are motivated by a psychological feeling of anxiety and fear by the Asians, which is the main concern of this study. The middle aged Vikram Lall, who is the protagonist in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* takes the reader on the journey of his childhood through memory. He flees his own country when he is charged with corruption by the new government in which he was serving. He fears being jailed or worst, assassinated by the very leaders who are his partners in corruption.

Vikram Lall's grandfather originates from Peshawar, while he and his fellow indentured labourer friends are from an "assortment of towns in northwest India" (Vassanji 2004, 16). They had participated in building of the railway line from Mombasa to Kampala, what the narrator proudly calls "our claim to the land". (Vassanji 2004: 16) Peshawar eventually went to Pakistan after the Partition, denying them the claim on a place they once called home.

During colonization in East Africa, there are activities of resistance carried out by some Asian characters like Lall in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* and Cota in *In a Brown Mantle*. These activities show resistance to colonialism, which is a journey of departure from the oppressive rule of the British colonialists towards freedom. Lall travels by train from his home in Nakuru to Mombasa as a form of wanderlust, but at the same time, the journey can be viewed as a reconnection with history of belonging to the land, because of the historical significance of the coast to the Asian community. The experiences of places they pass through during the journey, also creates in Lall a

sense of self-discovery. There is a mental shift from the state of naivety to that of being knowledgeable, as he confesses, “It was to become aware of one’s world, physically, for the first time in a manner I had never done before, whose universe had encompassed our housing estate and my school, the shop and my friends, the tree lined street outside that brought people in and out of our neighbourhood” (Vassanji,105). Initially, Lall’s Asian world and Kenyan-Asian identity was limited to only one geographical location, Nakuru, However, it later becomes clear that his identity cannot be limited to one place, as historically created by the British colonialists through racial segregation, which is a psychological journey towards knowledge acquisition and liberation from colonial control.

After fleeing to Toronto in exile from East Africa for several years because of fear for his life after attempting to interfere with looting activities being perpetrated by the post-independent leaders, Vikram Lall eventually decides to make a return journey in the last part of the book which is titled, ‘Homecoming’. He leaves a place, “where the seasons progress in order and the world seemed safe, to a place he always longed for and belonged to” (Vassanji, 388). The journey which is both physical and psychological, serves as a reconciliation as well as reconnection to East Africa, as he comments, “Perhaps it is here . . . that I should start my life anew, a life as simple as pure as a mountain stream from the green misty Aberdares” (Vassanji, 389).

Yusuf Dawood’s *Eye of the Storm* also gives an account of the history of Asians in East Africa. Dawood seems to share his personal experience through fiction when dealing with issues of rejection that befalls Maina Njoroge, the protagonist. Having been born in India, his parents later migrated to Pakistan during the partition of the two states. He pursued his primary and secondary schools in Pakistan, before moving to college in

Britain. He got married while there and eventually immigrated to Kenya. Dawood's sharing on the plight of immigrants in the host countries through literature concurs with Ngugi's (1972) comments, "A writer responds, with his total personality to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society." (92)

Dawood (2010) highlights the introduction of religion in East Africa through the narration of Arab migration, "Arriving in their dhows, laden with spices, porcelain and other merchandise from Persian Gulf, the Arabs had surreptitiously introduced Islam into the coastal region of Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. In fact, they infiltrated both the east and west coast of Africa." (17). This movement of Asians on the Indian Ocean contributed to the introduction and spread of Islamic religion in the hinterlands, and out of fear of losing followers and as part of colonizing strategy, the 'papal hierarchy in the Vatican decided to send evangelistic reinforcements. Father Johnson came with that rapid reprisal force.' (17). Being part of his aggressiveness, Father Johnson learns to speak both Swahili and the local Kikuyu language, the language of his parishioners. The travel motif therefore, constitutes a significant element of the idea of cultural mapping, in which memory is a crucial text (Mwairumba, 2013).

#### **4.4 The Homeland Myths as a Burden of the Past**

Memory, sense of unbelonging and nostalgia towards the native homeland seem to dominate the East African Asian literature as evidenced in the selected East African Asian texts. The concept of 'home' emerges as one of the constant issues that shape the East African Asian authors' sense of belonging. Ahmed (1999) questions what 'home' means, "What does it mean to be at home? How does it affect home and being at-home

when one leaves home?” (Ahmed, 3). The idea of home seems to go beyond a particular location a person occupies. This is the reason why, despite having a history of immigration from South Asia to East Africa that spans many years back, the East African Asian still nurses memories of home. As Ahmed (1999) argues, home is not a specific place inhabited by a person, but more than one place; and that there are too many homes to allow place to secure the roots or routes of one’s destination, hence making it mythical. Nazareth (1972) explains how serious memory has influenced the East African Asian community:

But there was the burden of the past. Always the brown men carry with them the burden of the past. There it was in Samsheer’s father, Mr. Mohemadali, born in Bombay. So that if he was torn limb from limb and were to die in an ecstasy of pain or remorse, a small corner within himself would still hold itself intact.

Like a clot of blood dried in the sun. (Nazareth, 8)

Samsheer, the protagonist in *Day After Tomorrow* stays with his parents, the Asian father and African mother, who operate a cloth shop in Kampala, Uganda. He spends most of his time with the father in the shop as he is taught trade. As a result, he grows knowing not just the cultural connection with his subcontinent, but his identity as a *Wepari* as well. The Asian children grow up knowing that their work is to do business, “the Indians had come to Africa to trade, and even the smallest child knew as it grew up that life centred around the shop and the peasants,” (Tejani, 1971. p.7). This knowledge and belief is derived from history, after the construction of the Kenya- Uganda railway, some Asians go back to their country, but a larger number choose to stay and engage in trade first at the coast, before spreading to other parts of the East African region.

In the evening when the shop is closed, the Asian family gathers in the house and the parents take the opportunity to talk to their children, mostly about their history and

culture. For instance, Samsheer's father narrates about the tough life in India while growing up and how he found himself in Uganda. The memories of Mohemedali are selective recollections of the special moments spent in India, which are rooted in family bonding and childhood security. From the story, fear and anxiety first emerge when Mohemedali is told that in Africa, "the lion ate man, and the people were all black and there were no roads," (Tejani, 7). This same feeling is passed on to the young generation of East African Asians through the narration of stories and histories of migration and the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. The stories detail the fierce attacks by man-eating lions of Tsavo, spear-wielding warriors from Kenya who are opposed to the railway line passing through their land, and diseases like malaria that claim lives among others. Such narratives of migration and estrangement trigger fear in the young generation, "hearing all these, the children wanted to escape into another world away from the shop," (Tejani 1971, 7).

Listening to such stories and histories of migration regularly after closing business slowly creates a nervous condition in the young generation of Asians in East Africa. Samsheer, for example starts feeling like a slave in his father's shop, and yearns to be free like other non-Asian children. His siblings also feel the same, and go ahead to escape into a freer world, "unconsciously they tried to live in a different world. Away from the yards and yards of cloth and blankets and the cheap rubber sandals stacked in their father's shop." (Tejani, 9). This is ironical, and contrary to the expectations of the father, who had initially thought the stories would encourage and toughen Samsheer in mind and body as a *Wepari* son. The reaction is enough to cause fear and anxiety in the father, who sees the Asian culture dying naturally before his eyes.

Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), is a story of the East African Asians in the pre and post-colonial Kenya. The novel is narrated by the protagonist,

Vikram Lall who is a third generation East African Asian, relying on memory to recall events that take place in the country in 1953 when he is only eight years old. He uses memory and remembrance to reconstruct the past from the location of the present. Before commencing, Lall confesses in the prologue, “I simply crave to tell my story...”.(Vassanji, 6) The story is then narrated by Lall chronologically from his childhood up to the middle age when he flees the country to Toronto for exile. Lall is born and grows up in a period when the Kenyan nation is under colonialism by the British imperialists, and as observed by Deeba (2016), every stage of his life corresponds with the (re) birth and becoming of a nation that he identifies himself with; yet he is painfully aware of the paradoxes inherent in such an identification.

The first part of the book which is named “The Year of Our Loves and Friendships” talks about Vikram Lall’s childhood, the experiences he encounters with his friends during these formative years of their lives as well as that of the nation. Lall paints a picture of deception during this era, “a colonial world of repressive, undignified subjecthood, as also of seductive order and security “ (Vassanji, 5). As a child, Vikram soon discovers that he cannot comfortably fit into the already set categories of being either the colonizer, as represented by his European friends Bill and Annie, or the colonized like his African friend Njoroge. The boy, Lall is forced to occupy the interstitial position of his community, a reality that disturbs him:

Why was my own life so simple? Why did it seem so irrelevant? In that fateful year of our friendship, when we played together I couldn’t help feeling that both Bill and Njoroge were genuine, in their different ways; only I, who stood in the middle, Vikram Lall, cherished son of an Indian grocer, sounded false to myself, rang hollow like a bad penny. (Vassanji , 49)

Vikram feels disturbed about his identity because of the history he carries. Having come from a family where the grandparents had experienced a double displacement (Peshawar and the Indian/Pakistan partition), he finds himself being a child of nowhere. Vikram has no connection with India, a country of his origin, because he has been born and raised in Kenya, and as he confesses, “India was always a fantasyland to me” (Vassanji, 19). Just Samsher in *Day After Tomorrow*, India is only mentioned to him by the older generation who refer to it as ‘home’, but he has never been there. To him, ‘home’ is Nakuru, a place he has lived and known all his childhood. Brah (1996) candidly describes the concept of ‘home’:

On the one hand, ‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin’. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dusty, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber skies in the middle of the day . . . all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday social relations. (Brah, 188-189)

According to the above statement, home is perceived by the diaspora as both physical and metaphorical space. It physically alludes to the geographical space occupied by the Indian Subcontinent. Only the older Asian generation is capable of establishing a real connection with the physical experience of the ancestral land. Metaphorically, ‘home’ is imagined through family gatherings, where members meet, talk and eat foods from their homeland, as well as listen to their own music:

Smells of hot ghee and spices filled the air in the backyards, ginger and garlic and chicken from one house, saffron and onion from another, fresh phulki

chapatis and daal from yet another. Lilted melodies and sad lyrics from Saigal, Hemant Kumar, and Talat filled the air (Vassanji, 25)

Such encounters help the third generation of East African Asians to have a slight experience of what home is. They also learn about their religion and culture through the gods and goddesses of Asian mythology. For instance, in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Samsheer reads books about the myths of their community, like the battle of Pani Pat, the passion of the Chauhans and the chivalry of the noble king of Chittor. This fascinates Samsheer, making him to like history. "Once a week the teacher read out to them lessons from the Mahabharat, the great Indian Epic. At those times Samsheer lived with heroes. His favourite was Arjuna, because as a marksman with the bow, he emulated all his teachers." (Tejani, 21).

While sitting around the fire in the evenings, Vikram Lall and other children are told Asian tales about Lakshman, Rama, and Sita, "speaking with monkeys and devils in the enchanted forests of a distant land." (Vassanji, 19). The mother also had a dresser that kept statuettes of Rama, Durga, Hanuman and Ganesh. In so doing, the older East African Asian generation orientates and connects the young generation with home, without necessarily having to visit it. They decide to re-create home as opposed to returning to it. This whole effort of recreating home is motivated by the fear of losing their culture and identity in the foreign land through the young generation.

The efforts by East African Asians to salvage their culture from erosion has been commended by Safran (1991), who regards them as genuine diasporas. That they have a certain basic defining feature and that feature, "sets it apart from the Jewish and the Armenian diaspora, is that a well-defined homeland has always existed for them" (88). Although this behaviour is praised by Safran and some other scholars, it creates a form

of insulation among the East African Asian community, making them vulnerable to hatred and discrimination by the native Africans. This would increase fear in them as a result of the anti-Asian feelings.

The East African Asians use history in their attempt to claim identity and belonging to the region:

We have been Africans for three generations, not counting my own children. Family legend has it that one of the rails on the railway line just outside the Nakuru station has engraved upon it my paternal grandfather's name, Anand Lal Peshawari, in Punjabi script-and many another rail of the line has inscribed upon it the name and birthplace of an Indian labourer. (Vassanji, 16).

By claiming to have names of their ancestors inscribed on the rails, Lall is justifying legitimacy of their ancestry in East Africa, a claim that is still frowned upon by the native Africans, looking at how the Africans treat the East African Asians during and after independence. Because of the fear of being expelled or discriminated against, the Asians turn to history for redemption.

#### **4.5 African Nationalism and Migrant Subjectivities**

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a period full of activities in East African states due to the attainment of independence. This is a period where politics was at the centre of everything in East Africa, and the Asian community was experiencing nervous conditions due to their occupation of interstitial position in these countries. The key issues were Africanization of the region and call for the integration of the Asians in the larger society. The East African Asian narratives produced during this colonial era, solidify the process of subject formation, which eventually shapes the community into particular forms of national subjects. While writing on the dilemma of the Asians in

East Africa on free movement across the colony, Simatei (2000) comments, “African independence is perceived as posing a serious threat to this world, for it seeks to submerge it in its quest for a uniform national entity based on an African entity.” (67) Even the forms of literature written at the time took a certain perspective in order to address them. The East African Asian literary works of the time also reflected on how Asian migrants responded to the issues and political pressure.

Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow* is regarded as a post-colonial novel, having been written in the mid-sixties, but more importantly, containing a plot that is set in the post-independent Africa. As many scholars feel *Day After Tomorrow* should have followed suit by agitating for radical change in leadership structures aimed especially at accommodating the Asian community. However, that is not the case, and as Johns (2009) puts it, “the text read more as a plea to the black community in favour of those Asians who have chosen to stay and in solidarity against those who have left.” (86)

Termed as a utopian novel written to romanticize Uganda, Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow* opens with a panoramic description of Kampala as, “situated amid the beautiful green valleys and hills which come out of the seven larger hills that surround the city. It is the Rome of Africa.” (Tejani, 5). This romantic unveiling of Kampala as a city of a new civilization which has the hopes and ambition, closes with the introduction of a small family consisting of a child born of an Asian father, Samsher who is the protagonist and an African (a Muganda) mother, Nanziri. This union portrays the viability of hybridity among the Asian community in East Africa. At the beginning the union is viewed with suspicion, but with time it is accepted, such that when Samsher goes to visit Nanziri at her work place in the hospital, nobody bothers. Unlike Samsher’s mother, who was being harassed by Asian children, Nanziri is less bothered by Samasher’s family, given that they are both educated and working in the city. Tejani

does not reveal the reaction by Samsher's family, but instead, chooses to focus on Nanziri's family which is receptive to a hybrid union between their African daughter and an Asian man. Integration between the Asians and native Africans is only made possible through marriage which results in hybrid offspring, such as Samsher's parents and his own family.

The novel seems inclined towards depicting the Asians that were left after the departure of other members of the community to the West as good and trustworthy. This is witnessed when Tejani pleads, "Surely, it need not be pointed out that the post-independence Asian exodus to India and England has sifted the grain from the chaff? Those brownies who have chosen to remain behind should be trusted, accepted, made at home" (Tejani 1971, 144). This points at the sense of fear and anxiety that engulf the Asians in Uganda, after the seizure of power by General Amin.

A few months after the book's publication, Amin expelled Asians from Uganda, an occurrence that the novel did not anticipate. Nazareth (1984) criticizes Tejani's inability to foresee the infamous expulsion observing that, "The surprising failure of the text to contain a hint of the Asian expulsion to come, emphasizes the naivety of the text" (Nazareth, 25). Looking closely, this naivety seems to be a deliberate, historic elision of the work. John (2009) comments, "the sweeping reproach to history – expressed within the novel complicates the author's offering of the book as a source of immediate historic potential, and is at odds with the literary trends that were most prominently being valued during the fraught post-independence years." (77). At the time of its production, other African authors like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Okot P'bitek, Robert Serumaga, Grace Ogot among others, had captured the mood and were writing literature touching on conflict and resolution with modernity within the post-colonial period.

Although scholars like John (2009), criticize Tejani for placing the novel outside the dominant East African literary trends of the time, his decision to address the broader racial discourses of the time is worth looking into. Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow* engages with contemporary realities which signal possibilities for both present and future enactments (Ocita, 2013). He tries to highlight the Asians' inability to discern the wave of Africanisation that was blowing in East Africa at that time, because of their insulation and support for colonialism and the West. Tejani projects contemporary social realities by deploying what Soyinka (1976) refers to as a form of visionary reconstruction of the past – and, implicitly, imaginative constitution of the future – for the purpose of social direction.

The relationship between the *Weparis*, in which Mohemedali and Samsheer belong, and native Africans is influenced by the colonial regime orientation that placed the Asians slightly above the Africans. This in-between position makes the East African Asians develop a feeling of superiority to the Africans hence hindering integration between the two communities. As a result, Asians become susceptible to hatred and discrimination from the other communities after independence, and as stated by Simatei (2000), “the aloofness does not only contribute to their marginalization, it also problematizes their allegiance to the new nation.” (79)

As mentioned earlier in this study, the coming of independence in East Africa brings with it a mixture of feelings among the East African Asians. There are those who have high hopes of accessing privileges and great opportunities in the African government, because they claim to have played a key role in its birth, while there is, the other group that is nervous of what will befall them in the absence of the cushioning the colonial government provided them. For instance, in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, the protagonist Deogratius D'Souza, actively participates in the agitation for freedom of

Damibia. Having left the colonial civil service just before independence to join politics, D'Souza becomes the personal aide to Robert Kyeyune, a prominent African politician, with the hope of being appointed to the cabinet when the new government takes over. However, when Damibia eventually gains independence and Kyeyune becomes the Prime Minister, he does not appoint D'Souza to the cabinet nor nominate him to parliament as earlier promised. This is an indication that the Africans are not ready for leadership by the Asians. Instead Kyeyune retains D'Souza as his advisor; even though he does not follow his advice much. This creates a sense of anxiety among the Asian community since they are not sure of their future in Damibia.

Later on, out of frustration, D'Souza gives up and starts engaging in corrupt activities, a vice he has been fighting all along. When he feels he has made enough money, he flees to London for fear of his life in the hands of other powerful and corrupt politicians. This behavior of looting the very country he helped fight for independence negates the trust in D'Souza as a true nationalist. It depicts him as a person who was supporting Kyeyune for his own selfish political gain as opposed to the county's needs. D'Souza's behavior dents the image of the Asian community in East Africa, confirming what the native Africans had perceived them all along as crafty, cunning and exploitative. For instance, at the beginning of the text, there is an urge in his mind to confess his sins, but D'Souza stubbornly refuses saying, "Confess- when I had committed no crime?" (2). Later on, it turns out that D'Souza had indeed committed crime, by taking bribes and hiding the money in a foreign bank. He is forced to flee to exile to London for fear of being discovered by the government and punished.

Therefore, through D'Souza's life, Nazareth narrates the Asian experience in East Africa. As Mwairumba (2015) puts it, "Nazareth analyses, revises, and tries to understand both the collective and personal experiences of Asians in East Africa and

how the same relate to the histories of Uganda and Kenya.”(120) This implies that the story of D’Souza is closely interconnected with the history of Uganda. Asians, like the rest of Africans, begin to discover that independence has not changed anything concerning their living condition, and so they keep asking themselves, ‘why?’

In Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow*, the children grow up in an environment of fear and anxiety, which would later form part of their personality and eventually fragile identity. For instance, when Nizar goes to Samsher to confess his mistake of submitting a wrong book to Mr. Mugcourt as his assignment, he is told, “You are finished, that man will never believe what you say.” (Tejani, 43). And true to Samsher’s words, Mr. Mugcourt gets very annoyed with Nizar and beats him ruthlessly in front of the class, in spite of his young age and small size, until the ear got swollen from the slap. The whole class is mortified by the brutality of the headmaster but cannot do anything because of his race. Even when Samsher, overcome with emotions, attempts to defend his friend, his protest is ignored completely, ‘there was something superbly serene in his refusal to note the protest at all. The headmaster was an exact replica of His Imperial Majesty the Governor, pushing away a human demand by the black man, as a diatribe of the natives.’ (Tejani, 50).

In Nazareth’s *In a Brown Mantle*, the Asians become fearful of the Damibian politicians because of the manner in which they do politics. They use a lot of cunningness and ruthlessness as they exploit their kin, a behavior that makes them worse than the colonial masters. When criticized by members of other races like the Asians, they come up with slogans of hatred and propaganda against those races as a means to divert attention and ultimately stay in power.

The narrator, D'Souza flees to exile in London because of fear for his life, where he narrates the story of his past and that of his country, Damibia. In the beginning of the novel, D'Souza portrays himself as an innocent man, going against his conscience that keeps urging him to confess his sins.

The behavior of D'Souza is depicted as the reason native Africans refer to the Asians as 'usurers, gamblers, exploiters, crafty, cunning, someone with his soul bound to his body by the one laudable and religious concern to turn his coin to better advantage; the local Jew; a user of false weights and measures, a receiver of stolen goods,' (Kahyana, 2014). This points at the relationship between East African Asians and native Africans as constructed by the British colonialists, through creation of racialized structures, in which the Asians were regarded as middlemen, who became, 'the concrete individuals who put into effect colonial policies resented by the Africans' (Morris, 90). Because of their position, the East African Asians become enemies of native Africans, as they are perceived to be a hindrance to the prosperity of the Africans. Even after independence, they still cannot be trusted with key leadership positions in the country, despite contributing to the fight for freedom. This is partly due to their dual or even triple loyalties in terms of nationality, which leads to the life of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians.

In the post-colonial dispensation, the East African Asian is still viewed from the perspective of ancestry, as a foreigner. That is why when Pius Cota, an Asian in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, tries to stand on the way of the corrupt regime by attempting to unearth a scandal involving a minister who steals a consignment of prefabricated houses from a foreign country meant to mitigate the housing crisis in Azingwe, is branded a "bloody mugoa" and a "pain in the neck" (Nazareth, 147). He is later assassinated. The particularity in reference to Cota's Goanness points to his

ancestry as a foreigner, and as postulated by Kahyana (2017), it is aimed at estranging him from Azingwe's citizenship, to make him a foreigner in a country he fully identifies with and whose independence from the British colonialists he passionately fought for. Even D'Souza himself is discriminated against by being referred to as a 'Mugoa meddler' by the Golden-Bed-Minister Gombe Gukwaya, "when are you going back to your country? If I were in power, I would chase all these brown people into the sea. They kept aloof from us until we won our independence and now we are the bosses, they are trying to be friendly...." (Nazareth, 114). Such sentiments were an indicator that all was not well with East African Asians, which intensified their fears, because they knew that they could not be trusted by the new government, and it was only a matter of time before something bad happened. D'Souza on the other hand responds to the minister, 'Fine, I'll do that if you'll do it.... I'll go to Goa the day you go back to the Congo. And the day all immigrant tribes in Africa move back to where they came from' (Nazareth, 75). The response agrees with Were and Derek's (1972) postulation, that all the communities that occupy East Africa immigrated from somewhere else, albeit at different periods in time, and therefore no one should claim ownership of the place they inhabit and regard others as foreigners. The particularity of the 'mugoa' reference vis a vis 'Asian' that is commonly used in Africa, is motivated by the need to discriminate the Goans as members of the Asian community.

When studying the forms of identity that describe African characters of Asian descent in Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* and *The General is Up*, Scheckter (2010) argues that the use of filiation as a form of identity not only privileges legitimacy as a form of identity but also denies one the capacity to construct their own identity, besides its constituting self-accusation. Scheckter, further comments that, the use of racial terms like 'Indian' or 'Goan' are no better, as they do not fully explain the characters in these

novels and similarly, therefore suggesting that the formulation of the characters' identities precedes the events in the novel, and therefore precedes the characters themselves (Scheckter, 83). With these knowledge of historically conditioned forms of identification, the characters strive to reinforce their new identity as Africans, at times by dismantling those things which construct them as Goans (Scheckter, 84). The feeling of anxiety which leads to dismantling of the old identities and reinforcement of new ones in East African Asians, is what this study is concerned with.

For instance, D'Souza dedicates his life in fighting for the independence of Damibia (fictitious for Uganda) and yet is still regarded as foreigner (Goan). He goes as far as encouraging the Goan community to fully identify itself with the country by taking its citizenship, a call that was hearkened to by members of the young generation such as Joaquim D'Costa. (Nazareth, 110). This is a daring move and risky venture, given that D'Souza comes from a community that has suffered successive colonial domination. Their only survival tactic is and has been to embrace loyalty and collaboration with the British colonialists for fear of destruction. Therefore, any attempt to forge an alliance with Africans against the colonial masters, a move advanced by D'Souza and D'Costa, could not have been supported by the community, especially the older generation who understood their history.

However, the two Goans courageously hold on to the anti-colonial campaigns up to the end when Damibians get independence. After doing all these activities, D'Souza is still called a 'Mugoa meddler' by the African government he has fought for, just because of his Asianness. Pius Cota, a modelled Goan to Kenyan journalist, Pio Gama Pinto, is committed to fighting colonialism and even after independence, he continues dedicating his life to fighting injustice against the poor citizens from the oppression by the rich and corrupt Kenyan leaders. Pius Cota is eventually assassinated by the same comrades

who had used their positions to amass wealth at the expense of poor peasants. Having been published in 1972, Nazareth gives an accurate prediction of the expulsion of Asians from Uganda by Amin which took place later in that same year, finally confirming their fears and anxieties.

Although Mwairumba (2015) argues that through depiction of the role played by the Asian characters in nation-building in *In a Brown Mantle*, Nazareth challenges the perception that East African Asians are colonial ‘stooges’. It is apparent that, because of their long history of successive colonization, the Goans opt for collaboration with the powerful adversaries as (the only form of) survival mechanism. This is witnessed when D’Souza’s father asks Pius Cota, “whether, as an immigrant race, we could bite the hand that fed us what we could not obtain at home.” (Nazareth, 11). This kind of loyalty to the British colonialists undermines the involvement of Asians in the fight for freedom of Damibia. The transition to political independence therefore, dismantles the old colonial order in which they had invested so much faith, increasing their anxiety on what will happen to them next. The thought of being expelled from Damibia sends jitters in their bodies.

The East African Asians’ interstitial position in the region works against them, “we Asians were special: we were brown, we were few and frightened and caricatured, and we could be threatened with deportation as aliens even if we had been in the country since the time of Vasco da Gama and before some of the African people had arrived in the land” (Vassanji, 303). This kind of dilemma is what causes fear and anxiety among the East African Asians, as they suffer both physically and psychologically while in the land they regard as ‘home’. At the same time the sense of in-betweenness leads to disillusionment among the young Asians in East Africa. Whereas Njoroge has a strong desire to rebuild his country, Lall on the contrary lacks a clear vision of the direction

he should take politically. Brah (2013), suggests that the main cause of this loss of ambition and direction is the background of hostility and negative public sentiment from native Africans against Asians in East Africa. This view is in agreement with what Lall expresses in his lament:

Here I was, a young Asian graduate in an African country, with neither the prestige of whiteness or Europeanness behind me, nor the influence and numbers of a local tribe to back me, but carrying instead the stigma from a generalized recent memory of an exclusive race of brown “Shylocks” who had collaborated with the colonizers. . . Black chauvinism and reverse racism were the order of the day against Asians. (Vassanji, 253)

Just like D’Souza in Nazareth’s *In a Brown Mantle*, Lall gets a job in the new government after independence but finds it hard to work, because of the ‘whirlpool of neo-colonial’ corruption that surrounds the new nation. He is made the personal assistant to Mr. Paul Nderi, a powerful minister in Jomo Kenyatta’s government, and his possible successor. It is at this time that corruption thrives, money flows in the country in the guise of foreign aid and campaign aid and is stashed away in private coffers by the same people who are supposed to uplift the lives of the citizens. Bribes are taken as “casual as handshakes” (Vassanji, 333), and people like Lall who find themselves in the middle between the corrupt deals and the personal zeal to serve the new nation and see it prosper, become victims of naming and shaming approach.

Although the Asians attempt to portray the ‘Mr. Clean’, image while casting Africans as corrupt, as depicted in Lall, they too are key suspects and adversely mentioned in many corruption scandals in East Africa. That is the reason Lall’s name ends up featuring on the top of the country’s Anti-Corruption’s List of Shame.

As it later turns out, it is Lall's Asian status that makes him an easy scapegoat for corruption activities in the country, "You were the perfect scapegoat, an Indian without constituency, whom they could hold up and display to the World Bank and the Donors as the crafty alien corruptor of our country" (Vassanji, 394).

Kenny (2013) summarizes the plight of Asians in East Africa as propagated through history leading to a fragile identity:

South Asians faced particular suspicion from native populations in wake of independence. Denied the right to own land by British policy, they concentrated in urban locations where they worked in business and in the imperial service. They tended to be more skilled and better educated than Indian migrants elsewhere and occupied an intermediate niche between the British elite and indigenous people . . . Africans came to see them [Asians] as colonial collaborators. With the onset of independence, Indians began moving capital overseas and some took British rather than local citizenship. Both moves stoked the fires of postcolonial resentment. The newly independent governments of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania responded by excluding Asians from jobs and services. (Kenny, 90)

The above statement clearly outlines the development of nervous conditions among East African Asians, which led to their fragile identity. The Asians' conflict with the native Africans because of their association with colonialists to exploit and oppress Africans, causes them to go to exile for fear of their lives and livelihood.

Imam Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall* (2016) opens with a description of Raj who is the father of Leena, the protagonist, watching from the window as the children play. The children's game evokes memories of his own childhood and when he turns

around, Raj sees the old portrait of Pio Gama Pinto, a Kenyan- Asian freedom fighter. He had last seen the photo at the age of sixteen, two years after independence. This was a period of transition that was burdened with a beehive of activities, “the country was awash with so many possibilities, that one went hunting for a dream the way they did a lion on safari- as mad and hungry men greedy for purpose.” (Verjee, 69).

The presence of Pio Gama Pinto is symbolic of the post-independence era that the country finds itself in. Despite being an Asian immigrant, he fights tirelessly for the freedom of Kenya, with the hope that after independence he would have a share in the national cake. Raj’s uncle, Dilip, narrates to him the story of Pinto and his contribution to the independence of Kenya, “He returned from India to become involved in the local movement here, even supplied them with weapons. And in the middle of the night, he would put political posters throughout the city, moving like a superhero.” (Verjee, 70). The uncle goes ahead to describe how Pinto fought for the freedom of Kenyatta and other political leaders in the 1950s, leading to his own detention in 1954 for five years. When he leaves detention, Pinto joins KANU party and ensures its first victory in the 1961 elections.

Through Raj’s uncle’s story, Verjee paints the picture of East African Asian as citizen, having shared in the painful political history of the region. Even Raj himself as a young man, meets Pinto one day and tells him, “...they say that you are brave, that you freed us from the *Wazungu*. That even the Africans trust you.” (Verjee, 73). Pinto then affirms it, “Because I trust them. Because we work together as equals and treat each other as such, as Kenyans fighting for the same cause.” (Verjee, 74). From his response, Pinto believed that his contribution to the independence of the country was appreciated by both Asians and the native Africans. However, that was not to be the case, as Asians in

East African had always been viewed with suspicion by the natives, as collaborators (traitors).

Apart from being collaborators, Asians are also treated with suspicion because of what is perceived as disloyalty to their respective East African nations. Due to their frequent mobility within the region and to other nations across the world, they are seen as belonging to multiple places, hence treated their East African nations as mere options that can be discarded at whims or slightest signs of trouble. This is evident whenever there are any political disturbances in the nations and the Asians quickly take off to other nations in some of which they have citizenship.

Things change after 'Uhuru', as native Africans openly manifest the hatred and mistrust towards Asians that they have held for a long time. For instance, Pinto gets in trouble with the new government when he tries to convince them to ensure equal distribution of resources and wealth among citizens especially those who fought for uhuru (the Mau Mau veterans). Raj's father predicts his predicament, "he will be killed for it, just wait and see." (Verjee, 74). Just like D'Souza in *In a Brown Mantle* and Lall in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Pinto is committed to seeing a changed and better East Africa after attaining independence. But that does not happen, as it turns out that the leaders go on a looting spree, amassing wealth for themselves without even considering those who fought for the very independence.

As Dilip Uncle describes Pinto's dilemma, "He discovered that the *mzee* had allocated himself over fifty farms in Central Province and Rift Valley. That he will be displacing all the Kikuyu squatters and other farmers to make room for his fat cronies. No better than the Colonialists. What could he have done?" (Verjee,74). Having witnessed this kind of looting, Pinto rose up and protested openly, imagining that the new government

would be reasonable enough to listen and reconsider their wicked move. That would not be the case, just like the Damibia government in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, they instead turned against him branding him a 'Mugoa meddler' in the state affairs. Before killing him, the government had to first paint Pinto black and splash him with allegations, "A story was spreading through Nairobi that Pinto and his socialist comrades were plotting a parliamentary coup after their demands for a ceiling distribution of wealth and just rewards for the Mau-Mau freedom fighters was brushed off by the president, swatted away within the gold tassels of his fly whip." (Verjee, 74). Unlike D'Souza in *In a Brown Mantle* who manages to escape to exile, Pinto is assassinated in Nairobi, at his gate, a thing that heightens fear and anxiety among the East African Asians.

After the incident, Raj's aunt warns them, "Time to leave this place. I told you they don't want us here." (Verjee, 75). The Asians develop a sense of insecurity and uncertainty in the midst of the looting and assassinations taking place in a country they regard as 'home'. Exile now becomes a painful reality, as explained by Nalini (2005), "Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new" (Nalini, 189). This describes the anguish that East African Asians go through in the wake of independence in the East African region. The forced exile imposed on them evokes nostalgic memories and a longing to be in their ancestral home in India. This heightens emotions of fear and anxiety within the group as they are faced with uncertainty.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

In respect to the above chapter, there is interrelationship between the East African Asians and the history of East Africa, as depicted in the selected East African Asian texts. The chapter has focused on the historical events that influence the formation of identity among East African Asians. These events which include migration, colonialism and African nationalism, contribute to the construction of fragile identities through emotions of fear and anxiety among the Asians of East Africa, as highlighted in the selected texts.

The chapter looks at the travel motif in selected texts as an important aspect in the formation of East African Asian identity. It traces the history of the community and explains how the Asians came to East Africa during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. This movement which is across borders, necessitates change of identity due to interaction with various diverse communities and cultures, which leads to transculturation.

The migration of the East African Asians therefore, is both physical and psychological. It is physical in the sense that it involves movement from place to place using different means such as railway, roads, water and air. This is depicted in the selected texts where Asian characters narrate stories of their genealogy and ancestry, while at the same time, some of them also find themselves undergoing a second migration to the British metropolis out of fear and anxiety in their host nations.

The migration is also psychological where the East African Asians, especially the young generation, undergo cultural transformation after coming into contact with other communities hence losing part of their culture and adopting that of the host community. Since culture is not static, the movement makes the process of cultural translocation a

form of identity formation that is complex. This also contributes to fear and anxiety of losing their identity, mostly from the older Asian generation as is highlighted in such selected texts as *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, *In a Brown Mantle*, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, and *Day After Tomorrow*. These authors are concerned with how migration affect the lives and identities of the characters. Indeed, as Mukherjee (1994) puts it, erosions and accretions come with the act of emigration. Nazareth for instance, presents the psychological journey undertaken by the Goan Asians after a painful experience of multiple colonization in their homeland, that they decide to set out on a journey of shifting allegiance to the successive colonizers for survival before eventually embarking on a physical journey to East Africa.

These journeys as narrated through history, play a significant role in the understanding of the East African Asians' dislocated identity. The authors make the characters return to East Africa from exile in order to reconcile and reconnect with their 'home', making the journey act as a highway to new life.

The chapter also examines how East African Asians nurse memories of 'home' as one of the issues that shape their sense of belonging, an observation that Singh (2018) also makes, "For diasporic writers, ancestral past and homeland live on in their imagination, frozen in time." Even though East African Asians keep referring to the Asian continent where they came from, the idea of home seems to go beyond the location occupied by an individual.

Home as represented in the selected texts, is perceived as both physical and metaphorical space. The physical space refers to the geographical location occupied by the Asian continent, including the physical experiences in the ancestral land witnessed by the older Asian generation like Samsher's father in *Day After Tomorrow*. The

metaphorical 'home' is an imaginary one experienced when the East African Asians meet in family and social gatherings, talking their indigenous language, eating food from their homeland, as well as listening their own songs. The older East African Asian generation use mythology to orientate and connect the young generation with 'home', without necessarily having to visit it. They re-create home by narrating mythological stories to their children in their houses in the evenings, as opposed to returning to it.

Colonial and post-independence politics have also been examined in this chapter as part of the major events that shape the history and identity of the East African Asians. The colonial period is a trying moment for the Asian community, as they are first brought to East Africa as indentured labourers to construct the Kenya-Uganda railway. During their stay, the colonial government uses a divide-and-rule policy to discourage any form of interaction between the races so as to maintain the status quo. This racial hierarchy limits the contact between Asians and the native Africans as it promotes European superiority. It is this policy that aggravates hatred and mistrust between native Africans and the Asians making the latter vulnerable to attacks during the fight for independence, as depicted in the selected texts. This state of vulnerability gives rise to feelings of fear and anxiety as depicted in the texts through Asian characters.

The chapter examines the post-colonial politics in the East Africa that led to betrayal, greed, fear and political anxiety. During independence, there were high hopes for the East African Asians who participated in the struggle for independence as depicted in *In a Brown Mantle*, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* and *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*. However, nothing changes after independence, in fact, things move from bad to worse as the new leaders engage in a looting spree. There also emerges the issue of Africanization where all investments set up by non-Africans during the colonial era are repossessed and distributed among the new native African leaders and their cronies.

When questioned by some members of the Asian community, they turn on them calling them meddlers and intruders who should go back to their country. Others are expelled from their country, while those who are not as lucky like lawyer Pio Gama Pinto, are assassinated by the very government they helped put in power. This heightens the feelings of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians as a result of their insecurity. All these experiences amalgamate the history of East African Asians as one of pain, fear and anxiety.

Given that, the search of identity needs to be understood as a social construction (Rodriguez, 2012), the East African Asian history acts as a connection between how the characters in the selected texts perceive themselves and also how they are perceived in the society. This history is narrated through individual experiences of the characters as well as their psychological introspection.

The next chapter gives a further analysis of identity by examining fear and anxiety in the selected texts and how they are presented through characterization and imagery.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: NARRATING ANXIETIES AND FEAR AMONG EAST AFRICAN ASIANS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter analyzed the history of East African Asians and how it contributes to their dislocated identities and cultural alienation, as manifested in the selected texts. This chapter gives a further analysis of identity by examining fear and anxiety in the selected texts and how they are presented through characterization and imagery. It examines the narrative technique and language use in communicating fear and anxiety in the texts.

Anxieties of belonging have historically been the ultimate preoccupation of diasporic Asians in East Africa, offering them a platform for conversation with their host communities (Ocita, 2013). Hawley (2008) suggests the need to investigate ways in which conversations between and among Asians and Africans are still ongoing and how constructive they are. This study agrees that there is need for such an investigation especially on the issue of anxiety, by considering it more instructive, with Asians and Africans of East Africa in the perspective. Ocita (2013) questions how these ongoing conversations between the two groups can be accounted for in order to better understand the ways in which they are constructive. This study therefore, takes into account the various, often contrasting, voices that emerge from these narratives as critical to their appraisals of contemporary realities.

The chapter interrogates the issues of fear and anxiety which lead to an identity crisis in the second and third generation East African Asians, as they get trapped in-between their Asian heritage and African culture. The characters in the selected texts grapple with in-between-ness, ambivalence, hybridity and marginalization in their struggle to

be part of the East African citizenship. Shukla et. al (2017), explain the devastating anxieties in the third generation Asians in East Africa in a vivid manner:

Longing for and belonging to a different homeland creates a void which cannot be filled . . . . It is like leaving the inherited for adopting temporary, notorious, glamorous future. The homeland is a pious place of worship in the Diaspora imagination. Nostalgia for homeland, feeling of rootlessness, instability, insecurity and isolation cause intense pain and grief, as reclaiming the past is impossible. Bicultural life entraps the immigrants in a dilemma. The couples are unable to acclimatize completely into the foreign culture and society. The intermingling of the eastern and western ethics irks lives . . . . Adopting the tradition of the native land and trying to learn new culture is a challenge. (Shukla et. al, 20)

As Shukla et.al put it, the East African Asians grapple with issues of anxieties of belonging as a result of their immigration to the region. This anxiety is both in the second generation, who had had an experience with the homeland before relocating and the third who were born and raised in East Africa.

## **5.2 Chronicles of Social Displacement and Cultural Unease**

The characters in the selected East African Asian texts manifest actions that are motivated by feelings of fear and anxiety, which are usually stored in the unconscious mind. They are haunted by a sense of cultural alienation, the feeling of not belonging or experiencing foreignness which forces them to constantly struggle to construct an identity of their own (Samanta, 2014). This sense of alienation is caused by the feeling of displacement from their homeland, which leads to a state of anxiousness as the Asians “strive to recreate a sense of home in an unfamiliar place” (Samanta, 14).

Tejani for instance, in *Day After Tomorrow*, presents Samsheer's father Mohemedali, as a person belonging to the second generation Asian emigrant who has to strike a balance between two extreme ends of his existence, the motherland India and the new habitat, East Africa. This duality elicits a serious conflict, both internal and external in the characters such as Mohemedali, since they are still haunted by memories of 'home', while at the same time, faced with the burden of displacement in a foreign land. That is the reason Samsheer's father spends time every evening talking to his children about their ancestral land and culture. He has the fear that his generation may get swallowed up by the culture of the native Africans, leaving them hanging as nowhere men (Hawley 2008). Because of this anxiety of displacement, Mohemedali finds himself at the centre of ambivalence which corresponds with the attachment to both the mother land and the other, hence the (m)other land (Hosseini, 2018).

Characters from the second generation immigrants in the selected texts, react to the social atmosphere in the native country through 'ambivalent acceptance' and have to reject their cultural background in their attempt to find a solution for settling down as citizens, and overcoming the haunting condition of hybrid in-between-ness. The immigrants therefore become 'heirs of ambivalence' (Hosseini, 2018) because they go through an acute suffering from exile and subsequent displacement as they do not have a 'homeland'.

The characters in the selected texts, whether from second or third generation, are depicted as caught in a milieu of human displacement, nostalgia and loss of identity. As observed by Bahmanpour (2010), "this sense of belonging to a particular place and culture and, yet, at the same time, being an outsider to another, creates a tension in the individuals," (46). This state of affairs appears to be a distinguishing feature in characters in the selected East African Asian texts. That the second generation is pained

by the feeling of ambivalence which has its roots in the displaced community, described by Anwer, (2017) as effects of 'rooting, uprooting and re-rooting,'. For instance, Tejani describes the Asian traders as people who are constantly living in fear, especially on Fridays, "For them Friday was the day of fear. Fear, as the handful of traders felt hemmed in by the vast horde of black peasants." (Tejani, 15). This is a paradox since the Asians fear the natives and yet benefit from them through trade.

Although the Asians did business with the natives, as their livelihood depended on it, they had a feeling of insecurity which disturbed them whenever Africans came in large numbers to buy goods from their shops, like on Fridays. It appeared the presence of the peasants was a threat to the safety of their business, through looting and robbery. At the same time, it invaded the small private *wepari* world, threatening to dismantle it culturally. This is through the influence they had on the Asian children through interaction, and even intermarriages. For instance, in the case of Mohemedali in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, where he ends up marrying an African woman and getting mixed race children against his culture. Samsher too finds himself falling in love and eventually marrying Nanziri, a native African with whom they get a child.

The Asians resist intermarriages, especially with native Africans, which reveals their racist attitude towards black people. That is the reason characters like Mohemedali try as much as possible to keep their children from interacting with natives, by detaining them behind the counter in their shops, and constantly talking to them every evening about their own culture and beliefs, an issue that is too hard for the children to comprehend. Even when the children go to school, the parents are keen on what is being taught, lest they lose their identity through interaction with the perceived inferior Africans.

The East African Asians are fearful of the native Africans even though they live together. For instance, the *weparis* in *Day After Tomorrow* fear going out at night in Kampala city of Uganda. When Samsher's family initially relocates to Kampala, they are possessed by fear, "fear in the air, under the feet, on the left and right. Fear behind, in front and in the eyes, as they watch and walk. It was in the hot city and the atmosphere of fear that Samsher now found himself." (Tejani, 29). The kind of fear introduced to Samsher makes him feel insecure walking in the streets of Kampala especially at night.

Samsher's father fears going out at night, that is why he chooses to send the son, an Asian -African, to his friend's house to bring the money, in spite of the wife's protest. When Samsher gets to Merali's shop, he has to knock and shout who he is. The door is firmly secured with a chair, four kerosene tins and a homemade burglar alarm, to keep the thieves and robbers away. This reflects the psychological nature of the insecurity of the East African Asians, that makes them a close-knit society. Merali is still uneasy to open the door even after Samsher identifies himself. He fears for the young Samsher's safety, but most importantly his property, "supposing there are thieves standing outside and they rush into my house? What are we to do?" (Tejani, 23). This shows that the Asians' greatest fear and anxiety is security of their life and property.

The ignorance of the Asians concerning how Africans lived contributes to their sense of fear, as Tejani (1972) describes, "they knew nothing about how a black man lived, his customs, his food habits. So, all the traders found their presence in the village strange and disturbing. Though they depended on it for their livelihood." (15). The fear illustrated in this statement as fueled by ignorance, amounted to fear of the unknown. Africans remained mysterious to the Asian. This explains why the East African Asian is unable to integrate in the native African society. They attempt to create a close-knit

society that does not open up to any other community except fellow Asians, a factor that contributes to feelings of hatred and mistrust from the native Africans.

For Tejani, the fear of alienation is extended to school, where Asian parents only allow their children to acquire an education that does not interfere with their culture of trade, "... their parents always tried hard to rid them of what they learnt in the magical circle of the school. Talk about school was discouraged. The children were not allowed to do their school-work at home." (Tejani, 20).

While in school, the Asian children are faced with another fear in the form of the school colonial administrator, Mr. Mugcourt who is also their class teacher. The headmaster and other teachers terrorize the children with punishments that are not justly administered, "if Samsheer did not know his sums, he would be pinched blue in the arm by the Goan Gregory. If he did not learn the prayers by heart, Mr. Zinnah would try to raise him from his seat by the roots of his hair as an example to the rest of the class. If he didn't understand his Tropical Hygiene, Allamiria knew exactly where to hit below the belly." (Tejani, 42). School, which is expected to be a place of peace and comfort to the young minds, turns out to be a torture camp, where educators, who are not sensitive to the feelings of the learners, inflict pain on children at the slightest mistake. The teachers are described as perpetrators of terror in school, causing fear among pupils.

### **5.3 Style and Images of Fear and Anxiety in Entangled Genealogies**

The authors in selected texts have used different styles and imagery to highlight the issues associated with fear and anxiety among the East African Asians. These images are in form of colour, objects, structures, and time of the day. There are also a raft of narrative strategies adapted by the authors of the selected texts depict the East African

Asian manifestation of fear and anxieties. These strategies include symbolism, imagery, epistolary, vivid description and use of Indian native language.

### **5.3.1 Symbolism**

This is the use of words or images to represent abstract things, concepts, people, objects or events other than the literal meaning. The authors in the selected East African Asian literary works use different symbols to highlight fear and anxiety as discussed in the subsequent sections. These symbols include apple, whiteness versus black, gun, shop, darkness and wilderness.

#### **5.3.1.1 *Rotten Apple***

Fear is heightened by the chronic behaviour of abuse of office in the emergent postcolony, which is an indication of impending hard times for the new states. Pius Cota, one of the characters in *In a Brown Mantle* predicts:

Azingwe is heading for a crisis although outwardly it is making tremendous progress. New buildings, new businesses, external aid. But there are worms in the apple. The poor people have no land, no food, no jobs. They lived in rat-infested slums before Independence. Now they do not have these slums. The slums were destroyed and replaced by modern flats, too expensive for the poor. (Nazareth, 145)

Nazareth uses the image of an apple to allude to the biblical Fall of Man, when Adam ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, and was banished forever by God from accessing the garden. The fall of Damibia is prone to escalate fear and anxiety among D'Souza's community, because of the negative attitude the native Africans harbor towards them. This attitude was exacerbated by the white people's demonization of

Asians as dirty, exploitative and a hindrance to Africans' progress (Kahyana, 2014). Apart from that, most of the Asians had acted as collaborators with the colonialists, therefore being used to oppress the natives.

As a result of the feeling of hatred by native Africans towards them, the East African Asians are faced with fear and anxiety of their safety. When the natives decide to fight for their freedom through Mau Mau movement, some of the Asians are not spared of their alleged collaborative role and so, become victims, forcing them to live in fear. The colonial police also unleash terror on the Asians through raids out of suspicion of hiding the rebels, "The police regularly raided the Indian residential areas expecting to find Mau Mau hiding among the servants." (Vassanji, 32). These raids usually lead to the arrest and injury of members of the Asian community, mostly owing to mistaken identity.

Symbolism is again highlighted in the titles of the selected Asian texts such as Bahadur Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, M.G Vassanji's *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Yusuf Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* and Imam Verji's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*. These titles suggest the plight of the East African Asians and their fragile identity as a result of anxiety.

### **5.3.1.2 White versus Black**

In Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Samsher encounters a group of White hunters who stop in his village, while on his childhood adventures. One of them carries Samsher and sits him on a dead lioness, then start to photograph him, as generic 'native' (Tejani, 1971, 11-13). The relating of an Asian child (Samsher), with the native African points at the relegated position occupied by the East African Asian towards the end of the colonial regime in the region. Jones (2009) comments, 'The Asian loses meaning as a

symbol of capitalist oppression, and is re-subordinated into the controlling terms of colonizer/colonized, white man/native.’ (78)

Black is associated with nativeness, ‘primitivity’ and inferiority while White is viewed as a symbol of superiority and power. Asian on the other hand, is associated with capitalism because of their obsession with money as well as alienated mannerisms. Samsheer finds himself developing disgust for his community as a result of this:

When he went to the Bazaar in the afternoons, he shuddered at the desiccated men and women he saw ... Like life-less automatons they sat in the shops, their beady eyes lighting up when a customer entered the shop. If he didn’t buy anything, he was cursed vehemently behind his back. Then once again the owner lapsed into an excruciating final lethargy. (Tejani, 57)

The Asians are described here from the capitalist perspective, because of their obsession with trade and alienation, such that the only time they interact with natives, or even whites, is when transacting business. They therefore, assume the image of the ‘White’ colonial and neo-colonial exploiter, a character that makes Samsheer uncomfortable with his community.

The Asian is sometimes referred to as a ‘Jew’ of East Africa because of their historical in-betweenness, a position Jones (2009) describes as, ‘sometimes strategic, sometimes miscalculated, sometimes manipulated.’ (56). The reference to them as Jews further hints at their diasporic nature. At another level, it also insinuates their enterprising spirit, just like the Jews were in Europe before the holocaust. Tejani does not position that is not consistently worked into the narrative as either a complication or deliberate displacement of the more prominent black/white conception of race in East Africa.

### 5.3.1.3 *The Gun and Fear*

The gun has been consistently mentioned in the literary texts of East African Asians when narrating about the strained relationship between the whites and Blacks. The Asian characters are also seen to be owning revolvers for security reasons, a privilege that native Africans are not entitled to. As it turns out, the other two races (whites and Asians) acquire the gun to protect themselves against native Africans.

Vassanji's description of the gun in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* emphasizes on the dangerous and unpleasant function it is capable of performing. Vikram explains how the father would go to the bedroom and bring out, "his revolver, a rather ugly, dull black thing inside a brown holster ..." (Vassanji, 60). The description of the gun in unpleasant terms points to the fact that whatever the weapon does is scaring, that it is just a tool for torture and pain. The mention of a black gun in a brown holster is symbolic of the feeling of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians. The Asians being brown in colour, acquire guns to protect themselves against the Blacks.

The colonial government also uses graphic images on the pamphlets to scare people and show how evil and wicked the Mau Mau are, as described by the narrator, "This one had a drawing of a devilish black man with large eyes and open mouth, leaping out of the yellow page, under the caption: The Mau Mau want your gun!" (Vassanji, 61). The white government decides to use black colour to paint the Africans as dangerous as well as scare people from associating with them, as they would end up losing their guns which is their security.

The image of the gun is used by Vassanji to highlight fear among the colonialists. Owning it provides security to the owner against Mau Mau attack, but at the same time losing the gun would lead to a stiff penalty from the colonial government. For instance,

when Vikram's father loses his gun, he is scared more of the government punishment than his own security, "Papa was frightened too. There was a stiff fine for losing a gun, there would be stiffer repercussions." (68). The expression describes why it is scarier to lose the gun than acquiring it. The colonial government would assume the individual has colluded with the Mau Mau and given it out. Eventually Vikram's father is fined twenty-five pounds for losing the weapon, but his African servant, Amini is arrested and taken away never to be seen again.

#### **5.3.1.4 *The Shop as Prison***

The association of the shop (*duka*) with Asians in East Africa cannot be ignored as evident in the selected literary texts. This is because of the Asian endowment with entrepreneurial skills. The image of the shop goes beyond just business and as Makokha (2014) explains, 'Rather than seeing a migrant people, with complex identity crises struggling to adjust to the transfer of authority from a White Self to a Black Other, blackest Africans tend to see the *dukawallah* and his emasculating habit of emptying the Black man's wallet and coffers.' (65).

Most of the native Africans attempt to understand the East African Asian community from the perspective of the *dukawalla* stereotype. This concurs with Bhabha's (1994) view that stereotypes are a major discursive feature in the ideological construction of otherness. The East African Asian image is viewed as a stereotypical *dukawalla*, always waiting to con natives of their money through shrewd business.

The shop plays significant role in the life of the Asians in East Africa. Apart from being their source of livelihood, it also acts as their refuge. In *Day After Tomorrow*, Mohemedali believes in the shop more than even school for his children. That is the reason why he insists that the son leaves his assignment and goes to work in the shop,

“We must work hard to attract a regular group of customers. You must come and attend to those whom I cannot look after. You understand? There will be no bread in the house and you won’t go to school anymore.” (Tejani, 30). To the father, the shop is a source of wealth and liberation, but to the son it is a prison, since it denies him freedom to socialize and interact with friends as well as do his homework.

Samsheer’s father therefore fears that without the shop, him and the family would be doomed. The shop now is therefore a symbol of financial security. The Asian needs financial security to maintain his place of prominence in the Kenyan society. Loss of this security would amount to sinking to the level of the natives, hence the fear.

#### **5.3.1.5 *Darkness and Danger***

Darkness has been adversely mentioned in the selected texts, bringing into perspective a sense of fear and anxiety. For instance, in Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow*, the Asians are depicted as people who exhibit fear of darkness. Their worst and most dreaded moments are when the sun goes down and darkness slowly sets in, as expressed by the narrator, “Fear of the darkness and the people it contained consumed everyone. No one ventured outside the four walls of their house, as soon as the sun disappeared over the horizon.” (Tejani, 21). Darkness is therefore perceived to conceal dangerous human beings (most likely native Africans) who engage in outlawed activities such as robbery, rape and murder targeting the Asians. It is ironical that Asians live in safe neighbourhoods surrounded by high walls, having dogs and guns, but still fear permeates all these. This could be as a result of their feeling of not belonging to the region and the psychological fear and anxiety of losing their identity and life in the hands of the natives.

The act of Samsher's father sending his half cast son in darkness signify that a mixed race child is perceived to be more courageous and feel safer walking at night than Asian. Mohemedali still harbors the belief that a wepari son is tough in mind and body. When Samsher gets to Merali's shop and knocks shouting his name before being allowed in, the old man grambles, "Is it fit to send a child wandering in the darkness at this hour? Supposing there are thieves standing outside and they rush into my house? What are we to do?" (Tejani,23). It is ironical that the Asians fear being robbed at night by native Africans, and yet they are the same people who rob the Africans during the day daily by overcharging them in their businesses.

The same fear of darkness is manifested when Samsher goes to visit his uncle Gulamhussein, who lives in the city of Kampala. The uncle lives in a mansion which is located in Kampala's suburbs, but that does not prevent them from the chronic nervous conditions, "Every evening Samsher saw his aunt fretting terribly. She felt the night coming and dreaded it. Darkness meant sleeplessness and the day meant tiredness." (Tejani, 56). The family's neurosis of fear becomes too much that it forces Samsher to leave the house and disappear back to the, "poor and unhealthy but welcoming house above the Blue Room Hotel" (56)

Vassanji also highlights on the metaphor of darkness in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, which is commonly associated with the robbers, lunatics and beggars. As Odhiambo (2000) maintains, the darkness can be viewed from two perspectives, one, that Africa needs cultural enlightenment, or two, that the continent has been resisting all attempts to illuminate it.

During the colonial period, Asians live in a lot of fear from both the whites as well as the native Africans. They fear the whites because of the way they harass them (Asians)

on suspicion that they are collaborating with Mau Mau. The fear of native Africans emanates from their perspective that they (Africans) hate them, and are out to exert revenge for being exploited and betrayed by the Asians. Having joined the Mau Mau movement, and fearing repulsion by the colonial government during daytime, the native Africans carry out their heinous activities at night, under the cover of darkness. It is these criminal activities that make the Asians afraid of darkness, “It was the nights that curdled the blood, that made palpable the terror that permeated our world like a mysterious ether.” (Vassanji, 46). The Mau Mau operate at night in gangs of between twenty and forty members armed with crude weapons and guns. They earmark a house and gain entry by poisoning the dogs, hack the security guard to death before finally descending on the victim mercilessly. Because of the activities that take place at night, darkness is synonymous with danger for the Asians.

#### **5.3.1.6 *Wilderness and Anxiety of the Unknown***

The concept of wilderness has been brought out in the selected East African texts in many instances. Tejani in *Day After Tomorrow* introduces it when narrating the story of Vasantlal and his journey to the East African coast. The story comes up during one of the evenings when the weparis meet in one of the member’s houses to play cards. Vasantlal is described as a brave man who dares to travel to the unknown East African region with only his wife by his side. The region is described as a wilderness because of its occupants who are regarded as uncivilized:

The wilderness was no ordinary wilderness. It contained people as well. People vastly different from themselves who lived a life close to the earth and the elements. Who had no consciousness of shame because of the fullness of their natural dignity. Men and women at one with their surroundings. Vasantlal and

his friends never thought that the natives of the land could easily accept the spirit of their vastly older civilization with its strange introvertedness, its gurgling sound of a language, its different habits of living. (Tejani, 32-33)

The above description of the wilderness frames native Africans as lagging behind in terms of development. Tejani refers to Africa as a 'wilderness' thereby implying that it is uncivilized. Vasantlal and the friends use the term 'wilderness' to express their fear while venturing in a strange land with people who have a different colour from theirs. They were at first fearful and anxious of how the natives would react because of their difference. Wilderness also represents the adventure spirit of the Asians who left their homes to plunge into the unknown. This was a big gamble that portrays them as very brave people.

### **5.3.2 The Journey Motif**

The East African Asian texts are dominated by thematic concerns of movement and formation of migrant subjectivities. The journeys play a significant role in narrating history of the East African Asian community, as depicted in the selected texts. Most of the characters in the selected texts or their parents are propelled to travel either because of wanderlust or as a result of fear and anxiety in the inhabited land. For instance, Mohemedali in *Day After Tomorrow* narrates stories of horror to his children when referring to his journey from India to East African, "There I was told the lion ate man and the people were all black and there were no roads. Only railway." (Tejani, 7). The stories of the construction of railway in East Africa creates fear in the minds of children, especially when the characters like Mohemedali recount scenes of horror such as the encounter with the man-eating lions of Tsavo, battles with the native Africans who were

resisting the construction of the railway through their grazing land and attacks by diseases such as Malaria.

The movement of the Asian community from their ancestral land into East Africa leads to dislocation, which is regarded as a break from the old identity (Goyal, 2017). The connection with the homeland (Asia) is so strong that it makes them experience loneliness while in the host country. It is from this experience of loneliness, mixed with the fear and anxiety of losing their culture to the host nations, that drives the East African Asians into developing insulation. The community therefore finds itself in a 'sandwich' culture, lying between the motherland and the host country.

These modes of transport, the ship, train and plane give the characters an opportunity to claim belonging in the new lands as a result of dislocation. Goyal (2017) illustrates:

The feeling of rootlessness, alienation, confusion, nostalgia, dislocation and sufferings due to discrimination on the basis of race, culture, religion and language concludes into conflicts, fight for identity and on the other hand lead to birth of feeling of marginality in the minority group. This results in the creation of a fractured identity. (6)

As described above, the East African Asians' fractured identity is necessitated by their frequent travels to the new lands using different modes of transport. As they travel, the community encounters conflict and discrimination due to the difference in race, religion, culture and language.

Vassanji highlights the images of mobility through the characters who are propelled into a world of shifting borders. In *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Lall, who is introduced as the protagonist narrating the story of his life from exile in Canada. He

had flown out of the country for fear of being arrested and persecuted for the economic crimes he committed in Kenya. Also when tracing his identity, Lall narrates the story of his grandfather and the friends who migrated from Asia to Africa using the railway transport, and later settled in Kenya. He reveals that his father was born in Kenya, a claim that is meant to assert his identity as a Kenyan citizen, a desire he held so strongly, “his fantasy was partly to do with desperate need to belong to the land I (Lall) was born in.” (Vassanji, 59). The railway therefore becomes a bridge that connects the Asians with Africans. This connection plays an important role in dealing with the anxieties of Lall and, by extension, the entire East African Asian community, concerning their identity and belonging.

There is another Journey made by Lall’s family in August vacation by train from Nakuru to Nairobi and Mombasa. This seems to be the most enjoyable journey for the whole family, as Lall’s parents like the adventure as well as the beautiful scenery, making his mother comment, “This is where I have married and made my home...and this is my husband’s and children’s country” (Vassanji, 122). Even Vikram Lall himself out of excitement confesses, “I would see, feel and experience it, in similar ways so frequently in my life; in some essential way, it defines me. This was my country- how could it not be?” (121). Lall’s comment confirms the psychological feeling of unbelonging that had haunted his community for long. The fact that they reiterate their belongingness to the country, underscores the inherent doubts they have. Why claim a country that is already yours? The East African Asians have been denied identity by the native Africans throughout the novel, despite having inhabited the region by birth and blood. The railway journey therefore, provokes the psychological battle in the minds of Lall’s family members, when they experience the beautiful scenery of their country, but

are forced to remember the opposition received from the natives, heightening the anxiety.

Vassanji also associates the construction of Kenya-Uganda railway with the feelings of fear and anxiety among East African Asians when narrating their history of migration.

Vikram narrates a chilling story of attacks by wild animals, pestilences and humans:

Our people had sweated on it, had died on it. Crashed under avalanches of blasted rock, speared and machete as proxies of the whites by angry Kamba, Kikuyu and Nandi warriors, infected with malaria, sleeping sickness, elephantiasis, cholera, beaten by jiggers, scorpions, snakes and chameleons, and wounded in vicious fights with each other. (17).

In this case, Vikram describes the painful experience that the Asian immigrants go through while constructing the railway in East Africa. This experience makes the East African Asians associate the railway line with fear and trauma because of what their ancestors went through.

### **5.3.3 Narration**

Vassanji in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003) narrates story about the history of indentured labour, British imperialism and racialized independence movements. Shortly before independence, the Asians in East Africa start experiencing a change in attitude from the native Africans. Lall's family moves from Nakuru to Nairobi where the father like other Asians, engages in property selling business making a lot of money as profit. At this time, many Asians have started selling their property and preparing to migrate to Britain because of the harsh political climate in East Africa. After independence, follows a period of distress and anxiety leading to mass exodus of Asians

from East Africa to Britain. Many Asians, especially those who collaborated and benefited immensely from the colonial masters, feel insecure with the coming of the new regime. The fear is heightened when the new leaders engage in amassing wealth in the name of Africanization.

Saeed Molabux, a character in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, who is also nicknamed Madrassi, becomes a victim of the police terror, “the officer, the corporal and other askaris converged on Saeed, raining rifle butts and kicks on his back as his body curled up on the ground like a worm and tried to shield his head with his raised elbows.” (2003, 38). This scenario describes a case of mistaken identity where a dark Asian resembling an African is cornered by the police mistaken for a Mau Mau suspect. The interstitial position occupied by the East African Asians is very precarious in a way that, it makes them victims of hate from both the Whites and Africans. They are a community sandwiched between blacks and whites and despised by both. They are both oppressed by the whites and despised by blacks, although they feel superior to the blacks.

There is also fear expressed by the second generation East African Asians over losing their identity to the native Africans. Having lived in both the original home and immigrated one, they perceive themselves as a dislocated group that is faced with the danger of losing identity in the foreign land. This fear is witnessed in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* when Vikram’s mother issues a stern warning to Njoroge to leave her daughter alone:

I want you to understand that I have lost my home in Pakistan. I have no cousins or uncles or aunts, no parents. At least let me have a normal family, where I can see my grandchildren grow up as Indians, as Hindus. I had dreams too, of

children and grandchildren- whom I can understand, can speak to....and bring up in our ways. I have nothing against Africans. But we are different. (Vassanji, 248).

In this case, Vikram's mother expresses her fear and anxiety concerning her identity as an Asian, having migrated and settled in East Africa. She has this feeling that her identity would be lost through her daughter's intermarriage with native Africans, giving rise to a hybrid generation that has no idea of what Asian culture is like. For Vikram's mother, the only way of establishing a connection with her home is by preserving her cultural identity in the foreign land.

The same feeling of fear and anxiety is also experienced in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, when Pooja (an Asian) is first introduced to us reading a book entitled *We Live in the Past Because We Are Afraid of the Future. Trauma and Recovery*, which she bought from TextBook Centre. The title of the book suggests the kind of nervous atmosphere surrounding Pooja's family, as well as the rest of the East African Asian community. Given that the story is set in post-colonial Kenya, the Asians are still going through anxiety and trauma as a result of change in regime.

Pooja is possessed with fear of native Africans despite migrating to East African with the husband. She and her husband Raj form the second generation Asians having a connection with both the Asian continent and Africa. This is a generation that is overwhelmed by fear and anxiety when they think about the future of their culture and identity, because of their (and children's) interaction with the native Africans. She constantly keeps warning her children against freely mingling with them. She says, "You must be careful, most of them are thieves- they robbed, they robbed my friend Bharti, they hijacked your second cousin, Jiten, and tied him up and stuffed him in the

boot for three hours!” (Verjee, 63). These are the words that come back in the mind of Leena when they stop with the father, to assist a diabetic African man found lying on the road. Pooja is radical in her stand against native Africans such that she keeps blaming the husband for pretending to be too good to them, even when she knows they are dangerous. After the incident, Raj cautions the daughter, Leena against telling the mother about what had happened.

Dawood in *Eye of the Storm* highlights fear among the Asians in East Africa when Njoroge, the protagonist, experiences a series of rejections because of his race. This is witnessed right from university in England where he is failed in a unit to justify his Africanness, to the denial to join the exclusive Muthaiga Members Club and eventually being denied an opportunity to marry an Asian woman, Ayesha due to cultural differences. The Asian culture prohibits cross-racial marriages, and embraces arranged ones. That is why, she is committed to her fiancé, despite his health issues.

#### **5.4 Anxieties of Influence within Psychosexual Dimensions**

Sexuality occupies a critical position in the literary texts of East African Asians. It is used to express the Asian anxieties in the post-independence Africa. None can be more incompatible than an intimate relationship between an African and Asian. This is regarded as an abomination and a taboo in the perspective of the Asians. The conservativeness of the Asians regarding issues of sexuality creates a fertile ground for African stereotypes of the same.

In Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Samsher experiences sexual awakening for the first time, the day he witnesses the Baganda ceremony, ‘Young as he was, a fierce longing came into him, a yearning to be with such harmony. For the first time in his young malehood, watching the man and the woman before him ... he woke up to his puberty.

(Tejani, 36). Samsher's strong sexual feelings developed from the encounter with Africans go against the racial grain, where the whites, Asians and Black Africans are not allowed to interact, let alone have a love relationship with one another.

The feelings move to a higher level when Samsher and Nanziri come together and eventually get a baby who is of mixed blood. Samsher is still fearful of his community's reaction, '...of hearts lonely and afraid that have come together, cautious at every step. Their struggle is hidden..... The overwhelming desire to find security and peace in the new society has brought them together.' (Tejani, 6). This feeling of fear is because of the Asians' perception towards native Africans, as well as their own fear of losing identity. Samsher struggles silently, but the desire to have Nanziri is stronger than the fear and anxiety, hence carries the day.

There are two forms of fear and anxiety witnessed in the text, one being the fear by the second generation East African Asians, such as Mohemedali, of losing their identity through cross-racial relationships and marriage. Having migrated from the Asian continent with their parents, they still have a connection with it as 'home' and would not want to lose their roots. The second one is the fear by the third generation Asians, like Samsher of being condemned and ostracized by their parents/community because of marrying the other race, especially the Africans. This is ironic as they are liberal, alienated and only know Africa as 'home'. They have no idea of what the Asian continent looks like, since they have never been there.

In Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram, grows up in Kenya interacting with native Africans such as Njoroge who was his childhood friend and playmate. Despite their friendship, Vikram's mother does not approve of their relationship, especially with the daughter Deepa. He comments, "Every time I said that,

Mother would have a fit, but she never objected to our playing with our friend.” (Vassanji, 7). This describes the Asians’ fears concerning the interaction between their children and the native Africans. Vikram’s mother fears losing her daughter and by extension, generation and the entire culture to the native Africans through cross-racial marriage. She goes ahead to hide all the letters that Njoroge writes to Deepa while in college. When asked by Deepa, she retorts, “Don’t be silly! Arre’ paagal, if the letters came, wouldn’t we have given to you? They must have been lost, only.” (Vasssanji, 169). The kind of response Deepa’s mother gives and her reaction, shows how guilty she is of the action, but she makes no apologies. Even Vikram’s father is against the relationship between the two. Although he admits that Njoroge is a good boy, but quickly comments that some things are not meant to be, later imploring Vikram to protect his immature sister.

After the meeting with the father, Vikram warns Njoroge against pursuing the relationship with Deepa. Vikram’s parents are so possessed with the fear of losing their daughter Deepa to a native African, Njoroge that when they hear about her planning to get married to him, they organize and have Njoroge shot dead. The relationship between an Asian and a native African is such a big deal, due to the fear of the former losing their power to the perceived inferior Africans.

The third generation of East African Asians, also have fear of being banished by their own community for entering into sexual relationship with native Africans. Like the case of Deepa who is in love with Njoroge, but does not know what to do because of the parents’ firm opposition. At one time she suggests to him that they run away, “Let’s run away to London, she pleaded, that is what Indian girls do to marry outside their community or religion.” (Vassanji, 223). Deepa displays a form of rebellion that is developed as a way of fighting racism.

The same fear of condemnation by the community possesses Vikram when he first meets Sophia, an airline stewardess. He at first feels fearful because the lady is white, a race that is “the exotic and forbidden fruit.” (Vassanji, 286). Despite the fear, Vikram ends up having intimacy with Sophia, hence breaking his virginity with a woman from another race, “It was here, where we first made love, I did not go home that night, but spent it with her at her hotel. I had been a virgin so far, and that first experience of sex was- well, what such an experience always should be.” (287). Their intimacy is symbolic of breaking the barriers across races.

Verjee also highlights the fear in the second generation East African Asians in *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, when Raj’s family moves to a new estate for security reasons. The first night in the neighborhood is eventful when they encounter Simran, an Asian girl being beaten by the father (Samsheer) and thrown out of the house after being found with Patrick, the night guard, kissing. In spite of her mature age (she is studying in university in England), Simran cannot make an independent decision concerning her life especially on relationships and marriage. When she attempts to explain to the father about how people live in London, he retorts, “Do they teach you to run around with a boy behind your family’s back? To have a relationship outside of marriage? Outside of your culture? We have our own rules here, our own culture,” (Verjee, 233). Samsheer being a second generation Asian, is afraid of losing his identity through the daughter’s cross-racial marriage. He knows the union would result in a hybrid generation, hence endangering existence of the Asian identity. Pooja supports Samsheer’s action, claiming that he is teaching the daughter a lesson, “She must know that she cannot shame her family that way,” (Verjee, 234). What she forgets is that her own daughter, Leena is also sailing in the same boat, having an affair with Mike who is a native African. Pooja’s husband, Raj sympathizes with the girl and offers to host her for the night when he finds

that the father has indeed thrown her out of the house at night. Simran is therefore taken to Raj's house, albeit under protest from Pooja.

In Dawood's *In the Eye of the Storm*, Njoroge who is a surgeon, is denied chances to marry two Asian women at different times despite perceiving himself as an ideal man for them. During his studies in England, Njoroge falls in love with Jill who is the only daughter of Mr. Hawkins. When he approaches the father to allow him marry Jill, Hawkins declines, stating many reasons which include distance from her home to a faraway land in Africa, racial and cultural differences and fear of raising mixed race children, "They will find themselves torn between two vastly different worlds. It has been said that children cannot choose their parents, but at least we must endeavor to provide them with a parentage that is compatible and confluent rather than conflicting." (Dawood, 41). Ironically, Mr. Hawkins later on falls sick while visiting Kenya, the same country he claimed to be too far from his homeland, and has to be attended to by Njoroge, the same young man he had rejected as suitor to his daughter. Unfortunately, the bitterness does not leave Njoroge, until he eventually carries out his revenge on the old man by letting him to bleed to death during the surgery, a matter that lands him into a lot of trouble later on.

Dr. Njoroge encounters a second rejection from another Asian woman, Ayesha, who is the matron in the hospital where he works. Being an Indian, her parents had already engaged her to someone else at an early age. She therefore declines to give in to the surgeon's sexual advances while on a retreat in Naivasha. Ayesha takes times time to explain to Njoroge about her culture:

In my culture, marriage is not a matter between two individuals. It is a union of two families, sometimes two clans. We don't just fall in love and marry. Instead

we first get married, then fall in love. But before we take the plunge, we need the guidance and blessings of elders. (Dawood, 73).

The statement describes how the Asians develop a form of cultural insulation, in order to keep their identity, a thing that a native African like Njoroge cannot comprehend. The insulation is an expression of fear of losing the culture to the natives. Njoroge is again so disappointed and devastated that he plans to carry out revenge on Ayesha's fiancé who is sickly.

The rejections that Dr. Njoroge encounters in his romantic relationships with Asian women shape his life as well as influence his personality in a way, that he develops a split personality of being both good and evil at the same time. Both the women insist on his seeking the consent of their parents because of fear of the repercussions of rebelling. Therefore, both the parents and children live with a certain form of fear within them, as far as interacting with native Africans is concerned.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the issues of fear and anxiety among the second and third generation East African Asians as they get trapped in-between their Asian heritage and African culture. For instance, the second generation East African Asians are possessed with the fear of losing their original Asian identity, from their homeland (Asia) to the native Africans. As a result, they develop insulation for their culture and become paranoid towards the younger generation in order to keep them away from adopting the foreign culture through relationships and marriage.

The third generation on the other hand, are a liberal group because they were born and raised in East Africa, and have never been to their purported homeland Asia. They are however, fearful in their interaction with native Africans because of how the

relationship is perceived by the parents. Most of the characters in the selected texts develop secret relationships without the knowledge of their family members. However, a few characters like Deepa, in Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikraam Lall* choose to rebel openly, but later on regret when the paranoid parents decide to eliminate the estranged lovers, such as Njoroge leaving them widowed. The parents and entire community insist that it is a taboo for an Asian to marry a native African even though they interact with them a lot especially in business.

The chapter has examined how the characters in the selected texts grapple with in-between-ness, ambivalence, hybridity and marginalization in their struggle to maintain their identity. The in-between-ness results from the position occupied by the Asians between the Europeans and Africans. This position makes them lose the trust of both races as they are seen by the colonialists as collaborators with the African Mau Mau movement, as well as traitors by Africans. The fear and anxiety escalates when East Africans gain independence and appear determined to revenge on the collaborators by expelling them from the countries and repossessing their businesses, as evident in what happens in Damibia in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*.

The issue of ambivalence is brought about by the East African Asian collaboration with the colonial government, which led to the native Africans being exploited in business. Since the whites owned land in the fertile highlands in East Africa, they allowed Asians to focus on business, where they are said to have exploited native Africans. The exploitation and collaboration with the colonialists resulted in an ambivalent relationship with both the colonialists and the natives.

Hybridity is brought about by the interaction among the East African Asians, Europeans and the native Africans. The interaction results in a mixedness of the cultures because

of their fluid nature, an issue that creates fear and anxiety among the Asians, especially the second generation, because of eminent loss of their culture through intermarriages among their children. The authors not only depict characters of first generations that had an experience to live in both motherland and the foreign one, but also those who have been born and raised in the foreign land, like Samsher and his siblings in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, D'Souza in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, Vikram and Deepa in Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Raj, Leena and Simran in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, and Ayesha in Dawood's *In the Eye of the Storm*. The first and second generation East African Asians therefore, compensate for their loss of strong connection with homeland as well as the associated cultural values, by reincarnating Asia in their children.

The chapter also examined images used by the authors in the selected texts to illustrate fear and anxiety among the Asian characters. They include the gun, which is symbolically used as a weapon for protection against attacks from enemies who are the Mau Mau. The gun therefore is owned by the colonialists and Asians to show fear of native Africans. It is also used to inflict pain and terminate life in the enemy. Another image used by the authors is the *duka* (shop) which plays different roles. It is first used to show the entrepreneurial skills in the East African Asians which is their main source of survival in the region, hence cushioning them against the fear of destitution while in a foreign land. The shop again becomes a prison to the young generation Asians who cannot be allowed to socialize and interact freely with their peers from other races, like Samsher in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*. It therefore becomes a cause for fear and anxiety to them because their parents use it to keep them from mixing with other young people and sometimes going to school to learn.

Darkness is also metaphorically used in the selected Asian texts to highlight fear and anxiety among the characters. Whenever the sun goes down, the Asians become afraid. They start closing their shops and securing their doors with all forms of objects including chairs and tables. Those who can afford use dogs, security guards and guns to protect themselves at night. Darkness is therefore, associated with heinous activities such as theft, robberies and murders. There is wilderness which is used symbolically to describe the uncolonized nature of East Africa. Wilderness is juxtaposed with Blackness which racially points at the primitive and inferior nature of native Africans, that makes the other races to avoid them. The East African Asians are hence fearful of interacting with them, lest their children intermarry leading to a hybrid generation.

Another image commonly used in the selected East African Asian texts is the journey. The journey motif has been adversely mentioned in the texts to symbolize movement. The different modes of movement such as railway, water and air assist in the narration of history of East African Asians as well as the cause of their fears and anxieties, for instance the encounters with attacks by wild animals, diseases and native Africans during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow* and the forceful departure from Damibia (Uganda) by air to London for fear of losing life in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*. The journey is therefore use to narrate the role of fear and anxiety in creating dislocated identities among East African Asians. The overwhelming presence of such images in the selected texts demonstrates that fear pervades the existence of the Asian in East Africa and defines their worldview and relationships with other communities in the region.

The chapter has also examined anxieties of sexuality among East African Asians, where they regard any sexual relationship with the native Africans as a taboo. Those found in

such a situation are therefore ostracized and stigmatized in the community, like when Shamran is found kissing Patrick in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us As We Fall*.

This chapter has interrogated the issue of fear and anxiety among the East African Asians as a phenomenon that has run through generations, only taking different forms at different times in history, as evidenced in the selected texts. The Asian characters in the texts, both from the second and third generations, are obsessed with different forms of fear which have been described by the authors literally and metaphorically. This fear has influenced the identity formation of the Asians in East Africa as a result of their varied dislocations and in-between-ness, as witnessed in the selected texts.

The next chapter looks at the efforts made by the East African Asians to assert their presence, as a way of negotiating their transnational identity in the region, despite the perceived differences with the native Africans. Their apparent placelessness becomes an advantage for them as they are now global citizens, interacting freely with other races.

## **CHAPTER SIX: NEGOTIATING BELONGING-DISJUNCTURE AS IDENTITY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the efforts made by the East African Asians to assert their presence, as a way of negotiating their transnational identity in the region, despite the perceived differences with the native Africans. Their apparent placelessness becomes an advantage for them as they are now global citizens, interacting freely with other races. As Girindharadas (2010) puts it, “Placelessness, at varying levels of privilege, might even be seen as becoming the center of gravity of the human condition. Millions now live in one country and work in another, some crossing a border on foot each day, others putting on fake accents and telemarketers’ headsets, migrating by pretense.” (120) This is the state that East African Asians find themselves in, such that they have to adopt and adapt with the current situation, operating as global citizens.

Having collaborated with the colonial government for survival at the time, the Asians are again compelled by circumstances to co-operate with new (native African) regime in order to evade expulsion and persecution. They devise survival tactics that would make them relevant in the new dispensation. The chapter analyses how the interaction of discourses in the selected texts influences the representation of perception of fear and anxiety in the characters.

### **6.2 Construction of East African Asians as Provisional Citizens**

The question of citizenship is the most crucial issue revolving around the identity of East African Asians. Kahyana (2013), interprets the portrayal of citizenship in East African Asian writing from two perspectives; with the first being the possession of a passport. This is derived from the libertarian conception which views citizenship as

legal status and further attempts to give individuals as much freedom as possible based on self-interest.

For a long time since immigration to East Africa, the Asians have been compelled to acquire identification documents in the form of passports in order to claim citizenship within the region. This allows them to move freely across territorial boundaries, both locally and internationally. Thus, citizenship becomes defined by ownership of the book, which is a legal requirement by the state. The Asian community adopts this libertarian conception of citizenship as a result of their interest in trade in the region, since their main concern was the security of their families, business and savings (Vassanji 1989). For instance, in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, when Leena arrives in Kenya from London, the first thing she is asked to produce at the immigrations department before being allowed to proceed, is the passport. This document serves as proof of citizenship in the host country. Upon producing the document, Leena is taken through further interrogation to prove her citizenship, as opposed to being allowed to go after producing the passport.

When she is robbed by street boys in Nairobi City, Leena goes to report the case to the police station, where she is asked for an identification document such as identity card or passport. When she declines, the police officer replies, "I need to verify your person. Unless you have another way." (38). The other way being referred to here is bribery. When Leena fails to cooperate, the officer tells her that she can do nothing about her situation unless she brings her identification documents, "Come back with your passport and make sure you are quick, quick. In the afternoon we are always busy." (39). The statement is meant to make Leena vulnerable and so, plead with the officer to serve her right away, instead of waiting for the afternoon, and the only way to do so would be to give a bribe in exchange for the service.

The second perspective on citizenship emphasizes on the social participation in public and community affairs. It demands that the individual citizen contributes to the common good of his/her community (3). The Communitarian conception of citizenship (Voet, 1998: 10) appeals to the native Africans who insist on seeing the Asians participate more in the social, economic and political development of the post-colonial East African states. This involves joining in the struggle for independence, racial tolerance and social inclusivity; and fairness in trade (4). For instance, D'Souza and Cota in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, play a critical role in the fight for the independence of Damibia. The two activists move all over the country, convincing fellow Asians to join native Africans in the fight against colonialism. The passion and determination with which these Asians participate in political agitation, proves their claim of belonging to the region as citizens.

In Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, there are people like Pinto, who participate whole heartedly in the in the fight against colonialism in their host country. The daring move by Pinto to fight colonialism in Kenya, despite having an Asian genealogy, emphasizes on the issue of cosmopolitanism among the East African Asians, which makes them feel like natives in spite of the geographical location.

### **6.3 Asian Identity and the *Duka* Concept**

The Asians in East Africa are known for their entrepreneurial skills right from the ancient days during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway. The *duka* (Kiswahili term for shop) is seen as the contact point between the Asian and the African in spite of their differences. The East African Asian choses to engage in business as a way of integrating within the African society. Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, introduces

the reader to a small village in East Africa, surrounded by Asian shops selling clothes, beads, sandals and blankets. Samsheer, the protagonist, is also introduced as a boy who:

knew that his job was to run a shop. He had never been told this. His younger brother and two sisters who were older than he, all knew this, without being told about it. The Indians had come to Africa to trade and even the smallest child knew as it grew up that life centered around the shop and the peasants. (6).

This passage outlines clearly the Asian vision in East Africa, as revealed to the young generation even without being told. The children grow up observing their parents dedicatedly engage in their everyday activities at the shop where they too could often help.

The entrepreneurial skills are depicted when the African peasants come to sell their harvest to the Asian traders in form of, “grain and fresh vegetables loaded in loose jute bundles on their heads,” (14). In return, the Asian traders also sell to the peasants, clothes, farm and household items. This trade therefore, provides an avenue for interaction between Asians and the native Africans, hence reducing misconceptions and prejudices between the two communities.

The Asians live in East Africa, surviving on trade, which they also purpose to pass on to their children. As Mohemedali would imagine:

He was a *Wepari*. A settler merchant. It was his duty to teach his children the art of trade. So he called them, like a primitive biblical patriarch did his sons, to the shop. To preach to them the gospel of the trade.” (9).

Mohemedali is determined to teach his children the trade, and that is why he makes sure Samsheer is always in the shop after coming back from school. The shop business

provides an opportunity for the East African Asians to interact with the native Africans, sometimes ending up in marriages, as was the case of Samsher's father. The entrepreneurial nature of the Asians has earned them respect and contempt in equal measure. The native East Africans often perceive them as exploitative and those out to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor locals. They are also believed to be corrupt as they use their money and influence to circumvent government policies such as tax evasion, hence enriching themselves further.

Through their long experience in business engagements, the East African Asians perfect the art of bargaining. As Mohemedali confesses:

The instinct for bargaining had so worked itself among the forefathers of his family that it was synonymous with the instinct of self-preservation. A persistent, almost fanatically religious impulse, arising out of poverty and deprivation. (8).

The expression shows how seasoned the East African Asians are in matters to do with trade. Therefore, Mohemedali sees the sole responsibility he has in teaching his children the art of business, being a *Wepari* himself.

In Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram's grandfather chooses to settle in Nakuru and start business. As a result, his children and grandchildren were born and grew up in the region engaging in wholesale and retail businesses. For instance, Juma Molabux did not go back to Asia after his indentureship with the railway, "He chose to settle in Kijabe, where he opened a store to sell blankets, beads and copper wire to the Masai." (41).

Juma Molabux, is introduced in the text as the only merchant engaging in wine business in the whole country, supplying even to the whites. As such, he is very influential and known to the colonial government. When his son Sayeed is mistakenly beaten and injured by the police during one of their raids on Mau Mau sympathizers, the government through the District Commissioner and the Commissioner of Police has to apologize to Molabux, and also assure him that the officers in charge of the raid have been reprimanded accordingly.

The East African Asians' involvement in business enterprise is also witnessed in Dawood's *Eye of the Storm*. Whenever he was taken to Nyeri town for shopping by his father Gitau, young Njoroge would be fascinated by Mr. Patel who spent all his time in the shop serving customers, and receiving a lot of money from them. Njoroge nurses fond memories of Mr. Patel because of his generosity towards him, "On the days when Patel was doing a roaring business, he would smile at the little boy and press a shilling into his open hand. Sometimes he would give him a packet of sweets." (Dawood, 21)). The industriousness and generosity of Patel forms part of Njoroge's childhood memories. When he later matures and becomes a surgeon, he still remembers the Asian businessman who comes for treatment in his hospital. As a result, Njoroge works on Patel meticulously until he gets healed of the prostate disease.

The East African Asians are perceived to be good at mathematics because of their involvement in business ventures. Therefore, wherever they are involved in development matters, their business acumen is given priority. Like Mr. Sheth in Dawood's *Eye of the Storm* is appointed in the Board of United Kenya Hospital because of being Asian:

There seemed to be a popular notion that people of Indian sub-continent were good at figures. Mr. Sheth had ample opportunity to prove it when the financial director presented the monthly incomes. While some Board members brought their calculators from their pockets, Mr. Sheth showed that he could do the sums off the top of his head and produce the correct results before the members had even finished feeding the data into their personal gadgets! The other merit attributed to the community was good husbandry and sound house-keeping sense..... Mr. Sheth had been elected the chairman of the Finance sub-committee and was given the difficult task of keeping the books in the black, and under his stewardship, they were rarely in the red. (Dawood, 7).

The above statement explains the perception of native Africans towards the East African Asians concerning their accuracy with numbers as a result of their involvement in entrepreneurship. With the presence of Mr. Sheth as Chair of the Finance sub-committee, the entire Board of United Kenya Hospital, was convinced that their financial issues were in safe hands.

The Asians' entrepreneurial acumen can also be attributed to their industriousness. For instance, apart from Mr. Sheth being on the Board of United Kenya Hospital, there is Miss Ayesha, who also is appointed the Matron of the hospital. Despite being an Asian, Ayesha works hard in the hospital and turns out being one of the best workers in the institution. However, it is Dr. Njoroge's sexual advances that seem to interfere with her smooth working. She refuses to give in, insisting that she already has a fiancé given to her by the parents, according to the Asian culture.

The East African Asian industry is also witnessed in the development of successful businesses. For instance, in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, when Leena arrives

from the university in London, she is first served tea with Manji biscuits. The tea is local beverage while the biscuits are manufactured by the House of Manji, an industry belonging to a Mr. Manji, who is an Asian merchant based in Nairobi.

#### **6.4 Political Contestations of the Nation-State**

The East African Asians have been actively involved in the political affairs of the host countries. This is through convincing their community to support the African leaders and participate in the fight for independence. Although some of the East African Asians find themselves in a tight situation after independence, due to the collaborative role they played with the colonialists. The colonial government had put them in between the Africans and the whites, with the main purpose being to, “put into effect colonial policies resented by the Africans.” (Ocaya-Lakidi, 90), which they did so well. As things were initially, the Asians had enjoyed the goodwill of the colonial government, when the Africans were suffering. They never imagined a native African would one day rule himself. Having joined the Whites to undermine and exploit the natives, the Asians are faced with embarrassment and shame mixed with fear, when the Africans take over leadership.

Later on, the Asians serve as politicians, enjoying a close relationship with the government of the day. However, in the postcolonial state, they have been accused of always collaborating with the government of the day as a strategy of survival. This could be the reason why few East African Asians are visible in opposition politics within the region.

The Asian political influence in East Africa, whether directly or indirectly, legally or otherwise, is therefore way above their numbers and above other communities. The Asian characters in the selected texts actively engage and are dedicated in the liberation

of East Africa from colonial rule. The Asians view themselves as Africans since they have been born and bred in East Africa. D'Souza insists when cornered by Gombe Kukwaya (the Minister for Interior and Defence Matters) after he attempts to complain about his (Gombe's) corrupt deals that earn him two taxis and two houses,

"Where are you from, Mr., Mr –"

"D'Souza."

"What country are you from?"

"This country, Damibia."

"I mean your real country – your country of origin."

"I was born here. I was even conceived here."

"D'Souza, eh? You must be from Goa. When do you propose going back?"

"I don't know what you mean. I am a citizen of this country."

"We are fighting for our Independence here. Don't you think you should go back to fight for your country and win independence for it?" (Nazareth, 75)

Gombe –Kukwaya's attitude towards D'Souza dashes his hopes of enjoying the freedom that he contributed in fighting for in Damibia. D'Souza is one of the East African Asians that have high hopes for their country, having known no other country except Damibia. But the response he gets from the politician, creates fear in him, forcing him, for a moment, to question his identity. D'Souza however, still stands firm and challenges him, "I will go to Goa the day you go back to Congo. And the day all immigrant tribes in Africa move back to where they came from" (Nazareth, 75). The

statement shows how native leaders conveniently use issues of nationality to intimidate members of the Asian community who dare question their authority. The perception of impermanence of the Asians in terms of citizenship is clearly evident here. For some locals, it does not matter how long the Asians have lived in East Africa, they will simply never belong. Their home will always be elsewhere. This kind of attitude towards the Asians increases their fear and anxiety in terms of what the future holds, given that some of them do not know of any other home except East Africa where they were born and raised. They may have only been told by their parents about the original land in Asia but have never been there physically.

The issue of misappropriation of public resources and engaging in corrupt deals is not only associated with the new regime of native Africans alone, but also the East African Asians who get positions in the new government. D'Souza in *In a Brown Mantle*, involves himself in corrupt deals, and after making a lot of money, flees to London in exile for fear of being eliminated by the very regime he was working for. This illustrates how the East African Asians also negotiate belonging in the region by participating in corrupt practices together with the natives.

Cota is not as lucky as D'Souza who escapes to exile. Despite playing an active role in the fight for the independence of Azingwe, Cota gets in trouble with the new regime after it fails to reward those who contributed to its ascension to power, including himself, and also when he attempts to correct them for their immoral behavior and greed. Consequently, he ends up being branded a 'bloody mugoa' and a 'pain in the neck' before being ruthlessly assassinated by the same regime he worked hard to bring in power.

As for the Asians who had earlier looked down upon native Africans, they are either forced to flee to England in exile, or swallow their pride and serve the new regime. The community therefore encounters identity crisis, being forced to adjust and integrate with the rest of the East Africa community.

In Vassanji's *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram grows up in a politically charged environment surrounding Kenya and Tanzania. The story opens in 1953, when he is eight years old, a time that sees the East African countries struggle for independence from the, "colonial world of repressive, undignified subjecthood." (5) .

Mahesh Uncle, is another Asian who is so deeply involved in the politics of East Africa, that he is referred to by the family as a communist. His support for the independence of Kenya is so intense that it makes his family nervous, because of the repercussions from the colonial government should it become aware. Having participated in India's fight for independence, Mahesh feels strongly that Africa also needs freedom. He even goes ahead to write a very long letter to the Indian High Commissioner Appa Pant, explaining why independence is a good thing for Africans, "He said India should give recognition to Mau Mau and assist them." (Vassanji, 213). This controversial letter lands Mahesh in trouble with the colonial government, which put him on the suspect list. He is now on the police radar, until he is eventually forced to run to exile in Tanzania out of fear for his life, where he continues with his activism.

Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall* also mentions the political role played by Asians in East Africa. When still young in the 1950s, Raj meets Pinto, an Asian freedom fighter who is famous in the whole region for his role in the fight for the independence of Kenya. Raj's uncle Dilip describes Pinto as a brave man because his daring role in fight for independence. This explains the determination of Pinto to see that Kenya is

free from colonial slavery. He passionately fights to see Kenyatta freed, as well as ensure, “the KANU victory in the 1961 elections.” (70). This kind of passion could only be manifested in a person who believed he belonged to the region. Pinto therefore, regards himself as a citizen of Kenya who rightly deserves to participate in the affairs of his country.

### **6.5 Cosmopolitanism as Top Life for the ‘Nowhere’ Men**

Having migrated and settled in the region, the East African Asians have to devise ways of survival and enjoying life in the new space they call ‘home’. The young Asian generation seems to take life liberally by freely mingling with natives without giving much attention to their race or strong cultural beliefs. They go as far as engaging in many social activities with them without much precaution. As argued by Saha (2010):

The world as a global village facilitates the feeling of being at home in the cosmopolitan urban quarters of the world. It is in these situations that the external circumstances of displacement become of less importance and the internal circumstances, that is the psychological and spiritual condition of the mind, gain prominence. Despite being in a diaspora there is little consolation of any hope of escape into any pre-exilic state. (1)

This statement reinforces the conducive environment provided by urban areas in the region, which encourages the East African Asians, especially the young generation who were born there, to interact freely with other races without burdening themselves with racial attitudes. The community views itself to be at home, carrying on with its activities without fear or anxiety of any form of discrimination or deportation from occupied spaces.

For instance, Mohemedali in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow* moves into a two-roomed house above the Blue Room hotel in the city of Kampala, which is full of young Asians who engage in social activities like drinking, smoking and debauchery:

the place had become the centre or meeting place for pimps, prostitutes and drunk Indian debauchees, tired of trade or religion. They flirted with the barmaids and African women, who worked as tailors, sweepers and seamstresses in the shops around the hotel all day long." (Tejani, 34).

This describes a generation that is tired of being branded 'visitors' but now freely interacts and engages in social activities just like the natives.

Samsher occasionally escapes from his father's shop to go and watch football matches with his brother at the Nakivubo Stadium. While in the stadium, he is fascinated by the Baganda culture especially the women, "He was captivated by the graceful movement of the muganda female. Her elegant dress that exaggerated her back-swing. The sharp delicate features and the glow of the fresh skin reminded him of the sun dying in a clash of hot sympathy for the earth." (35). This explains the cosmopolitan mindset in the young Asians who detach themselves from their strong racial and cultural cocoons, and become global citizens, appreciating the beauty of African culture. The attraction with Buganda culture is what later opens Samsher to his first puberty experience. Samsher is seen here as being cosmopolitan, such that he does not control his feelings because of the racial differences, but instead allows them to run wild into his world of utopia. These desires become actualized later in the text when Samsher gets into an affair with a Baganda woman, Nanziri, and eventually marries her. Samsher's experiences make him a real cosmopolitan since his marriage to Nanziri leads to a son, who is hybrid of Asian and African blood.

Entertainment spots are used as social places where people meet to interact and discuss many political issues. They become sites for political mobilization where politicians and businessmen frequent in order to connect with their people. For instance, in *In a Brown Mantle*, D'Souza frequents the New Jazz Club to engage in drinking and dancing as he freely mingles with the native Africans. The formation of night clubs like the New Jazz Club are meant to break the rules of civilization by allowing Asians mix and interact with native Africans freely without displaying an 'endorsement of the colonialist notion of barbarity versus civilization' (Mwairumba, 2015).

In Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, Leena is received by her family in Nairobi on arrival from London with a banner written boldly WELCOME HOME LEENA. The banner communicates a message on the definition of home according to the East African Asians. They believe they belong to the region by naturalization, as for the first- and second-generation Asians like Kohli senior, Pooja and Raj, as well as birth for the third generation like Jai and Leena.

### **6.6 Going to the Cinema as a Form of Integration**

The characters in selected East African Asian literatures are identified by their fascination with going to the cinema to watch films, especially during Sunday afternoons, as a form of leisure activity. Warah (2021) describes the fascination which began from the sixties to present as, 'a culture where moving-going was an integral part or the social fabric of this economically successful minority.' (2) The movies, mostly Asian, are used to expose the diasporic community to their cultures and languages as a way of helping them retain their identity. The movies are also seen to promote the Asian sexist culture where women are depicted as subservient to men and issues such as cross-racial relationships and marriages abhorred. In countries like Tanzania, Sunday

evenings shows are meant for family and community bonding, ‘Cinema halls were not lifeless chunks of brick and mortar; they resonated with soul and spirit. They were places that gave individual lives meaning, spaces that gave a town emotional life. Across generations, cinemas were central to the community formation.’ (Fair, 2020). This statement emphasizes on the role cinema plays in defining the East African Asian identity through socialization and enlightenment.

The characters in the selected texts are also actively engaged in watching cinema. For instance, Smasher in Tejani’s *Day After Tomorrow* has the first date with Nanziri by going to watch a movie together followed by a series of other similar events. The movie theatres therefore become avenues for bonding especially in cross-racial relationships. It is from watching the movies that Samsher and Nanziri decide to get married despite being from different racial backgrounds.

In Vassanji’s *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram narrates how he came to meet the girlfriend Yasmin while in Dar es Salam. They later went to watch films together, as the relationship grew and blossomed. Although they do not end up getting married, because of Vikram’s lifestyle of travelling from one country to the other, the movies play a critical role in cementing their relationship.

Apart from cinema, the East African Asians, especially the young generation in the recently published texts, embrace the use mobile phones in socializing with their peers, both Asians and other races. The likes of Michael and Leena in *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall* communicate using mobile phones to plan their secret dates without the knowledge of their parents.

## 6.7 Friendship, Courtship and Marriage

The East African Asians also negotiate their belonging in the region through their friendships, courtships and marriage with native Africans. These relationships within the region can be traced to the first-generation Asians who came to the region as indentured labourers. After the completion of construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway, not all Asians return to their native countries. Some choose to stay in East Africa and engage in trade, as a way of negotiating their belonging to the region. As a result, they end up marrying and getting children in the region. For example, Samsheer's father, Mohamedali in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, immigrated to East Africa from Bombay while still a young boy on a ship, and stayed on until he grew up and had his own family. Samsheer's father owing to his close interaction with the locals through business, ends up marrying a native African woman and getting hybrid children.

However, not many are open to the idea of cross-racial marriages, as nothing is mentioned about the families of the Asian businessmen, except that they are focused on teaching their children how to become entrepreneurs in future. The silence may indicate the feeling of reluctance with which the older generation of East African Asians approach the issue of integration, which contributes to the slow pace of realizing cosmopolitanism fully.

Despite tough rules and cultural beliefs surrounding the East African Asian community, there is a form of rebellion developed by, especially the third generation. These are young men and women who socialize and eventually enter into sexual relationships with the native Africans, being fully aware of the consequences. For instance, in Tejani's *Day After Tomorrow*, Samsheer develops a romantic relationship with Nanziri which culminates into marriage leading to a mixed race child:

A child plays in the verandah. He is the child of a new civilization. He is fair and brown like an Indian: but he has the bright teeth of the African and his curly hair. He is the life that has been forged from the union of parents of different races. The mother is African: the father is Indian. (Tejani, 6).

Therefore, the child born from the marriage between Samsheer and Nanziri is a true reflection of cosmopolitanism, a replica of Samsheer's own life experience of being born by cross-racial parents.

Samsheer's father, Mohemedali, seems determined to teach his children their culture, and discourage them from inter-marrying with native Africans. However, it is ironical that Mohemedali dissuades his children from marrying the Africans, whereas his own wife, who is their mother, is African. This makes it hard to make the children keep off relating with native Africans, the likes of Samsheer. At the same time, the children have grown up together with the Africans whom they regard as their brothers and sisters.

In *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Molabux stays alone in Kijabe, interacting mostly with the Masai who are his clients. The Masai men would tease him, if he was a real man, whose work was to just stare at their women. The pressure and loneliness became too much until he developed interest in their women, "He was lonely, he had no family in the country, and not much status, and he badly wanted a woman." (Vassanji, 43). The emotional need surpasses the cultural boundaries, pushing Molabux to marry an African woman, who stays with him through the entire text. Although it is evident that Molabux married a Masai woman out of loneliness and desperation, one cannot ignore the significance of his audacity to surpass cultural boundaries, given the seriousness with which Asians abhorred Asia-African marriages.

Lall also has the same experience of feeling attracted to the native Africans as a result of his ancestry. Given that the grandfather had sired children with African women, Lall felt that he belonged to the region and was tied to the land both by birth and blood just like his friend Njoroge (Makokha, 2002). Therefore, according to Lall, “His fantasy has partly to do with his desperate need to belong to the land I (Lall) was born in,” (59). The statement describes Lall’s grandfather who settled in East Africa and developed a sense of belonging through marriage to the native Africans. His generation therefore, perceive themselves as Africans because of being born and raised in the region.

Vikram’s sister Deepa, also falls in love with their childhood native African friend, Njoroge. This relationship is so opposed by their racially sensitive parents, that it ends up tragically with the assassination of Njoroge. Deepa on her part, does not see any problem in falling in love with and eventually marrying Njoroge with whom they have grown together. To her, he is a normal man like any other, if anything, better than her own arranged Asian fiancé, with whom she has no emotional attachment. The attachment she has to Njoroge is so strong that, it makes her unable to enjoy her marriage life later on in the text. Njoroge earlier on writes a letter to Deepa which highlights their shared humanity:

The most wonderful thing about us is that we have learned, we’ve discovered a new terrain in human relationship, a new trait that proclaims that we can get as close to another human as to become one in body and spirit – no matter how different the details of our birth (193).

This statement defines the relationship between Deepa and Njoroge as one that is cosmopolitan and does not allow interference by racial ideologies.

Despite the fact that East African Asians of first and second generation appear to strongly hold onto their cultural belief and practice of arranged marriages, their generations think contrary. For instance, Lall goes back to India and ends up marrying Sheila because of love, and not being chosen for him. Although he holds onto the belief of arranged marriages, he marries a woman of his choice, albeit an Asian.

In Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, Leena falls in love with her childhood native African friend, Mike and they begin an affair without the knowledge of her family. Having been born in Kenya and been brought up there, she does not see any difference between her and Mike. The two therefore develop strong feelings of romance towards one another and end up in a love affair, against the wish of their parents. The relationship between Leena and Mike demystifies the misconceptions of Asians inability to relate with the native Africans. During the initial stages of their affair, the two love birds are fearful of how their respective communities would look at them:

How about Diamond Plaza?

Too many Indians,

What's wrong with that? he challenges.

They stare a lot and it makes me uncomfortable (389).

The two lovebirds are at first very careful when selecting the venue for their date, because of fear of stigmatization by their respective communities. This fear makes them settle for a small café known as Kahawa which found in the backstreets and is not frequented by many people. But with time, they become free and can choose any restaurant for their dates and other customers also get used to such interactions and therefore, do not look at them suspiciously as they did at the beginning.

The kind of fear haunting the young Asians concerning their interaction with the native Africans goes deeper than just racial prejudice being witnessed. The new generation of East African Asians find themselves facing invisible barriers between two conflicting cultures that are determined and designed to keep them apart. The Asian culture for instance, advocates for arranged marriage before love, as mentioned by Ayesha when approached and proposed for a hand in marriage by Dr. Njoroge in Dawood's *Eye of the Storm*. She goes ahead explaining to him why it is impossible to have an affair with him, as she is already engaged to her ailing fiancé. The Asian culture also prohibits any cross-cultural marriages terming it a taboo, as expressed by most of the characters in the selected texts. The two cultures seem to conflict, as the African culture appears to more liberal. The native African characters are comfortably having affairs and even marrying other races such as Asians without being subjected to any form of stigmatization and ostracization by their own community.

However, the young generation of East African Asians does not have a problem with socializing and even having romantic relations with native Africans. The likes of Samsheer in *Day After Tomorrow*, D'Souza in *In a Brown Mantle*, Vikram in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* and Leena in *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, have a cosmopolitan identity which makes them perceive other people, including native Africans as fellow human beings. This stand is what creates a conflict between them and their own Asian community, making them be regarded as rebellious.

### **6.8 Interrogating Culinary Infusion in East Africa**

Food plays a crucial role in defining a community's identity. It marks borders between communities as well as act as a way of reconciling different groups (Ojwang, 2013). The East African Asian writings have captured the issue of food adversely to delineate

different nuances of their lives as diasporas. As Holtzman (2006) observes, “food is an intrinsically multilayered and multidimensional subject- with social, psychological, physiological and symbolic dimensions.” (362).

The East African Asians have given a significant contribution to the region by introducing foods such as *pilau*, *samosa* and *chapati* which have ended up being adopted as the region’s favorite delicacies. Apart from introducing Asian foods, the community has also embraced foods from the region such as *ugali*, beef and *sukumawiki*, hence exhibiting a sense of assimilation.

In *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram’s mother prepares delicious food made of hot ghee and spices, when visited by Mrs. Bruce on a Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Bruce enjoys the meal, promising to one day bring her family for lunch. The Asian community enjoy taking beer and soda when relaxing during the weekend. Whenever they meet as a community, the East African Asians ensure they have a blend of their culture with that of the native Africans in terms of the menu and music, “smells of hot ghee and spices filled the air in the backyards, ginger and garlic and chicken from one house, saffron and onion from another, fresh phulki, chapatis and daal from yet another. Lilted melodies and sad lyrics from Saigal, Hemant Kumar, and Talat filled the air courtesy of KBC’s Hindustani service on the shortwave.” (28). This passage describes the East African Asians’ effort to blend their culture with that of the natives through food and entertainment. They enjoy a meal of chicken, which is popular among the native Africans, while at the same time, listening to their own music from the local radio station. The government therefore recognizes the Asian contribution in the region, that is the reason they are allowed to play their music on national radio.

Njoroge's father Gitau in *Eye of the Storm*, working for the Irish Priest Father Johnson, prepares for the priest and his Asian friends their favourite dishes of mint sauce, grilled chops, fried fish and chips plus puddings. "He also introduced them to the local cuisine and occasionally prepared for them *nyama choma*, *ugali* and *Sukuma wiki*." (30). The Asian friends enjoy the local cuisine as part of their adaptation to the East African region.

In Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, Leena is welcomed home in Nairobi by the mother, Pooja preparing tea and biscuits for her. *Chai* which is a Kiswahili term for tea is an adopted Asian beverage, prepared from heated water which is mixed with milk, tea leaves and sugar. The biscuits bought from the shop are manufactured by House of Manji, which is an Asian industry belonging to Mr. Manji. Leena's father, Raj on the other hand, also enjoys visiting town with friends where they hire:

out a table at the back of the restaurant, all the men gathered around huge silver pots on coal stoves, their faces steaming from the chicken masalas and fish tikkas, and drinking bottles of whisky until midnight or sometimes later. (Verjee, 23).

The Asian characters have adopted a cosmopolitan identity where they enjoy the local delicacy just like natives. The idea of Raj going out with friends to eat and drink does not go well with Pooja his wife. Being a conservative, she prefers the fish prepared in the house by Grace, the house girl, so that the man does not have to go out interacting with dangerous native Africans. The Kohlis therefore love chicken masala, fish and beer, all of which are prepared locally, as they have an opportunity to import them from their homeland Asia.

While growing up as a young man, Raj admires Pinto, an Asian political activist whom he regards as his role model. He keeps following him to watch his lifestyle, for instance, in the morning Raj notes that Pinto has his breakfast of omelette sandwich. “One day he took leftover fish curry along with a piece of thick white bread and ate it cold as he learned the man’s routine off by heart, tracked through his scratched toy binoculars.” (71). The food eaten by Pinto, an Asian, suggests his adaptation to the East African lifestyle, like the ‘white bread’ signifying the local ‘ugali’. This supports his bid to fight for the rights of Africans during the colonial regime.

### **6.9 Language and Cultural Transmission**

Language is used as means of cultural transmission and translation. For instance, in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Sheila strongly desires to speak to her grandchildren in their native Punjabi language in order to emphasize on the importance of sticking to their culture, but cannot because they have already learnt the language of the region. At one moment when Vikram’s grandfather, Molabux initiates a conversation with him in their Punjabi language, he confesses to have had difficulty in keeping up with the conversation, as the language appears “fluid and too quick for my ears and the words and phrases I grasped were often alien to me.” (61). Therefore, language is seen as not immune to hybridity, and the purist sense of belonging that would be suggested by the ability to speak in Hindi or Punjabi is deceptive. (Mwairumba, 2015).

The East African Asians are able to learn and competently use English and as Kiswahili, the main languages, with Kiswahili being a language that originated from the East African Coast and eventually became the national language used in the region, in their social and business engagements. The Asians use English instead of their own language, mostly when interacting with the colonial masters, while Kiswahili language

is mostly used by the third generation East African Asians in their daily interaction with native Africans or even among themselves. Like Leena and Jai in Verjee's *Who Will Catch Us as We Fall*, are fond of speaking Kiswahili. When she arrives in Kenya from London, she thanks the officer at the immigration department who stamps her passport "Asante", meaning 'thank you'. As they drive through the streets of Nairobi with her brother Jai, they encounter street boys who are demanding for some money from them, "Kunisaidia mama, they implore. Tu kitu kidogo." (Verjee, 9). The language used by the street boys indicates that it is the national language and everyone who is a citizen of the country is expected to understand it. Jai, being a citizen of Kenya by birth, understands Kiswahili and therefore is able to answer the boys, 'Sitaki' meaning 'I don't want'.

#### **6.9.10 Signs of Colonial Hope and Post-Colonial Shame**

As they contribute to the development of the region, the East African Asians also perfect the art of corrupt engagements, as part of their strategy for survival. For instance, in Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle*, D'Souza who is born and grown up in Damibia, participates in the issues of national development by first working for the colonial government, before later resigning to join politics, at the instigation of Kyeyune. After independence, D'Souza is retained as Kyeyune's advisor when the former now becomes the Prime Minister. Serving in the new government exposes D'Souza to many emerging issues in Damibia, including the corruption practices, which eventually catch up with him. He finds himself right at the centre of the corrupt deals, making a lot of money. When he feels he has made enough money, D'Souza flees to London for fear of being arrested and assassinated by the very corrupt government officials he has worked for in Damibia.

Therefore, D'Souza's engagement in corrupt practices together with the Damibian politicians, is a form of adaptation for him as an East African Asian. Being adept at corruption proves that he understands the system and all its loopholes which he can take advantage of for his own selfish gain. His constant interaction with Kyeyune and the people of Damibia leads to a special connection, that he confesses, "As I became part of him, I became part of them. One was continuously rewarded and refreshed by their faith and lack of sophistication." (Nazareth, 47). The connection between D'Souza and the people makes him appreciate their identity, and feel part of them by actively participating in the fight for independence, but at the same time, also engage in the corrupt practices with them.

The Asians are known for their engagement in corrupt activities with the native government officials. For instance, when the two traffic policemen are on duty looking for money on the highway, their target is always Asians because of the ease with which they part with money to buy freedom. At one time David and Jeffrey flag down a car driven by a lady, thinking she is an Asian. The young African girl gives them hard time, although she eventually parts with some little cash before driving off. David later comments, "Too bad she wasn't a *muhindi*, that is where the money is to be made.... it's the *muhindi* who keep lots of cash in their pockets." (106). This comment by David suggests the role played by the East African Asians in abetting corruption in the region as part of negotiating their belonging in the region. When orientating his colleague Jeffrey on how to collect bribes on the road, David insists, "What did I tell you last time? Women. And *muhindi* women if you can. Those ones with fancy sunglasses and lots of jewellery. They will give you anything just so you'll leave them alone." (121). David reiterates the fact that Asians do not mind giving out bribes in order to buy their freedom, just like the native Africans. It is a form of survival strategy in the region.

### **6.9.11 Conclusion**

The chapter discussed how the East African Asians have navigated around their feelings of fear and anxiety by asserting their presence in the region through participation in various activities. They have worked hard towards establishing themselves economically, socially, politically and intellectually. Their strong presence is felt in such areas as trade where industrialists like Chandaria and Manji are mentioned, medical services the Aga Khan and MP Shah hospitals, philanthropy where such organizations as Rattansi Trust, Lions Club emerge, in sports such as hockey and Baseball, in education (the Aga Khan schools, Swaminarian Schools, book authors like Malkiat Singh, Patel and Nisar Saleem) and fiction writers like Pheroze Nowrejee, Vassanjee among others.

This chapter explored the efforts made by the East African Asians to assert their presence, as a way of negotiating their transnational identity in the region. The characters in the selected texts actively negotiate their belonging with both the colonial and post-colonial governments in the region through collaboration. This negotiation revolves around the process of identity formation among the community that seems to be achieved through citizenship. That is the reason why the Asian characters in the selected texts actively participate in the social, economic and political affairs of their respective countries, including the fight for independence. This status of citizenship helps the East African Asians to overcome their fears and anxieties of expulsion and persecution, giving them freedom to move across boundaries as they engage in trade. Their participation in the political affairs of the host countries gives them the hope and assurance of being rewarded by the new regimes through appointments in government positions, a thing that later on turns out to be a pipe dream.

The Asians in East Africa also actively engage in economic activities through business entrepreneurship. This is reflected in the selected texts where the characters operate shops which sell an array of items which include farm items, household goods, clothes, drinks and snacks among others. The duka (shop) which is synonymous with the Asian community, therefore becomes a bridge for connecting them with the rest of the communities such as the native Africans and the whites, whose interaction is mostly over business.

The Asian characters, especially the third generation, is liberal and develops a cosmopolitan identity where they enjoy interacting and socializing with the native Africans without thinking about the difference in colour. The free interaction allows them to attend same social places for fun and entertainment, buy drinks and watch movies and football matches together. They even engage in love affairs, despite their prohibitive culture as well as stern warnings against such arrangements from the parents of older generation.

The East African Asian negotiation of belonging to the region is also highlighted in their ability to participate in consumption of the local cuisines. The preparation of such foods as *ugali*, *sukumawiki*, as opposed to what is ideally regarded as ‘Asian’ foods, is a form of assimilation to the region. However, the Asians also contribute to the introduction of their foods to the region, which are enjoyed by the native Africans. Such foods as *chapati*, *pilau*, tea and *samosa* among many others, are enjoyed by non-Asian characters in the selected texts.

This chapter also examined the use of language as a medium of cultural transmission and translation. The East African Asians adapt the use of English and Kiswahili as the languages of the region in order to interact and transact business easily with other

communities. This assimilation is witnessed when Asian characters in the selected texts use Kiswahili and English when transacting business or even interacting and socializing with either the native Africans, whites, Arabs or even their very own Asian children. By speaking a language of the majority, the Asians are able to navigate around feelings of hatred and prejudices from the other races, especially the natives, that would result in fear and anxieties within the community.

Apart from competent use of the languages of the majority in the region, the East African Asians too take the hobby of watching movies as part of their leisure activities. As seen in the selected texts, the Asians enjoy using movies as avenues for social interactions as well as opportunities to learn other people's culture. The movies they watch range from action movies to romantic ones. They also enjoy watching their own Asian movies, as reminiscence to their own culture.

The East African Asians therefore, develop a survival strategy in the region, to circumvent their chronic nervous condition. This strategy of adaptation helps them develop a cosmopolitan identity, that allows them to be accepted in the region, as seen from the characters in the selected texts. Apparently, the third generation of the Asians in East Africa do not have a problem with free interaction across racial boundaries, as they have been born and raised in the region. They normally get confused whenever their parents keep advising them against interacting with their friends from other races. These constant advises and stern warnings of repercussions end up causing fear and anxieties among the young generation. However, they most of the time, choose to rebel and go ahead follow their hearts' desires, which sometimes ends up badly.

**CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,  
RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER  
RESEARCH**

**7.1 Introduction**

This study set out to interrogate the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their identity as demonstrated in the selected texts. It further examined how selected East African Asian writers present emotions of fear and anxiety in their texts in a manner that frames the community's fragile identity in both the present and future. Finally, the study investigated how East African Asians negotiate their belonging and difference in their respective countries as depicted in the selected texts. It used both psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories in the analysis of the selected East African Asian texts.

The works which were based on thematic concerns, characterization and period of production, range from the first East African Asian novel written in English in the nineteen sixties to the recent novel published in the new millennium, which highlights the transient nature of fear and anxiety.

The preceding chapters have examined how the authors problematize fear and anxiety through history, both as a concept and a marker of Asian identity. They have analyzed the depiction of various aspects of fear and anxiety with a view to establishing how they function in relation to the diasporic imagination. They have also examined the negotiation of a hospitable space in the region by the East African Asian community through participation in various development activities in the region. Specifically, the chapters interrogated the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their fragile sense of identity in the selected texts. They also examined the place of fear and anxiety in the quest for identity among East African Asians. Finally, they examined

how East African Asians negotiate their sense of belonging and difference in their respective countries as depicted in the selected texts.

## **7.2 Summary of Findings**

This section highlights the major findings upon which the conclusions are drawn.

### **7.2.1 Walking in the Shadow of History**

The first objective of the study was to interrogate the nexus between the history of East African Asians and their fragile sense of identity in the selected texts. The study established that, as immigrants, the Asians experience alienation through movement. The physical and psychological dislocation from their original home in Asia, contributes to the fragile nature of their identity. The historical events shape the identity of East African Asian community through movement, colonialism, and African nationalism. For instance, the Asians first find themselves in East Africa as indentured laborers during the construction of Kenya-Uganda railway by the British colony.

It is therefore, evident that colonialism contributes to the creation of fragile identities among the East African Asian community through the initiation of racial hierarchies by British colonialists where the whites are placed at the top of the social ladder, followed by Asians, then Africans at the bottom. The in-between position of the Asians makes it hard for them to interact with both the Whites and Blacks because the former are superior while the latter inferior to them respectively, which makes them, according to Warah (1998) lack the authority of the oppressor as well as the humanity of the oppressed. This form of stratified arrangement leads to tension between East African Asians and the native Africans which spans decades.

Another issue that emerges in the selected Asian texts is African nationalism. African nationalism advocates for the distribution of wealth by the new regime of East African leaders to the native Africans after independence. During the colonial era, it emerges that Asians were acting as middlemen between colonialists and the Africans which results to a lot of suspicion and mistrust from the natives, who doubt their being Africans despite their long stay in the region. It therefore, emerges that after independence, the new regime turns against the Asians, blaming them for the country's problems.

The study therefore, found out about the new form of African nationalism that set out to isolate the East African Asians due to their perceived role as collaborators during colonialism. The authors highlight the violent and greedy regimes of the native Africans after independence in East Africa who engage in grabbing businesses owned by other races like Asians as well as end up assassinating those who try to oppose their weird actions. The study shows how national identity finds itself in conflict with the diasporic identities through stereotyping which leads to nervous conditions among East African Asians. The conflict can also be attributed to the complacency with which the East African Asian community enjoyed their privileged position created by the colonialists, as the native Africans suffered racial discrimination.

For all the texts, such aspects as travel motif, memory of home and migrant subjectivities, become crucial in the formation of East African Asian identity. For instance, the crossborder movements necessitate interactions between diverse communities, leading to transculturation. This history is therefore narrated through the experiences of individual characters in the selected texts as well as their psychological introspection.

The Asian community's history also depicts movement across the Indian Ocean to East Africa as a result of a painful experience through multiple colonization. The experience results in an identity of fear and anxiety among the group, forcing them to yield to successive colonial masters for security. They later, have to run away from their home for fear of an eminent colonization, hence their dislocated identity. The migration becomes both physical and psychological as a result of their historical experiences.

History therefore, serves to both alienate and give the Asians a sense of belonging depending on one's standpoint. To the locals, the Asians' history reveals their foreign roots hence constructing them as outsiders. To the Asians themselves, their history enables them to construct a legitimate belonging to the nation of Kenya. Colonial history that privileged the Asians over Africans also form the background for postcolonial conflict between the races.

### **7.2.2 Experiencing Chronic Nervous Conditions**

On the representation of identity, the study found that fear and anxiety play a significant role in marking out the East African Asian identity, as highlighted through characterization and imagery. The Asian characters in selected texts grapple with such issues as in-between-ness, ambivalence, and marginalization in their attempt to claim citizenship in East Africa, which results in feelings of anxiety and fear. The second generation East African Asians are possessed with fear and anxiety of losing their original Asian identity and at the same time, acquiring a new identity which is African.

The authors have used varied images effectively to represent fear among the East African Asian community. As such, it is emergent that fear and anxiety betray the discomfitures of the East African Asians in terms of their sense of belonging and in

turn, solidifies their communal identity. the perceived threats against them makes them to upscale in-group identity and make more claims to their East Africanness.

There is also anxiety surrounding sexual relationships between the East African Asian community and native Africans which is highly sensitive and regarded as a taboo for the Asians. This form of anxiety about the incompatibility of intimate relationship between Asians and Africans breeds ground for stereotypes concerning the Asian community. The Asian characters become paranoiac whenever they discover their children, especially girls, having a romantic affair with a native African boy, and are ready to do everything possible to stop the relationship, including killing somebody.

The anxiety demonstrated by the Asian community in East Africa displays their concerns about maintenance of racial/ethnic purity, which would then mean loss of the Asian identity. As a result of their fear of losing an identity, the East African Asian community develop a form of cultural insulation, which keeps them together, and prevents other races from accessing them. This is witnessed when some Asian characters decline to engage in relationships with native Africans, instead preferring to date fellow Asians. This insulation is what contributes to misconceptions from other races towards the Asians.

While they isolate themselves to maintain racial identity and purity, the East African Asians equally marginalize themselves and remain a distinct minority that is treated with suspicion by the locals. This is the ambivalence of their aloofness. They want to be East African without being African. The Asians want to belong to the East African nations on their own terms which creates problems with the native Africans.

### 7.2.3 The Legacy of Asianness in East Africa

This study further, looks at how East African Asians assert their presence in the region in order to be accepted, despite grappling with identity issues. It is observed that the community has negotiated belonging in the hostile spaces it occupies by establishing themselves economically, socially, politically and intellectually. It engages in development activities in the region through business entrepreneurship leading to the name *dukawalla*. The community therefore uses Kiswahili as a language of communication during business transactions as well as daily interaction with the other communities. The Asians also participate in consumption of the local cuisines such as *ugali*, and *sukumawiki* as a way of negotiating belonging, as reflected in the selected texts.

The study further reveals that the East African Asian identity is still a work in progress as shown by how the characters from the new generation relate with other races. They are slowly adopting a cosmopolitan disposition, as opposed to the parents' racial attitude. The cosmopolitan disposition is manifested in the adoption of the local languages like Kiswahili and preparation of local cuisines among others. The East African Asians are also willing to share out some aspects of their culture with the locals, like cuisines. This explains that the East African Asian identity is not fixed but fluid in nature. The idea of construction of identity as an evolving process, is in tandem with Hall's (1990) position that, "instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Cultural Identity, 222).

It therefore emerges that, although scholars like Ojwang (2013) have raised valid questions concerning the future of East African Asian dislocated identity as a result of

their anxieties and fears, this study finds that the community is slowly embracing integration with host countries. There is a paradigm shift in the identity formation process, especially from the perspective of the present and future generation, which is not racial but cosmopolitan, making them citizens of the world. This is manifested in the selected texts where young Asian characters have no issue interacting with everybody including the native Africans through education and social engagements. The group experiences more problems, fears and anxieties with their parents, who form the second generation of East African Asians, than the native Africans. The children however, develop a rebellious attitude towards the racial and discriminatory beliefs in their community by having intimate relationships across different races and social status.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

First, the study concludes that history operates like a double-edged sword for the Asians in East Africa with regards to perceptions about their sense of belonging. By inserting their own voices in the narration of their history through literary works, the East African Asians gain significant mileage in so far as claims for identity are concerned. Indeed, as Achebe (1959) observes, “until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will continue to glorify the hunter”. (175)

Second, the study arrives at the conclusion that fear and anxiety serve as unconscious mechanisms for the negotiation of Asian identity in the East African region. Through fear and anxiety, the Asians mold a cautious sense of national identity that remains in a state of flux, while strengthening a decisive in-group identity among themselves. To them, aspirations to a strong national identity must be firmly rooted in an authentic communal identity.

Finally, the study concludes that the aspirations of Asians to a sense of belonging within the East African context is characterized by a sense of ambivalence. They simultaneously nurture cosmopolitan visions as well as a desire for difference. The result of this is a community at crossroads and for whom full-scale integration remains a dream more than a century after settlement within the region.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

The study found makes the following recommendations.

Historians should consider literary works by East African Asians as reliable sources of historical records, as they seek to record the history of the nations in the region.

Psychologists should consider using literary texts by East African Asians in understanding and handling cases on emotions such as fear and anxiety within the migrant society.

Curriculum developers should consider including more books by East African Asians in the curriculum to enhance national integration. Such books could include set books and course books.

#### **7.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

As a result of the above findings, this study makes the following suggestions for further research.

- i. This study focused on the psychological aspects such as fear and anxiety which emerge as markers of identity among the East African Asians. However, there is need to look at other aspects that may influence identity of the East African Asian community such as gender and politics among others.

- ii. This study dealt with only one genre of literature, the prose, in looking at the psychological aspect of the East African Asian community, but there is also need to study how the Asian authors in East Africa such as Patel, Sondhi and Warah use other genres like poetry, drama and auto/biography respectively to highlight issues affecting them.
- iii. Since this study dealt with only one immigrant race in East Africa, the Asians, there is need to study how other immigrant races in the region like Arabs and Whites represent themselves and other races in their literary texts.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Research Approval**



**JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**  
BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES  
*Office of the Director*

Tel. 057-2501804  
Email: [bps@jooust.ac.ke](mailto:bps@jooust.ac.ke)

P.O. BOX 210 - 40601  
BONDO

**Our Ref:** Z562/4351/2018

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021

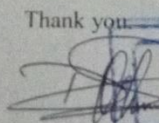
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: MAKHAKHA JOSEPH WANGILA – Z562/4351/2018**

The above person is a bonafide postgraduate student of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology in the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences pursuing a PhD in Literature. He has been authorized by the University to undertake research on the topic: *“The Belonging-Disjuncture Double Bind: Fragile Identities in the Works of East African Asians”*.

Any assistance accorded him shall be appreciated.

Thank you


Prof. Dennis Ochiudho

**DIRECTOR, BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

## APPENDIX I1: Ethics Review Approval



JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA  
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
DIVISION OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH  
JOOUST-ETHICS REVIEW OFFICE

Tel. 057-2501804  
Email: [erc@jooust.ac.ke](mailto:erc@jooust.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.jooust.ac.ke](http://www.jooust.ac.ke)

P.O. BOX 210 - 40601  
BONDO

OUR REF: JOOUST/DVC-RIO/ERC/E3

20<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

Joseph Wangila Makhakha  
SEHSS  
JOOUST

Dear Mr. Makhakha,

**RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TITLED "THE BELONGING  
DISJUNCTURE DOUBLE BIND. FRAGILE IDENTITIES IN THE WORKS OF EAST  
AFRICAN ASIANS"**

This is to inform you that JOOUST ERC has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is ERC 24/8/21-3. The approval period is from 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 – 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2022.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations and violations) are submitted for review and approval by JOOUST IERC.
- iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to NACOSTI IERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks of affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to NACOSTI IERC within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to JOOUST IERC.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

for

Prof. Francis Anga'wa  
Chairman, JOOUST ERC

Copy to: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, RIO      Director, BPS      Dean, SEHSS


### APPENDIX III: Research Permit

  
**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Ref No: **350649** Date of Issue: **25/May/2022**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**




This is to Certify that **Mr.. Joseph makhakha Wangila of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research in Siaya on the topic: The Belonging-Disjuncture Double Bind: Fragile Identities in in the Works of East African Asians for the period ending : 25/May/2023.**

License No: **NACOSTI/P/22/17802**

**350649**  
Applicant Identification Number

*Walter*  
Director General  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

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