



The portraits of Powerlessness, Meaninglessness and Normlessness as Reflected in Dinaw Mengestu's Trilogy

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Abstract

This study focuses on the themes of alienation in three fictional works of Dinaw Mengestu; “The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears” (2007), “How to Read the Air” (2010), and “All Our Names” (2014). This research aims to investigate specifically the causes of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness forms of alienation enumerated by extracting the fundamental concern that human being faces in the course of immigration. This study deals with the major concerns and matters of the immigrants’ causes and reactions to alienation regardless of the reasons for their exodus. The main reason for focusing on the concept of alienation in the selected novels is that this area of literary theme has not been given enough attention to be studied comprehensively in the context of African (Ethiopians) immigrants’ life. Besides, no other Ethiopian literary work has portrayed on these themes of meaninglessness, normlessness, and powerlessness better than the selected three novels that have dealt with the pain and sufferings of alienation in their lives. This study tried to explore the immigrants’ sense of alienation in the hosting country and in the process of immigration, where life as an immigrant was unbearable, forcing them to try the process of economic. An attempt was made to explore the multiple dimensions of alienation and the alienating factors based on Melvin Seeman’s aspects of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, and meaninglessness. The selected three literary immigrant novels reveal the feelings of alienation as a central thematic preoccupation. The researcher used textual analysis to explore the selected literary works and captured the portrayal of alienation of the African immigrants which allows the understanding, process, and witnessing of human suffering.

Keywords: Alienation, Dinaw, Seeman, powerlessness, and meaninglessness, Normlessness

1. Introduction

In a sociological view, it can be said that the human being lives in a group for various socio-economic advantages as a universal due to its basic behavioral characteristic of nature. A person was not created to live alone; he or she was designed to live in fellowship: First, fellowship with God; then, fellowship with other men. That is what the Bible tells us. This suggests that human beings cannot possibly live alone effectively to win a meaningful essence of life because they have the potential of getting a better advantage in their lives in communion. According to the Open Bible (1985), human beings first fellowshiped with God and then, fellowshiped with another man that advocates social and collective shares. The basic intention of such a sociological concept is a continuous and interdependent relationship among the individuals within a certain group of society. By its nature, taking man as a social animal is to mean human beings can never exclude themselves from society. In their attempt to live without interdependence on one another, they possibly show either wild behavior, or they should have a divinity power.

Similarly, the undeniable truth about the impact of creating a better personality through the attitudes, beliefs, morals, ideas, and overall conduct can be shaped by the influence of the community where s/he lives. All these are established through communication and interpersonal relationships with others. For some reasons, it can be difficult to function properly for some people if the social norms do not allow them to practice all those mentioned interactions because the natural or artificial forces influence them to live accompanying different from their inclined association. Hence, they may develop and experience various forms of alienation in such absence of natural interactions within the society or in their state of denial to access the natural and fundamental desires of fulfilling the primary human necessities. In such a situation, social restrictions and specific inadequacies have pushed modern human beings into a despairing personal world that is not connected to others around them, and the result of such despondences may create different problems. In line with this, the social, political, and economic circumstances of a particular society have insightful effects on the literary preoccupation of writers who want to associate themselves with the reality of their communities.

The study deals with the themes of alienation in the three novels of Dinaw Mengestu: “The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears” (2007), “How to Read the Air” (2010), and “All Our Names” (2014). The reason why alienation becomes a major preoccupation of human conditions in the selected novels is

portrayed as one of the greatest problems of the meaning and purpose of life on earth. Alienation is widespread and can be seen in different forms of portrayal in various genres of literature. One of the areas of literary genre that deals with this concept is the novel in general and the immigrant novel in particular. As explained in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy published (Aug30, 2018), alienation can be viewed as an aspect of the theory, concept, philosophy or pragmatic reality, or may be considered as a fictional state of mind in which it is to be taken a multidisciplinary concept. It can be argued that alienation is one of the profound and central issues of immigrant literary works with specific references to contemporary novels though it needs an intensive study to identify its form of existence. In his interview with DW (15/9/2014), Dinaw, as a second-generation African immigrant, has produced the three novels to inform his experience of immigration as equal as the first-generation immigrant communities feel it.

2. Significance of the Study

Various researchers who are interested to conduct their studies on the issue of alienation may find it helpful to access the concept of alienation for their study and see further gaps in researchable areas. This study also helps to contribute its role in a brief way to a better understanding of alienation through the lives of the immigrants in the selected novels. Thus, this productive effort of the study could help the understanding of the precise sources of alienation among different groups of society that would also allow us to plan a better social policy to tackle the foundation of the problems. This research also creates significant awareness of the causes and consequences of immigration in the lives of the immigrant characters of the selected novels. It could be further utilized in creating consciousness about the potential distraction of dislocation and relocation of human beings since the issue of migration has become a global burden as it is a common concern for the international communities. Furthermore, this study significantly offers data to the stakeholders of the immigrant institutions while attempting to publicize the African immigrants' current conditions and come up with a possible solution to the migration problems. Last but not least, this study could inspire various fields of social and human studies to integrate literature in their fields of study.

3. Review of Related Studies

For his M.A thesis, Theodros (2005) conducted a study on Some Aspects of Alienation Reflected in V.S. Naipaul's Half a Life. The study dealt with the concept of alienation as reflected in the context

of Caribbean immigrant characters. As Theodros states in his statement of the problem, the study focused on the question of identity in the colonial era based on the Marxist point of view focused on mainly political and economic perspectives of alienation. Esmaeel and Hojjat (2012) are other researchers who have also conducted collaborative research on the themes of alienation with the title of “A Survey of Man's Alienation in Modern World”. These researchers aimed at recalling different modes of alienation in the modern world, and they look closely at the contemporary alienations of the characters in Sam Shepard’s *Buried Child* and *True West*. They also attempted to analyze the mentioned novels by applying Paul Sartre's ethical alienation and Heidegger's ontological alienation to these works.

Abdul (2013) has studied a “Theme of Alienation in Modern Literature”. He has selected modern European and American literary novels for his analysis of alienation. Accordingly, the alienated characters in the Novels that he has selected are recurrent figures in much of post-modern American and European fiction. Another related work by Ahmed (1987) is “The Theme of Alienation in the Major Novels of Thomas Hardy” which is one of the prominent research projects on the theme of alienation. It mainly focused on the theme of alienation in general and the causes of human isolation in particular, and it analyzed the selected novels of the wide trajectory of Victorian literature. The following two academic papers are also very pertinent to this study because these research works have taken the trilogy. One of them is Sylvia’s (2015) thesis *Re/Creating History through the Persistence of Memory in How to Read the Air*, and she tried to explore the combination and relationship between the real experiences of the immigrant communities and the experiences of the present fictional characters. Sylvia’s preliminary point of discussion was recreating narratives of the past and narratives of identity about time and space regarding *How to Read the Air* and other immigrant novels.

4. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to explore the themes of alienation of the immigrants in the selected literary texts.

- Portray meaninglessness, powerlessness, and normlessness forms of alienation in the selected trilogy
- Show the major causes and effects of meaninglessness, powerlessness, and normlessness of the immigrants in the selected novels.

5. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Concerning the theoretical frame of this study, the researcher took Seeman's (1959) sociological dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Different scholars have tried to rephrase and interpret Seeman's theory of alienation in the contexts and fields of various disciplines since a lot of things have been changed since the production of Seeman's work. The present researcher has taken this framework considering its visibility for the selected novels. Melvin Seeman published his theory, on the Meaning of Alienation (1959), in the journal *American Sociological Review* as an attempt to identify the meaning of the concept of alienation. This theory is cherished by various areas of study because it has comprehensively redefined the publication of Marx's manuscripts. In his piece, Seeman explains the duty as being to produce a specific and unique social aspect rather than a global indicator of the individual's feelings of pleasure or hopelessness, discomfort or dissatisfaction, uselessness or hopefulness.

6. Analysis and Discussions

Kalekin Fishman (1996:97) states powerlessness as: "the gap existing between what a person wants to do and what that person feels capable of doing". This point implies the inability, vulnerability, and dependency of a person to determine his fate in the challenges of daily life. When the individual's decision-making apparatus in the overall activities of social structure is disabled or excluded, that person can be labeled as powerless to impact his or her destiny. Such instance of powerlessness is portrayed in Mariam's profound feeling of disillusionment. The researcher marks Mariam's disillusionment as a state of powerlessness because of the unanticipated conditions she faces in the new homeland and the breach of her boundless hope. The introspective immigrant characters, Mariam and Angela, are aware of their shortcomings; however, they know and understand little about their husbands, and they could not make efforts to acquire goal-relevant information to change the situations because they could not control the external environment such as Jonas' workplaces and Yosef's journey.

Seeman (1959:361) also describes the aspect of powerlessness, "those who are low in expectancy for control are not interested in and do not absorb control-relevant learning". An individual having a generalized expectancy to control his or her love relationship may develop a feeling of powerlessness.

The two female characters develop no interest to know their husbands' realities because they could not relevantly control every bit of information regarding their family; thus, the way they react is an indication of their powerlessness. In such a situation, Yosef and Mariam reach the level of superficial relationship as they continue to mistreat and miscommunicate in their daily activities. Since they hope for a better life, no one could imagine the viability of coercive confrontation between them. However, Mariam feels helplessness to shield herself from her husband's coercive attack. No one is around or nowhere to go to stop him from biting her until a scar is left on her face. Jonas narrates the severe pain of his mother: "The last fight they had had before that morning left my mother with a deep black and purple bruise on her right arm, just below her shoulder" (HRA:9). As a consequence of such physical abuses by her husband, she loses basic human rights and hope. In the contemporary world, life has become so complex; that the relationship between husband and wife becomes obscured.

Jonas is stuck in dilemma after realizing his inability to integrate the memory of his parent's distressing experience. He states the state of internal suffering: "...I'm going in order to submit to the confusion of time and memory carried in by the breeze. Within a single breath I can jump across decades" (HRA: 116). This is why the researcher strongly argues that (HRA) deals with the power of imagination revealing the relationship between his true and false identities as a helpless African immigrant. Additionally, the immigrants' feelings of despair are foregrounded by contemporary literary works, and HRA particularly exemplifies Jonas as a typical character who becomes so helpless to control and manipulate his mental freedom. Thus, Jonas is in a critical state of limbo with his identity because he frequently finds himself in a terrible state of identity confusion as a result of his parents' disconcerted lives and his destitute relationship with his wife.

Similarly, The Ethiopian Isaac in "All Our Names" (AON) was an immigrant who came across various experiences of disdain, feelings of isolation, despair, and anguish and gradually retreated from social realities through the influence of depressing situations and social constructions of the hosting country. The researcher has identified that psychological and social alienation aggravated the facets of dehumanization and further destroyed the immigrants' conscience with eventual cynicism. In the final section of (AON) part one, the author also tries to demonstrate the frustration (meaninglessness) of the people in a multicultural Uganda illustrated through social divisions. This situation and the inter-clan killing which rocked Uganda during the revolutionary war marginalized some of the individuals.

As an immigrant writer, AON acts as a voice for the anguish of the civilians who live far from their original land and become victims of reality because of identity differences. The life of Isaac in Uganda and the US was very complex to put plainly, full of mess in the context of his main purpose of dislocation.

The other form of alienation is proposed by Seeman (1959: 786) “Meaninglessness is characterized by a low expectancy that satisfactory predictions outcomes of behavior can be made”. Contemporary immigrant literary novels usually employ fragmentation of stories to show the meaninglessness of modern human lives. The whole narrations of the stories in the three novels are presented with fragmented spatial and chronological techniques, shifting forward and backward between present and past experiences of the immigrants to display the meaninglessness of their new lives. Sometimes it goes back to times in Africa; at other times the fragments capture the first years of the characters in America. For example, in the beginning, part of the novel in (BT), the series of stories takes place in May after the departure of Judith and Naomi from Logan Circle. The next chapter takes us eight months back to September to show the previous year around the time Judith moves into Logan Circle. This deliberate back and forth movement show the disjointed and meaninglessness nature of life. Such fragmentation underlines the futility of the immigrants’ search for a meaningful life and the predicaments of modern times.

In a different scenario of example in the (BT), the departure of the characters Judith and Naomi from Logan Circle in a very critical condition is a very painful loss of hope to the narrator, Stephanos. The accidental separation of Stephanos from his dreaming family makes him trigger again the traumatic loss of his father and homeland seventeen years ago during the ‘Red Terror’ in Ethiopia. The failure of making a cherished relationship with Judith and his failed attempt of forgetting the miserable past becomes the reason for him to develop certain frustrating consciousness about life in the US. To display the condition, Stephanos said, “There are already too many hours in the day; to worry about anyone, in particular, are pointless” (BT: 35). His inclination to pursue an essential value in life seems unachievable; tackling any problem for purposeful life becomes useless. In his narration about Christmas, Stephanos expresses his frustration after he realizes his dream of making a family with Judith becomes unattainable. Next to that excruciating night, he joins his two immigrant friends laughing sarcastically at their isolation, mocking one another until, “the night faded into a blurry,

indistinguishable memory” (BT: 180). This also illustrates the three friends’ freedom of movement is restricted after realizing their hope of success in American society fails. As it is said earlier, various aspects of alienation can overlap in a single series, and the above abstract may describe a feeling of estrangement besides the feeling of meaninglessness because of the interdependence of various modes of alienation. Consequently, African immigrants are victims of various difficulties that result in the ultimate state of meaninglessness

Furthermore, Jonas in (HRA) narrates his parents’ ungrateful condition of life through Mariam’s unconscious use of the terms ‘fall’ and ‘agony’ in her effort to justify the immigration life so as to protect her decaying marriage. As a result, at some point in her life, Mariam gives up the persistent strive of improving her family: “Fall was the repose that made both possible and bearable, and now here she was with her husband next to her, heading headlong into an early-fall afternoon with only the vaguest ideas of who they were becoming and what came next” (HRA: 13). Yosef does not make an effort equally to protect their marriage from falling apart because his traumatic life in the US makes him hopeless to understand his wife and the decadence of his family. Their relationship is bounded by the emotion of uncertainty and lack of open and meaningful discussion as long as they do not understand the events in which they take part. Both of them frequently express discomforting blame for each other which eventually creates the ultimate result of downhearted and abandoned forms of feelings.

Related to the above, Jonas reflects on his hopelessness of the three years serious relationship he had built with his wife; however, they do not show respect for each other as husband and wife. Let’s see what Jonas tells his wife regarding their relationship: “We had been married for three years, but we had spent much of the past six months hardly talking except to exchange pointed attacks at each other” (HRA:15). Such poor and undesirable communication is a desperate manifestation of life without long term principle. This state of despondency about their future is an implication of the disregarded value of their lives. Even they could not make any attempt to discuss and avoid their problems as husband and wife. They live together without caring for one another because they lost hope to reconstruct their relationship.

As it is depicted in (HRA), the turning point for Jonas is when he understands his relationship with Angela flattens to the lowest after he lost his job at the immigration center. To save their failing marriage, Angela gets him a part-time job teaching at a school. However, he knows it is unlikely to be fruitful in spite of her efforts. Jonas hopelessly reacts to the crumbling relationship: “Even had I wanted to, I couldn’t have said to Angela. While she claimed to have forgiven me for lying to her, the damage remained. Her trust in me, and our relationship, was far from repaired” (HRA: 53). Had Jonas surmounted and handled the circumstance as equal as Angela, their relationship would not have ended. Rather, he accelerates the end despite Angela’s positive mentality and persistence. He is frustrated by his unwelcoming personal experience which produces an absence of meaning in his relationship with Angela. Human beings by nature are social creatures striving to fulfill meaningful social coordination and relationship. As social creatures, we seek pleasure in our lives as long as we share emotion, passion, and love.

More spectacularly, there has a similitude of commitment to the portrait of the psychological makeup of the immigrants while facing challenges to reach their final destination. Jonas retrospectively recounts his father’s state of traumatic memory: “My father, Yosef Getachew Woldemariam, dreamed of boxes until the last days of his life (P: 42)”. This portrait of psychological trauma to the first-generation immigrant disturbs the rest of his family and till the day of his life. The presentation of Yosef’s life with the power of reviewing the past suggests that a significant number of immigrants’ journeys affect the second and third immigrant generations in their attempt to integrate with the hosting people. Thus, the novel dedicates vast coverage to the immigrants’ trauma and psychological disturbances, symbolizing their terrible journey by ‘box’. The traumatic experience haunts Yosef until his death; it also affects the whole of his family. Seeman (1959: 789) has argued about meaninglessness when “the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe...”. In post-modern literary works, characters are denoted when their daily experiences create some difficulties for them to predict the outcomes of their actions. As a contemporary literary piece, the target novel vividly presents such confusion as an outcome of the difficult situation through Angela’s life experience and the way she loses her job as a lawyer. She describes the moment: “when a judge handed down the second defeat two months later, Angela was fully convinced that she was going to be fired” (HRA:79). Angela’s financial source stalls, and this economic crisis deteriorates her relationship with Jonas,

fueling their uncertainty of rapprochement. This complicated environment suggests that a meaningless relationship is built by materialism; the decline of financial provision also ruins the constructed relationship. Both Jonas and Angela are unfortunate for facing the same destiny of losing their jobs. And this incident is to be labeled as a meaninglessness aspect of alienation because Jonas and Angela are intensely suffering from loss, futility, and emptiness.

In spite of his unprecedented optimism about his parents and country, Isaac is frustrated after realizing that his father could not allow him to go to school and his country is in civil war. He frequently articulates his desperation and the vainness of life. This aura of alienation exacerbates his desperation since he could not attain the meaning of life. A metaphorical simile is used to emphasize the deep sense of the futility of the immigrants, depicting Isaac as a person detained behind a cell. Isaac states it: "I felt as if I had been into a prison" (AON.178). Isaac convinces himself that living in such circumstances is like being confined in prison with no basic human rights. This is one of the complementary reasons why Isaac decides to go far from his home where there might be any fortune to bring him to new life. Bill Ashcroft et al. (2000:9) have raised a point that strengthens this point, "A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration". Life is not as easy as many have expected in metropolitan cities as long as that person continues confronting the experience of immigration. African immigrants may not have freedom as others due to the existence of unbalanced attitudes of the hosting countries toward the African culture. Isaac and other immigrants set goals and dream big to make a better future, but they realize their dream is meaningless. Meaninglessness aspect of alienation is fundamentally an existential issue that reflects the life of the immigrants.

The third dimension of alienation is normlessness which has been specifically defined by Seeman (1959: 788) as, a "high expectancy that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve given goals". A typical portrait of this state of feeling in (BT) is Stephanos's failure of his serious relationship with Judith is another form of a discontented experience of feeling that shadows more than one dimension of alienation. After his hope to own Judith, unsuccessfully ends he frustratingly violates the norm that governs our social aspects. At the expense of his frequent failure, he brings a prostitute to his home simply to gratify his internal drive after understanding his attempt to get Judith is impossible. He describes the situation, "...I wanted to see myself fully and honestly, naked in my bed

with a woman whose real name I would never know. I took pleasure in feeling another body under me and on top of me” (BT: 163). Stephanos realizes that Judith and Naomi are unlikely to be part of his dreaming family; he feels that his future becomes gloomy and directionless, and this explicitly forces him to respond by normless action. The way he reacted to her because of his frustration to get Judith shows the crisis of his moral values. As Seeman (1959) has elucidated, the concept of normlessness and meaninglessness are ambiguous as to what the individual ought to rely on or the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision making are not met. Stephanos, as a victim of the new life, challenges an enormous state of dissatisfaction in the form of meaninglessness and normlessness.

The second target novel, “How to Read the Air” (HRA) plainly displays certain distresses of anomie when the represented immigrants showed a lack of social norms. Jonas in this novel tries to deceive Andrew, the man who provides him with a supportive recommendation to get a job at the American high school. Angela reveals his lie: “I’m promoted. I’m going to be teaching some of the more senior level English classes...” (HRA: 227). In fact, he was not promoted. Jonas again denies it when the dean of the school asks him for the conformation of the information coming out, “I never spoke to anyone about teaching here.... I didn’t say anything else about the school. You can ask my wife. She was there.” (HRA: 248). Following the resentful behavior, he admits that the school decides to fire him from his job. The deceptive behavior Jonas frequently displays may be attributed to his upbringing in what is said to be “not an exemplary family”.

The personality he exhibits can be labeled as an unaccepted behavior of reaching the desired goal; sociologists call such kind of reflection a state of normlessness. His personality is the reason for the demise and end of his marriage besides not safeguarding his job. By any means, his actions can be assumed as an inappropriate social norm, which is no longer effective to secure his work and rescuing his relationship with Angela. Such absurd personality can also be seen in terms of how one should not be acting in various situations of relationships. Neal and Collas (2002:122) define normlessness as “sudden and abrupt changes occur in life conditions, and the norms that usually operate may no longer seem adequate as guidelines for conduct.” During their winter vacation, Angela confesses to Jonas that she is unfaithful to their conjugal relationship because she sleeps with Andrew before they legally end their marriage. Her confession is, “I began sleeping with someone else...I hardly even cared about, just because I thought it might make me feel better. Less alone” (HRA: 254).

In any social norm, infidelity is prohibited and should not be tolerated as a choice to solve what so ever personal problem anyone has faced. In fact, her misconduct comes after their relationship deteriorates, to avoid isolation though it accelerates the falling of their relationship. Breaking the existing norms, to Angela, is a means of avoiding personal estrangement; she thinks going out with another person gives her a feeling of association. Nevertheless, this is unethical to the conservative society; it even makes her prone to the exposition of social alienation. Such anomie may prevail as a result of the personal syndrome; it may also create self-estrangement, meaninglessness, and social isolation in the context of various social reactions whereby there is a discrepancy between the social structure and the individual's personality.

The same state of feeling in a different condition, Mariam's strong wish for the death of her husband, just to claim her freedom, is an instance of moral corruption, and the social relationships of human beings are basically violated simply for temporary satisfaction. Such an act of self-indulgence may create further alienation of the individual's social participation. Mariam violates the social norm as a means of accommodating her freedom. Such violation of accepted morality contributes to the rapid deterioration of social ethical values. In her final sentimental sense of relief, she describes the death of her husband as "A great weight had been lifted off my shoulders" (HRA: 280). To speak frankly, this excerpt shows the dark side and the harsh reality of unplanned immigration lives. By the time they stay together, Mariam's physical body has been never far away from her husband though she was psychologically far away from him. Since she has found no real meaning in her marriage, she is entirely withdrawn and isolated, in which no one could understand her problem; she even has no real friendship with anyone in her neighborhood in the new home. Ultimately, she internally demands the unconditional death of her husband realizing it is the only option to liberate her from the coercive action of her husband. However, she is emotional to imagine the wrong way of attempting to resolve her psychological disturbance. After the death of her husband, she continues with the bad memories of harassment by her husband and the yearning for the good days of her home country which affects her not to begin a better life entirely out of her expectation.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The mishandlings and misunderstandings of African immigrants in their hosting societies are demonstrated in the three novels of Dinaw Mengestu. African culture is wrongly perceived as

devastatingly uncivilized and irrelevant to the further confirmation of the prejudiced treatment of the immigrants. As a result, the African immigrants are exposed to various psychological challenges of isolation, up to the extent of blaming themselves for misconceptions by the hosting country. Thus, their alienation results have prevailed in various forms of racial discrimination, and social rejection, and reinforces a generally anti-immigrant-attitude, which in turn obstructs the immigrants from feeling at home in the USA. While alienation of the immigrants in the US has been a longstanding problem, the over-emphasis on African immigrants by African-born American authors like Dinaw predominantly makes international researchers pay attention to the concept of alienation in the 21st century. The harsh criticism of the American traditions of mocking others indicates an entire reconsideration and a shift in global attitudes upon the actual treatment of the African immigrants by the hosting societies.

Furthermore, the study has comprehensively shown the failures of the immigrants to visualize their dreams; failure, obstruction, unrest, isolation, and meaninglessness are some of the challenges the characters of the selected contemporary immigrant novels. The researcher has taken the selected trilogy for the current study since African immigrants in the US were not extensively explored. There is a significant number of immigrant fiction that depict the concerning issues of global immigrants; however, they are not easily available in third-world research. In the three novels, human lives are portrayed as the everlasting fight for the good of humanity that ends only in the suffering and death of the immigrant protagonists. No good avails to fight for survival where the immigrants are reduced to a pitiful figure by internal and external socio-psychological forces. The eventual failure of the immigrant characters relies on the way they challenge the environment of the hosting community. In a world of pain and failure, immigrants have their defense to assert their existence. To speak frankly, the individual has the freedom of will to create his values and ideals of reality. To overcome such confrontation, he has to carry on a consistent battle against the social and environmental barriers of this world which this study has attempted to investigate.

Speaking broadly, quantifying the feelings of alienation is very complex although it is possible to feel their prevalence because part of the subject's characteristics emerges from defining them based on attitudinal perspectives since the concept is multidisciplinary. In the three novels, the multiple identities of the immigrant characters, the one they left in their original home, and the new culture they

accommodate in their new home are dealt with in implicit and explicit attempts. In such dilemma of identity and in their effort to take part in every aspect of social activity, the immigrants face various challenges of alienation. Therefore, the study has concluded that the efforts of the target novels to present the reality and to trace the intersection of displacement and African solidarity are very successful.

Last but not least, the study strongly recommends that senior researchers should see and investigate that alienation can increase creativity if the immigrants are rejected enough, and could be a powerful force in the positive results of deep introspection and intellectual independence.

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