

Refugee Experience in *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow*: Identity Crisis,
Othering and Definition of Home

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

This thesis titled “Refugee Experience in I Saw Ramallah and The Bone Sparrow: Identity crisis, othering and definition of home and homelessness ” submitted by Susmita Farhin Pinak (ID No. 22263004) of Summer 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master’s in English on October, 2024.

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Abstract

The recent Israel-Palestine conflict and Rohingya genocide have escalated the refugee crisis to one of the most pressing issues worldwide. Both the Rohingya and the Palestinians are otherized based on their religious and cultural identities by the dominant groups. They have been brutally victimized for decades in their homelands, and these groups are now forced to live as outsiders in their own countries. They face marginalization in their host countries which make them suffer from severe identity crises and a sense of homelessness. Their histories are denied, their stories of suffering are distorted, and their voices are silenced by their governments. Refugee literature is an exceptional medium to explore these experiences, offering holistic insights into the conditions surrounding the refugee crisis. Novels narrated by refugees or inspired by true refugee experiences can provide a deeper understanding of their sufferings. *I Saw Ramallah*, a memoir by Mourid Barghouti is an impeccable example of a refugee narrative that tells the story of the exiled Palestinian writer's loss of home and conflicted identity. Zana Fraillon's fictional novel, *The Bone Sparrow*, inspired by real events in a refugee camp in Australia, portrays the true hardships of Rohingya refugees and their struggles to find a sense of self and existence. This thesis aims to show how refugee narratives address the real stories, sufferings, and traumas of refugees without any biases. The paper explores refugee experience by decoding the novels *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow* through the lens of Orientalism. This research examines the identity crisis, concept of home and homelessness and othering of the characters in the texts. The study further investigates the dehumanization and distortion of history and truths of the refugees by analyzing the characters of the texts.

Keywords: Refugee, identity crisis, othering, homelessness, displaced, community, excluded.

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Chapter- 1

Introduction

In the poem “Mural” (2000), written by Mahmoud Darwish, the speaker says, “But I will dream. May a certain land take me in as I am, one of the sea /of refugees./ Stop asking difficult questions about me, my place and whether my mother/ actually gave birth to me “ (Darwish, 148). The verses from the poem eloquently convey the psychological turmoil and the struggle for identity, existence, and belonging experienced by every refugee. Similar to Darwish’s poem, refugee literature serves as a powerful medium for exploring the experiences of refugees. The world has witnessed the overwhelming flow of displaced communities and refugees over the past ten years. Even today, we are witnessing some of the most severe refugee crises, as exemplified by the ongoing conflicts between Israel and Palestine, Rohingya and Myanmar, Ukraine and Russia and others. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi dully labels the decade as “decade of displacement” (Volk and Inhorn, 1). Therefore, the discussions surrounding the refugee crisis and refugee narratives have become more relevant than ever.

Refugees are best defined as individuals compelled to leave their homeland to escape persecution or conflict and, consequently, “no longer enjoy the legal protections afforded to citizens of a state” (Loscher, 5). When a person is designated as a refugee and excluded from the homeland, he or she becomes stateless. Neither the government and authorities of their birthplace accept them, nor do the countries where they seek refuge grant them the legal rights of a citizen. As a result, most people with legal citizenship and access to basic rights and justice view refugees as existing in a state of social limbo. They simply find themselves as non-existent beings who have no land to possess or belong to. They exist as physical entities, yet they do not exist in official

terms since they are not included in any census or archive. The refugees are no longer considered as normal human beings who deserve the same rights and benefits as every other citizen belonging to a certain state or a nation. They are otherized in their homeland as well as their host country. They are persecuted, tortured and uprooted from their own homeland and history of origin. Finally, they are displaced and become homeless, which leads them to identity crisis. In the mainstream media and news portals, we hear the numbers and statistics about the death toll or destruction of the lands or houses of refugees. They focus on the conflict between the governments regarding the refugee crisis or highlight the sensational stories about the wars. They seldom analyze the situation from below and cover the stories from the perspectives of the refugees. The media nowadays hardly pays attention to the identity crisis, sense of home and belonging, and the suffering and trauma of refugees as they are othered and marginalized. This thesis will discuss how these untold aspects of refugee experience are showcased in literature.

However, Palestinian and Rohingya refugees are impeccable examples of the otherization by the dominated groups. Both the Palestinian and Rohingya communities are Muslims and have been the victims of mass killings due to their religious identity. While the Rohingya issue is considered as the “textbook example of ethnic cleansing by the UN” (Bari, xvi), Palestinians have the longest history of displacement and make up the largest part of the global refugee population which is still an ongoing issue. The displacement of Palestinians primarily began with the birth of the State of Israel in 1948 on the land of Palestine forcing approximately 750,000 Palestinians to leave their homes and none among them “were allowed to return to the homes or communities from which they were displaced” (Volk, 3). After the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the houses of Palestinians were razed and demolished and more

Palestinians were displaced and became stateless and the same pattern was carried out in 1969 and 1971 (Said, 14). The ongoing war between Israel and Palestinian has killed more than 38,000 Palestinians and driven 2.3 million people from their homes which Israel justifies blaming the 7th October Attack by Hamas in 2023 (Reuters). They keep bombing and demolishing Palestinian houses, schools, hospitals and institutions. By doing all this, they aim to eradicate Muslim communities and erase the marks of their existence to establish the land solely for Zionists. Similarly, the Rohingyas were strategically excluded from their homeland due to their religious identity by the Buddhist nationalists of Myanmar by the means of various citizenship acts. Rohingyas originally belonged to the Arakan, formerly an independent province in Burma, where Islam was introduced by the Muslim traders in 11th century but eventually was invaded by Burma in 1784 (Ashiq and Kausar, 104). The British Empire came in this region and created a census in 1872 excluding the Rohingyas, as they were Muslim, from the Burmese community (Sultana and Harun, 23). After independence from the British, Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, introduced a citizenship law in 1982 to purposefully exclude the Rohingya community by denying the truth and cleanse Muslims from their land. The 1982 citizenship act made the Rohingya community officially displaced. The recent influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh was caused by an attack on Burmese military by a Rohingya armed insurgent group in 2016–2017 (Chowdhury, 3). As a consequence, Myanmar launched a “disproportionately large counterinsurgency measure” that forced about 700,000 Rohingya refugees flee from Myanmar and enter into Bangladesh in 2017, and the efflux continued in 2020 (Chowdhury, 3).

If we look back on our school days, we cannot recall any mention of the Bihari community, non-Bengali citizens in Bangladesh, or the Rohingya community in our textbooks because we were never encouraged to know about them or remember them. To be precise, our official history, “the

history publicly learned and celebrated” (Ricoeur, 85), does not include them. So, the authorities or the government who exclude certain communities from their territory conceal or fabricate the facts and history about the existence of that community in their lands. Therefore, their historical archives or official historical narratives do not tend to include the reality of the existence of refugees. Even if they do so, they fabricate their narratives in accordance with their own interest. As the refugees are neither part of the history of their host countries, the authorities of those countries are not interested in recording their stories or history of their origin. Thus, the true stories of refugees are never recorded unless the refugees narrate their own stories. In this regard, refugee literature can provide an impartial perspective without any influence of biases as the refugees narrate their stories with their own voices. Refugee narratives can work as the alternatives to the official archives or historical narratives. Mahmoud Darwish is esteemed as the national poet of Palestine, renowned for “poetry of resistance”. He has mostly written about Palestinian consciousness, question of identity, connection with their land and their oppression and persecution by the authoritative Israel. His poems are the vivid reflection of the stories of Palestinian refugee experience. Edward Said, a Palestinian American philosopher and the founder of the theory of Orientalism, also has spoken a lot about Palestinian history. His memoir, *Out of the Place*, conveys the authentic and raw experience of a Palestinian. Again, the poems of Mayyu Ali, a Rohingya refugee, serve as the alternate history of the Rohingya community to retell their stories. Through his poems, Mayyu Ali vividly portrays the brutal realities of dehumanization, torture, injustice, the quest for identity, and the jeopardized sense of self experienced by his people. Likewise, *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*, another biographical novel by Habiburrahman, provides the firsthand experience of a Rohingya refugee. This memoir narrates the eradication of Rohingya identity and existence in their own

country by the Myanmar authorities. Similar to these literary works, *I Saw Ramallah* by Mourid Barghouti and *The Bone Sparrow* Zana Fraillon serve as quintessential examples of refugee narratives that vividly depict the everyday struggles, quest for identity and home, and the otherization faced by Palestinian and Rohingya refugees. Both texts offer nuanced insight and understanding of the refugee experience. Therefore, to fulfill the purpose of this discourse, we are analyzing these two texts. By studying these two novels, the current paper tends to discover what kind of representation and narratives refugee literature offers and how it is different from the stereotypical historical and official narratives about refugees. The paper focuses on these two novels to examine how literature represents the otherization of refugees which causes their loss of homeland as well as a sense of a strong identity. This discourse analyzes these two novels in order to unveil the voices and narratives of refugee characters and understand their struggles and experiences from their own perspectives. Thus, the paper aims to amplify the muted voices of refugees and bring their overshadowed existence to light.

The writer of *I Saw Ramallah* (1997), is actually a Palestinian poet, well known as a “poet of exile”. *I Saw Ramallah* is an autobiographical novel originally written in Arabic and translated by the Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif. The novel is set on the backdrop of 1967’s six-day war between the Arabs and Israel. As Israel won the war and occupied territories like the West Bank and Gaza Strip, they restricted thousands of young Palestinians who were outside their homeland from returning to their own country. Barghouti, the author and narrator of the text, is one of them. As the young author, when the war broke in 1967, was studying in Cairo, he became the “naziheen, the displaced one” (Barghouti, 3). Overnight, he becomes a refugee, which results in him staying in exile for thirty years. Throughout these thirty years, he has been trying to get

“permitted” to return to his own country and is being rejected. All these years, he has been seeking a home or a place for himself but ultimately fails. Edward Said, in the foreword of the memoir dully says, “Barghouti’s text is consequently laced with problems related to where he can or cannot stay, where he may or may not go, for how long and in what circumstances he must leave, and what, most of all, occurs when he is not there” (Barghouti, ix). The comment by Said, visibly portrays the uncertainty, identity crisis and sense of homelessness of the people in exile. Evidently, the novel addresses the suffering and dehumanization and the struggles to exist and preserve history and culture of the Palestinians and injustice faced by the Palestinian people at home and abroad every day. The novel narrates the story of the author's return to his homeland after thirty years, his contemplation of his identity as a refugee, and how he and his homeland receive each other after his exile.

Zana Fraillon, the author of the novel, *The Bone Sparrow*, is known for her literary works “based on research and recounts of survivors of the Forgotten Generation” (Fraillon, 187). She mostly writes for children and young adult readers and *The Bone Sparrow* is one of them. Although the novel is an imaginary story and the characters, events and places are factious, as the author claims in the afterword, “it is based on an all-too-true reality” (183). In fact, the narrative style of the novel resembles a magic realist novel to some extent, telling the harsh truths of the lives of refugees, which ends with the hope of a positive future. *The Bone Sparrow* is centered on the character of Subhi, a 9 year old boy, born and raised in a detention center in remote Australia. His family fled from Myanmar, their homeland, due to constant death threats from their government as they were Rohingya. They arrived in Australia with hopes for a better future, but the situation in the detention center is no less miserable than in their homeland. Like all the other

Rohingya families in the camp, they also face unbearable living conditions, threats from the “Jackets”, the camp guards and dehumanization and humiliation. For Subhi, all these difficult situations are normalized as he does not know what it means to live like a free human being. However, his life revolves around his Maa, his elder sister Queeny, his friend Eli, quite older than him and Jimmie, a girl from outside the fence whose great-great-great grandmother was a Rohingya refugee. Unlike Subhi, all of these characters were born in Myanmar and know what it means to be in a safer place and live a normal life. While they are quite practical, Subhi lives in the delusion that his father (Ba), a poet who has already been killed in Myanmar, would find them one day and believes that he often sends him gifts through a “Night Sea” Through the passage of time, as Subhi grows up, he gradually understands that they are refugees, they do not belong to anywhere and whatever is happening to them is not normal. Through Subhi’s character, Zana Fraillon has tried to draw the authentic picture of refugee camps and tell the real stories of Rohingya refugees who have lost their sense of identity and home and have been tortured, dehumanized and othered everywhere.

Refugee narratives, memoirs, and literature on displaced communities can provide deep insight into refugee experiences as they are free of biases. This paper studies the identity crisis of refugees by illustrating the experiences of the protagonists and characters in these two novels. The identity crisis is caused by their exclusion from their homeland, denial of citizenship and legal rights by their own government, and lack of recognition by the authorities. The correlation between identity and memory is another crucial area of investigation in this research, and it is done through a critical analysis of Barghouti’s memoir and Fraillon’s novel. The research further questions whether they can find a sense of belonging elsewhere or create a home in a new country for themselves. This discourse also delves into their suffering from homelessness and

being uprooted from their origins. This thesis comprehensively discusses the othering of refugees in both their homeland and host countries. The current essay discusses the exploitation, persecution and dehumanization of the displaced people, portrayed in the novels, by the authorities and the dominant party. This research also critiques the tendency of the government and authorities of concealing and distorting the truths, facts and histories of refugees. As they are othered and marginalized by the presumably superior group, they do not own the historical narratives and archives. The primary sources examined in this research provide a strong counter-discourse that not only challenges the orientalist misrepresentations of the refugees but also reinforces the humanity of the oppressed people through a retelling of their stories. Finally, the research attempts to make a comparison between Palestinian and Rohingya refugees based on their nature of relationship and attachment to their homeland and approach to their present host country.

This thesis will contribute to the field of studies on the refugee crisis and refugee narratives. The paper speaks for the marginalized and silenced refugees as it discusses their identity crisis, exploitation and loss of their homeland which mainstream media tend to avoid. As the refugees are fighting and struggling for their existence and rights as human beings, this paper sheds light on their struggles and may give voices to them. Since this paper discusses the distortion of the history and facts about the existence of refugees and excluded communities, it may encourage the other researchers to study more about the history and origin of refugees. Above all, studying refugee narratives and literature reaffirms their roots and identity and helps prevent their history from being erased or fabricated.

Chapter-2

Theories and Methodology

Novels, biographies and various other forms of literature that portray refugee narratives and experiences are often examined through the theoretical frameworks of postcolonialism, colonialism, and nationalism. Numerous scholarly works are available on refugee narratives analyzing the concepts of identity, trauma, memory, exile and displacement. Some researchers consider refugee narratives as alternate history. For instance, *The other side of silence* by Urvashi Butalia has addressed the untold stories of partition of India in 1947 where she has highlighted the oral narratives and individual voices through interviews, memoirs, diaries, and autobiographies of refugees and people who were affected by the partition. Through these voices, she has tried to fill the gaps and limitations of the history of the partition of India. Again, Pradip Kumar Bose, in his paper “Refugee, Memory and the State: A Review of Research in Refugees Studies”, has discussed the connection between memory and official historical narratives and emphasized that literature can be an alternative archive of historical narrative (Bose, 17). Rajeev and Devi, in their paper, analyze the collection of poems written by Mayyu Ali, a Rohingya Refugee, as alternate history which will be discussed in this thesis. *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow*, based on Palestinian and Rohingya refugee experience, display these concepts and ideologies in a nuanced manner. As othering of certain groups, rooted in the theory of Orientalism, is a fundamental driver of refugee crises, this paper is primarily based on the theoretical framework of Orientalism to analyze the texts. Egon F. Kunz's school of thought on refugees is a significant contribution to refugee studies. He categorizes refugees on the basis of different factors such as their social relationships and their nature of displacement. In

order to compare Palestinian refugees with Rohingya refugees, on the basis of analysis of the texts, this study will apply Kunz's perspective regarding the classification of refugees. The paper also sheds light on the role of memories and past to study identity and the concept of home of the characters.

Orientalism as a discourse, developed by Said, investigates the ways the West deploys in misrepresenting the East or the Orient that now stretches beyond its medieval geographical locations. This core point of view of Orientalism gives the Westerns the scope of othering the Eastern by identifying them as the weaker, strange, barbaric, savage and inferior to them. Deriving from this idea, a certain community is defined as the weaker and inferior and thus othered by, apparently, the superior community. This act of othering not only legitimizes oppression, dehumanization, exploitation, and exclusion but also allows the dominant group to manipulate facts, truth, and history about the marginalized community. And, this is how the West discursively forms the very identity of the people they speak for, disseminates this through numerous outlets of which literature is significant.

In the context of refugee experience, othering plays a major role in their exclusion and sufferings which leads them to the state of homelessness and identity crisis. Both the Palestinian and Rohingya communities are othered by the Israel and Myanmar government respectively. In both the texts, we see how refugees are excluded from their country because of being othered on the basis of cultural and religious identity.

Kunz has discussed his theory of refugee and classification of refugees in his book, *Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory*. In this book, he classifies refugees into three categories according

to the social relationship of the refugees to the population of the home country: majority - identified refugees, event-alienated refugees and self-alienated refugees (Kunz, 42-43).

According to his theory, the majority-identified refugees are more attached with their nation, whereas the event-alienated refugees remain in an ambivalence of being attached to their homeland and accepting that they are excluded by their country. Self-alienated refugees are those who remain in exile for personal reasons and are comparable to voluntary immigrants. For the purposes of this thesis, the focus will be on the first two categories. Additionally, Kunz classifies refugees on the basis of their attitude towards the displacement into two groups: reactive –fate group and purpose-based group (Kunz, 43-44). The displacement of the former group is defined as a reaction to a specific event, while the latter group flees their country with a purpose and generally consists of voluntary migrants.

Refugee narratives provide the nuances of the perspectives and personal experiences of a refugee character. So, refugee narratives are often the unbiased medium for refugee and diaspora studies. To investigate refugee experience and portrayal of their identity crisis, sense of belonging and othering, the paper takes the qualitative approach and goes through the close analysis of the selected primary texts. The discourse analyzes the protagonist of the two texts in detail in order to understand their sense of self and home as refugees. Apart from the primary texts, the paper briefly studies the collection of Mahmoud Darwish's poems, *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise* and memoir of Edward Said, *Out of Place* to understand Palestinian refugee experience. The paper also provides a succinct explanation of the novel *They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*, a biography of Habiburrahman and *Exodus: Between Genocide and Me*, a collection of poems by Mayyu Ali to see how Rohingya refugees are portrayed in these texts. Furthermore, the paper

goes through some secondary resources and research on the Palestinian and Rohingya refugees residing in different camps to understand the actual scenario.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the research statement and explores the definition, characteristics and difficulties of refugees. Then the chapter gives a brief history of the displacement of Palestinian and Rohingya community. The chapter also introduces the primary texts. This part includes the brief discussion of the protagonists and the characters of the texts as well. The chapter ends with the objectives and significance of this thesis.

The second chapter introduces the methodology and theories used for the thesis. This chapter succinctly discusses the theories and the concepts that are analyzed in the discourse. Moreover, the chapter discusses the rationale of using the selected texts. Then the chapter gives an overview of the paper and discusses how the thesis is organized.

The third chapter is dedicated to the review of the published scholarly discourses and books on refugees, particularly on Palestinian and Rohingya refugee crisis. The chapter explores how different scholars define refugees. The chapter sheds light on Edward Said's books on Orientalism, history of the representation of Islam in Western media and history of Palestine.

The chapter tries to investigate why Islam and the Muslim community is targeted and othered by Western world and the comparatively dominant groups in certain communities. The chapter also reviews books and articles on identity, displacement and the concept of home and researches on Palestinian and Rohingya refugees in different camps. Then this section discusses the papers and articles on *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow* and how those articles view the portrayal of identity, sense of belonging and othering in these two texts. The paper also tries to briefly

analyze other literary pieces about Palestinian and Rohingya refugee narratives such as Mahmoud Darwish's poems, the memoir *Out Of Place*, poem of Mayyu Ali and biography of Habiburrahman.

The fourth chapter is about the analysis of the portrayal of identity crisis in the two texts. Firstly, the chapter discusses how identity is defined and influenced by the recognition of others. This part also discusses how lack of recognition leads the refugees to identity crisis. Then the chapter analyzes how the protagonists and characters of the two novels suffer from a severe identity crisis due to the lack of recognition and legitimacy by others.

The fifth chapter begins with discussion on the connection between memory and identity. This part includes the explanation about how Ricoeur views the connection of identity and memory. Then, the chapter shifts to the analysis of the texts and how the novels depict the influence of past and memory on the conflicted nature of the identity of the protagonists.

The sixth chapter examines the sense of home and homelessness of Palestinian and Rohingya refugees depicted in the novels. At first, the section discusses Freud's idea of "unheimlich" and how it relates to the concept of home for refugees and then it focuses on the portrayal of this idea in the novels. Furthermore, the chapter includes how memories of home jeopardizes the sense of belonging of the characters in the novels.

The othering, exploitation and dehumanization of the Palestinian and Rohingya refugees are explained in the seventh chapter. The chapter begins with the discussion of Said's statements on othering and the distinctions between the self and the other. Then the chapter focuses on the elaborate discussion on how the texts showcase the brutal persecution and dehumanization of the refugees through the portrayal of the characters. Continuing the discussion on othering, the next

chapter discusses how the Self or the superior group establish and fabricate the historical facts and truth about the subordinate group like refugee communities. Finally, the chapter analyzes how the selected literary pieces examine the distortion of history of the existence of Palestinian and why their historical facts and truths are distorted.

The ninth chapter attempts to make a comparison between Palestinian and Rohingya refugees under the light of our analysis of the two texts. The chapter begins with the explanation of Kunz's idea on the classification of refugees. Then, the chapter compares the protagonists of the two novels which provides differing perspectives of the characters. This comparison helps us to show differences between these two communities.

The tenth chapter is the concluding chapter which provides a summary of what we discuss and analyze on the primary texts in this thesis. The chapter includes the major findings and an overview of this thesis. The section concludes explaining the importance of studying refugee literature or refugee narratives and how this paper can contribute to the field of refugee studies.

Chapter- 3

Literature Review

As the number of displaced people and refugees exponentially increases each year, discussions about the refugee crisis are becoming increasingly relevant and widely spoken about in contemporary times. Numerous writers, scholars and researchers have spoken about the definition and history of refugees around the world. Many data related discourses have been published about the crisis of the necessary aid and how to reduce or face this humanitarian crisis. As Loescher, in his book titled *Refugees: A Very Short Introduction*, refers to the definition of refugee according to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Conventions, “refugees are defined as persons who, ‘owing to a well-founded fear of persecution, on the grounds of race, religion, nationality or membership of a social group’ find themselves outside their country of origin, and are unable and unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country” (5). Priya Kissoon defines refugee, in the book, *Intersections of Displacement*, as a migrant foremost while their position and voice in the society ascribe them a marginal or stigmatized identity in her country or nationality (7). She claims that this marginality combined with ‘othering’ in the host country creates “double alienation” for the refugee who has already gone through a traumatic experience in the native county (7).

However, works of literature by refugees can serve as a powerful medium for gaining a panoramic understanding of the definition of a refugee, as well as their identities and experiences. Some researchers regard writings about refugees as a distinct literary genre or subgenre, recognizing the significant rise of "refugee narratives". Julia Hope claims in her paper that the refugee narratives have emerged after the “turn of the millennium” (193). She further

argues that the critics have “struggled to theorize this emergent genre within an encompassing framework” and often they have thought about bringing the literary variety under postcolonial studies considering “its emphasis on othering” (Hope, 193). Again, KN Pooja claims in her discussion that the refugee narrative “poignantly underscores the traumatic ordeals and adversities endured by refugees”, including the painful separation from family and community ties, and the miserable exposure to different sorts of violence and discriminations (34).

Undoubtedly, refugee narratives or refugee literature allow the readers to get a vivid picture of the refugee experience. Palestinian refugees, the largest refugee population in the world, have the “longest history of displacement, beginning in 1948 with the founding of the state of Israel” (Inhorn and Volk, 3-4). Likewise, Rohingya refugees have been recognized as “the most persecuted people in the world” by the United Nation (Sultana and Harun, 27). Both Palestinian and Rohingya writers view literature as an 'alternate history,' as it provides them with a voice and the power to narrate their stories from the perspective of refugees. Among the Palestinian literary figures, Mahmud Darwish is a significant literary personality and widely studied poet. Jassim, in his discourse on Palestinian literature, has described Mahmud Darwish as a “resistance author” considering his contributions to the development of the “Writings of Resistance” or “Poetry of Resistance” and has “given them a place in literature to express their complaints” about their oppressions (Jassim, 6). The text *Out of the Place*, a memoir by Edward Said, is also another literary piece that serves as an account of the experiences of a conflicted identity of a Palestinian-American writer as author of the book says, “I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities—mostly in conflict with each other- all of my life” (Said, 3). Similar to this, *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* by Habiburrahman, a Rohingya refugee, “is a chilling memoir of the narrator who escaped from the death zone” which is a notable example of

Rohingya refugee narrative (Lamsal, 2). *Exodus: Between Genocide and Me* by Mayyu Ali.

Another Rohingya refugee, is a collection of poetry that “acts as a collective representation of the injustice faced by the Rohingyas that have severely fractured their sense of self” (Rajeev, 9045).

Nonetheless, *I Saw Ramallah* by Barghouti and *The Bone Sparrow* by Fraillon are the impeccable examples of refugee narratives that explicitly serve the purpose of alternate history.

The impact of Barghouti’s novel is vividly expressed by Edward Said as he describes the book, in the foreword, as “an intensely lyrical narrative of a return from protracted exile abroad to Ramallah” and “one of the finest existential accounts of Palestinian displacement” (vii).

Meanwhile, *The Bone Sparrow* remains a quintessential literary work which speaks for Rohingya refugees since KN Pooja, in her paper, describes the text “as a significant exemplar within the genre of refugee literature, centering its narrative on the multifaceted experiences of refugees” (34). All the refugee narratives, more or less, highlight the identity crisis, sense of home and homelessness, othering and exploitation of the refugees. This literary genre tends to tell the untold history of the marginalized people from the perspectives of the refugees that have been suppressed or fabricated by the West or the dominant party.

Both Palestinians and Rohingyas belong to Muslim community and their histories of displacement reflect almost a similar pattern. The displacement of Palestinians started “in 1948 with the founding of the state of Israel” (Volk, 3) or, as Edward Said put it in the book *The Question of Palestine*, “Arab Palestinians were dispossessed and displaced in 1948 in order to facilitate the “reconstruction and rebuilding” of Palestine” (14). The displacement of Rohingyas also started in 1948 as a result of the independence of Burma “as the Burmese government continued treating the Rohingya as illegal migrants and denied their citizenship” (Sultana and

Harun, 26). So, all these accounts raise the question about the displacement of these two Muslim communities in the post-independence period or specifically at the end of British colonial rule. This is a matter of argument as to why the Muslim are alienated or treated as the “other” in certain countries.

The very foundation of this othering of Muslims or islamophobic attitude lies in Orientalism which Said defines as a “corporate institution for dealing with the Orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” (3). The colonial domination creates the discourse of Orientalism which is “a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans and makes “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures (Said, 7). Said claims in *Orientalism* that, to Anglo-French-American the Arabs and Islam, “for almost a thousand years together, stood for the Orient” (17). The history of anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice in the West lies in the history of Orientalism (Said, 26). However, the reasons for anti-Arabs or islamophobic attitude is more complex than the dichotomy of East and West which Said discusses in *Covering Islam*. In the book, Said has comprehensively discussed the rise of Iran with Ayatollah Khomeini, the history of the adverse relationship between the West and Arabs and how the West views the Muslim world. Said claims that, during the Middle Ages and early part of Renaissance, Europe considered Islam as “demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity” and “Mohammed was a false prophet” and “an agent of the devil” (46). Above that, for hundreds of years the great Islamic armies and navies have threatened Europe by colonizing its domains. To the West, it seemed that Islam, “a younger, more virile and energetic version of Christianity” arose in the East, was capable of destroying Christianity. Even when the Arab world started declining and European power was rising, the memories of the

glories of Muslims haunted the West. While other civilizations of the East like India and China gave up to their domination, “only Islam seemed never to have submitted completely to the West” (Said, 46). After all these, in 1978, the rise of Iran, “a major oil supplier during a period of energy scarcity”, made America, the new power in the West replacing Britain and Europe, feel “paralyzed” and “powerless” (Said, 46). Undoubtedly, Muslims have been a threat to the Western world and it is always necessary for them to suppress the Muslims to keep them in the superior position. To suppress them or blacklist the Muslims, the West always tend to redefine Islam by associating the religion with terrorism, as Amartya Sen claims in his book, *Identity and Violence*, “The unwillingness to distinguish between (1) a Muslim person’s variety of associations and affiliations and (2) his or her Islamic identity in particular has tended to tempt Western leaders to fight political battles against terrorism through the exotic route of defining—or redefining—Islam” (57). So, the representation of Muslims as terrorists or extremists has allowed the West to otherize them or classify them as “the strange”, and Europe (the West, "us") as “the familiar”.

In the case of Israeli occupation of Palestine and the displacement of Palestinians since 1948, we see the Orientalist view towards Palestine as Said states in *The Question of Palestine*, “There is the entrenched cultural attitude toward Palestinians deriving from age-old Western prejudices about Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient. This attitude, from which in its turn Zionism drew for its view of the Palestinians, dehumanized us, reduced us to the barely tolerated status of a nuisance” (xix). The Balfour Declaration in 1917, which ensured “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, made by none other than the British Government (Said, 15). This is undeniable that it was the Zionist supremacy, claiming that the Jews are “God’s chosen people. And God has given them the right to expel from their chosen land other people

who are not affiliated with their religion”, that created the State of Israel and successfully eliminated Palestinians from their lands (Ashiq and Kausar, 100). The British fueled this policy “of forcing a Jewish majority on the country” (Said, 18).

Again, in the extinction of Rohingyas from Myanmar, British colonial domination played a significant role. In the book, *The Displaced Rohingyas*, the authors have stated, “the seeds of the conflict between the Buddhists and the Muslims in Myanmar were sown by the British who strategically moved the slogan from “Burma for the Burmese” to “Burma for the Buddhist Burmese... In general, the British would speak of Islam as something that was not a characteristic component of life in Burma” (37). They further argue in the book that there are instances of communal riots in the history of South Asia centering on religious intolerance which normalizes the ethnic cleansing and marginalization of Muslims in a Buddhist majority country like Myanmar (37). So, it was easy for the British to create communal riots in these colonies as the Ismail and Rahman state in the book, “the British discourses worked as the basis of many communal riots in Myanmar” (37). Furthermore, the Rohingyas were promised by the British that “if they supported the British, they would be given their own national area” (Ismail and Rahman, 26). After independence, in 1948, the British did not keep their promise and Rohingyas were left stateless as Burmese government denied their citizenship. In this case as well, the colonial rule of British was much responsible for the othering of Rohingyas. So, we see, all these sufferings, dehumanization and othering of Muslims, in the countries that were once colonized by the West, in some way or the other, are the results of the age-old anti-Muslim attitude or Islamophobic nature of the West or the British. Muhammad Abdul Bari also blames this anti-Islamic or Islamophobic nature of the west for the sufferings of Rohingyas as he states in his book, “in a post-9/11 anti-Muslim climate the Rohingya people’s religious identity might have

exacerbated their plight” (xviii). So, this phenomena of anti-Islam or anti-Muslim mindset has become a universal thing which allows the authorities to otherize the Muslims.

In the book, *Identity and Violence*, Sen has elaborately discussed the plurality and multiplicity of identity and how identity can be a reason for political dispute. He has stated in the book, “Identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community; a sense of belonging to a community is thus seen as a resource like capital....but it has to be supplemented by a further recognition that a sense of identity can firmly exclude many people even as it warmly embraces others” (15). Md Saiful Islam and Ali ŞAHİN talk about the relationship between state and identity in contemporary times. They claim that the idea of identity has become a “foggy notion in contemporary politics” (82). According to them, identity can be defined in the traditional way as “all-inclusive oneness” or “we-ness” in a society (82). They further discuss the formation of identity as they state, “identities are typically built around states, global regions, cultures, and racial groups” (82). For refugees and displaced persons, this sense of belonging remains obscure. They are excluded from their homeland or a certain region because they impose a certain identity. Again, when they are excluded, they are no longer attached to that certain community or the land which provides them a sense of a cultural or national identity. So, they constantly suffer from an identity crisis as Dorota Woroniecka states in their paper, “to become uprooted and removed from a national community is automatically to lose one’s identity, traditions, and culture” (22). The authors of the book *The Displaced Rohingyas*, discuss the loss of political identity as they say that the forcibly displaced people lose their “political community and legal identity in the form of citizenship” (10). They further discuss the consequences of the loss of the right of political involvement and say, “They

are practically disconnected from the political processes of the nation-state system, and they lose their voice and representation, turning them into an alienated segment of the population” (10).

This identity crisis of refugees is best understood through Palestinian refugees as Said states in *The Question of Palestine*, “Each Palestinian community must struggle to maintain its identity on at least two levels: first, as Palestinian with regard to the historical encounter with Zionism and the precipitous loss of a homeland; second, as Palestinian in the existential setting of day-to-day life, responding to the pressure in the state of residence” (121). In fact, during the exile in refugee camps or detention centers, sometimes their sense of identity is lost as they struggle to survive. Michael Vicente Pérez has done research on the Gaza refugee camp in Jarash between June and December 2016 and he has conducted informal interviews with the refugees about which he has discussed in the book, *Un-Settling Middle Eastern Refugees*. He has observed that the refugees in the camp “neither demanded citizenship nor did they mobilize against state policies of exclusion” but they “carve out a meaningful existence in the context of prolonged displacement” which was described “simply as the effort to make a living” (122). Pérez calls this effort “living as enduring” (122). He further describes their status as “a shared experience of immobility or “stuckedness”....which is the experience that life is no longer moving” (125). This constant “immobility” or “stuckedness” in the camps and detention centers always sabotage their sense of self and identity. Even if they try to mobilize or keep their lives moving forward, they are restricted by their status of refugee or Palestinian. In Pérez’s research., Shadi, an ex-Gazan refugee born in Zarqa camp, is a participant who tried to find work in Zarqa but he had to confront the limits of his non-national status that restricted him to find a good job enough to

support his family. Sharing the struggle of looking for work as a refugee Shadi explained, “I realized how my identity as a Gazan worked against me” (Inhorn and Volk, 127).

Dorota Woroniecka has discussed the territorialization of identity in her paper where she has provided a different perspective about the Palestinian refugee camps and relation between their identity and place during extended exile. She claims in the paper, “The camp operates as a site of commemoration, a site where the initial trauma of war and displacement is transformed into suffering caused by extended exile, where the elements of pre-exilic geographies of origin are re-created both spatially and socially and where refugee identity is territorialized and fostered” (28). She argues in her paper that the refugee camps represent both their place of origin and “refugee status”. She further argues that the miserable condition of the camps strengthens their determination to return to their place of origin and to hold on to their pre-exilic identity. All in all, the Palestinian refugees struggle every day to maintain their identity in exile and displacement which eventually lead them to identity crisis.

In the case of Rohingya refugees, the identity crisis is reflected more explicitly. The government and the historians of Myanmar deny even the existence of the term “Rohingya” which simply question their identity and existence (Sultana and Harun, 25). In the foreword of the book, *The Displaced Rohingyas*, Bob Rae states, “Even the word “Rohingya” is contested. Myanmar politicians and army generals made a point of interrupting me in discussions on the crisis by saying, “there’s no such people as Rohingya. They simply do not exist”, insisting that I use the term “Bengali” to indicate that there were people living in Myanmar simply did not belong—they came from what is now Bangladesh and that is where they should return” (xiii). Meanwhile, the existence of the Rohingya community in Burma is proved in the term Rohingya itself as the

word “Roang” refers to the language that “was spoken by people who used to live in Arakan” (Sultana and Harun, 26). On one hand, the officials of Myanmar, the homeland of Rohingya, deny their existence. On the other hand, the stateless Rohingya people still “identify themselves as the Rohingya because they have been living in Burma as a native of Rohang” (Sultana and Harun, 26). This lack of recognition creates identity crisis among the stateless Rohingya community as the authors of Ismail and Rahman put it, “Peoples’ identities “are formed by recognition, [which demands] that we all recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their worth” As the Myanmar government does not recognize the Rohingya people as citizens of the country, it inflicts the Rohingya with an identity crisis” (38). To make the situation worse, Myanmar government implemented a citizenship law in 1982 which codifies Myanmar's eight national races traced in Myanmar before 1823, divided into 135 distinct indigenous ethnic groups, but excludes the Rohingyas (Islam & Şahin, 83). According to the law, Rohingyas “were regarded as non-nationals or outsiders” (83). Furthermore, they were given yellow cards which identify them as “persons having returned from Bangladesh by giving them no legal status” while other groups were given “pink cards for the full citizens, blue cards for associate citizens, and green for naturalized citizens” (Sultana and Harun, 24). Undoubtedly, the yellow cards were given to them simply to exclude them from the country. That is why, Islam and Şahin, in their paper, blame the 1982 citizenship law “for stripping the Rohingya of their citizenship and repeated mistreatment as a minority, rendering them stateless even in an identity crisis” (88). Islam and Şahin, in their paper, also claims that, after migrating to Bangladesh, the law “not only created identity crisis but also designed false identities (Bengali or foreigners) for them”, as they had to “obtained fake birth records, national id cards (NID), and even passports” (84). Not only that, they are also “trained to pretend to be

Bangladeshi” to travel abroad using the fake passports (Islam and Şahin, 85). Impersonating or pretending like another human being or member of another community is the utmost reflection of the identity crisis or simply losing identity which Rohingya refugees have to go through.

Refugee literature captures the similar sort of identity crisis experienced by refugees in their reality. Hassan Nassif Jassim studies Mahmud Drawish’s poems in his paper where he argues that Darwish’s revolutionary poetry “is the first way to express Palestinian identity” (12). He has claimed that the poets who remained in Palestine after 1948 tended to use straightforward language to portray an actual image of Palestine during Israeli colonialism—“incorporating their histories into their selected pieces, resulting in a diverse tapestry that embodies the distinct identity of the Palestinian people” (10). He further argues that Palestinian writers and poets “take great pride in sharing their own identity” and they “are determined to convey their unique sense of self” (Jassim, 15). He analyzes one of the poems of Darwish where the poet has directly addressed the Israelis and reflected their history of colonization and exploitation. Jassim talks about the poem and states, “The Palestinian people often reflect on the complex relationship between their identity and the land” (11) as the idea of land is the foundation of Palestinian identity and consciousness. This relationship is reflected in the lines from one of Darwish’s poems, as Jassim quotes,

Document it.

I speak Arabic.

You took the vineyards from my ancestors.

Along with the fields that my family and I used to cultivate,

You abandoned my family and me with nothing except these pebbles.

Likely, will your government follow suit? (Jassim, 11)

So, when their land is snatched away from them, their sense of identity and self also are hampered. The identity crisis of every Palestinian is explicitly showcased in another poem written by Darwish titled, “Who Am I, without Exile?”. In the poem, the speaker addresses a “stranger” standing “on a river bank” which perhaps is a metaphor for a Palestinian or the land of Palestine. The speaker constantly tries to imply through the poem that nothing significantly defines him or identify him which is reflected in the lines,

Nothing brings me back from this distance

to the oasis: neither war nor peace.

Nothing grants me entry into the gospels.

...

Nothing carries me, or loads me with an idea:

neither nostalgia, nor promise.

What shall I do? What shall I do without exile? (Darwish, 113)

So, the speaker implies that nothing but exile defines him. The speaker further says,

We have become weightless,

as light as our dwellings in distant winds.

We have, both of us, befriended the strange beings in the clouds. (Darwish, 113)

Through the lines the speaker tries to indicate that the existence of Palestinians has become “weightless” or perhaps meaningless and they have been estranged in their land. The speaker directly reflects that they have no identity as he says, “We have both been freed from the gravity of the land of identity” (Darwish, 114). Perhaps through this line, the writer is trying to refer to their loss of land which identified them as Palestinians. So, through Darwish’s poems, we get an extreme sense of identity crisis of the Palestinians. Again, *Out of Place*, similar to *I Saw Ramallah*, is a memoir by Edward Said which primarily revolves around the identity crisis of the author. Although Said was not a refugee, since he carried the “talismanic U.S. passports” as his father had American citizenship, his experience of being a Palestine born American citizen is an impeccable example to understand the conflicted identity and disturbing dilemma of every Palestinian. In the whole text, the author constantly reflects his lack of a concrete sense of a complete identity and belongingness which is reflected in the lines, “I seemed to myself to be nearly devoid of any character at all, timid, uncertain, without will. Yet the overriding sensation I had was of always being out of place” (Said, 15). He was confused even by his name, Edward Said, which represents a mixture of English and Arabic identity. Said shares his traumatic memories of his schools which were either dominated by English or Americans. His sense of contested identity and, at the same time, longing for a complete identity are reflected in the lines, “I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim.... I found I had two alternatives with which to counter what in effect was the process of challenge, recognition, and exposure, questions and remarks like ‘What are you?’; ‘But Said is an Arab name’; ‘You’re American?’;.... ‘You don’t look American!’; ‘How come you were born in Jerusalem and you live here?’” (Said, 17). His self-doubt and dilemma of

choosing a definite identity is further illustrated when he says, “The overall sensation I had was of my troublesome identity as an American inside who lurked another Arab identity from which I derived no strength, only embarrassment and discomfort” (Said, 85). Said looks for a concrete identity throughout his whole life. He tries to fix his identity even when he comes to know about his cancer and he regressively thinks “about finding a place to die” but gives up. He ends up finally realizing that he has become habituated with his incomplete identity and his displacement as he states, “With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place” (245). So, this memoir by Said reflects the struggle to hold on to the identity of every Palestinian.

I Saw Ramallah is such a literary piece that draws the picture of each Palestinian struggling with conflicted and stripped identity. Soman and Padmanabhan, in their study on the text, draw attention to the title and states, “there is detachment in Barghouti's use of the words “I” and “Ramallah” in the title which reflects his identity being cast-off from the city itself” (127). They put emphasis on the author's use of the word “I” and argue that the repetitive use of “I” actually represents the lives of displaced Palestinians which transfers his experience into a communal experience. The paper also discusses about the author's return to his homeland from exile and how he feels displaced and dispossessed in his own homeland. Discussing that, Soman and Padmanabhan claim, “He has unfortunately been severed from his fundamental right to the homeland and is forced to identify himself with new titles which are problematic to his cultural identity” (131). Alsaleh also focusses on Barghouti's return and argues that the text represents the identity of Palestinian community as he states, “the act of returning to Ramallah comes because of Israeli permission, which illustrates how the displaced autobiographical text represents not individual, but collective experiences of exile” (6). Alsaleh further discusses

Barghouti's exile and says that he "is made a stranger by the various hosting places and people that provided a temporary, conditional home" (8). Not only that, the exile has also "designed his life and shaped his shattered identity" (Alsaleh, 8). Again, Barghouti's identity crisis is explicitly highlighted in Abuawad- Shahin's paper when he discusses Barghouti's encounter with Ramallah. He compares the encounter with "a real object that can anchor his identity and dispel his sense of loss" (Abuawad- Shahin, 111). He further states about the objectification of the place, "the physicality of the place in Barghouti's case does not resolve this tension that he feels at the core of his identity. The intense feeling of non -belonging is a result of nothing but that nothingness or the void at the core of human identity" (111). However, Philip Kim, in his paper, discusses the relationship between construction of self and idea of nation as he says, "the construction of the self, highlights how nation is a subjective concept, borne out of the imagination and creation of individuals" (1). Kim views the text in an exceptional way where he claims that the text questions the imposed Palestinian or a certain national identity which develops the construction of self and the subjectivity of nation. Referring to Barghouti's writing his everyday experiences in this memoir, Kim further argues the role of writing or documentation in constructing self and national identity. He further argues that throughout the whole narrative of Barghouti's memoir, dates and important events are continually "referenced to identify with the Palestinian national identity" (4). Again, Kim discusses Barghouti's first encounter with the bridge where he asks, "how was this piece of dark wood able to distance a whole nation from its dreams?" (Barghouti 9). Referring to this question, Kim claims, "the nation is a constructed concept, and, although the entity which distances Barghouti from his land is Israel, it is rather the constructions of the self in relation to nation, not a physical or empirical object that a bridge could distance itself from" (Kim, 2). Moreover, he argues that, to some

extent Barghouti's narrative urges to create "a legitimate nation of Palestine and to compose a Palestinian history and identity" (5). All in all, Kim keeps emphasizing on the fact that the notion of national identity or precisely, Palestinian identity is constructed but he does not question the construction of Israeli identity. He also does not question the nation-statelessness of Palestinians or any refugees if nation or national identity is constructed. Whether or not, Palestinian identity is constructed, the author of the text, who represents Palestinian identity, is never able to form a concrete identity or have a strong sense of self in displacement or exile as Chakrabarti claims in his paper, "Barghouti feels like an exile that belongs nowhere; he is rootless and insecure" (127).

Similar to Palestinian literature, Rohingya narratives also revolve around the identity crisis of Rohingya refugees. *Exodus: Between Genocide and Me* is a collection of poems by Mayyu Ali who is a Rohingya refugee and he has recorder the actual "voice of Rohingya survivors who recollect the horrors of the genocide" (Rajeev and Devi. K, 9045). Rajeev and Devi. K have studied the poems from this collection and they claim "these writings bring to light the world of the Rohingyas and the traumatizing hardships that they have had to face" and "help them to reconstruct their identities which have been fragmented by the hegemonic groups" (9050). In the paper, they analyze the first poem from the book, "That's Me, A Rohingya" which describes the alienation of Rohinyas by the Buddhist nationalist government of Myanmar as "they are denied a birth certificate which means that their birth is not even officially acknowledged as an addition to the population (9046). Further, the poem focuses on the racial discrimination towards the Rohingyas as their black skin is used to segregate and ensure "the bleakness of their future" and deny their excess to basic human rights (Rajeev and Devi. K, 9046). Rajeev and Devi. K argues that, since Myanmar had reduced their identity "to the status of being a stateless community", the

Rohingyas suffer from a “disorientated perception of the self” (9046). This troubled sense of self is reflected in the lines, “Even when I live in a country where I was born, / I can't name it as mine like you do/ Without identity”. So, the poem “clearly speaks about the shattered sense of identity that haunts the Rohingyas” since they are constantly threatened by the government of being uprooted from their land and existence (Rajeev and Devi. K, 9046). The Myanmar government not only creates an identity crisis among the Rohingyas but also creates false identity as Rajeev and Devi. K claim that the Myanmar officials spread the Islamophobic narrative of Rohingyas being terrorists and pressurize them to accept that identity. Discussing the tendency of the Myanmar officials of creating false identity, Rajeev and Devi. K state, “the government first constructs an identity for the Rohingyas and then tortures them to accept this identity, making them believe that it is the only way they could be spared to stay alive” (9047). Mayyu Ali reflects Myanmar’s attempt of imposing their constructed identity on the Rohingya community through his poem “Torture” in the lines, “A confession of their version, A truth/ for their ears,/ A depiction that pleases their eyes” (24). Similar to these two poems, “Living Dead”, “No Place on Earth”, and “Voyage” are some of the poems from the book by Ali which speak about “the survivors who have lost their loved ones and their identity” (Rajeev and Devi. K, 9049). *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* by Habiburahman is also another memoir which narrates the author’s story of his “effort to escape his land and seek refuge in other places or countries” (Lamsal, 11). Lamsal, in his research, claims that the Palestinian refugees have neither the rights of the citizen of the country they reside in nor the rights as a foreigner in that country and he compares their situation with the Rohingya refugees and states, “A similar situation is being faced by Rohingyas in this memoir” (4). As displaced communities like Palestinian and Rohingya refugees have no land or nation left to belong to, they end up having a questionable

identity which is reflected in the novel. The novel showcases the constant displacement of the author as he moves from his homeland to Thailand, from Thailand to Australian detention camp and finally to Malaysia. Throughout his journeys, he deals with the struggle to preserve the stripped identity which began from a very young age as he says in the novel “I am three years old and am effectively erased from existence. I become a foreigner to my neighbors”

(Habiburahman, 10). His trauma of losing his communal identity also reflects in line, “With the stroke of a pen, our ethnic group officially disappears” (Habiburahman, 10). As a consequence, “in his own nation, he was left stateless” (Lamsal, 11). When he tries to escape from the country he is faced with another kind of existential crisis. During this displacement, as Lamsal puts it, “he had to practice the art of invisibility. If he was visible, then he had to face the peril of the state. But, if he learned how to melt in with the crowd he would escape” (6). This invisibility transforms him almost into a “nobody” for the time being. So, whatever they do or wherever they go, they carry the baggage of being stateless or a person who simply has no identity.

Zana Fraillon’s *The Bone Sparrow* is another refugee narrative that represents Rohingya identity. K N Pooja in her study of the novel claims that the book “takes its inspiration from the real-life experiences of refugees confined within Australian detention centers (34). She argues that the novel has a “compelling narrative” that clearly showcases the hardships and dehumanizing experiences that refugees face in the camps every day and “the erosion of their identities, and the unwavering yet desperate hope that characterizes their lives” (38). As the plot of the novel is set in a detention center, she comments in the paper about the condition of the “individuals residing within detention camps and refugee settlements” that they have no access to fundamental human rights, “including the right to life, the right to freedom of expression, the right to personal security, and the right to dignity, face significant jeopardy (Pooja, 32). All these deprivations

extremely affect their sense of self and identity. As the protagonist of the novel Shubhi is a nine-year-old Rohingya boy born in a refugee camp in Australia, this confined environment is the only reality he has ever known, characterized by an existence bounded by guards and fences (Pooja, 34). This confinement and fences reduce his identity to a merely living object as Mark Froud states in his research, “there is a constant struggle to retain, or develop, a sense of self amid the detention center’s confinement” (37). Mark Froud studies, in his paper, the effects of marginalization and abuses on the lost and migrated children through analyzing Fraillon’s novels including *The Bone Sparrow*. Froud considers Fraillon’s writings as “a path for reclaiming the forgotten, and re-telling the stories which define identities” (31). In the paper, he claims, “the experience of trauma can fracture an individual’s self-identity: trauma, especially in early life” (29). He further argues that the individual sense of displacement is “replicated in the physical displacement of children from their families and of people from the places they call home” (29). He also claims that communal identity and family ties are important for these marginalized individuals in the face of institutional oppression that tends to erase their identity. Above that, for children like Shubi, it is difficult “to realize independence and re-establish their own identities” (Froud, 32). However, the introduction with Jimmie, who belongs to the external world, gives Shubhi a sense of self as he is now recognized by a person from out world. Paradoxically, this introduction also works in a negative way as Froud states, “the awareness of his own self as a human being, and the knowledge that there is a world outside which excludes him and his family and friends, opens up a deeper understanding that he is being confined and denied his freedom as that human self” (37). So, *The Bone Sparrow* really gives a convincing and authentic picture of the identity crisis and muted existence of the Rohingya refugees residing in the detention camps which makes it an impeccable example of refugee narrative.

The experience of losing “home” or being “homeless” is a major aspect of refugee experience. Homelessness or displacement from their country, which they know as their home, is the initial or immediate crisis for the refugees. As Priya Kissoon studies the Experiences of Home and Homelessness of refugees in her book, she states, “the euphemism ‘no fixed abode’ points to mobility or ‘unrootedness’ as the underpinning characteristic of homelessness” (1). She describes the displaced situation of refugees as “doubly homeless”, considering the fact that “they found themselves with nowhere to turn and facing the streets, on the other hand, they were in a foreign state with no place, not even a country to call home” (Kissoon, 2). In order to understand homelessness, we have look for the definition of home. Kissoon defines home as “a safe place to rest one’s head, a place of respite, freedom, and relative security from environmental, political, and economic stress or harm” (4). Again, some people consider home as “embodiment of democratic citizenship” while for some individuals it is “a domicile or dwelling place that provides for their basic needs and that of their family” (Kissoon, 4). Kissoon claims that for most people, “it is a combination of all three, reflecting the evolving priorities and needs of the individual” (4). Again, quoting Somerville, Lindsey McCarthy talks about the ‘six signifiers of home’ which are identified as “shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode (and sometimes additionally, ‘paradise’)", while he claims “homelessness is positioned as the semantic opposite of each” (McCarthy, 4). Kissoon argues that the sense of home necessarily should not be a “place bound” or even a “place” (23). According to her, a home refers to a “state of being” or “state of doing” which provide the “ability to progress, succeed, make decisions, and choose one’s pathway” (24). On the other hand, homelessness simply refers to “loss of shelter” of “lacking of a dwelling place” (Kissoon, 28). Kissoon argues that refugees experience “double homelessness” considering their “loss of both a home and homeland” (29). Ultimately, for

refugees, “neither the country of origin nor the place of dwelling can be presumed to have been a home in any respect” (Kissoon, 29).

Pérez conducted research in the Gaza refugee camp in Jarash, a city in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which is described as “home” to millions of refugees including Palestinian refugees who were displaced from Gaza Strip in 1967 (122). For his research, he worked with two Palestinian refugees, Shadi and Rami, who struggled to find work and make a better living in Jordan as they were “non-national or non-citizens”. Both of them struggled to ensure a better life and a secured future because of the fact that they did not have citizenship. Clearly, they could not find or make home in the host country. Analyzing their cases, Pérez comments, “denied the right to their homeland in Palestine and marginalized as noncitizens in Jordan, ex-Gazan refugees thus remain a liminal population living the experience of indefinite exile (130). Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska has conducted research on the basis of his fieldwork in Al-Am‘ari which “is one of 19 refugee camps located in the West Bank and is home to approximately 6,000 persons” (Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska, 24). However, al-Am‘ari is described as very different from the “popular image of a refugee camp, as a provisional arrangement of tents or makeshift shelters set up somewhere aside of the regular urban landscape of the host population” (Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska, 26). Rather it resembles a normal functioning locality “with its densely populated cement houses and paved narrow alleys filled with shops and local enterprises” which raises question on its status as a refugee camp (Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska, 29). Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska, in this paper, highlighted a conversation with a 21 year old woman, a refugee residing in al-Am‘ari, where she was asked whether the image of this camp threatens the its label as a refugee camp to which she strongly disagreed and replied, “We are refugees, because it is not our country. For everyone there is a homeland, everyone should be in his place, in his

homeland. Because of that we will remain a camp. Wherever we will go, wherever we will come from, we will remain a camp” (30). The statement explicitly showcases the homelessness or lack of the sense of belongingness of the Palestinian refugee in the host country. However,

Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska also draws attention to some other interviewees who “emphasized their attachment to al-Am’ari; the camp has become their place of belonging” (32). One of them was a 32 year old man who asserts, “In my life I got used to the camp life (...) the camp became my city, my village ... as long as we are living in the camps our cause will continue to be heard and seen. But if we went out of the camps, we would wipe out any right to ourselves” (32).

Drawing attention to this comment, Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska claims, “there seems to be no inconsistency between being strongly attached to the camp as a place of one’s belonging, and at the same time treating one’s presence in this place as a proof of belonging (or right) to another space” (33). So, the camp has become an embodiment of their displacement and their country of origin at the same time. Even if they consider the camp as their “home”, they see it as their pre-exilic homeland which no longer allows them to enter. So, ultimately, “the refugee will never feel wholly at home in a foreign country” (Kissoon, 1). In the book, *The Displaced Rohingyas*, the authors have discussed the history of exclusion of Rohingyas and their displacement.

Although historically, Rohingyas are located in the “Northern Rakhine state of Myanmar, the citizenship law enforced by Myanmar authority in 1982 has “forced them to seek refuge in other countries such as Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and several other countries (Bhuiyan et al, 6). According to the doctrine of Bunyan, Siddiqi, and Haque, in this book, among all the host counties, “Bangladesh has been the most popular country for them to seek shelter to escape persecution” as a neighboring country (6). There are four major migration streams of Rohingyas to Bangladesh in 1977, 1992, 2012, and 2017 “which

have resulted in the accumulation of about 1.2 million Rohingya” residing in the camps of Cox’s Bazar (Bhuiyan et al, 6). Discussing these connections of Rohingyas with Bangladesh, the authors claim, “the Rohingya’s connection to Bangladesh is long standing, although the Rohingya hold a sense of belonging to Burma, not Bangladesh” (25). So, again we sense a complicated kind of belongingness of refugees without having a home in homeland. Again, Bulbul Siddiqi, Palash Kamruzzaman, and Mohammad Ehsan Kabir conducted in-depth interviews with Rohingya refugees residing in Cox’s Bazar in 2019 about which they discuss in *The Displaced Rohingyas*. During their fieldwork, they interacted with an elderly man, working as a volunteer to help his community, exclaimed that “they were eagerly waiting to return home if the government ensured the safety, security, and the right to their citizenship in Myanmar” (Siddiqi, 81). On the other hand, some of the new Rohingya refugees in the host country have “lost their confidence to be repatriated” as they come to know about the experiences of their previous generations of refugees. Evidently, as Siddiqi, Kamruzzaman, and Kabir put it “the concept of home is very complicated for the Rohingya because of the denial of citizenship in Myanmar, which caused their displacement” (81). Discussing about the concept of home, they share a bit of their conversation with another middle aged Rohingya refugee, living in Bangladesh for 35 years, where he states, “Who wants to live a life as stateless? I also want to go back to my country, but I will not be able to return to the current situation. We need to have the safety and security of our lives” (81).

As Jassim argues, Palestinian literature emphasizes home, physically and symbolically since “Land hood” is the cornerstone of Palestinian identity and consciousness (14). He further claims that people, specifically from rural Palestine share "spiritual connection" with their land (14). This sense of home and connection with land is vividly visible in Darwish’s poems and *I Belong*

There. The poem starts with a literal description of a house where the speaker was born and has many memories. The speaker also has his mother, brother and friends. Then the speaker starts describing the natural beauty of that home which pictures the landscape of Palestine. Then the speaker refers to the oppression and colonization of Israel in the line, “I have lived on the land long before swords turned man into prey” (Darwish, 7). In the final line, the author displays his longing to regain his home as he says, “I have learned and dismantled all the words in order to draw from them a/ single word: Home” (Darwish, 7). This longing for home and belongingness are also reflected in Said’s memoir, *Out of Place*. As the title of the memoir indicates, Said looks for a “place” throughout his whole life. He ends up finally realizing that he has become habituated with his displacement as he states, “With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place” (245). This last line perfectly advocates for every displaced person as it indicates the forever homelessness of the author who represents the displaced Palestinians. Similar to these two literary pieces by Palestinian writers, *I Saw Ramallah* also intimately deals with the idea of home and belongingness. Alsaleh, in his paper, comprehensively discusses the aftermath of exile and the complicated sense of belongingness of a displaced person after coming back to his or her homeland. He argues that the text “warmly flirts” with the scope of providing a different perspective on the idea of home (2). *I Saw Ramallah* is a text that “reflect on exile as a reality that cannot be altered even if the return to the homeland is (politically) offered and physically materialized” (Alsaleh, 4). Alsaleh dully claims that the experience of being unable to return to his homeland, become a resident of his former homeland and reclaim his country can be deeply traumatic (Alsaleh, 2). Alsaleh further points out the estrangement of Barghouti as he becomes a visitor in his homeland and his own country people become the “new but temporary community” for him (4). Further he draws

attention to the fact that Barghouti went to Cairo for his studies but he could not come back due to his exile as he says, “I graduate. I am awarded a BA from the Department of English Language and Literature, and I fail to find a wall on which to hang my certificate” (Barghouti, 7). Quoting this line by Barghouti, Alsaleh states, “the metaphor of having no wall refers to having no house or place to call home” (11). Again, Neha Soman, in her study of the text states, “the images of Barghouti's disfigured homeland concretize his dilemma of detachment and contemplate on mutilated belonging” (127). Pointing out to the author’s encounter with the Palestinian streets ordained with Israeli flags, Soman says, “the feeling of being defended that one ought to experience in his homeland was deprived of the author as the symbols of the conqueror prompted his defeat” (128). This feeling of depression and deprivation indicates the author's reaction to the “disfigured meaning of his homeland” (Soman, 128). His return to his own homeland seems like “a return to the foreign land that creates abjection through its uncanniness” (Soman, 128). Soman further illustrates Barghouti’s paradoxical feeling of alienation in his homeland and states, “The return to one's disfigured homeland unsettles the mind of the repatriate rather than evoking the sense of attachment. For instance, Barghouti feels displaced and dispossessed on his return. He is uncertain of his stature at his homeland” (131). So, this text explicitly shows how refugees never feel at “home” even if they return to their own homeland.

A similar tonality of homelessness or lack of belonging is found in Rohingya narratives as well. In the poem, “A Rohingya Refugee”, Mayyu Ali reflects the urge to go back to his homeland and live peacefully. At the same time, he expresses his worries about the worst consequences of going back to Myanmar. His miserable situation and insecure future in both his homeland and host country is depicted in the poem as he says, “I can be killed here in Bangladesh/ My body

can earn a proper funeral/ Sending me back to Myanmar is immature, / Not even the assurance of a funeral there!”. The above lines also show that, being a Rohingya refugee, not only his life is in danger, but also his dead body is unsafe. Still, as a human being he eagerly wants to go back to his homeland which is reflected in the lines,

Every refugee wishes to go back home,

Why do I need to deny myself?

...

All I want is to live again in my own home,

A safe life, to enjoy my rights.

As Rajeev and Devi. K explain Ali's another poem called "Trafficking", they say that the poem "throws light on incidents of human trafficking of the Rohingyas because they are refugees in several countries but not a citizen of any country" (9049). In the memoir of Habiburrahman as well, we see, he tries to flee from his own homeland due to the constant denial of their citizenship and their brutal persecution. As he flees from one place to another to find a settled and peaceful life, he nowhere finds a livable life. When he is in Thailand, he finds one of his friends, Ramzan, whom he asks whether a Muslim country like Malaysia would be compassionate or not to which he replies, "Malaysia is a Muslim country but there is no way in the world that I would want to go back there. I can't tell you which country might be the most welcoming for stateless people like us. I've been in many places and each one is as horrendous as the next" (Habiburrahman, 141). This clearly shows their homelessness jeopardized sense of belongingness which is an eternal curse for every refugee. As K N Pooja analyzes the novel *The*

Bone Sparrow, she claims that the author of this novel was “moved by the dire circumstances of the Rohingya people” whose homes and ancestral lands were subject to dispossession or wanton destruction” (34). However, when they move to the detention camp, “they encounter a grim reality marked by their confinement within camps, deprived of access to education and gainful employment” which again contradict the notion of homeland (Pooja, 34). *The Bone Sparrow* explicitly criticizes inhuman living condition of the refugee camps which is, in the novel, characterized by “overcrowding, with makeshift structures crafted from scavenged materials like tents and shacks, resulting in confined and cramped living quarters for the refugees” (Pooja, 35). In *The Bone Sparrow*, as K N Pooja explains that the life of the 9 year old protagonist, Shubhi, has not been marked by the external hardships that his fellow detainees faced who escaped cruelty and violence in their home countries but he is severely deprived of the basic rights that everyone should have (35). So, the detention camps do not offer the facilities that a home must do. However, the camp is the “only reality he has ever known” (Pooja, 34). As a result, the idea of home never developed in Shubhi’s consciousness. Ultimately, refugees either have absolutely no idea of a “homeland” or they live with a sense of homelessness or absence of belongingness.

The founding reason behind the exclusion of refugees in different regions is otherization of a certain community which is derived from orientalism. Said defines orientalism as, “a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”)” (43). This division between us and them leads to the idea of “self” and “other”. Both the case of Palestinian and Rohingya refugees demonstrate this conflict of “us” versus “them” which allows the dominant “us” to exclude the “other”. As Ashiq and Kausar discuss the issues of Palestinian and Rohingya refugees as

religious genocide, they argue that Jews consider themselves as “God's chosen people” and they are given the right to expel the “other”, who are not “affiliated with their religion”, from their “chosen land” (100). This assumption of Jews clearly reflects religious supremacy over the other. This supremacy is also reflected when Said states in *The Question Of Palestine*, “Palestinians remain so specialized a people as to serve essentially as a synonym for trouble— rootless, mindless, gratuitous trouble” (7). As the Palestinians were non-Jewish and Jews were the superior, the former were otherized and so Israel, “was to be built on the ruins of this Arab Palestine” (13). The Rohingyas were also otherized in Myanmar because “they differ from Myanmar’s dominant Buddhist groups ethnically, linguistically, and religiously” (Hossain and Hosain, 239). However, in their case as well religious supremacy was a more prominent reason for their othering as Ashiq and Kausar state, “Buddhists in Burma are of the opinion that Muslims are "foreigners" and should be deported from Burma” (105). The dichotomy of self and other is reflected as Sultana and Harun assert, “Like other minority ethnic communities, the Rohingya in Burma have become “otherized.” Burma’s nationalist, anti-Islam, Buddhist perspective considers the Burmese as “civilized,” and the Rohingya as unruly” (24).

In refugee literature, the othering of refugees is reflected through the demonstration of their dehumanization, exploitation and fabrication of their history. Jassim, in his analysis of Darwish’s poem, states, “the horrific conditions that his people are forced to suffer as refugees are addressed in several poems that he has written. Through his poetry, Darwish tells the whole tale of Palestinians' misery in Lebanon” (13). Again, Said in his memoir, expresses his feeling of being othered in his schools in Cairo which were run by the English. Not only in schools, but also in streets, he was estranged which is reflected when he was restricted by an Englishman to go to a certain area as the man said, “Arabs aren’t allowed here, and you’re an Arab!” (Said, 48).

Similarly, *I Saw Ramallah* also portrays the othering of Palestinians as Abuawad- Shahin claims that, Barghouti produces “a narrative against a background of displacement and occupation and Israel’s relentless attempts to turn the Palestinian into the inessential Other” (109). Abuawad- Shahin also points out that refugees can never be included in hosting countries either as “the displaced are always reminded of his foreignness, of the fact that he comes from there” (110). Again, Mayyu Ali criticizes the othering of Rohingya refugees as Rajiv and Devi K analyzes one of his poems, “That’s Me, A Rohingya”. They claim that the poem explains how Buddhist nationalist authority of Myanmar strategically colors the Rohingyas and “pinpoints them as the quintessential Other who must be eliminated” (9046). In Habiburrahman’s novel, as well, we see otherization of Rohingyas in Myanmar since they are labeled “parasites of the nation”, “vermin” and “black infidels” (Lamsal, 5). Fraillon’s novel reflects the othering of Rohingyas as “the text prominently spotlights the grim and dehumanizing conditions, along with the pervasive denial of basic human rights” (Pooja, 34). Again, Mark Froud, points out that the refugees in the novel describe themselves as “invisible” “because many in the outside world are ignorant of their existence” (37). Referring to that aspect, Froud states, “the Rohingya, and refugees from all places, are so often denied agency or a dignified existence, placed in a limbo between countries, apart from the rest of humanity” (37). This indicates that, when it comes to identifying refugees, every government or authorities simply otherize them because they have no nation to belong to. Interestingly, Julia Hope, in her paper, criticizes Fraillon for representing Rohingyas “as “othered” and as a “victim” in need of a “white savior” with helping hands” (199). Hope claims that the protagonist Subhi is “othered by the curious revelation that he does not speak Rohingya, as his mother has told him it is better to learn English” and this leaves Subhi without any “linguistic or cultural heritage” (195). Hope also points out that the novelist, in the

acknowledgement and afterwards, the choice of words like “they, them, their” for Rohingyas could be viewed as “othering” to refugees as it creates the “us versus them binary”. So, Hope to some extent, accuses Fraillon for otherizing Rohingya refugees in her writing.

Refugee narrative or refugee literature can be a great medium to achieve a thorough understanding of the complexities of refugee identity. Literature has always been an impactful way to give voice to the marginalized and subaltern group of the society. Refugees surely need to speak for themselves and tell their stories to the world. Rajeev and Devi duly consider literature and art as a gateway for refugees to “rewrite their history that was being wiped out by the hegemonic groups” (9044). Refugee narratives wonderfully provide a vivid insight to the identity crisis, sense of belonging, dehumanization and exploitation, fabrication of the history and othering of Rohingya. So, refugee narrative can be taken to the consideration of studying as an alternate history or alternate account to the refugee crisis.

Chapter-4

Conflicted Identity of Refugees

4.1 Formation of Identity

To define “identity”, James D. Fearon emphasizes that the notion of identity “evokes a sense of recognition” (6). He reflects on some definitions of identity such as “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” or as a concept that is used to “describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others” (Fearon, 4). A person's identity is dependent much on recognition by others. Nowadays, we are recognized by our identity cards, passports, census, voting rights and citizenship. So, it is a particular nation-state or authority that provides all these labels and identities. We get all our legitimated rights and ability to seek for law and justice from our constitution and governmental bodies. So, to preserve their sense of identity, human beings seek out institutions or groups to which they can belong, as Amartya Sen claims in his book, “we see ourselves as members of a variety of groups—we belong to all of them. A person’s citizenship, residence, geographic origin, gender, class, politics, profession, employment, food habits, sports interests, taste in music, social commitments, etc., make us members of a variety of groups. Each of these collectivities, to all of which this person simultaneously belongs, gives her a particular identity” (Sen, 16). When refugees are denied recognition by a government or nation, they can neither claim citizenship nor belong to any of these groups. They are excluded from their homeland as well as the host country where they initially sought shelter. Ultimately, they belong to nowhere which raises questions on their identity. These questions and the need for validation from others

lead them to identity crisis which is visibly addressed in the texts, *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow*.

4.2 Identity Crisis in *I Saw Ramallah*

Barghouti constantly portrays this crisis of processing his identity as “displaced” and accepting himself as a refugee throughout the whole text. His identity crisis shows how an entire race or ethnicity suffers due to this displacement and occupation. His conflict to process this displacement is showcased from the very beginning of the novel as he says, “Displacement is like death. One thinks it happens only to other people. From summer of ’67 I became that displaced stranger... The stranger is the person who renews his residence permit... He has to constantly come up with evidence and proofs” (3). Each time he is asked for a legal document to verify his identity or when he tries to enter a place and is restricted, his identity is questioned. Whenever his identity is questioned, he seeks recognition from someone. This struggle or conflict of establishing his identity as a Palestinian is shown as he compares the immigration process with an examination hall while entering into Ramallah after thirty years. His identity crisis is explicitly portrayed while crossing the bridge, connecting Amman to Palestine, as he says, “The person with spectacles on his eyes and a small bag on his shoulder. And these are the planks of the bridge. These are my steps on them. Here I am walking toward the land of the poem. A visitor? A refugee? A citizen? A Guest? I do not know” (11). The question marks indicate that he is asking someone about his identity and he wants others to recognize him or give him an identity. So, this displacement jeopardizes both his national identity and individual identity for good. His identity has become “vague and ambiguous” and “temporary”. Though he waits for all these things to “become clearer but the things are no clearer even after thirty years” (Barghouti, 26). Rather this vagueness or ambiguity seem a permanent crisis for all the refugees

as he says, “I do know that the stranger can never go back to what he was. Even if he returns. It is over. A person gets “displacement” as he gets asthma, and there is no cure for either” (4). So, he indicates that the question of the identity of a refugee is never resolved or becomes clearer. Once people are tagged as refugees, they have to carry this “small bag” of evidence, proofs and questions regarding their identity for their whole life.

4.3 Barghouti’s Identity Crisis in Homeland

These questions over their identity are not resolved even when he enters into his homeland. He still finds himself as a stranger or a refugee, even when he stands on his homeland for the first time in thirty years, which is reflected in the lines, “The gate of gates/ No key in our hand. But we entered, / Refugees to our birth from the strange death/ And refugees to our homes that were our homes and we came” (Barghouti, 22). His estrangement in his own country is further reflected when he struggles to communicate with people in his homeland. He does not recognize his neighbors when he reaches his own house, Dar Ra’d nor the children of Deir Ghassaneh, his birthplace, can recognize him. Again, he feels alienated when he is sitting in a car headed to Ramallah, as he says, “In the car I am mute...Have I been struck by my life as a man is struck by a fever?... These are my people. Why do I not talk with them?” (28). His desperate need of recognition from others is showcased when he comes to Deir Ghassaneh and says, “I wanted someone to know me. Even that old man walking slowly and thoughtfully along the street did not know me... How stupid in your own birthplace to ask a tourist’s questions: who’s this and what’s that?” (66). So, he still feels like a stranger in his homeland not only to others but also to himself. The lack of communication, validation and recognition from his own country’s people sabotages his identity as a Palestinian. Again, his identity is questioned in his own country as he has to “put in an application for a reunion identity card which would give him the right to

citizenship- thirty years overdue” (Barghouti, 47). His attempt to seek citizenship from his birthplace denies the existence and identity he has had over the last thirty years. It raises the question of who he has been during all those years. Since he has been away from his country and his native people, he claims that the displaced “Palestinian has become a telephone person, living by the sounds of voices carried to him across huge distances” (Barghouti, 126) as they have never been able to live with their family in a stable home. All their sorrows and joys are connected with the telephone ring. Ultimately, we see, when a person becomes a refugee, he starts to live in an emptiness or a limboland. He compares himself with an abstract entity like a telephone person”. Like these vague and ambiguous ideas, his identity also becomes vague and ambiguous.

4.4 Identity Crisis in *The Bone Sparrow*

The Bone Sparrow explores the identity crisis of refugees through the eyes of a 9-year-old boy who needs more attention and validation from others than a grown-up individual to understand his own identity. However, being in a Rohingya camp from birth, it is utterly impossible for Subhi to develop an identity as an independent human being. In the camp, the refugees are not recognized even by their names but by their numbers. Subhi seems to accept that he is nothing but an identity number which is reflected when he describes Harvey as the only nice Jacket because he calls all the children by their names instead of the numbers like other Jackets. At this, he says, “Most people have their boat ID as their number. Maa is NAP-24 and Queeny is NAP-23. But I was born here, so I have a different ID. DAR-1, that’s me” (Fraillon, 19). So, he identifies and accepts himself as merely a number. Not only that, he is also unable to differentiate himself from animals as he has been dehumanized in that impossible living condition in the detention center. In the very first chapter we see, the sea waves have made

everything damp inside their tents, even their beds, and with the waves, hundreds of animals have swum all the way up to the tent, trying to get a look inside their bed. When Queeny says that these are not real beds, Subhi replies, “I don’t think those animals would know the difference or really care much either” (Fraillon, 12). So, here, Subhi compares himself with the animals as he also does not know how it feels to sleep in a “real bed”. While Subhi does that unconsciously, Queeny, who is a practical character directly says, “Here, we are the dead rats they leave out to stop other rats from coming” (Fraillon, 95). Queeny’s sense of identity, self and existence is quite clearer. She pretty much sees the reality of their existence on the earth and that no country wants them as she says, “we’re all dumped out here in the middle of nowhere, Subhi. So everyone forgets us.... This way we don’t even exist” (Fraillon, 93). However, like every other living human, both Subhi and Queeny urge to create identity for themselves which is reflected when Queeny finds a camera and tries to reach out to the outside world to let them know about their existence by taking photos. Queeny’s tremendous urge to be acknowledged by the world outside is reflected when she says, “I’m sick of being invisible. I’ve had enough. And now even if only a few people see, it will mean I’m not invisible anymore” (Fraillon, 105). Being invisible means to be unrecognized or unidentified by the world outside. Queeny’s realization of being “invisible” implies the fact that someone only exists when that individual is recognized by others. Not only that, the individual exists or forms identity the way others recognize that person. So, recognition and labeling play a crucial role in creating identity crises among the refugees since they are tagged as “displaced”, “stateless” and “invisible”.

Chapter- 5

Identity and Memory

5.1 Connection between Self and Memory

As Ricoeur examines the relationship between identity and memory, he sheds light on the French expression which means, “In remembering something, one remembers oneself” (96). In his discussion, he claims that memory is a kind of prototype of “mineness, of private possession, for all the experiences of the subject” (96). Ricoeur further discusses the role of memory in forming present identity and mention Augustine’s doctrine of memory in *Confessions*, as he quotes, “the memory of myself coincide: in them I also encounter myself, I remember myself”....In short, the mind and the memory are one and the same” (99). Vijay Agnew, in his book, studies the effects of memories in someone’s identity, particularly in the identity of diasporas. Explaining the complex relationship of diasporas with their memories, Agnew states, “memories play a role in the individual’s struggle to construct a social and personal identity in a world in which subjectivity is both fragmented and fractured (Giles 2002, 21)”(7). He further claims that the nostalgic memories of diasporas help them to form a secured and positive identity. So, memories and the past significantly influence the identity of an individual and a community. For refugees, memories are the only gateway to preserve their identity as a legitimate citizen of their former nation-state which no longer acknowledges them. They reflect on their past to satisfy their desire for official citizenship. Ultimately, they are divided between their present identity as refugees and their past identity as legal citizens. While their current identity reflects uncertainty and misery, their former identity reflects ease and legitimacy. It is likely for refugees to take shelter under memories or remember themselves as legal citizens to seek recognition from others. In

both *The Bone Sparrow* and *I Saw Ramallah*, we see that memories occupy a significant part in the lives of the protagonists. They rely on their memories and the past of their ancestors to reflect their validation.

5.2 Effects of memories on Identity in *I Saw Ramallah*

As a displaced person, Barghouti's identity is very much connected with his memories and remembering. He admits this need of being stuck with his memories in the lines, "The displaced person becomes a stranger to his memories and so he tries to cling to them. He places himself above the actual and the passing" (131). Through his past life and memories, he wants to hold on to his Palestinian identity which he indicates through the lines, "Every day I walked in the streets of Ramallah. I wanted to recapture the old images, the old rhythms.... Is there something new for strangers? Or do they go around the world with baskets full of the stains of the past?.... I wonder if the people I passed on the street saw me as a stranger? Do their hurried eyes note the basket in my hand?" (50-51). The lines vividly indicate his longing to showcase his past only to grasp onto his past identity or to declare that he once was Palestinian and he belonged to this place, without giving any justification of explanation. On one hand, he tries to cling to his memories of being a Palestinian. On the other hand, he struggles to remember all of his birthplace which he admits in the lines, "I have completely forgotten what the road to Deir Ghassaneh looks like. I no longer remember the names of the villages on both sides of the twenty-seven kilometers that separate it from Ramallah" (61). However, while he is living in Cairo with his wife, Radwa and son, Tamim, he is again unable to grasp a complete Palestinian identity through his memories as he says, "I had to divide my memory between the absurd past, the concrete present taking shape with Tamim and Radwa in our house...And dividing the memory between an old wariness and a new found comfort was impossible" (73). So, he is conflicted between his past and present

identity. Ultimately, the past and the memories of the refugees and the displaced also become vague and ambiguous through the passage of time which make them forget their identity.

5.3 Effects of Memories on Identity in *The Bone Sparrow*

In *The Bone Sparrow*, Subhi, who never saw Myanmar, always wants to preserve his Rohingya identity through Rohingya language and past memories from others. He learns the Rohingya language while Maa wants him to learn English so that he can make a place here. His desire to preserve his Rohingya identity is vividly reflected when he says, “some of the oldies call me Aussie boy. They say the way I talk sounds just like Harvey, and that even the way I walk is more Australian than Rohingya...It just puts more heaviness on my back.... and I whisper the few words of Rohingya that I know, just so my brain doesn’t turn to thinking that they are right and that I am only Aussie Boy” (Fraillon, 97). The Rohingya words represent the past and former homeland of Subhi’s ancestors. So, whispering Rohingya words separates his Aussie entity and reminds him that he is originally a Rohingya. Subhi’s whole Rohingya identity is derived from his family and other member’s past and memories of Myanmar which resemble Halbwachs’s idea of collective memory. As Wetzell discusses Halbwachs’s doctrine of an individual’s recollecting of memories from the memories of a community, he quotes, “it is the individuals who, as members of groups, do the recollecting....It could be said that each individual memory is a ‘point of view’ of the collective memory (5). The collection of stories and memories of the people in the camp creates a collective memory which influences Subhi’s individual memory as well as his identity. Subhi takes shelter under the stories and memories about Myanmar that his father and mother used to tell but now Maa has stopped talking. This is where he feels the identity crisis. His eager effort to remember the stories to preserve his identity is reflected in the lines, “sometimes, in here, when people stop talking, and stop asking, and stop remembering,

that's when they start to lose that piece of themselves" (Fraillon, 38). So, in the case of Shubhi, collective memory is very important to keep reminding himself that he and his ancestors are Rohingyas. Again, the significance of these memories and stories for Subhi to hold on to a stable identity is reflected when he says, "I need these stories. Everyone else in here has memories to hold on to. Everyone has things to think on to stop them getting squashed down to nothing. But I don't have memories of anywhere else.... I need them to make my memories" (Fraillon, 128). Not only Subhi, but also Queeny finds remembering as a way to preserve her existence, when she tries to send their photos to the newspaper, as she says, "the people out there will remember us... We just need to show them who we are, that we're people, and then they'll remember. This time, they won't forget" (Fraillon, 93). So, for refugees, memories play a big role to get recognition and validation to form a sense of identity. Here, remembering becomes the key tool or evidence of their existence, legitimacy and recognition.

Chapter- 6

Home and Homelessness

6.1 Freud's concept of "unheimlich" and Idea of Home

The idea of home for refugees is more complex than anything else. Home is a space where a person can stand freely without giving any justification or clarification which is one of the basic rights and birthright for most of the people in the world. When a person becomes a refugee, this fundamental right is stripped away. With their right, their home and identity are taken away and they become homeless forever. Even if they are able to return to their homeland, it becomes difficult for them to feel the same sense of belonging to their land as Barghouti states, "It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever" (Barghouti, 131). However, the refugees continue to see their birthplace as their homeland, though their idea of homeland is profoundly shaken. The sense of "home", "homelessness" and belongingness of refugees can be associated with the term "unheimlich" or uncanny. Lindsey McCarthy, in her paper, examines the term which was originated by Freud in his essay 'The Uncanny', published in 1919 (McCarthy, 5). As McCarthy discusses Freud's definition of the term "unheimlich", she claims the term refers to "a disturbing combination of dread and horror in which 'the homelike' and 'the unhomely' merge" (5). She goes on to discuss Freud's description of the term and argues that "something is frightening not because it is unfamiliar or new, but because what used to be familiar has somehow become strange" (6). To be precise, the term reflects the combination or a situation somewhere "between the familiar and unfamiliar, the homely and un-homely" which actually resembles the situation of refugees. McCarthy claims in her paper that the unheimlich is located in "what appears to be familiar,

domestic, friendly settings lurks feelings of homelessness and dislocation. The *unheimlich* allows for fluidity and multiplicity: how one space can be felt as 'home' and 'un-home' at different times" (7). In a nutshell, the term describes a situation when a person feels unhomey or homeless in his or her homeland or in a "homelike" place which apparently provides shelter. If we think of the Palestinian and Rohingya refugees or any other refugee community, we can resonate with this idea. On one hand, when refugees are denied their citizenship, tortured, killed and otherized in their homeland or birth land, their familiar surroundings, which they have been calling their home, become horrible and strange. On the other hand, when they take shelter in a "host" country, which apparently seems welcoming and homely, treat and tag them as refugees. At the end of the day, they are otherized in their new country as well and they feel homeless. Therefore, the concept of "*unheimlich*" provides an understanding of how refugees perceive their idea of home when they are tortured and othered in their native country. They bear this "*unheimlich*" sort of state everywhere since they are estranged in their host countries as well. Bearing such a complicated idea of home, refugees often find it challenging to create a sense of belonging in new places. In both the novels, *I Saw Ramallah* and *The Bone Sparrow*, this idea of "*unheimlich*" or the feeling of being homelessness in the homeland and new country is reflected vividly.

6.2 Barghouti's Idea of Home

In the text, Barghouti displays a complex idea of home. As he has been traveling from one country to another, during his exile, he becomes a person who is "always without a place" (Barghouti, 87). Rather he claims that his "relationship with place is in truth a relationship with time" (Barghouti, 87). His feeling of homelessness is reflected when he says, "From Baghdad to Beirut to Budapest to Amman to Cairo again. It was impossible to hold on to a particular

location... I do not live in a place. I live in a time” (91). Throughout these journeys and moving between hotels and “up to thirty” houses, he has neither felt belongingness nor has possessed anything since every possession and staying is “passing and temporary”. Somewhere he has accepted his homelessness as he says “I felt comfort in hotels. They taught me not to hold on to a place, to accept the idea of leaving... It gives you something of the taste of temporary permanencies” (92). When he returns to Ramallah and he travels to the places where he had spent his childhood, he becomes wounded and emotional as he sees a war-torn country that is totally different from what he knew as his homeland in his childhood. His remorse of losing home is reflected when he says that he left his homeland to achieve a certificate but he cannot find a wall to hang his certificate in his homeland. Seeing the Israeli settlers everywhere and greenlees image of Palestine, he does not recognize his birthplace. He wonders whether his son would be able to connect the picture he had drawn to him with the country it has become now. He claims his son would think it as “another country”. So, his situation or lack of belongingness resembles Freud’s notion of “unheimlich” as he fails to find a home abroad and feels “strange” at homeland. Here, he gets a jerk when he sees his “unhomely” and “strange” homeland and this is where he realizes his “unheimlich” situation which is reflected in the lines, “The long occupation that created Israeli generations born in Israel and not knowing another ‘homeland’ created at the same time generations of Palestinians strange to Palestine; born in exile and knowing nothing of the homeland except stories and news” (61). His disappointment of losing the sense of belongingness and his homeland is further illustrated in the lines “The long Occupation has succeeded in changing us from children of Palestine to children of the idea of Palestine” (Barghouti, 62). The term “idea of Palestine” suggests that the Palestine Barghouti once knew no longer physically exists, but instead, it remains as an abstraction in the minds of the people. So,

the country has become a strange place for its own people. Therefore, Palestinian refugees perpetually suffer from an “unheimlich” sort of situation where they feel strange in their homeland and fail to find belongingness in the host countries. With the estrangement in their own country, their idea of homeland remains ambiguous and uncertain for Palestinian refugees which is reflected when Barghouti states, “And now I pass from my exile to their ... homeland? My homeland? The West Bank and Gaza? The occupied Territories? ... Israel? Palestine? Is there any other country in the world that so perplexes you with its names? Last time I was clear and things were clear. Now I am ambiguous and vague. Everything is ambiguous and vague” (13). However, Barghouti constantly seeks a home and tries to find a sense of belonging as he claims that the essence of the homeland never leaves the body until death which he compares to the fishes that “still carries the smell of the sea” even in fisherman's net (Barghouti, 151).

Barghouti constantly urges to reclaim his home that is why he has returned to Ramallah. Not only Barghouti, but all the Palestinians long to reclaim their home which is reflected through his conversation with his old neighbor, Abu Muhammad, who says, “Anyone who can come back and live here should come back and live here should come back immediately.... Should we leave it to the settlers?” (Barghouti, 142). However, he finds some sense of home and belonging with his wife, Radwa and son, Tamim in Budapest and Cairo. He refers to the modest apartment in Budapest as a “beautiful home”, and to his son, it is a “paradise”. His sense of attachment with that apartment reflects when he says “I used to see what Budapest gave him and say to myself that we owed it to our place of exile to remember the good things” (134). Nonetheless, the apartment, which he considers ‘home’, is also a temporary happiness as he claims that every possession is temporary for him. This temporary sense of belonging and happiness is reflected as he states, “In this beautiful home, in this happy natural scene ... your telephone rings one night

and a hesitating voice tells you that so-and-so died “half an hour ago.” You discover that you cannot join in the funeral ... because you have no passport. or no visa, or no residence, or because you are forbidden from entry” (134-135). With these lines, we see Barghouti’s sense of permanent homelessness as he realizes that he is even denied entry to his country to join funerals of his loved ones in his homeland. So, no matter how eagerly they want to belong to a home or make a home, their being uprooted from their origin always haunts them. Ultimately, for refugees, the concrete sense of home does not exist.

6.3 Idea of Home in *The Bone Sparrow*

For the protagonist of *The Bone Sparrow*, Subhi, the idea of home is pretty much clear at first. Since the damned Rohingya camp is his birthplace, he considers the “family tent three” as his residence as he says, “that tent is all the house I’ve ever known” (Fraillon, 28). His mother is hopeful about being able to make a place as she says, “someday they see we belong” (Fraillon, 38). She wants Subhi to learn English so that no one will think he is any different when he gets out because she knows that going back to Burma is also impossible. On the other hand, both Eli and Queeny, being the practical characters, know that this is not their home which is reflected when Eli says, “a tent is a tent and a house is a house and there’s no need to confuse the two” (Fraillon, 28). Nonetheless, Subhi has some idea of his homeland or his ancestral land from the stories and description of Burma that he hears from Queeny and Maa that give him a nice picture of his home as he says that the stories were mostly happy and good. Although he knows that going back to Myanmar is also impossible as they were told that they are not allowed to come back to Myanmar. He understands that they can never live in their ancestral land either as he says when he thinks of informing Harvey about the knife he finds near the fence, “Maybe telling would get someone sent back to where they came from, which is the worst thing that can happen

in here.... Worse than staying in here your whole life and never knowing when you'll walk through those fences" (Fraillon, 132). Again, here, we can connect his situation with the notion of "unheimlich" since Subhi has figured out that their own homeland is "unhomely" and "strange" for them. At the same time, he realizes that he is not wanted in Australia either, which he has been considering as his home. As he sees and figures out their position, his idea of home is blurred. He realizes he belongs to nowhere. He starts to feel homeless when Eli is shifted from the family tent to the Alpha tent which is for adults. He feels numb seeing the rebellious and strong Eli breaking down and crying when he says, "They reckon it's getting too full in here, so we have to go to a Transit Centre. In another country, Subh. Because, this country won't have us" (Fraillon, 115). We again realize Subhi's homelessness vividly through the lines, "For years, I didn't get it. That we aren't wanted in this place, or in Burma, or in any other place. I didn't get that we aren't wanted anywhere" (Fraillon, 95). These lines represent the Freud's notion of "unheimlich" reflecting the unhomeliness and strangeness of a place for Rohingya refugees as they are not welcomed anywhere. The lines also provide a quintessential description of the hopeless sense of homelessness of all the refugees in the world, and reinforce the fact that refugees perpetually live in a strange state of limboland.

6.4 Hope for belonging in *The Bone Sparrow*

However, the novel ends with a hope and an indication of their finding a home as they have found a way out of the camp with the help of Sarah who is possibly a human rights worker. The possibility of finding a new home and better life is indicated in the lines, "'Look, Subhi,' Queeny says. She points way out, to where the land ends and the sky begins. 'It's the sea'" (Fraillon, 180). The lines suggest they will escape the camp through the sea and the sky symbolizes a new beginning. Perhaps their hope or change reflects the author's desire for them to have a better life.

However, the question remains whether or not they will get a better life or find a home for themselves elsewhere after getting out.

6.5 Sense of Belonging and Memory

Reasonably, the sense of home for refugees is deeply connected with their past, memories, and remembering, much like their identity, as they have fled from their country or have been excluded from their homeland. After displacement, their sense of belonging and attachment to their homeland exists only in their memories, past, and imagination. As Vijay Agnew suggests, their home in their memories becomes a “metaphorical home” while they physically reside in another country or detention camps. Agnew, who studies the relationship between diaspora identity and memory, claims that people living outside their place of origin experience a “dynamic tension every day between living ‘here’ and remembering ‘there,’ between memories of places of origin and entanglements with places of residence” (4). Agnew further elaborates, stating that “memories can be nostalgically evocative of imaginary homelands and places of birth and origins, as well as an antidote to the struggles of the present” (10). In the texts, we see the protagonists of the novels, Barghouti and Subhi, divided between their present situation and their memory and imagination of their origin.

6.6 Connection between Home and Memory in *I Saw Ramallah*

In *I Saw Ramallah*, Barghouti himself indicates the significance of memories when he says, “The Occupation has created generations without a place whose colors, smells, and sounds they can remember; a first place that belongs to them, that they can return to in their memories in their cobbled-together exiles” (62). These statements imply that memories and remembering are important for refugees and the people living in exiles. By remembering their home where they

spent their childhood, the Palestinian children and people are able to keep ties with their roots and have a sense of belonging. Barghouti again emphasizes on how memory connects the displaced person with their land in the lines, “Displacements are always multipleWhen it happens you become a stranger in your places and to your places at the same time. This displaced person becomes stranger to his memories and so he tries to cling to them” (Barghouti, 131). Barghouti’s remembrance of his home and attachment with his homeland is expressed when he explores the streets and places of Ramallah and tries to remember old images and recognize the native people. When he reaches his home, Dar Ra’d, and describes the home by saying, “Here my mother gave birth to me. Here in this room, I was born.... The room is large and white, its high ceiling borne on columns rising out of its four corners to meet in the middle of a dome like those you find in old mosques and churches. Here we lived out our early days; my grandmother, Umm ‘Ata, my father and mother, Mouunif and Mourid and Majid and Alaa” (56). With these lines, he not only remembers his home but he remembers his childhood, parents, siblings and history of his ancestors and land. Thus, his memories tie him with his roots that gives him the sense of having a home and a family.

6.6 Connection between Home and Memory in *The Bone Sparrow*

In *The Bone Sparrow*, we see, the protagonist repetitively implies how stories and memories of other members in the camp are important for him to create memories for himself and thus make sense of his existence and belonging. For Subhi, stories and memories of Myanmar he hears from people around are the only means to believe that he has a homeland and a place of origin to belong to. This belief gives him comfort and hope. Whenever he feels that he does not belong here, he asks Maa to tell some stories to feel safe. He compares the stories with a blanket in the lines, “One day everything will be covered in one gigantic blanket big enough to warm everyone.

A blanket full of every story there ever was” (Fraillon, 129). So, Subhi takes shelter under the stories of memories of Myanmar to find solace and belongingness. Subhi’s total concept of Myanmar is created from the description that Maa and Queeny give from their memories of homeland as he has never seen Myanmar. Subhi’s idea of his homeland is reflected when he says, “Most of the stories were good and happy. All about their dog and their donkey in Burma, and swimming in the sea and watching shooting stars fall from the sky.... And some weren’t so happy” (Fraillon, 37). Again, Queeny teaches him all the things she used to do in Myanmar, through imagination, like how to climb a tree, ride a donkey and swim in the sea. All these imaginings and descriptions create an image of Myanmar. Subhi also procures the image of his ancestral homeland from drawing as he states, “Some of the oldies ask me to draw them things. Sometimes they ask me to draw things I haven’t ever seen, and then they have to talk and talk until I can see in my head what they have in their remembering” (Fraillon, 128). Evidently, the drawings made from the memories of the oldies create an imagination or an idea of homeland in his head. Like Subhi, every Rohingya refugee, whether they have seen Myanmar or not, relies on memories, imaginings, and stories of their homeland to sustain their sense of home and belonging.

In a nutshell, the idea of home always remains blurry for refugees. They neither feel homely at their own homeland nor can make a place in the host countries where they take refuge. They either remain in an “unheimlich” situation or they try to find a sense of belonging in their memories of home or past. They keep trying to find a home throughout their whole life which leads them to uncertainty.

Chapter-7

Othering of Refugees: Exploitation and Dehumanization

7.1 Said's explanation of Othering

The founding reason behind the exclusion of refugees in different regions is the otherization of a certain community which has its root in orientalism. Orientalism is rooted in the rigid distinction between the Orientals, the East or the "Other" and Occidentals, Europe or the "Self" where, as Said states, "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal" (40). This polarized distinction gives the scope to the "West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other (Said, 48). The Self or the apparent superior party must dominate and the Other or the weaker must be dominated, "which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said, 36). Orientalism provides a framework for one group to dominate another, thereby justifying the rule, exploitation, and dehumanization of the dominated group by the superior group. A particular group is forced to become refugees when they are considered different, strange, or peculiar due to their religion, culture, or language within a territory or country. They are treated as the 'Other' and eventually tortured and dehumanized which forces them to flee. In the new country where they seek refuge, they are already otherized—not only because they are culturally different but also because they are excluded by their own country. They face the same humiliation and exploitation in the refuge country as well. Thus, refugees are always otherized everywhere. Both Palestinian and Rohingya refugees were otherized in their homeland on the basis of their religion, culture and language and thereby they

were excluded which led them to flee from their country. Both the text explicitly gives the testimony of the exclusion, exploitation and dehumanization of the refugees through the experiences of protagonists of the texts.

7.2 Othering in *I Saw Ramallah*

In the case of Palestine and Israel, we all know Israel is the one which is the powerful, an authority or institution and the “Self” since Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories by force. They have brought in settlements in those territories to preserve their establishment, they have put Israeli flags in Palestinian territories as well to demonstrate power and they have restricted access of Palestinians to their settlements to show that they are “Self”. The occupation of Palestine establishes them as the Other which is expressed in the lines, “They took the addresses of our homes and the dust of our drawers. They took the city’s throngs and its doors and its lanes” (Barghouti, 144). They kill whoever they suspect to be involved with the “Intifada” whether he or she is a child or grown person every now and then. All the killings and assassinations, represents the dehumanization of the Palestinians by Israel as they consider themselves as an institution. While it comes to refugees, the whole world becomes the “Self” and the refugees are the “other”. They are othered on their own country as well as in foreign land which Barghouti indicates as he admits that they themselves used to call and treat the people from coastal cities, banished by Israel in 1948, refugees who came to live in West Bank (Barghouti, 41). This indicates that, the moment a group of people become refugees, they become the “other” to everyone. However, the text, from the beginning, indicates the practice of Israel of treating Palestinian, in their own country as others since Barghouti sees Israeli officers and authorities everywhere and says, “The others are still masters of the place. They give you a permit. They check your papers. They start files on you. They make you wait” (38). His

disappointment at being treated as 'other' is illustrated when he says, "Occupation prevents you from managing your affairs in your own way. It interferes in every aspect of life and of death, it interferes with longing and anger and desire and walking in the street" (48). On the other hand, when he sees a Palestinian officer unaffected by his presence at the waiting room, during immigration process, he says, "It was clear that the Agreements had placed him in a position in which he could make no decisions. All security, customs, and administration procedures were their business, the business of 'the other side'" (21). All these preventions and restrictions from traveling, going to certain places like Jerusalem and "praying in the holy places even on Fridays" are only the ways to convey the message for Israelis that, "We are the masters here" (Barghouti, 141). Again, Barghouti explains his encounter with an Israeli lawyer, who specializes in defending Palestinian detainees. When he asks her whether her country would accept him as a refugee, she says that the laws of her "government would not permit it" (Barghouti, 156). To this comment, Barghouti criticizes them saying that even if the Israelis have sympathy for the Palestinian, they will never accept their "cause" and "story". To some extent, their sympathy or compassion for Palestinians is also another way to make them feel "losers" or "weaker" and represent themselves as the "victors". Barghouti again reflects the binary of "Self" and "other" by Israel in the lines, "when they took our entire space and exiled us from it, they put us and themselves outside the law of equality. They became an enemy, they became strong; we became displaced and weak" (Barghouti, 157). The tendency of Israel to downgrade Palestinians as Other when Barghouti regrets to see the backwardness and lack of development in Palestine. Israel has intentionally restricted the development of Palestine to keep the binary position of self and other which is illustrated in the lines, "Palestine's progress in the natural paths of its future was deliberately impeded, as though Israel wished to make of the whole Palestinian community a

countryside for the city of Israel” (Barghouti, 147). Barghouti further criticizes the imposed binary position between Palestine and Israel by saying, “They moved forward as fast as they could and made sure that we should keep moving backward” (147). So, Israel, the self, not only makes them other by exploiting and dehumanizing them, but also they keep them in darkness and underdeveloped conditions to maintain their position as Self.

7.3 Othering in *The Bone Sparrow*

Fraillon, in her novel, vividly reflects the othering of Rohingyas in both home and abroad. First of all, their othering in Myanmar, which they have been regarding as their homeland, is reflected through Subhi’s “not so happy” stories that he has heard from Maa and Queeny. He says, “They were stories we had to hear though. About being told the Rohingya don’t exist.... About not being allowed to go to school or to work or to the hospital. About being arrested and made to build roads and dig holes for no money. About running from the police and soldiers.... About people disappearing and people dying. About my Ba being arrested for writing his poems and not coming back.... About being told if they come back to Burma, they’d be killed.... About every country in the world saying we don’t belong. Not in this place. Not in any place” (Fraillon, 38). The lines evidently reflect that the Myanmar authorities have violently exercised power over Rohingya because they do not consider Rohingyas as one of them but as the “other”, the weaker other. Again, the Rohingya refugees are dehumanized in the detention center which is supposed to be their safe place. Their othering in the detention center is reflected through the uninhabitable and deadly condition of the detention center. From the very beginning of the novel, Fraillon gives the picture of how refugees are treated. Their tents, where they sleep and live, frequently get damped by the sea water. The environment causes rashes and contagious diseases. Most importantly, there are shortages of eatable food which is the fundamental need for their survival.

As Subhi describes, they mostly get something that is “brown and mushed and just about impossible to guess” (Fraillon, 15). He often gets “a bit of plastic”, flies or worms and even a human tooth. They only get good food, as Subhi says, “Real eggs and real toast” (Fraillon, 75), when they are visited by the “Government people” or the “Human Rightsers”. Again, we see in the novel, the Rohingya children do not receive proper education as Subhi explains that a teacher used to come to teach them but it was “expensive”. So, they never bring a teacher or arrange any program to educate them. Their living conditions and the type of food they receive suggest that they are treated like animals, reflecting their dehumanization. Furthermore, they are deliberately kept illiterate to prevent them from living like normal human beings or achieving equal position as the 'Self' or the Australian citizens. Thus, the authority maintains the dichotomy of self and the other. However, the othering of refugees becomes clearly visible when we see the adverse treatment of Rohingyas by the Jackets which is reflected when Subhi says, “Most Jackets don’t bother with us Limbo kids, except to search us over with their beeper wands or shove us out of the way” (Fraillon, 19). They usually call all refugees by their number instead of their names. Again, they never allow them to go outside or to own anything from outside and frequently check and inspect them and even threaten them with their lives. The Jackets, repressing the Australian authority, are able to get the scope of exploiting and torturing them only because they otherize the Rohingyas. The most wicked of them is Beaver, a representative of that authority which considers itself as the “Self”. Beaver mercilessly kills Eli with a rock who is not even an adult. Harvey, the only goof Jacket seems to be sympathetic with them, witnesses the incident without protesting. Rather, he walks away after the murder of Eli like he does not exist. The brutal murder of Eli and the ignorance of Harvey demonstrate the dark reality of refugee camps. In the end, they make the Rohingya refugees realize that they are nothing but “dead rats” like

Queeny says. The killing of Eli shows the utmost dehumanization and exploitation of Rohingyas by Australian authorities which is nothing less than the Burmese government. So, they are otherized both in their homeland and refugee country. It is evident that when it comes to the refugees, the whole world becomes the “Self” and they remain the “other” always.

Chapter- 8

Distortion of History

8.1 Said's Explanation on how the Self Distorts Facts about the Other

Orientalism otherizes a group not only by domination or disregard, but also by “intellectual authority”. The authorities and the dominant groups make statements and perceptions about the inferior party and try to establish those statements as facts and truth. Simultaneously, they deny and disregard the perceptions of the “other” about themselves. Thereby, they distort, conceal and fabricate their history as well. Discussing the knowledge of the West about the Orient, Said states, “To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for "us" to deny autonomy to "it"-the Oriental country-since we know it and it exists, in a sense, as we know it” (32). So, the Self owns or possesses the knowledge, facts, and historical narratives of the Other, allowing them to manipulate history in accordance with their own benefit. When a nation or government of a country excludes a certain community, which eventually leads them to become refugees, they also create historical narratives and various facts and statements about that community. They do not do these only to otherize them or to demean them. Rather, by distorting their history, they establish themselves as the superior and make sure that the excluded community may never come back and reclaim their citizenship and land.

8.2 Tendencies of fabricating history by Israeli and Myanmar government

In the case of Palestine, we notice this attempt of concealing history by Israel, as Said says in *The Question of Palestine*, “In Israel today it is the custom officially to refer to the Palestinians

as “so-called Palestinians.... The fact of the matter is that today Palestine does not exist, except as a memory or, more importantly, as an idea” (4-5). Similarly, the constant negation of Myanmar officials about the existence of Rohingya also affirms the fact that they want to make sure that the Rohingyas never come back to their native land. By their attempts to deny the existence of refugees, the ruling groups also want to establish that their land only belongs to the Jews or the Buddhists. In the texts, the tendencies of the dominating parties of distorting histories of Palestinian and Rohingya refugees are clearly highlighted.

8.3 Fabrication of History in *I Saw Ramallah*

As Israel considers itself the institution and authority, it also claims the right to change history and facts. The authoritative tendency and nature of Israel is showcased when Barghouti describes an Israeli soldier holding a gun during his entrance to the West Bank in the lines, “This soldier with the yarmulke is not vague. At least his gun is very shiny. His gun is my personal history. It is the history of my estrangement. His gun took from us the land of the poem and left us with the poem of the land” (Barghouti, 13). So, the lines clearly indicate that the gun symbolizes authority and domination over Palestinians that have stolen their land and their history of existence.

Through the lines, Barghouti tries to convey that the Israeli has not only occupied their lands by force, but also has snatched their history with that gun. Barghouti’s message becomes vivid when he criticizes the former Israeli president Yitzhak Rabin for denying the entire course of Palestinian history while eloquently portraying the “tragedy of Israelis as absolute victims” (Barghouti, 177). While Israel has been taking the lands of Palestinians away, killing them, bombing on them, crushing their institutions and buildings, the Israelis are the one who always play victim and thus fabricate history. As Rabin claims that they are “the victims of war and violence”, Barghouti criticizes him in the lines, “Rabin has taken everything, even the story of

our death...He changed facts, he altered the order of things, he presented us as the initiators of violence” (177). Through the lines, it is effectively reflected that the Israelis steal the stories, deaths and histories of Palestinians by ridiculously playing victims of war and violence.

Barghouti not only criticizes Rabin but also speaks for the communities who have been otherized and represented fallaciously by the whites. Barghouti beautifully describes the nuances of the tendency to fabricate truths, facts, and historical narratives about the Other by the West or the whites as he says, “It is easy to blur the truth with a simple linguistic trick: Start your story from “Secondly”. Yes, this is what Rabin did. He simply neglected to speak of what happened first” (178). So, by using this simple term “secondly” the Israelis have erased what they did in the first place and thus they have been blaming Palestinians for all the wars and destruction. Thereby, they have turned the whole course of history “upside-down”. Barghouti not only criticizes Israelis for distorting their history, he also speaks for Red Indians, black men, Gandhi and Vietnamese from whom the “whites” or the authorities have always stolen their history. In historical narratives, they have been misrepresented as “original criminals”, “barbarous”, and “responsible for the tragedies” by using “secondly”. So, this is how the whites and the West or the dominant group always falsely manipulate and distort fact, truth, reality and history in accordance with their need and perception. If we look at the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine, we see that the Israelis and pro-Israelis are accusing the 7th October attack by Hamas to justify the brutal killings, persecutions and bombing, ignoring the whole history of injustice with Palestinians. However, since the Israelis or the whites steal and occupy the lands from “other”, they are bound to fabricate their history so that the weaker can never reclaim their land and the “Self” can keep their position and power.

8.4 Fabrication of History in *The Bone Sparrow*

In the afterword of the novel *The Bone Sparrow*, the author claims that the authorities deliberately try to hide the reality of the detention centers that makes it harder for those who want to know the truths (184). The affirmation from the author evidently shows the distortion of truths and facts of refugees by the dominant groups. The novel depicts the violent power play by the Myanmar government as demonstrated through the stories of Jimmie's great-great-grandmother and her husband, Anka and Oto. In one of their stories, we understand the othering Rohingya and the attempt to wipe out their existence by the Myanmar government started long ago as the narrator of the story says, "the Rohingya would be told that such a people didn't exist. Many would be killed and tortured and forced to leave.... Many would fear that they had been forgotten by a world that seemed deaf to the cries of those in need, a world in which hope is in short supply" (Fraillon, 178). The lines reflect the Myanmar government's perceptual tendency to eradicate the Rohingyas from Myanmar, aiming to erase the history of their presence in the country, which began long ago. Again, the negation of the existence of Rohingyas by continuously saying, "Rohingyas do not exist", reflects their strategic attempt to wipe them out from the history of Myanmar. Since Rohingyas, like every other refugee, are othered in the host countries as well, the authorities of Australia also hide the miserable story and struggle of Rohingyas. At the same time, they hide the brutal treatment of camp guards which is projected through Eli's murder. After his murder, the authority has tried to conceal the truth of how brutally he has been killed which is reflected in the line, "Someone has put a jacket over his head so no one sees what Beaver did" (Fraillon, 163). This process of forgetting and ignoring their story is also shown when Jimmie's father ignores the report on the protest in the Rohingya camp in the newspaper and concentrates on sport news. As they are othered, no one cares about their

stories and news, which could contribute to the archives and historical records. Again, we see the fabrication of their truths when some kids, in Jimmies school, describe the situation of the refugee camps and say that the refugees are “lucky” because they had everything. The insane distortion of facts is reflected when the kids say, “Good clothes and thousands of toys and books and computers and teachers and doctors who live right there in the Center so you didn’t have to drive for two days if you were sick. And one of the boys, Max, he said he saw a container get delivered to the Center, and inside it was full of brand-new bikes” (Fraillon, 43). So, the description sharply contradicts the truth and reality of camps and refugees who are living in utterly wretched conditions. All these fabrications and concealing the truth and ignoring the stories of Rohingya refugees are the parts of the process of distorting their history. Furthermore, the description and perception of Australians about the Rohingyas illustrate the fact that authority, or the Self, always archives whatever and however they choose to remember about the Other, resulting in a distorted history.

All the authorities in the world, who have tried to make a community “other” and establish themselves as the “Self”, have not only taken away their lands or stripped their identity but also attempted to wipe out their existence or history. They do so because they want to deny the fact that they were one of them which threatens their establishment and position as “Self”.

Nonetheless, the discussed text or the refugee narratives work as mouthpieces for the “otherized” communities. Refugee literature always tends to tell its stories by representing marginalized characters who continuously scream for their rights and existence, and retell their history from their perspectives.

Chapter- 9

Comparison between Palestinian and Rohingya Refugee

9.1 Kunz's Classification of Refugee

We can compare Palestinian and Rohingya refugees based on the discussion of the texts, using Egon F. Kunz's doctrine on refugees, which explores the social relationships refugees have with both their home country and host country. Kunz has categorized refugees based on their nature of attachment with their nation. He defines the first group as majority-identified refugees “who are firm in their conviction that their opposition to the events is shared by the majority of their compatriots and identify themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government” (42-43). The second kind is events-alienated refugees who are characterized by the ambivalence between “their original desire to be identified with the nation, and their subsequent realization of their rejection by the nation as a whole, or by a section of its citizens” (Kunz, 43). Most of the event-alienated refugees are religious and racial minorities. The difference between the two groups is that unlike the former group, the members of latter one “seldom entertain the hope, and only rarely the wish, to return to live among their former compatriots” (Kunz, 43). Again, refugees can be classified according to their attitudes toward displacement. There are two groups of refugees under this category: Reactive fate-groups and Purpose groups or revolutionary activists. The members of Reactive fate-groups “flee reluctantly, without a solution in sight; they flee because they react to a situation which they perceive to be intolerable” (Kunz, 44). As Kunz discusses, the members of reactive fate groups are mostly composed of majority-identified national refugees who are victims of wars, sudden revolutionary changes, and expulsions, often including event-alienated refugees.

9.2 Kunz's Theory and the Refugee Characters in the Novels

As we have discussed in the novel *I Saw Ramallah*, we see, the protagonist returns to his homeland after his 30 years exile though he has been constantly denied entry by the Israeli officials before the implementation of OSLO accords. When he is able to enter into his country, he urges to get his citizenship renewed. Though he comes back to his homeland, there is no home left for him where he can hang his certificate. Still, he wants to be here and bring his son. At the same time, he constantly criticizes the Israeli authorities and their presence in his land. His thirst and eager attempt to get his rights as a citizen of his homeland reflects his attachment to his nation but his criticism about the ruling government displays his hatred towards them. Not only the protagonist of this novel, but all the other Palestinian characters showcase their firm attachment and sense of loyalty to their people and their land which is reflected when Barghouti's old neighbor, Abu Muhammad insist him to return and reclaim his land. Said, in his memoir, also displays a sense of attachment to Palestine throughout his whole life. When he is diagnosed with leukemia, he thinks of "finding a place to die" so that he can finally own a place. Thinking about his death, he goes to Palestine after four years. His sense of belonging to his homeland and detachment with the place where he actually resides is reflected when says, "To this day I still feel that I am away from home....The fact that I live in New York with a sense of provisionality despite thirty-seven years of residence here" (188). Similarly, Darwish, in his poems as well, portrays his reminisce of home, loss of identity and belonging to his nation. Poems like "Mural", "The Strangers' Picnic", "I Belong There", "On This Earth" and "Another Road in the Road" are such poems by Darwish that vividly reflect the attachment with home and nation.

In *The Bone Sparrow*, we see a promise and hope for a better future in another country rather than a longing to return to their own. We see, Subhi tries hard to restore or nurture his “Rohingyaness” or consider Myanmar as his homeland through the memories and stories of other Rohingyas in camp. However, his mother wants him to be like the foreigners so that he can do something here and make a living for himself. Her tendency of moving forward and slight detachment from homeland is reflected when she says, “No more. Looking back only brings sad, Subhi. Now look forward” (Fraillon, 38). Not only Maa, his sister Queeny does not seem to cherish or nurture the memories of their homeland where they were born. Rather, she makes efforts to get recognized by the people so that she can exist. There is no instance where we see any of the Rohingya refugees make efforts to go back or cherish the desire of reclaiming their land. Rather, going back to Myanmar is the worst idea for them. Above all, the novel ends with an indication that Subhi and his family are going to another country where they will find a better life. Similarly, we see in *First, They Erased Our Name: a Rohingya speaks*, Habiburrahman flees from one country to another and tries to find a better place. He finally ends up in Malaysia in the hope that being a Muslim country, they will be compassionate towards Rohingyas. However, he never looks back to his country or finds any hope of returning to his homeland or to his people.

From the texts of Palestinian writers, we can say that the Palestinians are more attached to their birth land and their national consciousness. There is a sense of hope and intense desire to return to their own soil and live permanently which resembles majority-identified refugees since they, as Kunz describes, resonate more with their nation and live in hope that they will return to their origin. On the other hand, all Rohingya, from the texts we discuss, do not seem hopeful of returning to their own homeland or that much attached to their native country people. Rather,

they tend to seek a better life in other countries or move on from their national identity and emotions. So, we can put Rohingyas in the category of event-alienated refugees as they differ from the majority-identified refugees since they accept the fact that they are rejected and unwanted by their nation and they never hope to return to their country. Perhaps, the Palestinian and Rohingya refugees differ regarding their attachment to their origin because of their different history of displacement. As Palestinians were displaced by the Israeli colonies who did not belong to their land, they still have this hope to regain their land. On the contrary, the Rohingyas are the members of a religious minority group in a Buddhist majority land and they were excluded by the majority group. Perhaps, that's why they do not cherish this hope to return while they still have the sense of belongingness with their land. So, they have this ambivalence between their attachment to their homeland and realization of being rejected by their government. However, both Palestinians and Rohingyas, we can say, belong to the reactive fate-group as their displacement was not a purposeful or voluntary one. Rather, their movement was a reaction to the persecution of the dominant group.

Chapter- 10

Conclusion

Refugee communities continue to represent a significant portion of the global population, many of whom remain trapped in a state of limbo. They are unable to build a secure future for themselves, nor can they become an asset to any country or contribute. They are unrecognized, suppressed, silenced and othered in every country. Their personal experiences and stories of persecution, identity crisis, desire to go back to their home and their historical facts from their own perspectives remain ignored and unheard. Refugee narratives serve as great sources for getting an unbiased and valuable insight into the refugee experience.

Refugee experience has been projected in several literary forms around the world. *The Bone Sparrow* and *I Saw Ramallah* are such literary examples that represent voices of refuge through the characters of Barghouti, Subhi, Queeny and Eli. The texts show the daily struggles of refugees for finding a concrete identity, dealing with the loss of home and enduring the sufferings of being treated as Other and subordinate. Both the texts speak for their existence and their right to live a normal life in a safe home. The texts expose the long-standing attempt of Israel and Myanmar to erase the history of Palestinian and Rohingya. So, the novels represent their existence or serve as the account of their histories.

By studying and analyzing such novels, we come to these conclusions that refugees like displaced Palestinian and Rohingya communities suffer from an eternal identity crisis. As they are never identified and recognized by any government, they always question their own existence. At the same time, their national identity is questioned by others as they do not exist in

any census or official registry and archives. Even if they get any passport or entry permits, they still recognize the label of being uprooted from origin. On top of that, their past and memories from their birth land always remain with them which make their identity divided between past and present. They intend to cling to their past identity which was secured but they cannot deny their present condition as refugees. So, refugees live the rest of their lives bearing a broken and conflicted identity.

Similar to identity, their sense of home and belonging is also affected by their memories of homeland. Though forced to leave, these memories remain deeply attached to their soul, like an essence or a scent. They cannot feel the same attachment to their refuge country, as part of their identity still resides in their homeland through these memories. While they desire to go back to their homeland, they acknowledge the reality that they are denied entry to their homeland. Even if they are able to go back, they are made feel like a stranger in their own homeland. On the other hand, they never get the status of a citizen in a new country due to their status as refugees. They are othered in their refugee country as well. So, the lack of acceptance everywhere, including their own homeland, make them feel perpetually homeless belonging to nowhere. Their sense of home and belonging always remain vague and uncanny.

As the thesis has attempted to find out how the texts display othering of refugees, we claim that the texts have vividly portrayed the othering of Palestinian and Rohingya refugees. The novels reflect othering not only through the portrayal of the exclusion, persecution, degrading and dehumanization, but also they show the suppression and eradication of their voices, narratives and history. The texts also intend to retell the history of Palestinian and Rohingya identity from their perspectives challenging the traditional narratives of authoritative governments. From the exploration of othering in the texts, we can say that the powerful group or the “Self”,

intentionally torture and fabricate historical accounts of refugees because they want to erase their narratives and existence. By silencing and manipulating their voices, the Israel and Myanmar authority maintain and justify their position. At the same time, the refugees are marginalized everywhere as they are denied citizenship by their own country. So, they remain a subordinate community and are dehumanized in the host country also which is the apparent safe place from them. Therefore, when it comes to the argument of the refugee crisis, the government of the whole world transforms into the Self and the displaced community is treated as the Other.

As this paper compares between Palestinian and Rohingya refugees applying Kunz's classification of refugee, as per the analysis of the selected texts, the paper asserts that the two refugee communities differ in their nature of attachment to their homeland and nation and their attitude towards their displacement. Palestinian refugees resemble the majority- identified refugees as they are more attached to their nation. Whereas, Rohingya refugees are identified as the event-alienated refugees as they remain stuck between their desire of going back to the homeland and their acceptance of the fact that they are excluded from their country. Both the communities are identified as reactive-fate groups. So, we can say that compared to the Rohingya community, Palestinians resonate more with their national consciousness.

Refugee narratives provide a different perspective to view the current refugee crisis and their terrifying experiences. Literary works like poems of Mahmoud Darwish, Said's memoir *Out of Place, First, They Erased Our Name: a Rohingya Speaks* by Habiburrahman and *Exodus: Between Genocide and Me*, collection of poems by Mayyu Ali are some remarkable examples of refugee narratives that takes the readers into the horrific journey and experiences of refugees. Similarly, Fraillon's fiction *The Bone Sparrow* and Barghouti's autobiography, *I Saw Ramallah* powerfully capture the harrowing and bone-chilling experiences of Rohingya and Palestinian

refugees comprehensively portraying their struggles to preserve their identity and existence, make a sense of home and find a place to belong to and deal with the tyranny and injustice they go through every day.

Refugee narratives like these novels offer the readers and researchers such an opportunity to view the refugee experience through the eyes of those who have lived it. These sorts of literary works provide very raw and unbiased narratives and voices of refugees which mainstream media may not offer. So, refugee literature can also be studied as alternate history. All in all, reading refugee literature can enlighten us about various dimensions of the refugee crisis, refugee identity and their history of displacement. These thesis papers will contribute to the field of studies on identity, distortion of history, marginalization of refugees, sense of belonging, Palestinian and Rohingya refugee crisis and experience and their history of displacement. Much like refugee literature, the paper seeks to amplify the suppressed voices of refugees and attempts to acknowledge their hardships, sufferings and relentless struggle for rights and survival.

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