

# DESIGNATED NOMADS

By

Tasneem Habib Aniqua

ID No. 17103001

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelors in English

Department of English and Humanities  
BRAC University

September, 2020

© [2020]. Brac University  
All rights reserved.

## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing 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/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

### **Student's Full Name & Signature:**

Tasneem Habib Aniqua

ID No. 17103001

---

**Student Full Name**

Student ID

## Approval

“Designated Nomads” submitted by Tasneem Habib Aniqua (ID No. 17103001) of Summer 2020, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors in English on September 28, 2020.

### Examining Committee:

Supervisor:  
(Member)

Abu Sayeed Mohammad Noman, PhD, Assistant Professor,  
Department of English and Humanities

---

Full Name  
Designation, Department  
Institution

Program Coordinator:  
(Member)

---

Full Name  
Designation, Department  
Institution

Departmental Head:  
(Chair)

Firdous Azim, PhD, Professor and Chairperson, Department  
of English and Humanities

---

Full Name  
Designation, Department  
Institution

Supervisor:  
(Member)

Samia Huq, PhD, Associate Professor (ESS) and Dean,  
General Education, Department of Economics and Social  
Science

---

Full Name  
Designation, Department

## **Abstract/ Executive Summary**

As a response to the refugee crisis that occurred as an aftereffect of the World War II, the United Nations Organisation had created the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees in 1951. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed the surge of refugees flowing into sheltering countries which have never been observed before. Starting from the fleeing of Armenians and Russians, Greeks, Turks, Jews, Syrians and Afghanistan, South Sudanese and Somalia, Venezuelans, the Rohingya massacre and so much more, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen catastrophes and death in settling and sheltering camps, riots and violence between natives and refugees. People do not remember the pride of being able to help these displaced beings; rather they remember the hostility and discrimination from natives and misconceptions portrayed through media. Behind the numbers and statistics, these are people who are filled with dreams of a safe future, security for family and stable livelihood and home. Looking at an uncertain future, these people are unheard voices of the minorities. Literature attempts to shed light on the unheard voices through narrating their stories, while anthropological research reveals the condition they live in. Combining both allows people to look at the refugee crisis far different from what have been portrayed by media.

**Keywords:** Refugees and Natives; Trauma; Hostility; Othering; Media Portrayal; Cultural Relativism; Refugee camps and Borders.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude to BRAC University for giving me the opportunity to be a part of it. I would also like to thank the Department of English and Humanities and the Department of Economic and Social Sciences for giving me the opportunity to write an honors thesis. To my advisor Abu Sayeed Mohammad Noman, PhD, thank you for giving me the freedom to write what I wanted and guiding me through the research. I would also like to thank my Anthropology supervisor, Samia Huq, PhD for broadening my perspective about issues and society. To Asma Ul Hosna Anika, I genuinely appreciate your assurance and calm in the midst of my confusion and anxiety. To all my friends and family for helping me survive all the stress throughout the year and for never stop believing in me. To my parents, especially my mother, Sayeda Farhana Hossain, for supporting me through thick and thin and loving me for whom I am and my father for giving me the freedom to study what I wanted. To my sisters, Farah Habib for encouraging me to explore my passion, Sarah Habib, your presence and guidance throughout my university life has allowed me to make the best of it and Fatema Habib for pushing me to do better. Most of all, I am completely indebted to Abu Sayeed Mohammad Noman, my supervisor for letting me follow my ambition and breaking the chains of my limits. Without his wisdom, kindness, patience, enthusiasm and encouragement, I would have never been able to acquire confidence in my abilities and produce such a research paper. His confidence in me has allowed me to shed my insecurities, restored confidence in me, while pushing me further than I thought I would be able to go.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Approval.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract/Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Literature Review.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Chapter 1 [The Nightmare and the Determination].....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Chapter 2 [The Loneliness and the Breakdown].....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Chapter 3 [The Door and the Realisation].....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter 4 [Anthropological Research].....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Citation and References.....</b>	<b>81</b>

## **Introduction**

Literature has been a platform where various issues of the society could be depicted and criticised. It has given space to the unheard voices of the past and brought about awareness among the younger generations. Portraying stories of history and of its mistakes and tragedies, literature acts as a guideline to avoid repeating the same catastrophes all over again. Commonly phrased that the past has the ability to repeat itself, literature plays a role as a social example of why horrific and inhumane tragedies should not be repeated. It helped raising awareness in people as well as being used as a powerful tool to influence the perspective and opinions of its readers. Reading is the most common form of escapism besides various activities like gaming, listening to music, painting and so on. Although the written realm of creativity and imagination does more than just let its readers escape reality. It serves as an opportunity to polish one's own personality through printed words. As a result, different styles, forms, story plots, and characters appeal to different readers. It calls out to out to a relatable part of their personality, allowing the story or context to become a part of the reader's reality. In a way, we can assume that it may be one of the many reasons why the concept of genre came into existence. Writers for centuries have focused on satisfying the desires of the audiences and the readers even if it meant that they were supporting some of the stereotypical ideologies of the society. Thus, people started using literature as an inconspicuous tool to capture the readers' attention and make them think about the issues prevalent in the society. These subtle ways of slowly incorporating social problems and their effects had to be carefully constructed within the story plot so that readers did not lose interest from the books. Even if the writers were making an attempt to nudge the readers into a certain direction, they also had to make the story plot plausible and relatable so that people genuinely enjoy such writings. At times, while focusing on the success of the production, the writers lose their focus on the direction of the story. Thus, the literature becomes an object of

mere entertainment rather than a soul moving context that would broaden the reader's perspective of life, people and civilisation.

Despite attempting to portray social issues in different narrative techniques, writers at times are not successful in connecting the victims of injustice through their words. Through genres, writers are able to exercise their literary capabilities to make people aware of different yet indefinite social issues like rape, women empowerment and subjugation, racism, bullying, mental health issues, isolation and depression, war and chaos, control of money, power etc. and so on. However, at times texts focusing on such issues are unable to fully capture the essence of the matter. I believe the issue that is extremely challenging to portray the reality of the people and society is the refugee crisis.

The refugee crisis has been a rising globalised issue in the 21st century as it has recorded to achieve the highest percentage of human displacement as of 2018. An unrivalled number of 70.8 million people across the world have been forced to desert their homes and their conflicted homelands. Among such unprecedented numbers, there are nearly 30 million refugees of which, more than half of children who are under 18 years of age<sup>1</sup>. According to United Nations, these people have not only been denied access of nationality, but also been deprived of their basic rights such as right to education, freedom of movement, healthcare, security, employment and so on. Usually when we think about refugees, the first thing that comes to mind are the people who have been displaced from their homeland due to conflict of various types. These types include political clashes, religious issues; dictatorship induced social doctrine, war over natural resources, land invasion, ethnic cleansing, mass genocide, minority subjugation and so on. However, the people who have been fortunate enough to escape alive from their homeland because of these issues were far more than just being

---

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, "Refugees", *Global Issues*, Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.



unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the people who have been uprooted, homeless, or forced migration from their homeland are considered to be refugees. They flee from the borders of their country and no longer have the protection of their government. They have to take asylum in other neighbouring and foreign countries for different reasons that mainly go back to the basic humane instinct to survive. It is a general idea that displaced victims could only have fallen in such predicament due to conflicts and bloodshed. However, in the past two decades, specifically from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this issue has taken a globalised form and has accelerated in an alarming manner<sup>2</sup>. According to Amnesty Internationals, over the past 10 years, just over 1 million refugees have been resettled in comparison to the 3.9 million refugees who returned to their respective countries. By 2019, only half of the total percentages of the refugees have been resettled<sup>3</sup>.

According to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), after accumulating data regarding refugees of all forms have stated that the world is witnessing the highest recorded data of human displacement that they published on their website on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In their statistical yearbooks, a total number of 70.8 million people have been forced to flee their homes all around the world. Nearly 25.9 million refugees of the total count are children and over a half of which are under the age of 18, a rise from the statistics of 2018. Not only that, there are also millions of stateless people which are recorded in data to be 3.9 million, but the organization believes that there are million others who are left unrecorded. It is assumed that in every two seconds, one person is forced to leave or flee from their homes due to conflict or persecution. In the recent decade, starting from the late

---

<sup>2</sup> More than two-thirds of all refugees came from countries like Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar in 2019. Syria has been the country with the staggering number for refugees since 2014 and by the end of 2019, there were 6.6 million Syrian refugees supported by 126 countries worldwide.

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

19<sup>th</sup> century, the flux of displaced people has been on the rise with no indication of reducing under any circumstances. Almost eighty percent of the total refugee population lives in the neighbouring country of their homeland. Among the refugees that come to seek asylum and protection, most of them have been from countries like Syria (6.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and South Sudan (2.3 million), making a total percentage of fifty seven. Looking at the numbers, people instinctively distance themselves from these people and fail to see these unfortunate human beings more than just numbers. As a result, it is easy for them to just momentarily feel sad for these refugees and their broken families before they resume on with their lives. It is one of the many reasons that play an important role of how people started to become more immune to human sufferings and torture.

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there have been certain documents and permission needed in order to allow a person to enter into a foreign land. It started from the month of Nisan, of the 20<sup>th</sup> year reign of the ancient Persian King Artaxerxes, around 450BC<sup>4</sup>. However, there were not conditions or policies in place to prevent people coming to the country<sup>5</sup>. Rather, these people were received in both welcoming and hostile manner, depending on the perspective of the people in the receiving country. On the contrary, the right to seek asylum was commonly recognized and somewhat honoured for both the displaced victim and the asylum providing country. It could be said that the people asked for refuge in another country would elevate the status of the asylum providing country. The country would be depicted as a place of peace and prosperity from the global perspective. There have been numerous waves of migration of people throughout history depending on various reasons. There had never been any problem regarding refugees and asylum until the rise of closed-stated frontiers during the late 19<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Benedictus. Leo, "A brief history of the passport: From a royal letter to a microchip", *The Guardian*, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2006. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2006/nov/17/travelnews>. Accessed on 7 Nov. 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Passports that are recognised today started being used during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, travelling papers started to circulate among contributing and important members of the society in the British Empire from 1540, which was conducted by the Privy Council.

century. By 1920-30s, the political asylum had degraded exponentially because of the political unrest across the world along with gradual decrease of empathy towards human suffering and the bizarre increase of the number of refugees. With increasing unrest and strain of relationship between countries led to the restriction of refugee movement in certain areas and with the lack of resources of the ever-increasing number of displaced victims.

The refugee crisis has been long present within the history of mankind, longer than most of the issues that are prevalent in today's world. The refugee situation took a noticeable physical form during the World War II. The world saw the greatest displacement of human beings that went into the staggering numbers of 81.6 million people from 1960 to 1960<sup>6</sup>. In addition, some of the most historic example of such mass migrations would include the exclusion of the Jews from Spain during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the exodus of Huguenots from France in 1685, and the eviction of Jews from Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic in the 1930s<sup>7</sup>. The renowned nomads of refugee history are the Jews, as they have never been able to settle down and set their roots before being banished away from places. It was due to the fact they refused to be pushed into conformity and thus was expelled by the secular or conservative authorities. When people think about refugees, the common idea that comes to mind is of those who had been displaced or forced to flee fur to violent and dire circumstances that made it impossible to live in their homeland. The people who have to leave their birth of origin due to impending war in order to have a chance in surviving are considered to be war refugees. One of the most classic examples is the Liberation War of 1971 between East Pakistan and West Pakistan, where more than 8-10 million people fled to India to seek protection and asylum. Such examples also include the partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947. It resulted in one of the biggest human migrations recorded in history

---

<sup>6</sup> "A visual guide to 75 years of major refugee crises around the world", *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/historical-migrant-crisis/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

<sup>7</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. Refugee, Encyclopædia Britannica. 7 Jan. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/refugee>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

as 18 million people had to change their homes, the Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India. These people usually escaped from their homelands due to racial or religious intolerance and discrimination. They are known to be religious refugees. Religious refugees usually result due to being the minority practicing religion of a country, the hostile hatred and volatile tendencies between the different religions, the narrow-minded beliefs and opinions of the people and so on. The most recent examples of such refugees around the world would include Rohingya Muslims being persecuted in Myanmar to Christians in the Central African Republic to Hindus in Pakistan as well as the violent riots in the Muslim areas in India, the forced overtaking of Kashmir and so on.

On the other hand, one of the most frequent refugee movements of the modern times is the politically motivated refugee movements. According to Idean Salehyan, statistical analysis have shown that regions have higher chances of experiencing conflict internally if they have a history of civil wars or have bordering states that are at war.

“The regularity and strength of this geographical clustering casts doubt upon the conventional assumption that civil wars are independent, domestic phenomena, driven exclusively by processes and attributes within the state where conflict occurs. Rather, international factors and relationships with other states may be very important in shaping the risk of internal conflict” (1)

Such movement started to rise due to the gradual accumulation of power and control by the governing authorities, which in result gave those more opportunities to oppress the minority groups, if they do not conform to the majority’s way of lifestyle, beliefs and morality. This type of movement could also be known as forced migration<sup>8</sup> because the victims are not given a choice to stay or flee the country. They are forced to pack up their lives and move

---

<sup>8</sup> The unintentional or coerced movement of people from their homes and homeland is called forced migration.

away from their homelands and livelihoods due to imminent threats that could be from religious, political, military or government bodies. For example, the Russian revolution in 1917 and the civil war of 1917-1921 caused 1.5 million to be exodus because of being the opponents of communism. Hundreds of thousands of Spanish loyalists escaped to France in the wake of the Spanish civil war during 1936-1939. Furthermore, between 1915 and 1923, more than 1 million Armenians left Turkish Asia Minor and when the People's Republic of China was established, more than 2 million people fled to Taiwan and the Crown colony of British, Hong Kong during 1949. In the 1950s, the Korean War (1950-1953), the Hungarian Revolution (1956), The Chinese Takeover of Tibet (1959), The Cuban Revolution (1959) and so on left more than a million people to flee from their countries and become refugees. Moreover, a recorded number of 3.7 million Refugees migrated from East Germany to West Germany after the Berlin Wall was erected<sup>9</sup>.

Similarly, two more types of refugees that include ethnic refugees and environmental refugees also fall under the total refugee population across the world. Ethnic refugees are people who have to flee from their country because they were being persecuted or massacred by the rival ethnic group because of their diverse beliefs and lifestyle. It is due to the fact that these people are in danger of facing the horrific consequences of ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing can be defined as the attempt to remove the people of undesirable minor group in order to create "an ethnically homogenous geographic area". Such type of ethnic cleansing has been present throughout history, yet the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen drastic rise in the brutality of ethnic cleansing. As examples, we could include the Turkish massacre of Armenians

---

<sup>9</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. Refugee, Encyclopædia Britannica. 7 Jan. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/refugee>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

during World War I, the Holocaust of Jews during the World War II, the mass killings in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s<sup>10</sup> and so on.

The most recent examples of Ethnic refugees would be the Rohingya Crisis. According to the Human Rights Watch, more than 671,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to the southern district of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar in the late August of 2017<sup>11</sup>. In 2019, UNICEF recorded Rohingya refugees to mount up to 910,000 people that have settled in Cox's Bazar in July. These people fled from Burma's Rakhine State to escape from the military's all-out campaign of ethnic cleansing. Effectively denied citizenship, these people are the largest singular population to be stateless till date. The Burmese security force has been accused of crime against humanity that includes mass killing, sexual violence, infant shooting and arson and so on. The military and civilian officials have denied time and again the accusation of abuse of power and torture against the Rohingya's despite the contradicting and extensive evidence provided by the victims.

Not to mention, environmental disasters that can be both natural and man-made results in environmental refugees. These people become homeless due to the drastic and degrading condition of global warming. For example, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in January destroyed the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince that resulted in many civilians to flee in different parts of the country as well as the neighboring Dominican Republic in 2010<sup>12</sup>. The 2011 9.0 magnitude underwater earthquake in Japan left millions displaced and loss of home. Man-made disasters like the nuclear reactor explosion in Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine left 350,000 people permanently evacuated from the area and made the region highly radioactive and inhabitable for humans to live in for the next 200 years. The effects of

---

<sup>10</sup> History.com Editors, "Ethnic Cleansing", HISTORY, A&E Television Networks, 10 Jun. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/topics/holocaust/ethnic-cleansing>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> "Rohinygya Crisis"- UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

<sup>12</sup> "REFUGEE" NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, Resource Library, Encyclopaedic entry, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/refugee/>. Accessed on 31 Jan. 2020.

environmental climate change also lead to the formation of refugees. The effects of global warming led to the melting of ice glaciers, thus, resulting in the rise of water bodies. Due to such monumental effects, water surrounding countries like Maldives, Venice and so on would be completely underwater before the century is complete. As a result, the gradual increase of water levels drove people to migrate to higher lands and countries for survival.

We can say that the world of literature is a cut-throat business, where the writers' vocabulary skills and talent of painting a picture through words may depend on how the readers react to the context. With the gradual increasing number of steps or techniques that need to be considered while writing a literary piece has limited the freedom of the writers. After all, in a capitalistic society of the present era, the success of a book does not depend on how passionately the words are written, rather its capability of bringing profits and fame to the production house and the author. If the book does not become "the talk of the town", it loses its literary value even if it had potential to view the world in a different way. Thus, the popularity of the novel becomes more important than the message it could spread as the profit it may produce overrides the genuine intention of letting the readers enjoy a diverse literary novel. Despite trying to make the people more liberally open to diversity, some writers or novels gradually made the readers narrower minded towards peoples' personal opinion. With the mounting checklist of potential success that the writer has to keep in mind, they slowly lose their ability to properly portray their emotions and thoughts through the characters of the books. The writers slowly start to follow the mainstream rules of the publication house and consumer's demand. So when it comes to the refugee crisis, question may arise of how well could a writer be able to narrate a story before, the capitalism of the society and the fleeting emotions of the readers bury the genuine intentions of creating awareness.

All these millions of refugees have innumerable stories to tell. However, for a book to get popularity and exposure, exceptional stories are mostly focused on. As a result, the

ordinary stories about ordinary people are overshadowed and pushed away from the spotlights. It is quite ironic because the world is filled with ordinary people with borderline extraordinary stories. While exceptional stories are published, the ordinary ones become blurred. As a result, writers fail to portray the reality of such people, who belong to the majority of ordinary refugees. Looking at the global phenomena of the refugee crisis from multiple genres; this research is aimed at exploring how none of them are fully able to capture the essence of the crisis. The contemporary novels like *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007) by Dinaw Mengestu, *Violent Borders* (2016) by Reece Jones and poems like Benjamin Zaphaniah's "We Refugees", Warsan Shire's "Home", Lamiya Safarova's "Don't Call Me Refugee", Brian Bilston's "Refugees" and so on have only succeeded in bringing light to the different aspects of loss and sufferings of the refugees. The issue remains of whether or not these literary phenomena have truly been able to depict the reality of these people or whether it is just a perspective of the writers and their accumulated knowledge regarding the sufferings of the refugees.



## **Methodology:**

The entire research paper has been divided into six different parts to execute the main concept of the thesis topic. Based on three contemporary texts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the paper would include discussions on the refugee crisis that has been a rising issue in the era of globalisation. Chapter-1 would include the basic introduction of the refugee crisis and the different types of refugee crisis that has been observed and recorded all over the world. It would also include why the refugee crisis is seen to have less popularity in the publishing world in comparison to other genres of books and novels. An idea of how literature establishes a platform for reflecting the issues and problems prevalent in the society would be discussed in the Introduction. It would contain discuss about the importance of both Literature and Anthropology in the refugee issue and how it is able to highlight the crisis from different angles. As an elemental part of the Introduction, different types of refugees are explained; the paper would also include the various examples of the refugee crisis that has been prevalent throughout human history. It would include information of the crisis and the rising numbers of refugees through various data accumulating resources and organizations.

This particular part of the paper would entail on the how the topic of the refugee crisis would be divided according through Methodology along with the Literature Review, used as a foundation on which the discussion would be continued on.

Firstly, chapter-1 would be based on the published text of 2009, *God Grew Tired of Us*, a memoir narrated by John Bul Dau with Michael S.Sweeny. Focused on the Second Civil of South Sudan, the memoir is first given a small introduction before the chapter dives into the events that led John Bul Dau to come and settle down to America. Being one of the lucky ones, Bul Dau was able to narrate his story as a “Lost Boy” which allows the readers to get a closer glimpse to his life as a refugee, the operations of refugee camps and the slow yet

mechanical process through which a refugee is allowed to go to a refugee receiving country. The chapter takes a look at the different incident in his life and how it inspired him to pursue his dream of a better living. It may have been a desperate attempt to leave the place of his nightmares that pushed him forward to achieve his dreams, where many have fallen behind and crumbled down due to the atrocities they had seen during their flight from death. The chapter also includes some of the reasons and important information regarding the civil war in Sudan at the moment. It also includes information and discussion about the difference in the emotional and psychological reaction that was seen between the narrator, John Bul Dau and the other “Lost boys” around him.

Moving onto the next segment, Chapter-2 would be based on the contemporary text *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Chrstity Lefteri. Originally published on 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2019, this text is a very recent depiction that deals with the flight of the refugees from Aleppo and Syria into the European countries. Falling under the genre of fiction, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* sheds light on the plight of the refugees, a long lasting effect since the start of the civil war in Syria from 2011. Through Nuri life as a beekeeper and Afra’s life as an artist started to disintegrate with the conflicts that started to move so close to their home. With the loss of their only child, we see the couple go through an existential crisis which that tears them apart as husband and wife. Fighting alone and helplessly with their own demons, the readers become a part of their journey from Aleppo to London. Through their journey Christi Lefteri shows the dark and gruesome sides of the refugee crisis and how easily refugees are taken advantage of if they have no hope to get out of the refugee camps and settlements. Through an emotional journey, Christi Lefteri uses literary techniques to keep the readers involved and interested. The chapter would mainly focus on the growing distance between the two people and also the psychological and post-traumatic disorder that Nuri silently struggles with. Afra’s blindness can also be considered a symbol of how helpless refugee become as they are

blinded with the horrors and burdened to pick up the pieces of their dreams, reality and mentality. As a result, they become easy preys to be devoured by the darkness of the criminal world.

The next part, Chapter-3, would focus on another contemporary novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. Published in 2017, this book deals with the issues of emigration and refugees in a different light. With a splash of magical essence, the texts had made the readers realize that there are more obstacles for the refugees to face other than just trying to get accepted to the refugee receiving country. Falling under the category of magic realism, Mohsin Hamid wrote an enticing story of a so-called couple who, though experience had grown in different ways. Their experiences together taught them about life in different ways, thus allowing them to grow as different people from the time they first met. This book also deals with how media highlights the refugee crisis and paints the refugees as villains. In such situations, the refugees face more hostility and volatile behaviour from the natives of the receiving country. The language used to represent the refugees also plays a big role in how the people view these displaced nomads. In all the chapters and the texts, the common issue of psychological trauma and the “othering” the refugees proves how discriminatingly natives treat the refugees. Their behaviour, perspective coloured by the media as well as committing crimes under their names shows that people are would take whatever advantage they would find in order to quench their thirst for violence, highlighting the refugees to be the root cause of the chaos and disorder initiated after their arrival.

Lastly, Chapter-4 would include conclusion and the similar issues that are found within the three texts and how these issues play an integral part of the current situation of the crisis. All the chapters consist of different anthropological aspects regarding the refugee crisis along with this chapter. However, this chapter not only shows the similarities between the three texts but it also shows that despite the year gap between the three texts, the issues of the

refugee crisis still remains the same, maybe even more severe. With the help of anthropological research and the literary texts, this research paper has been able to highlight the people within the refugee crisis than the issue itself. One of the most infuriating realities of the refugee crisis is the fact that the people lose their identity, family, reality along with their history. They become the nomads of the world, travelling from one place to another with no place to call home. Despite many research papers and texts written about the refugees and the refugee crisis, there have always been some cracks or blurred lines that fail to let the voice of the refugees reach the spectators of the world. This chapter would look into the issues and the reasons as to why despite the refugee crisis being a long lasting issue, many have failed to give a voice to them and also why they have never been allowed to acquire free reign to write their own story.

## **Literature Review:**

One of the most important journals that would be frequently quoted in the thesis is Barry N. Stein's "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study". The general conception of the refugee situation is thought to be a short term, temporary issue which would be quickly resolved and allow the displaced people return to their homeland. However, throughout history, this conception has been proven incorrect time and again. It is one of the many reasons as to why refugee crises are not handled at the right time or in the proper way, "perspective is the most corrosive and damaging element that all refugee programs must confront" (Stein, 320). The continuous patience of waiting without the end in sight burdens the parties that provide relief to the refugee victims. As a result, the focus to relieve these people slowly starts to dissipate. According to Stein,

"The result of this perspective is incompleteness, things left undone, a failure to evaluate programs, to prepare for the next wave of refugees, to experiment with strategies, to develop coordination, to undertake research and to learn from the past. All refugee agencies at all levels, as well as the refugees, are victims of this perspective" (320-321).

Situation changes so rapidly and becomes so volatile that it becomes impossible for the refugees to go back to their lives again. It is impossible for refugee supporting organizations to keep up with the constant evolution of the problem and thus it becomes unable to support the displaced people in proper ways. In reality, the volunteers and organizations do not get the chance to finish up projects of settling and providing subsequent amount of resources to the people and take a holiday to celebrate their success. The relationship between people and countries are always hanging by the thread. These dangerous situations often turn ways for

the worst and thus organisations and volunteers literally runs from one place to other to provide support for the victims of region or country.

We are living in an era where major effort are being given by national and international governments, agencies, volunteering and charity organization and foundations that were set up and running with the aim to provide relief to the displaced people. The aim of such bodies of organisations is, “to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, permanent and professional refugee assistance system” (Stein, 320). Stein believes that there is no guarantee for the relief, resources and options provided to the refugees would produce the outcome which everything is aimed for. However, even if Stein states his doubt regarding the end result of the actions taken during such crisis, he states that, “...the accelerating development of major refugee crises has promoted an appreciation of the need for alterations in the system” (320) - it would allow for people to come up with better system and management system through the mistakes done by their peers and examples of how the refugee crisis is being handled across the world.

The refugee problem has become such prominent issue in the present world, that in order to improve the ways of handling the refugee problem with limited consequences, the refugee experience must be observed. By doing so, it has opened a new field of groundwork and exploration for many research organisations. Starting from the base of the problem, the refugee crisis allows intellects to look at the issues and problems that led to the consequences of becoming a refugee. The reason of clash that resulted in the flight of the people, along with the journey of the refugees from their homeland to the asylum giving country, the mental trauma, emotional stability, sense of distortion of displacement that fills the refugees to the brim of sanity. Through research and narration of the refugee experience, opportunities to improve their situation, their procedure to resettlement may have higher chances of

progression. Their stories and experiences may have a chance of being used as an example of what could and would happen if peace is not maintained.

Usually, when people hear news about events and issues that led to the rise of the refugee crisis, they monetarily feel sympathetic towards those people. After a moment, they forget about the news and information and moves on with their lives. It is not that they do not feel bad for the people who became victims of power play; it is because they unconsciously distance themselves from the situation and the news. It allows them to feel peace with their surroundings and situation because they would not be able to comprehend the suffering that the victims had to go through in order to survive. The entire paper would follow the theory of “Othering” and the consequences of such thought process. Even if the blatant show of discrimination between people has slowly started to fade away as the world enters a new phase of globalisation, the basic idea of Said’s Orientalism has taken a new form. One of these forms is the refugee crisis.

The basis of Said’s argument focuses on the discrimination of people and culture which depended on their geographical settlement, “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’ (10). A term invented by the Europeans, “Orient” is depicted as a place filled with mystery, exotic people, lifestyles and beliefs that is completely opposite of from the mindset of the Europeans. Since the Europeans believed that they were superior in terms of race and civilised than the “Orient” barbarians, they made it their “duty” to educate the unfortunate people. According to Said, Orientalism is very similar to what Deny Hay has pointed out the concept of Europe, “a collective notion of ‘us’ Europeans as against all ‘those’ non-Europeans...” (15). We can say that the Europeans divide themselves into their superior and civilised “The Self”, whereas categorised the rest as “The Others”. In a way, “...European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as

a sort of surrogate an even underground self” (11). If the ideology is placed on the refugee crisis and is used to observe how the natives and certain group of people react to them, would surely prove the continuous existence of such power dynamics of superiority and inferiority mindset. As the “Orient” countries and the people and their culture have been narrated to be alien and foreign, the refugees are also seen in a similar light. The natives of the asylum countries may unconsciously believe that they are better because of their living conditions and peaceful environment. The refugees would be categorised as the unfortunate “other” to be born in a place where the value of lives hold little meaning. In a way, we could assume that these people looked at the refugees to be consequences of decisions that were not taken in logical and intellect surroundings. They may even consider the reason of the clash to be pathetic, believing that such incidents would have never taken place in their region because they were more superiorly intellect, thus reflecting, “...European superiority over Oriental backwardness...” [sic] (15).

Moreover, how media have highlighted the refugee crisis and the people also play a vital role in how the natives and the audience would look at the refugees. Refugees and immigrants have been observed to be represented with specific words within the media. They are depicted in a diverse set of words like, “floods and tidal waves, invasions, animals, weeds, disease” (189). These people are often considered to be dangerous for various sectors of the asylum-seeking countries. They are reduced to pawns which are then used to either highlight the generosity of the country even if their living conditions are lower than standards. At times these people are used as an excuse for the rise of crime rate in the country. While some commit crime out of desperation, others use the issue and frame the refugees for the outcome. The ways in which the refugee crisis is depicted in newspapers and media proves that they use the “marginalized refugee” to draw attention to the fact of how the hostility and prejudice towards the refugees is not something concerned with an individual. In



reality, it reflects the, “socially shared and resourced by representations provided in the language of a community” (189). It shows that people use language as a weapon to control and move the emotions of the readers, which becomes alarming if used to create unrest and chaos within the community.

According to Ivan Leudar and others, “The language of hostility between groups is, moreover, not fixed - it comes about and changes and some expressions of hostility are creative” (189). This gives rise to another issue of how the studies of the crisis shows of how people talk about refugees but it does not allow the refugees to have a space to speak within the situation, despite being the core of the entire issue. With only few exceptional cases, “these identities are rarely presented as refugees would construct them, or in their own voices” (188). It may be due to the fact that the refugees are so often subjected to hostility and violence that they do not get the opportunity to speak out in public, or rather, they are afraid of the consequences of that action; “Such disempowerment may be a fact of everyday life, but even so the discursive analysis of hostility towards them is incomplete unless we include the effects it has on them - the uptake of hostility by its target so to speak (188-189). Being in a new place with no connection with the lifestyle and culture, the refugees are always at a disadvantage. Their lives are literally in the hands of the asylum-country and due to such compromising situation, it is high likely that they have to keep quiet about the discrimination they face. They have the crippling fear of being deported back to their country if they raise any voice or rebel against the mistreatment they experience. Thus, their voice and life are simply oppressed without any means to find justice for the violence inflicted upon them. Even if they do report the situation, the authorities cover it up because they do not want the media to light them in a negative light where the refugees are not being treated properly.

This is where anthropological research and the study of refugees come into effect. Throughout the recent centuries, researchers have dispersed far and wide for concerns and fieldwork related to the refugee crisis. B. E. Harrell-Bond and E. Voutira believes that being in the discipline of studies that focus and research upon human behaviour, the field of anthropology has contributed the most in the study of the refugee crisis. They also believe that the relationship between anthropology and refugee study is meets halfway, since anthropology also earns recognition by being able to recognize “refugees as falling within its disciplinary concerns” (6). One of the first issues that most refugees face is the violent clash of cultures and beliefs. Since refugees are the result of chaos and disorder in a country, the first and foremost ability that they need to hone the capability to adapt in order to survive the “radically new social and material conditions” (7). As a part of anthropological studies, such gradual changes needs to be interpreted and document to become a valuable part of the diversity in human culture. Since large number of refugees usually needs a considerable amount of humanitarian assistance, B. E. Harrell-Bond and E. Voutira believes that, “Anthropologists' insights into power, and their expertise on structure of authority” (7)- would make them become invaluable members and put them in position that would help them make policies relates to refugees and so on. They used the assumptions of policy makers as an example.

Policy makers believe that if refugees are moved with the regions of their homeland, then they would not face the cultural backlash that would generally be seen when refugees are moved to different countries. However, the data and research done by anthropologists proved that even if demonstrated that even crossing borders with another region would bring a sharp change in beliefs and ways of life, along with the challenges faced during exile. As a result, there would be clashes between people and have influence over the power relation between the people of the same “ethnic group”. Despite being in the same land or country,

people would be forced into camps, be employed through secondhand dealings, have to follow the hierarchy of power and politics which would then force them to change their views on social obligations and kinship.

Lastly, while anthropology works on the improvement of the conditions for refugees, literature plays a more intimate role between the refugees and the readers around the world. When the topic of refugee is featured in any newspaper, most start with an anecdote of one of the refugees and what they saw before their lives changes for the worse. One of the reasons of using these anecdotes is to catch the attention of the readers and to make them look at the refugees like people rather than just numbers on a spreadsheet. As the spotlight increases upon the crisis and the media covers the atrocities and torture inflicted upon the refugee, the people look at them and thus urges international organization to increase their support and resources for the refugees. In a way, the exposure to the horrors inflicted on the refugees puts pressure on countries to provide assistance but within the chaos, the refugees and their identity as beings starts to fade away. According to Ryan Sim, “the mental health of these refugees is often forgotten” (46) - as people sign and donate food, money and clothing, they only feel better about themselves but the mental trauma on the refugees barely comes to their mind. They are being of individual personalities who are then pushed together under the umbrella term of refugees. According to Sim, “...refugees are often left in a new environment, haunted by past terrors, searching for family, and isolated, reinforcing the need for mental health assistance” (46). All these stories are impossible to narrate as thousands end up at the door for asylum every other day.

Literature or writers then try to establish a connection between them and the world. Usually, the aim of such literary stories is to provide the stories of refugees an open platform. The stories of execution, rape, child killing, genocide and so on usually takes up the front pages of the newspaper and media, but in a filtered manner. Literature takes another step

forward to depict the narratives of the refugees; however, writers also at times feel the need to censor some of the incidents that they believe readers would not be able to emotionally handle. In a way, the stories and realities of the displaced people are watered down for the readers and audience to be able to accept it. It is ironic because despite being able to narrate their realities, they do not enough control of what goes to the readers of the world.

## Chapter-1

### The Nightmare and the Determination

*God Grew Tired of Us* portrays the life of the South Sudanese people that have been under attack and has been depicted as one of the top three places from which the highest numbers of people are internally displaced or have fled to their neighbouring countries and region. *God Grew Tired of Us* is basically a memoir which happens to be an accurate notion of the life of a refugee that has been narrated by one. Coming from the French word “memory”, memoir as a literary genre is similar to that of an autobiography where the author writes about their memories regarding certain life-changing incidents of their lives. Memoirs can range from the authors narrating their lives around a singular which brought inevitable changes to their meaning of existence and their mentality. Usually memoirs are written by celebrities, world leaders, athletes, social influencers and so on. However, the way the authors express themselves through the words can transform these memories into memorable and great works of literature even if the author does not lead an exceptional or extraordinary life. In his book *Memoir: An Introduction*, the scholar Thomas Couser argues that we go to the genre not so much for detail or style as for “wisdom and self-knowledge, “for what the main character, who is always the author, has learned. Sometimes, though, the style is the lesson” (Source: Stephanie Burt, “LITERARY STYLE AND THE LESSONS OF MEMOIR”, *The New Yorker*).

A memoir can function as a sad, funny, absurd, good, inspiring, relatable and horrific for the type of audience it focuses on targeting. One can use her/his memoir in various methods, such as, to reconstruct her/his image that has been damaged in some way, to reassert political ideologies, to advocate particular agendas to the public. However, despite the different intentions with which a memoir is written by various people, *God Grew Tired of*

*Us* written by John Dau with Michael Sweeney has a different outlook that is closely related to the initial idea of a memoir of allowing the readers to personally dive into the situations experienced by an refugee. John Dau's life from a young and innocent child to a war refugee residing in a foreign land let the readers experience different range of emotion through the journey narrated in the memoir. Ending the memoir on a bittersweet note of family reunion and separation, we see that the text gives a positive idea of how a refugee may acquire an opportunity of living a safe and peaceful life despite their chaotic past. However, we have to keep in mind that the memoir was written based on the Christopher Quinn's documentary, focusing on the unrelenting spirit of three "Lost Boys" of Sudan. The memoir portrays the crisis during the civil war in South Sudan, from the perspective of John Dau, one of the three "Lost Boys". It focuses on his heart breaking journey from his homeland with insurmountable odds stacked up against him to the land of dreams, the United State of America.

Despite the inspiring journey of John Dau, the situation regarding refugee crisis has taken a turn for the worse after the September 11 terrorist attack. *God Grew Tired of Us* was first published in 2008, seven years after the attack on American soil. The drastic changes in refugee, immigrant and foreign policies within the asylum giving countries have created the highest number of refugees displaced externally and internally till date. As we start off into the third decade of the twenty first century, the refugee crisis has been reduced to no more than a political agenda and a chess game between the leaders of the free world. Human kind has made phenomenal progress from their predecessors of the Stone Age in terms of everything related to the benefit of the people living. National and International organisations have attempted to resolve the crisis to the best of their abilities, however, they could only do so much if the leaders of the advanced economies do not interfere with the situation. *God Grew Tired of Us*, although have overshadowed issues regarding the asylum process and the

mental affects that affect the refugees, it has portrayed a more systematic ways of handling the global crisis.

First, we need to look at how the incidents are narrated chronologically. The readers would be able to construct a general idea of the atmosphere around John Bul Dau, but it cannot be detailed. It is due to the fact that John Dau had not only attempted to narrate his journey through memory, but as a child, he was more focused on survival rather than looking around. The setting only becomes clear when life-threatening moments occur through the journey, usually through the diverse strong emotions felt by John Dau. From different life-tuning moments of separation, attacks, death of his peers, starvation, mutilation through animal attacks, momentary peace in the camps and so on provides a vivid description of John's memories to the readers. In *God Grew Tired of Us*, the narration of John Bul Dau reflects a sense of determination and sheer will to overcome the mounting obstacles in front of him. As a young child, he was brought up in the Dinka tribe with the teachings of a leader and wisdom of one as well. Those morals and principles instilled by all the people of his tribe played a very important role in his survival amidst harsh conditions. However, only a few people are lucky enough to retain their learning in such dire conditions. Most victims would only reminisce their past lives and grieve for the ways in which their family, morals, lifestyle used to be before everything ended up in blood and tears. Throughout the years of struggle in John Dau's life, he had heard the term "Lost Boys" innumerable times, he never understood the symbolism or the meaning behind the words until much later. For him, the term "Lost Boys" of Sudan never meant to be depicted in negative terms. For him, it was a bond that was created between thousands of children over harsh times and loneliness, providing a small sense of reliability. In foreign land, it had brought them together and allowed them to set up a community, in order to preserve their traditions and beliefs in an era of diversity.

"Lost Boys" refers to some 33,000 unaccompanied minor refugees who were violently forced from their homes during the 1980s as a result of Sudan's civil war.

"Lost Boys" is a term that has been applied to these refugees, and which they themselves widely accept. The term grounded in the portrayal of Peter Pan's band of lost and wandering orphans, who bonded together in an effort to escape the hostilities of adult life" (31).

Within the last pages of the memoir, we see how Christopher Quinn's production has helped John Dau to accumulate enough funding for the refugees in his motherland. In the memoir John states that, "Fund- raising efforts for the clinic coincided with the completion of *God Grew Tired of Us*, Christopher Quinn's documentary. After he put finishing touches on the film, I got a lot of financial help in unexpected places" (264). We see John's strong personality comes into play as he is seen to be determined by focusing on he needs of the Dinka people by setting up a medical clinic in the Duk Country. He knew the value of dollars and instead of using for his own betterment; he put it all into the development of the dispensary clinic in his hometown. He made sure that the funds were being used for the right cause when he said, "It certainly works better than throwing money at an inept and corrupt government and hoping some of it spills into the right pockets" (264). Despite being thousands of miles away from his hometown, he was worried about the health and survival of his people. Even from the beginning of his journey of escape from his hometown, his instinct to survive is what made his story one of the extraordinary stories of the refugee crisis. His strong will to survive and persevere overshadows the emotional aspect of what a refugee victim would go through. Only a few numbers of refugees have the opportunity to narrate the life they witness crumbling before their eyes.

After surviving the brutal civil war, we see that John does let the cultural shock of the American lifestyle get in his way of helping his people, "The best way for Americans to help



Africans, I believe is to get Africans in the United States to oversee my philanthropic redevelopment. African immigrants had to fend for themselves to succeed in America, so they know how to get things done and how to get the most from a dollar” (264). This line reflects how John had struggled to survive and make most of the meager allowance of various part-time jobs to sustain himself. His story and the documentary played an unparalleled role in helping the war inflicted people of Sudan. “Americans will realize how badly my homeland has been hurt by war, and how the skilled people necessary for its redevelopment have been scattered to the winds. With America’s help, sparked in part by Christopher’s film, the Dinka will replant, rebuild and re-establish democracy” (273). The memoir as well as the film has shifted the focus to the crisis in Sudan and caught the attention of the world. *God Grew Tired of Us* is an exhausting and awe-inspiring tale of the survivor who succeeded through his perseverance and the opportunities that were provided to him in the land of freedom, America, making his memories an extraordinary tale to remember. However, despite the positive note on which the memoir ends, the question that remains is to which extent the opportunities are still available to the refugees or immigrants in the United States in the recent decades.

Secondly, to say, that John’s story reflects the condition of Sudan and the surrounding area around it would be incorrect. According to Anthony Constance,

“In the last decade, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe have all experienced the disruptions of internal war. If the time line is extended further into the post-independence past, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Zaire can be included. In each of these cases, the exclusionary politics of the state triggered armed resistance; armed resistance resulted in internal war; and internal war created refugees” (575).

The memoir gives a singular focus on the internal war within Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia. John Dau is a single voice, among the thousands that have been displaced to suffer unimaginable torture and sufferings to become undeserving victims of nightmares. His transition the American individualism culture can be seen as a smooth transformation, which does not actually display his thought process properly. His intuition of taking in all the information provided to him starting from the use of basic necessities within shared apartment along with doing two to three part-time jobs in order to pay the rent. He also took initiatives to send money back to his homeland and drew up a plan to set up a clinic in the Duk Country. These types of initiatives could be seen as stepping stones or goals that made John stay focused rather than be overwhelmed by the wonders of America. His experience made him more determined to become something and help his fellow countrymen.

We see in some cases that John talks about his opinions regarding what he saw and experienced living among the American citizens, yet the way he narrated those incidents may leave some of the questions regarding his trauma unanswered. The curiosity rises on whether or not John Bul Dau felt any sort of despair for being separated from his loved ones or whether his stubbornness to survive ever allowed him a chance to truly assess his personal issues regarding the horrors of his life. According to Turkon and Wheat, “Due to culture shock and separation from family and familiars, many refugees experience social disorientation and depression. If they are coming from a situation in which they were brutalized through conflict, post-traumatic stress disorder is a concern” (31). Since the early refugees had been over-indulgent in alcohol to cope with the emotional distraught they experienced, John’s reaction and behaviour as an individual is an example of strong personality that could survive the harshest of times. In a way, the way that John persevered could be seen as an awe-inspiring method of success and survival but to what extent and at what price of emotional shutdown led him to have a singular minded goal of achievement. It

sadly does not truly reflect the reality of the refugee crisis because he was among the few hundred survivors who had the chance to make a life in America. His initial focus and determination are qualities that refugees often develop after over-coming the period of loss and confusion. The readers are not able to see any sort of emotional distraught despite such a tragic journey and drastic change of environment in John Dau.

When John Dau and his two companions were received by Susan Meyer, their cool headed behaviour after arriving in a strange place caught her in surprise as well. She stated that, “*One of the things that surprised me at the airport was that when John and the others came off the plane, I expected them to look confused, lost or frightened. And they were none of those things*” (187). She further explained that should have “*stop, look around and try to get my bearings*” (187) when she arrives at a foreign and strange place. The only sign of awe and wonder was seen when John initially experienced cultural shock of how Brandy Blackman was able to drive a car and she owned it. John’s excitement of living in a country like America came to surface as he remembered “every detail of the ride into town that night” (188) - where he found everything to be starkly different from what he had seen and experienced throughout his journey. In the memoir, John says that, “It was all overwhelming and confusing. I concluded that Syracuse must be a big, fast village, and it would take a long time to figure everything out” (189). These particular types of emotion and adjustment issue have been experienced by every refugee who took asylum in countries like America or anywhere in the Western Hemisphere.

Since the cultural, religious and social aspects tend to clash within different culture, John and his fellow companions were seen to gradually ease into the lifestyle of the American citizens and were open-minded to the ways of American life. They had faced various obstacles that contradicted with the beliefs of their ethnic traditions. Once, John was seen given the clothes of a deceased grandfather by one of the donors. He knew that he would

never wear them but had accepted it in good spirits to make the donor feel good. He had to throw it in the garbage because “Taking clothes that belonged to people who have died was taboo” (198). Similarly, along with John Dau, Andrew and Jacob had to struggle with the “dilemma of loosening” tight grips over their ways of living and belief in the Dinka tribe and avoid “insulting the people who sponsored” them in America with no intentions of harming them. It may be because as a human being, when a person has been brought up in a way to be independent, to get help at times seems to be an insult of their pride and honour.

It can be assumed that John, Andrew and Jacob felt the same way but they tried their best in being open-minded and learned to compromise and preserve their belief at the same time. They were not alone in their struggle to fit into the society as well, since *God Grew Tired of Us* is narrated from John’s eyes, who was a part of the Dinka tribe, there were many more who were suffering from the same situation. The “Lost Boys” were typically identified as one group of people in the eyes of the Americans or the organisations. Since they were unaware of the importance of tribal identity within the young refugees, they were unable to grasp their reluctance of following people, coming from other tribes. According to the statistics provided by Kurton and Wheat of the black population, “Americans typically identify Lost Boys as “Sudanese,” the Phoenix population is approximately 80% Dinka and 20% Nuer. Even among the Dinka there are clan and lineage differences that divide them, with the majority being of the Bor sub-group. Many Lost Boys would heed to a recognized leader from their own culture but not to one from the other” (31). It was a blessing for the refugees from Sudan to come together in the foreign lands of America. Even if the volunteers and organisations were not able to see them as individuals at first, the unity in an unfamiliar place is what helped them become stronger as people. In *God Grew Tired of Us*, John Dau says, “My identity had been reduced to a serial number on the top of the exam packet. Those who scored the test would not know whether I was Dinka, Turkana, Bantu or anything else”

(157) – this line reflects on how John Dau was competing with hundred other nameless students. This is the reality of the refugee crisis as the identities of these displaced human beings are reduced to numbers. There are no faces attached to the numbers of people that are being recorded each year. As a result, people are able to distance themselves and think that these refugees are “others” who do not have any relationship with them. We do not see the aspect of identity crisis or religious clashes in John’s story as he tried to find a common platform to practise his beliefs of Christianity along with the traditions in America. It is an essential aspect of a refugee’s life to try and preserve her/his history and identities when they are thrown into the fast paced life in the refugee receiving country. This part is also overshadowed because religiously exiled refugees are judged by their traditions and ways of life in foreign countries as well. They feel awkward and afraid of violence which we do not see in *God Grew Tired of Us*.

Thirdly, one of the major problems within the refugee crisis is the separation or death of family members. These people have the tendency to suffer from psychological trauma as they are pulled within their nightmares of reliving the death and violence inflicted upon their loved ones before death. One of the reasons behind Africa’s internal wars is identity politics as we can clearly see from the initial conflict that John Dau witnessed and heard from his tribe members and families. John is observed to barely experience backlash of identity politics in the United States. It may show the freedom to practice one’s own religion in America, but it is an example of how religion and moral clashes force people to leave their homes and lives to survive. According to Leif Manger, when it comes to reasons that triggered war within Sudan is the clash of identity politics and ethnicity, “One characteristic of 'the new wars' is that they are often about identity politics, i.e., the quest for power is couched in terms of exclusion and inclusion of people in various groups” (108). John Dau’s blind belief in Abraham’s lies has been a blessing in disguise because he was saved from

imagining the death of his family, a blessing that did not extend to Abraham himself. As a result, the constant worry regarding the danger in which the family may be in was absent in most part of John's journey to survival. Only after he was able to find stability in America was he able to inquire about his family being dead or alive, "Almost from the day I entered Kakuma in 1992; I tried to find my family. I wrote about 70 letters and gave them to Red Cross...I learned that it often took years for families scattered by Rwanda's civil war of 1994 to find each other" (237).

According to Barry N. Stein, Stephen Keller argued that the trauma of flight or fight stress has an influential effect on how the refugee would behave in the future. Keller's argument was based on his research related to disaster that explored the behaviour and trauma of the affected in the face of threats, danger and various survival and life altering situations. Stein, in his paper, "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study" claims that Stephen Keller's argument is sound and reasonable because the refugees are the ones that experiences unexplainable loss as they not only lose a part of their lives and loved ones but they also come to witness the degradation of humanity and any kind of moral principles within mankind. In *God Grew Tired of Us*, we do not see John Dau narrate any type of post-traumatic stress order, rather we see him to narrate fellow refugees going through such problems. The mentors and volunteers had organised different types of activities and counseling so that the war affected refugees have the opportunity to deal with the past events of their live. According to Stein,

"A new life in a strange land awaits. Anxiety, fear, frustration and emotional disturbance appear, and often the refugee regresses to a more infantile state, loses his or her willpower, and becomes apathetic, helpless or manic and aggressive. The refugee loses structure, the ability to coordinate, predict and expect, and has basic feelings of incompetence" (324).

Moreover, Stein asserts scholars and researchers have observed the ways in which refugees react after they have settled down in the refugee camps. They also scrutinise the behaviour of such people when they become conscious of their situation and when realisation hits them in full force. It may be due to the fact that John Dau was given the responsibility to look over more than a thousand “Lost Boys” however, he claims that he still has nightmares regarding his hardship and sufferings, “Like most survivors of that day, I still have bad dreams about the Gilo River. And I wonder still, what does war do to people to make them shoot children? Do those Ethiopian soldiers ever get nightmares?” (102). He states that he has horrible nightmares, however, through his narration it is impossible for the readers to understand whether or not these dreams had influenced any type of behavioural changes within him. Through the narration, the readers could assume that John Dau decided to hold a positive outlook towards his life and how he could help his people with his abilities and opportunities. His goals of life may have played a vital role in how he had preserved his sanity and mentality whereas most of his peers were struggling.

It would be unfair to compare his sufferings with that of his peers, however, it was his strong will that had made it possible for him to overcome that particular stage of his life; a capability which is a rare factor in most of the refugees that are suffering in today’s world. Stein discusses about the psychological consequences of such dire condition, “Besides the suffering, trauma and persecution already endured, and the loss of loved ones, the refugee must now face up to loss of homeland, identity and former life” (324). However, it was observed that John took very little time to understand and become accustomed to the lifestyle of American citizens. The only hostile behaviour he narrated was during the time he was fired as a guard in St. Joseph’s Hospital. He is only seen to be discriminated when the women shouted, ““Go back to your f\*\*\*\*\* country! You are stupid. This is America and you cannot tell me what to do!”” (228). Other than this specific incident, John Dau never faced any kind

of racism, fascism, violence or even discrimination regarding education, employment, housing and people. There were incidents where one of the Lost Boys have had issues with the law and also with criminals that ended in fatal consequences, but he never included such in his narration in *God Grew Tired of Us*.

Thus, we can conclude by saying that the readers did not see any sort of discrimination in the way John was being treated in America. This sort of behaviour is sadly a rare case in the present era due to the animosity that the Trump government has created between the natives, immigrants and the refugees. Throughout the entire narration, the readers may not find any incidents that would have made John Dau feel left out or isolated from the new and foreign environment in America. John Dau's experience is a pre-2001 story when America and other foreign nations did not restrict movement of immigrants or refugees due to the fear of terrorist attacks and religious radicalisation. Keeping that in mind, it is natural for John Dau's story to plant seeds of hope within people but the situation of the world and times have changed. His narration was of an experience that occurred before the terrorist attack of 9/11 on US Soil, thus there are many issues and loopholes which exist in the story. In a way, we can say that despite the text being an inspiring read for people all around, it fails to reflect some of the realities faced by millions of refugees in the present era.



## Chapter-2

### The Loneliness and the Breakdown

*The Beekeeper of Aleppo* falls under the category of fiction which leaves the readers feeling desolate and empty but thankful by counting the blessing of peace and happiness in their lives. While the storyline comprises of people, stories, memories, incidents, events, history etc. that are not entirely true, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* enables the writer to focus on some of the burning issues of the refugee crisis. Cristi Leftery creates a place for readers to make a criticism regarding the treatment of the refugees by relating to stories that are published in the newspapers. It is not based on any particular history or fact; rather which can be narrowed down to a singular or multi-character narrative story or prose, while sometimes it can be considered as a novel. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* deals with the emotional side of the journey and people. The creates a deep pull towards human emotions and empathy that regular news is unable to do regarding the matters of the refugee crisis. It evokes an emotional side of the readers as the characters are seen to not only battle their circumstances physically, but also mentally struggle to overcome their adversities. Through the romantic, gothic, realistic, historical, disjointed pieces of anecdotes *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* comes together at the end of the storyline and produces a piece of literature worthy of being praised. Being a novel, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* focus on the human experience, distract the readers or do both of the functions in order to create an overwhelming feeling of sense of emotions. Through the novel, the readers would be able to understand the discrimination between the refugees and the natives and well as the desperate attempt of the refugees to belong somewhere.

The term “novel” is derived from the Italian word “novella”, which is the plural form of the Latin word “Novellus”, an alternative meaning of the word “new”. The concept of

novella was usually found within the fourteenth century Italian classic literatures that included enlarged anecdotes. Usually, the novel attempts to reflect the issues of life that have never been expressed in other types of literary forms like epic poems, sonnets, dramas and so on. Usually, in novels, the protagonist or the central characters do not have unrealistic personality traits. Rather, such characters have flaws that most readers would be able to relate to. These characters would be deemed as un-heroic, imperfect, confused, conflicted emotions, unredeemed or even absurd- the traits that would never be found in classical literature or dramas in terms of a protagonist's personality. The literary text evokes empathy of the readers towards the characters and the situation which seems so far away from their own reality. It is able to successfully reflect the mentality of people during a time of chaos and disorder. It shows how people become desperate to fit into a society, while others isolate themselves because of the alienated feeling. According to Kidd and Castano, "The category of literary fiction has been contested on the grounds that it is merely a marker of social class, but features of the modern literary novel set it apart from most best-selling thrillers or romances" (377). According to them, literary fiction has the ability to de-familiarise readers' from their natural surroundings, while unsettling their expectations and evoke their thinking capabilities regarding things that they may or may have not noticed around them in the past. They further discuss about the fact how literary fictions are able to use writing techniques to enable readers to gain access to the character's personal experience.

In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, we see the emotional conflict within Nuri Ibrahim as the novella is able to portray the "...complicated individuals whose inner lives are rarely easily discerned but warrant exploration" (378). We can assume that Christy Lefteri chose to bring the character of Nuri and Afra Ibrahim to life because in the world of fiction, there are fewer threats in comparison to the real world. She used the writing technique, underlined with power and subtlety to portray the experiences and sufferings of the refugees in order to avoid

facing any type of social, religious and politically threatening consequences for it. According to Kidd and Castano, people in reality are usually living life according to the “convention and informed by stereotypes” (378) and such expectations are usually broken down within fictions like *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* as the text rattled and disintegrated the readers expectations of a happy ending without any scars. Christy Lefteri allowed the readers to hone their thinking abilities and form their own opinions regarding the circumstances of the refugee crisis by letting them infer the monologues, struggles, conflicts, feelings and thoughts of the characters’ with simplistic writing, making the readers feel more closer to the characters. With the rising crisis of closed borders and rejection of asylum for the refugees, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* plays an important role in portraying the people who get stuck in the middle of nowhere, with crumbling hope for the future and broken dreams of the past.

Where *God Grew Tired of Us* gives the readers an awe inspiring story of a young man, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* evokes strong and heart wrenching emotions of helplessness, frustration, distance, and nightmares that was clearly absent from the former text. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Christy Lefteri brings about issues that are prominent within the crisis. It is a more gruesome version of journey that millions of refugees have gone through but failed to express. It may be due to the fact that these people consciously or unconsciously refused to remember the darkest parts of their journey and the price they had to pay for a better future. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* focused on a couple's journey, however, their story is able to reflect many aspects of the crisis that news and reporters fail to include in their broadcast of the issue. The text can be used to expose the dark aspects of the refugee journey with the hope of acquiring more active participation and support from all over the world. However, Christy Lefteri's novel voices out nightmares that most people fail to realise or acknowledge. Many believe that refugees go away from their conflicted homelands to foreign places for asylum. However, the moment the journey starts, the people are unaware of the

chipped soul that starts to fade away into nothingness as most refugees are not able to handle the helplessness of their reality. We are able to look into the issues that include child trafficking, sex workers, smugglers, rape, and emotional breakdown and so on from the eyes of Nuri Ibrahim.

Starting from the breakdown of Afra and Nuri Ibrahim's relationship to the loss of a child, the regret of survival, the lack of communication between Nuri and Afra along with the determination to meet Mustafa, PTSD, casualties of war, Mohammad's existence and so on helps the readers to understand the various aspects of a refugee's life. Unlike in *God Grew Tired of Us* where John and his fellow peers have been victims of religious genocide and oppression of foreign religion upon them, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* initially focuses on the conflicts of Syria in the first few chapters before it delves into the thoughts of the main couple. However, besides the indication of rebel's attacks against the government and the President's name, no other information is provided regarding the conflict is provided to the readers. Many would think that it would have been a better narration if the readers knew what the socioeconomic conditions of the country were. However, since this text focuses more on the emotional turmoil that refugees usually experience, the political conditions have little to no importance in the story. When it comes to war and clashes of power regimes and authority, the innocents are usually trapped in the crossfire of the battlefield. Survival becomes the only option and desperation leads to the breakdown of the human psyche as we have seen in case of Nuri. During the recent refugee crises, the European nations started to close down their borders in the view to harbour their resources, their political allies along with the protection of their citizens at a dire time when any Muslims would be under suspicion of being a terrorist. The refugee crisis took a great hit due to such stereotypical perceptions. The story of Nuri and Afra is the only one among millions who have suffered the same or yet more due to such obstacles and discrimination.

First, we would be looking into the concept of “Othering” and how Nuri and Afra’s experiences of not being welcomed into foreign lands is a common scenario throughout the refugee crisis despite the fact that the era of colonialism has been long gone and buried in the past. The issue of stereotyping people due to their different backgrounds and beliefs is one of the ingrained dark realities of the human psyche. It proves that despite the colonial empires being long gone, their dividing schemes are still present in the era of globalisation and fragmented peace. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, one of the most distinct ways we see how people still distance themselves from people and make them feel uncomfortable and out of place. In the very first chapter of the text, we come across Niru being relieved of Afra being blind because she may lose her faith in humanity as he did when he came across giant billboards claiming refugees to be the bane of the peoples’ existence. “I’m not sure how she would deal with all this, if she could see it. The billboard just outside says that there are too many of us, that this island will break under our weight. I’m glad she’s blind” (3) – the antagonistic feeling of being unwelcomed and seen as undesirable baggage unnerves the refugees. They start to feel like a burdened and unwanted responsibility which the receiving country is forced to cope with. As Haldrup and Koefoed discusses the Danish election campaign in 2005, during which a small centred party released a video that showed quotes from a ministers of foreign aid and integration saying things like, “‘We are not preventing them from having children. Nor are we killing them. We even give them money to travel home’, and ‘We have been so foolishly kind to let them in and now we’re stuck with them’” (173). The minister was also a politician from the reigning government and the video came under vigorous scrutiny and comments that showed how people not only citizens, but also leading authorities reacted negatively to the incoming flow of refugees from different places to seek asylum in the European countries.

Despite providing the resources and basic necessities for the refugees, people started to become hostile towards them believing that the refugees do not belong there and had to go back where they came from. Instead of providing them the necessary means of safe living, the natives were not physically forcing the refugees out of the place but rather making them feel uncomfortable enough to leave voluntarily. However, it was impossible for the refugees to go back as they had tolerated the backlashes of the natives and hold onto their silence for the sake of living in a safe place. Identities are basically a social construct that depend on the geographical, social, cultural, religions of the group of people. However, the difference can be welded as a weapon to create division and animosity between the mainstream population and the minor ethnicities.

To differentiate a person or a group of people as “Others” usually occurs when majority have a superiority complex and belief that they are far better in terms of morals and principles of the minority group. These small groups do not usually follow the mainstream ideologies of practise and beliefs which makes them vulnerable if majority ostracises them in the society. According to Jenson, the concept of “Othering” can help to “reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination” (253). This inequality of power could be easily seen throughout *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* as Nuri and Afra Ibrahim along with their fellow refugees struggle to survive and seek asylum to places. The constant dread of being forced to go back to their war-stricken country depends on the decision that the asylum countries make. Their fate depends on the authorities who have no idea what would happen if they were forcefully sent back to the place of death and chaos. According to James Pope, the concept of “Othering” it basically a “discursive phenomenon” which comes about when a group of people or a situation is outlined. This phenomenon is usually related to problems that rise from social or political motives or stance. When it comes to differentiating a group of people for their origin, religion, language, skin tone and so on, the concept of Orientalism

by Edward Said is an appropriate theoretical tool to start discussing about how people like Nuri and Afra have constantly been victim of “Othering”. According to Pope, “Said (1978) presents in his book *Orientalism* that to understand the construction of “Oriental” identity, one must examine the phenomenon as a discourse, and this discourse is a colonizing activity. There is a definite unequal power relationship in constructing the identity of the other, even to the point of obscuring their humanity” (58). After the 9/11 terrorist attack, there has been a rise of negative portrayal of Middle East countries. The western media has portrayed Arabs, Muslims and all the Middle-Eastern people to be either oppressors or terrorists. This misinterpretation has gone to such an extent that the people are considered as the image of terrorists. So we can assume that Middle-East or Arab refugees like Afra and Nuri are all considered dangerous people, thus, directly been told to leave the place as they might “the island will break” under their weight or destroy the place altogether. According to Pope, when it comes to use the refugee crisis for their own benefit, they would easily use the concept of “Us/Them” in order to sound more heroic and responsible in the eyes of the citizens, “The political elites position themselves as the hero, opposing the invading alien villain, and protect the citizens victimized by the mere presence of the invader” (58).

Secondly, in the text *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, through the introduction of “The Moroccan Man” comes with the image of an old man who seeks asylum but also reads the book *How to Be a Brit*, so that he would be able to easily fit into the English society and avoid being the centre of attention and peoples’ sympathy. The readers would also be able to witness the same thing when Afra had to change her appearance, “Her hair is the colour and texture of sand since we dyed it for the photos, bleached out the Arabic” (5). Franz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Mask* is a phenomenal text that could easily reflect the ways in which the Moroccan man and the Ibrahim couple had to change their language, ways of clothing and style along with facial features in order to be granted asylum in the European countries.

Initially, Franz Fanon talks about the relationship between language, race and culture in the text. According to him, language can be used as a leeway to gain access into a culture. If a person is able to speak in a language, they can easily be accepted and take upon the culture. This is what the Moroccan man had been trying to do. By reading up on the ways of the British people, he was trying to get ready for the interview with the authorities and create an acceptable image that would easily allow him to gain visa to stay in the European countries. Everything depends on the social worker that interviews them, we also see Nuri getting ready for the interview as well thinking, "...if I say the right things, if I convince her that I'm not a killer, then we will get to stay here because we are the lucky ones, because we have come from the worst place in the world" (6).

Similarly, one of the main reasons that Christy Lefteri felt the dire need to express the sufferings of the refugees is because of how they are usually portrayed to the eyes of the world. While many empathise with the unfortunate hardship of the refugees, the natives of the asylum providing countries or even the media portray them to be advantage seeking people who are given more priority than the rest of the citizens in the country. There are others who believe that the tax-payer's money is used for the benefits of the refugees rather than the people of the country. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, which is reasonable since the text solely focus on the war, loss and the emotional toll on the refugees during their journeys. Thus, we do not see the hostile behaviour in the text. According to Rebecca Wallace, a fellow in post doctorate in the Department of Politics and Public Administration of Ryerson University states that, "Immigrants are generally perceived as contributing to the economy while refugees face considerable scrutiny regarding the legitimacy of their claims (Envirionics, 2016) and are often seen as "taking advantage" of social programs and benefits" (211). It is due to the fact that immigrants are often portrayed with the issue of economic and monetary stability of the country along with the availability of jobs, the refugees are seen as



security threats. According to Edward Taylor, “The economic impacts of refugees depend on the rules governing interactions between refugees and the host country, the structure of host economies, and the characteristics of refugees” (7452) – sometimes all the resources aid received by the refugee receiving countries, do not get properly utilised due to corruptions and power play. Thus, refugees do get the basic necessities for sustaining themselves. As a result, due to desperation, some refugees venture out of the camp in search for work. Even at such times, the refugees are taken advantage of because they are not given the proper wage. The natives see the refugees to be a nuisance that are snatching the jobs of the economy and thus leaving many young natives unemployed. Print or news media that have segment regarding the refugee crisis tend to focus more on the validity of the refugees’ claims and based on their national origins can be used to written in negative tone

According to how the background of the refugees are detected through interviews, questions regarding the validity and the way the crisis is described have been ‘inherently racialized in news outlets’ ascriptions of the ethnically diverse “other” (Wallace, 211). Christy Lefteri wrote *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* in 2019 that indicated the rising tension between the natives and the refugees. The lack of job employment in Greece at that time was affecting the economy of the country along with providing resources for the refugees. In the text, we see Nuri interacting with a volunteer in one of the camps that he had temporarily resided with Afra in the island of Leros. The island could not accommodate all the refugees that were coming in. As a result, they had to improvise and use places that were once the death doors of the Holocaust, “This island was a leper colony once...This asylum was like a Nazi concentration camp. People were caged and chained without names or identities. The children here were abandoned, tied to their beds all day” (165) - the location itself symbolises both death and life. It was a place where Jewish people were forced to live and die in concentration camp, which became a haven for the people who were fleeing from the

conflicts and war of their own land. According to Hangartner, the sudden and dramatic increase of the incoming flow of refugees has been under the spotlight since 2015. Refugees coming from Muslim majority countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, Syria and Yemen have accumulated to more than three million people who applied for asylum in Europe. According to Kristen Biehl, “The application process both for refugee status determination and for third country resettlement can take up to several years, and asylum seekers often find themselves in situations of indefinite and unpredictable waiting between each step of these procedures” (58). One of the dreads the refugees have is of having their applications for asylum rejected. Many applications have been denied in the following years of 2016 and 2017 after the EU-Turkey agreement; however, many people keep on flowing within the continent in order to get away from conflicts and persecution.

Moreover, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri had the asylum documentation in his backpack that said, “*To stay in the UK as a refugee you must be unable to live safely in any part of your own country because you fear persecution there*” (57)- here the readers see a slight hesitation within Nuri’s mind. It may be because Nuri knew that if he agreed to the conditions given within the asylum papers, there were high chances that he would never be able to return to his old life with Mustafa and the bees. He would have to start a new life in an unknown and foreign place where his presence may or may not be welcomed. His journey through different asylum camps led him to believe that people would look at him and Afra as unwanted people in their country. It seemed reasonable because according to Hangartner, the rise of refugee flow within the European countries has treated social and political issues to such an extent that it even generated “violent political backlash” (442). They further discussed how the political parties had taken advantage of the rising tension among the citizens and used the peoples’ anxiety to propagate their political drafts of restricting the policies and the flow of refugees into Europe. Looking into several studies that focused on

European countries like Austria, Greece, France and so on have seen to come to similar conclusions of how the “refugee migration” played a vital role for the ascend of extreme-right parties.

In addition to the obstacles that the refugees face while fleeing away from the conflicted zones, they also need to start their new lives in a foreign place. One of the most difficult things that refugees face is the ability overcomes the trauma that they have experienced throughout their journey. One of the most beautiful aspects of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is how beautifully Christy Lefteri was able to reflect the internal struggle of Nuri at the darkest time of his life. Starting from the loss of his son along with Afra becoming blind, he tried his best to stay determined to reach Mustafa and his family in the UK. The struggle that both Nuri and Afra had to overcome was to accept the emotional and traumatic baggage that had accumulated within them through their journey for survival. The wounded mental and psychological stability of the refugees is one of the hardest experiences to deal with after they have succeeded in settling down in a new place. The post-traumatic stress disorder led many to destroy their lives in different ways or lock themselves form the world and the people around them. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* starts with the line “I am scared of my wife’s eyes” (1) - which builds up the feeling of both fear and anticipation. In a way, we can assume that Nuri is scared that he is unable to see the emotions through Afra’s eyes but have conflicted emotions of both relief and sadness that she could not witness the things around them as he can. “She can’t see out and no one can see in” (1). According to Telga, “This fear the protagonist feels cannot be explained simply by the fact that his wife is blind, because of the atrocities she witnessed in Aleppo” (656). Afra’s blindness is more than just a casualty of war and terror. It is a symbolic representation of the distance that has been created between both of them. Throughout the text, we see that the gap between the husband and wife increase as more terror and atrocities witnessed by both of them, “There is no cohesion anymore, not

only in their own individual narratives (due to forced displacement), but also between husband and wife” (656). In a way, they were unable to communicate the overwhelming feelings that had been bottled up since their departure from Aleppo. Survivor’s guilt played a very important role in Nuri and Afra’s life due to the loss of their son in a bomb blast. It was in that incident that took away Afra’s eyesight as the last thing she saw was Sami dying in her arms, “The horrors they witnessed constitute now a sort of emotional barrier that interposes between them, but this could be, one might argue, the only possibility they have to cope with their overwhelming feelings” (656). The guilt of surviving an incident that took the lives of their son drifted Nuri and Afra more further from each other. The growing distance between them was not done intentionally; rather, they could not console each other in the way they wanted to. All with their fellow refugees were coming in terms with their new environment and trying to find a kind of familiarity within the foreign land.

Furthermore, we can assume that despite Nuri attempting to describe everything to Afra with words, the alienation and the overwhelming feeling of despair was unable to be expressed through words, but with expression that Afra was not able to do so. According to Stein, it is general to think that “immigrants” come to new lands to search for new opportunities and dreams. However, when it comes to refugees, it is not relatable to them. They have been forced out of their homes, homeland and countries. If they were given a choice to stay, they would have stayed but it may have had the consequence of losing their lives. Generally, refugees are considered to be poor people, but they were well-faring in their own society, “Most refugees are not poor people. They have not failed within their homeland; they are successful, prominent, well-integrated, educated individuals who fell because of fear of persecution” (322). This argument could be backed up with the financial status that Nuri and Afra had in Aleppo, along with the social relationship they maintained with people in their community. The simplistic way that Christy Lefteri was able to switch Nuri’s distorted

memories and his reality could be easily seen within the changing chapter and sub-chapters where the chapters alternated between the past and the present of Nuri's reality and how he had struggled to come to terms with his loss and hopelessness. The readers are able to see that Nuri experiences sudden episodes of paralysing terror where he is dragged back into the memories of death, chaos, blood, bombs, dead bodies and the sheer terror of not being able to see the next sunrise. Nuri's post-traumatic stress episodes started only after they arrived in their first asylum camp, where they were stuck with option of either going back to their country and die, to settle down in the country that they first found asylum in or to "to accept a distant resettlement opportunity in a strange land" (322).

Thus, from the above discussion we can conclude that *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* plays an important part in deconstructing the emotions and struggles that millions of refugees go through. Both Afra and Nuri are reflections of millions who have drifted apart and have had difficulty to come back to their own persons again. Readers would not be able to understand the trauma of losing one's own identity and home but can only try to imagine. It is because we instinctively consider them to be different from us. Silently discriminating them as "Others" and emotionally distancing ourselves from their sufferings is another form of colonialism which we still deny of doing so. Since this novel was published in 2019, the refugee crisis within Greece has taken the turn for the worse. The refugees have no idea whether or not they would be able to leave the country and move to another settlement to start their new lives. The hostile feelings have started to break out and refugees have become victims of violence which is an irony because they left their homeland with the intention of avoiding violence and came to the place where they became the target of violence. According to Middle East Eye, 2020, refugees who have attempted to go to Greece from Turkey were caught by the patrolling security on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. Not only the refugees were forced to strip in the freezing temperatures, but the Greek security forces took away their documents

and money and were sent back to Turkey again in their undergarments, “Ankara has repeatedly complained that Europe has failed to keep its promises under the 2016 EU-Turkey refugee deal to help migrants and stem further migrant waves” (MEE Staff). There was a time when countries that accepted refugees not only was seen to be a sign of humanity, but also were considered respectable to provide the helpless people. Now entering the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see that countries started to close borders, prevent refugee to travel and strip away their human rights as they are considered different from the natives. In 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, Aljazeera published an article that showed Greece to be “condemned” because of their ill treatment of refugees. If they were criticised of treating refugees in an inhumane manner before, detaining more than 450 refugees in a navy vessel in Mytilene, a port in the island of Lesbos brings about a whole new example of inhumane treatment of refugees. With the constant wave of refugees coming to the European countries, the host countries have either stretched their resources thin or have suspended providing for the refugees, as Greece did. Christy Lefteri in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* have tried to reflect the struggles that refugees face while leaving their home and adjusting to new environment. However, the recent development in the refugee crisis shows that people have been victim of more violence and discrimination for just being refugees. It proves that refugees have higher chances of being discriminated and alienated in foreign lands for just seeking asylum from the violence of their own homeland.

## Chapter- 3

### The Door and the Realisation

In the previous chapters, we focused on the different ways in which the refugee crisis is represented in literature. Anthropological research on the issue had shed light on the similarities and gaps within the works of literature. While *God Grew Tired of Us* gave the readers an overall sense of how John Bul Dau and many of the “Lost Boys” of Sudan had survived the macabre encounter with extremists and extreme environment, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* exposed the readers to the antagonistic emotions of Nuri and Afra Ibrahim while seeking asylum and protection from the atrocities in their homeland. Although the former looks at the overall experience of John Bul Dau, it lacked some clarity in terms of certain issues that are very common now-a-days among the refugees and how other countries have come to react to them. The latter gives more focus on the emotional breakdown and psychological trauma that both Nuri and Afra Ibrahim seemed to suffer from. Their journey was not only from a place of conflict to an asylum country but also the emotional struggle through which they had to find themselves and each other. In this chapter, we would be looking into the text named *Exit West*, written by Mohsin Hamid. In this text, we would be focusing the change in personality, morals and perspectives of such drastic journeys to unknown land can have an effect on the refugees as people.

In *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, the refugee crisis is shown through magical realism. Starting the story with the idea of an uncanny romance between two individuals, *Exit West* surprised its readers with the concept of magical doors opening up to new places. The story muted out the horror in the unmanned city of the protagonists by providing them a portal to travel to a safer place. The story of Nadia and Saeed provides a reality which is more relatable to the readers despite having a fantastical element like magical realism within its

writing. Initially, their story made the situation more real because of the unnamed city that they in. It could be assumed that Mohsin Hamid snatched away the idea of distancing from the readers as they are given a scene and reality that could be a reflection of any city in the world with chaos and unrest. Through the genre of fantasy and magical realism, this chapter would focus on the refugees after the refugee crisis through the character development of both Saeed and Nadia and the emotional turbulence that changes both of the characters spiritually and individually. Since the text falls under the genre of fantasy, it is consistent in showing different lives of people who travel through magical doors for various reasons. They include decisions taken to avoiding fatality, change of scenery and lifestyle, desperation, savings young and innocent souls from the harsh reality of dire circumstances and so on; but every time a person travels through a door, it carries the hope of going to a better place and living a better life. *Exit West* primarily focuses on the journey of Saeed and Nadia, while providing disjointed anecdotes of strangers, living in different parts of the world that used the doors for other reasons and desires.

The text falls under the genre of fantasy because it contains magical realism within its depth. Many people consider magical realism to be a subset of the fantasy genre. However, in true fantasy novels, the story is set in a world that has no similarity with the world we live in. The concept of fantasy depends on the intensity of the unconventional story line and the strangeness within the characters themselves. The bizarreness of the story line may include other or parallel worlds, while the eccentricity of the characters may revolve around the idea of supernatural or unnatural beings. The readers' imagination plays a great factor in this genre as their capability to escape from reality and come up with otherworldly images, scenes and faces is what makes this genre alluring. The events within the fantasy genre functions outside the laws of the real universe as it includes basic elements of ancient myths, legends



and fairy tales. While fantasy itself is unrealistic, fantasy writers try to reflect on the truth of the society and its effect on the human conditions and their ways of thinking.

On the other hand, the term “magical realism” was first recognised by a Cuban novelist named Alejo Carpentier who was able to find this unique characteristic in Latin-American literature in the 1940s. The term itself is relatively new despite the fact that it has been present within literatures of many cultures in different ages. According to Roman De La Campa, “...magical realism can be linked to an unsuspectedly rich history of related literary forms throughout the world, a study of which can provide new links to earlier periods and different narrative mode;” (206). Many believed that the genre of magic realism was a “natural outcome” of the post-colonial writing in order for people to make sense of the two separate realities of the conquered and the conqueror. De La Campa believed that magical realism should be appreciated and accepted because it, “... provides a special gateway to grasp, if not master, the literary lineaments of postmodernism (or postcolonialism, or both), most particularly due to the ways it is able to subvert or transgress established discursive codes that sustain not only literature but also history” (206). Among the famous and noteworthy Latin-American writers or realists, Colombian writer named Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Brazilian author named Jorge Amado, the Argentine writers Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar, and the Chilean writer named Isabel Allende are the most prominent writers.

The lines between the genre of fantasy and magical realism are blurry because they both deal with elements that are not familiar with regular everyday life. While fantasy introduces the readers to new world, a magical realist story is set in a prosaic and familiar place, where it contains a place or beings that are not of the real world. Magical realism can be defined as a genre that is deeply rooted with the works of reality with some elements of magic in it. They can be considered as fictional texts that may have magical or surreal

elements that have slight possibilities of actually happening in reality. Magical realism is a literary revolution of the previous century. It is characterised by two conflicting perspectives, one is based on the supposedly rationale image of the reality while the other is the acceptance of the unrealistic elements incorporated within the threads of reality. This literary movement was initiated by Latin American authors. They started to question the reality of the political regiment of their country by attempting to deconstruct the foundations of their political regimes. It is essential for writers who want to question the mainstream thought process of leading authorities without being threatened. It gives a golden opportunity to the writers to create an alternative and relatable and accepted reality, which can be used as a very power weapon against government administrations.

The magic realism regarding the door is that some were able to use it as an escape from their lives while other used it as an escape to save their lives. In this discussion, I would look into the desires and wants of the two protagonists as they are forced to travel together for the sense of reliability and familiarity. However, it would also provide an idea of the change that is likely to occur within the refugees when they are forced to adapt to the countries that receives them. The discussion would be based on the events and responses to certain situations that the two protagonists went through as people and their relationship with each other. Having two opposite spectrums of reality, Saeed and Nadia experienced different sorts of realisation, despite being with each other most of the time. Not married or related, but they were estranged with a deep sense of loyalty towards each other. The concern and care for each other may have rooted in romantic feelings, but the promise that they made for others because of their loved ones had a driving force that had overcome their romantic feelings for each other.

The 2017 novel is the fourth book written by Mohsin Hamid which starts off with a surprisingly normal scene of Saeed and Nadia meeting in a classroom which blossomed in a

romantic relationship in an unnamed city lingering at the brink of war. Usually, when readers start a book related to refugee crisis, they instinctively distance themselves from the characters and the horror that they were about to read within the following events. In *Exit West*, the readers may have been surprised by the normal situation they come to face with Saeed and Nadia's interaction and relationship. The setting seems very relatable and normal to the readers as it may be a part of their everyday lives as well. The classrooms, the parents, the dating, the cafes and restaurants and so on could be said to be elements to lower the readers' guard to the reality which they do not relate to. It allows the readers to relate to the everyday lives of these characters and that their drastic change of situation is not something out of context. These incidents are so unpredictable that the writer shows that chaos and destruction can take any form, anywhere around the world. It makes the global crisis more real and more devastating. According to an article published in *The New York Times*, "With its surreal premise, "Exit West," an acclaimed new novel by Mohsin Hamid, might feel hallucinatory and distant had it arrived at a different moment. Instead, the novel — which fuses magical realism with a harrowingly vivid story of global migration and displacement — feels ominously relevant" (Alter, 2017).

Usually in refugee related stories like the ones previously discussed, the writers often focus on the journey of the characters or the protagonists. It is not an uncommon way to shed light on the refugee crisis as the people suffer the most during their transition from one place to another. Children travelling for thousands of miles as narrated by John Bul Dao in *God Grew Tired of Us* and adults, both male and female are beaten, jailed and sexually assaulted and so on, which could be seen through Nuri and Afra in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. The dangerous situations are often confronted during the travelling phase of the refugees, where they have to take dangerous risk and take part in illegal activities just for the sake of survival. However, in the novel *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid had narrated a story about the migration of

two romantically involved individuals and compressed the entire journey in an instant through the magic doors. It may be assumed that the writer wanted to express his opinions regarding the struggles that the refugees go through mentally and physically after being safely resettled in a foreign land. The story begins with a scene of an unnamed city that has been crowded with refugees flowing in from different places, “In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace, or at least not yet openly at war, a young man met a young woman in a classroom and did not speak to her” (Hamid, 3) . The idea would seem odd that the protagonists were attending classes in the city that was at the brink of war but the writer answers the readers question by further writing,

“It might seem odd that in cities teetering at the edge of the abyss young people still go to class—in this case an evening class on corporate identity and product branding—but that is the way of things, with cities as with life, for one moment we are puttering about our errands as usual and the next we are dying, and our eternally impending ending does not put a stop to our transient beginnings and middles until the instant when it does” (Hamid, 3).

The description may be long and roundabout but it shows how life within the city must go on despite the constant fear of death and war that has infiltrated the city’s peace. It also provides an opportunity to look at Saeed and Nadia’s story and their romance to also be a part of the normal life despite the havoc that has been going around them, “Their city had yet to experience any major fighting, just some shootings and odd car bombings, felt in one’s chest cavity as a subsonic vibration like those emitted by large loudspeakers at music concerts...” (Hamid, 4). Despite the façade of peace, the war fast forwards the love and passion between Nadia and Saeed, which also bring us to the conversation where they start discussing about going to different places around the world. The hope of clutching to even a single normal emotion such as love, millions like Saeed and Nadia try to normalise their life

despite the presence of desperate refugees living in “many of the open places in the city, pitching tents in the greenbelts between roads, erecting lean-tos next to the boundary walls of houses, sleeping rough on sidewalks and in the margin of streets” (Hamid, 15-16).

Comparatively, Nadia and Saeed represent two personalities that are opposite of each other. Nadia can be said to be the black sheep of her family as her thought process was not compatible to the ways of her family. Nadia’s “constant questioning and growing irreverence in matters of faith” (Hamid, 12) was a discord between her and her father. The argument that made Nadia break off her relationship with her family was due to her views about life and her strong personality that led her to announce that she would be living separately from her family. Whereas Saeed seemed to reflect a family-oriented personality due to the stable yet monotonous relationship that Saeed’s parents seemed to have. Though the information regarding Saeed’s parents’ life and sexual activities seemed to be odd in the midst of the crisis but it also showed that their relationship was no different from many around the world. It also gave a sense of familiarity to how Saeed grew up among his parents and their calm relationship with each other made him desire to have the same sort of relaxed and secure relationship with Nadia. It may be one of the reasons that Saeed refused to become physically intimate with Nadia at the initial stages of their relationship, “Saeed was certain he was in love. Nada was not certain what exactly she was feeling, but she was certain it had force” (Hamid, 31)- as desperation for any kind of normalcy could be said to have heightened their emotions, we observe a slow change in Nadia and Saeed’s personality when the fragments of chaos and death started to come up within the city. Nadia and Saeed’s family not only started to stock up on their daily necessities but they also rearranged the furniture of their house so that neither militants nor government soldier would barge in and take the members away.

In addition to that, the death of Saeed’s mother was the trigger that led to the decision of getting out of the war-inflicted city. Both Saeed and Nadia dedicated themselves to find a

route through which they would escape the war-torn city with Saeed's father. However, in the end, they had to leave Saeed's father behind as he was adamant to stay in the place where his wife had been. Saeed's father also contemplated the risk and burden of having an elderly travelling in such dangerous situation. Both Nadia and Saeed had to accept the promise of safety and company along with the accepting the fact that they would be leaving Saeed's father behind. We imagine the change within the texts as the writer narrates, "making the promise he demanded she make she was in a sense killing him, but that is the way of things, for when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (Hamid, 55). When Saeed and Nadia arrived on the "Greek Island of Mykonos" (Hamid, 58), Nadia went into management mode and started to buy things that were needed for their temporary stay in the refugee camps, whereas, we do not really see Saeed being able to take an active part in the situation initially. It may be because he was still in shock of what he had to do in order to survive. While Nadia had only the hope of her family to be safe and sound after her visit to the demolished building, Saeed was aware of the gravity of the situation of leaving his father in the city with no protection. According to Stein, the residual effects of threats, trauma and stress on a person's mental health is very prominent when it comes to the psychological stability of refugees. He argues about the trauma of escape and flight leaves an effect on the psychology of the refugees for the future, "Because they usually endure the greatest hardship and loss, those who are late to flee are likely to come out of the experience with three residual characteristics: guilt, invulnerability and aggressiveness-guilt for the loved ones lost because the refugee delayed flight or failed to protect them during attack. The feeling of invulnerability develops because the refugee has been through the worst and has survived" (Stein, 232). Here, we see Stein discusses about the trauma of the refugee after the leaving their homeland due to unfortunate circumstances that may initiate from the death of a loved one.

However, in the case of Saeed, despite him not wanting to follow his father's wishes, he had to leave his father behind, knowing that it may be the last time that he might be able to hug or see his father. The sense of loss and leaving the beloved ones behind is what started to change Saeed's personality as he starts searching for places and people with a sense of familiarity of home. On the other hand, we see Nadia in a sense to become a curious child as she look around and takes in her new environment. She does not stand and look at everything in awe and wonder; rather we see her taking the reign of the matter into her own hands and try to get a sense of security and comfort in the foreign place. We see the emotional gap created between Nadia and Saeed during their stay in London after they decided to travel through another door in Mykonos. After travelling through the mysterious portal door in Mykonos, the two lovers ended up in a house that was probably situated in one of the richer parts of London. The expensive furnishing, the comfortable bedrooms, the bathroom with running water and other facilities made them assume that they had landed in a hotel room. What may have been something of the norm to the readers would shock their conscious because the simplest facilities that they had taken for granted would make them appreciate the fact that they were not in the same situation as the refugees.

London was the place where Nadia and Saeed and many others who had travelled through the door were titled as villains as the natives reacted to them in a hostile manner. They were deemed as "others" as the locals started to get horrified of the onslaught of incoming refugees through the door. We see that the people living in the house are tainted as dangerous as after their first discovery by the housekeeper and two policemen, later "a vanload more of them, in full riot gear, and then a car with two more who wore white shirts and black vest and were armed with what appeared to be submachine guns, and on their black vest was the word written POLICE in white letter but these two looked to Saeed and Nadia like soldiers" (Hamid, 71) –it looked as if a whole battalion had been sent to check upon the

refugee filled house armed to the teeth for possible riots. In that very moment, the refugees living in the house like Nadia and Saeed were deemed as outsiders that needed to be cleansed. The local newspaper started to refer to the areas where the refugees were living in houses as the "...worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation" (Hamid, 72). This clearly reflects upon the way the UK media started to other the refugees as something ominous, "... UK coverage had the most negative and polarised coverage of the crisis, often presenting the issue as a social or cultural threat" (Langdon, 95). To see as a part of the minority was something that both Nadia and Saeed had not experienced before. Their coping mechanism due to the absurdity of the situation had made it through their change in behaviour towards each other. They may have used their own frustrations in words and behaved unkindly towards one another.

In *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid clearly refers to how the British media started to put the refugee crisis in negative framing in 2015, when the peak of refugee migration was present in the EU nations. The dominant newspapers used to attach negative syllables like "threat" to the people who were displaced during that time. According to Nicola Langdon, the negative construction used to have different types of portrayal that included stereotyping like racism, deceptive rumours linking them to different types of criminal and terrorist acts as well as questioning the authenticity of the refugees' situation. By using such "selective terminology and misleading information, the use of metaphorical statements and the evocation of past experiences of mass migration, such as during the Rwandan Genocide and World War II" (Langdon, 93) started to create mistrust and social anxiety for safety as well as the unpredictable status of the impact of the refugees in the economy brought about social issues like Islamophobia and racial discrimination. One of the most significant scenes of "othering" of the refugees in *Exit West* is when the television started to discuss about a huge operation in order to "reclaim Britain for Britain" (Hamid, 76) and for which army was also being



deployed and police, civilians and volunteers were also receiving weeks training in order to push the refugees out of their land. It can be considered that they assumed the refugees to be “uncontrolled and deviant as opposed to orderly and civilized” (Jensen 63) British citizens, as they had supposedly taken over the area of residence. According to Langdon, the way in which the British press had use the concept of frame to portray the refugees involved, “...involve the repetition of words or themes to stimulate effect or metaphor, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images” (Langdon, 93) and thus started to provide reason for the negative backlashes received by the refugees. In *Exit West*, we see such situation when the street in which the two lovers along with other refugees lived were attacked by nativist mob, “the mob looked to Nadia like a strange and violent tribe, intent on their destruction, some armed with iron bars or knives, and she and Saeed turned and ran, but could not escape” (Hamid, 75). For Nadia, it felt like she was in the same situation as in her own city. The anger of the nativist and how they blamed and attack the innocent refugees who had no part in the supposed criminal acts reminded her of the similar horror she experienced in her own city. We can see her emotions clearly when she describes how the anger of the locals astounded her and their willingness to slaughter innocents to “reclaim” their land, “She wondered whether she and Saeed had done anything by moving, whether the faces and buildings had changed but the basic reality of their predicament had not” (Hamid, 89).

Moreover, being in such a grave and dangerous place with no sense of familiarity or belonging, Nadia and Saeed were always bickering or at each other’s nerves. It may be because while Saeed was suspicious of the people not from his place, Nadia was more curious to learn about the ways of the people she was sharing the house with. We see her taking part in large meetings where the elders took decisions regarding the functionality of the supplies and issues, while on the other hand, Saeed went to the house where he found

young men that belong to his nation and was drawn in the way the people were passionate about the mistreatment that they were receiving from the natives. He almost got dragged into a crime as he was given a small gun. He had not informed Nadia about the incident but later on returned it because he saw the weight of the gun and the lives it could take. Also, he became conscious about his own morals and principles regarding the lives of people, native or foreign. Saeed found the environment and the inhabitant of the house to be “jarring” while Nadia experienced the place as a kind of “university dormitory”. Their different opinions regarding how the people were behaving in the house started to bring a rise in Saeed, whereas Nadia advised him to step back if he did not want to be injured. The constant clashes of opinion and bickering regarding different yet small topics started to create a gap between Nadia and Saeed, “...he wondered if this new way of speaking to one another, this unkindness that was now creeping into their words from time to time, was a sign of where they were headed” (Hamid, 74). The physical attraction between Nadia and Saeed also started to diminish after they first came to the house, “...they slept on the slender single bed together without speaking, without touching, or without more than the cramped space demanded, for this one night not unlike a couple that was long and unhappily married, a couple that made out of opportunities for joy and misery” (Hamid, 71). This type of distancing is different from what we have seen between Nuri and Afra Ibrahim in *the Beekeeper of Aleppo* as they were a married couple who had been mourning the loss of their child in their own ways, while Saeed and Nadia had no other relation besides a romantic attraction and a promise to keep each other safe.

Furthermore, Nadia and Saeed found themselves in another predicament about their feelings towards each other after they moved to the worker camps that were being used to build new cities around the greenbelt of London. They were able to live in the camps in exchange for their hard work and at nights Nadia and Saeed slept beside each other but were

too tired to initiate any sort of activities due to the stressful work they had to endure all day. However, despite their fading attraction towards each other, they tried rekindle their love by initiating caring words towards each other. However, we first see the change within Nadia when she started to dream about the girl who led them towards the door in Mykonos, "...when Nadia woke she was almost panting, and felt her body alive or alarmed, regardless changed, for the dream seemed so real, and after that she found herself thinking of Mykonos from time to time" (Hamid, 96). Whereas Saeed became more spiritually invested since that was the way he felt close to his father. The news regarding the death of his father triggered a more spiritual mourning from Saeed's as he did not know how to mourn. Rather, he started to put more effort into his work and took extra shift in order to distract himself. In this case, Nadia was unable to console him as she did when Saeed's mother had died. Both of them slowly started to lose the sense of belonging to each other and drifted away, "So it was with Saeed and Nadia, who found themselves changed in each other's eyes in this new place" (Hamid, 105). Saeed seemed to become more attracted or drawn close to the people from his country in the labour camps or online, while Nadia had moved farther away from anything that would remind her of the time she lived in the nameless city. It was during this time when Nadia and Saeed started to feel the distance they created between them but for the sake of loyalty and fading love, they stayed together and went off through another door to the new city of Marin, which was situated near the Pacific Ocean.

Lastly, in Marin Saeed started to become attracted to the preacher's daughter. At first, he often stayed away or avoid talking to her because "...he felt his breathe tighten within him" (Hamid, 111) and felt guilty towards his loyalty for Nadia. Although, for Nadia, the presence of the new woman was welcoming because it made her relationship with Saeed more comfortable and we suddenly see that Nadia realises that she had started see Saeed in a brotherly form which no longer surprised her as she used to think about the girl in Mykonos

and pleased herself to sleep. She realised that she was no longer attracted to Saeed and that she was interested in girls. Nadia was the first one who had brought up the topic of leaving Marin alone although she did not tell Saeed about her sexual preference shows that she had no longer felt the intimate bond they had shared together for so long. It may be because she was not afraid of how Saeed would react to her realisation, “These stereotypes about how sexual minorities should understand and express their sexual and gender identity simultaneously include processes of racialization” (Brotman and Jin Lee, 153). According to Brotman and Jin Lee and their research based on the sexual minority regarding homosexuality in refugee camps showed that the refugees in the camps,

“...suggested that their understandings and conceptualizations of sexual and gender identity shift and change over time and do not always align with western notions of a linear and essentialized trajectory. Participants in our study varied in their rejection, awareness or acceptance of Western identity labels to define themselves, indicating that conceptualizations of sexual and gender identity are far more complex and contested than the reified notion of "gay" or "trans"...” (154).

In this case, we can see why Nadia was willing to travel alone and away from Saeed. It was due to the fact that she was curious to explore her sudden rise of interest in the female population and wanted to further analyse her stance in the blurry context of sexuality. While Saeed became more close to the preacher’s daughter, Nadia was starting off again as an employee in a food cooperative and became close to the female cook there.

In conclusion, we can say that both Saeed and Nadia had chosen different paths to trek upon with different people. However, the names of their new lovers were not given with the text. We can assume that the focal point of the story was how both Saeed and Nadia had developed spiritually and as individuals despite the horrible experience they had to go

through as refugees. We can assume that the writer had focused on Nadia and Saeed as they were the only two characters who were blessed with a name and personality. The short stories regarding different people around the world and how they had used the door to be saved, to save, to find love and hope and so on shows that how they had not migrated from their place of birth but also how they had used their experienced and what it did to have influenced their ways of seeing live and beliefs. So in a way, we can say that the door was not only a route of escape, but it was also an opportunity for people like Nadia and Saeed to embrace and value life in a more genuine manner.

## Chapter – 4

### Anthropological research

The literary texts like *God Grew Tired of Us*, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Exit West* portray the global Refugee crisis in different shades of people, fear and memories, providing uncommon elements within the texts. These texts roughly give the readers an overall idea on the multifarious issues behind this crisis and how people are impacted by them. The question still remains whether or not the texts successfully portray the emotions that the writers want to evoke from their readers. *God Grew Tired of Us* gives us the story of John Dau, where the reality of the refugee crisis is very different from the stories written in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Exit West*. It proves that despite being contemporary novels, these texts reflect the drastic change in how the refugees are being portrayed. The texts allow a glimpse of several issues regarding borders, selection interviews, lack of resources, human trafficking and smuggling and so on while anthropological research regarding such issues gives readers an in depth knowledge regarding the refugee crisis. It would also entail on how the crisis has taken advantage of people as commodities and opportunities of illegal operations to function secretly. It shows that human desperation overrides ones' principles and morals when they have nothing to lose.

The most unique concept seen within the text of *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid is the absence of borders. Mohsin Hamid uses the transporting doors to focus on the struggles of the refugees after they enter into a foreign land than their journey to the asylum country. It brings the question to mind of whether or not much focus is given on how refugees struggle to cross different borders than their struggle to settle down in a place alien to their lifestyle, beliefs and habits. The complexity of borders and their significance in the present world subtly expose how the concept of “othering” fellow human beings is still ingrained within the mind

of the present generation. Even if there is no longer the legal concept of colonizing a place, the process of globalisation has brought about the ways people still regard someone outside their homeland, birth, language, religion or beliefs and so on as an outcast. Basically, in simple terms, borders can be defined as the geographic boundary that has been placed by the government or authority to provide them with the legal jurisdiction to oversee or control the functions of region, people, and economy within the borders. Borders also provides an opportunity for people to look into the different cultures that have been practiced, modified and evolved within the territory from the start of its existence. Borders change throughout the course of time and history for different reasons that are at times peaceful while at other times, full of violence and bloodshed. There are other ways, borders change as territories are sold off or traded peacefully with bordering regions. Through wars, the land had been broken down and divided into different small regions and chartered off by international agreements through various times. It is a complex and complicated procedure for the ruling government on how it would be able to work out the details of adding in new pieces of land or region within its chartered map or trade off some of its land for some resources or economic benefits with its neighbouring countries. Mohsin Hamid removed the chaos of borders form his storyline to focus on the resettlement of the refugees as they struggle to find their identity and place in a foreign environment. Saeed and Nadia jumped through space and time, from one place to another to show that the struggles of displaced people are more than just jumping borders and escaping from chaos and destruction of their own homeland. The literary text allows the reader to think about the crisis more profoundly while anthropological research regarding such situations allows the people to see a bigger picture of an issue that has been present since the beginning of time.

The study of anthropology stems from the idea understanding human development in terms of religion, culture, social and cultural norms that differs from regions, countries and

neighboring people across borders. It is the scientific research of human behaviour in the past and the present according to various factors including physical and cultural evolution, biological characteristics, social and religious customs, traditions and beliefs that have been prevalent throughout history and its transformation throughout the ages till date<sup>13</sup>. This field of study is a continuous process in tuned with the changes occurring within the fabric of the society and the behavioural response to it. Cultural anthropology is one of the major divisions of anthropology that observes culture. It is based in the collection, analysis, observation, interpretation of the research that is done by ethnographical field research. It is seen as a cultural and behavioural study of humans that differs regions to region. When it comes to cultural differences of different human societies based on geographical characteristics, borders play a role of division of cultures and principles even if these boundaries are within the same geographical region. Borders are nationally recognised as a controlled method through which the flow of people within and out of the country through migration, travelling or immigration could be determined. Only citizens are allowed to travel and move around freely within the borders of their own countries. Although, the same could not be said regarding the shared borders with another country as the government of the adjoining country need to allow people to cross over into their territory. Countries around the world have different rules and policies about who may be able to travel, work and live within its borders. Usually, travel documents like visas and passports are issued to non-citizens that allow them to travel, work and live within the borders of the country For example, The United States issues documents known as ‘green cards’ that allow non-Americans to live, work and be protected by the laws of the country within the borders<sup>14</sup>. It is a complicated procedure that is a long wait as it contains various steps like submitting legal documents, giving interviews,

---

<sup>13</sup> “Anthropology.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anthropology>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Diane Boudreau, Melissa McDaniel, Erin Sprout and Andrew Turgeon. *Border*, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/border/>. Accessed on 8 Jul. 2020.



allowing background investigation and so on for the documents to be either issued or rejected. However, the borders are another kind of nightmare in the eyes of the refugee. It is a gamble of life and death for them as they are hanging to life by desperation and hope to be accepted into the asylum country. If their application to acquire shelter in the country is rejected, then they have nowhere to go. Stuck between a closed door in the front and impending loss of life behind, they are forced to illegally enter the country rather than go back to the place where the death is the inevitable reality of their lives.

In a way, we can say that the physical presence of borders also helps to propagate the idea of “othering”. According to Henk Van Houtum and Ton Van Naerssen, the concept of borders represents something beyond a fixed point of land or region in a fixed space or time. It can be assumed to symbolize a type of social practice of “spatial differentiation”. In the linguistic sense, they claim that it is “unjustly” assumed to be completely focused on the place itself. Rather they urge that the concept of borders would be understood on how it is used as a complex yet subtle strategy to “make a difference in space among the movements of people, money and products” (126). For citizens, borders are often taken for granted and a fixed place in space and time that is approved by the majority of people living within the country. Usually, the refugees are not seen within the centre or in the semi-circle of the country. They are placed in refugee camps or asylums that are usually placed at the edge of the country, nearing the borders of the territory. The setup of the refugee camps and centres shows the “transnational landscape in a strikingly different way”. Houtum and Naerssen state that the refugee camps are set up in places that are situated at the edge of urban areas or countries, where they fill up empty or broken-down houses, crumbling buildings, small tents and huts. They wait for judgment to be given to them as to become a part of the land and the people or be ousted, to be sent back to their land. There is no sense of security or home within such quarters. Rather, the present condition of border control, asylum seekers, refugee

gives of feelings of “emotional distance and praxis of indifference” (131). Cultural relativism plays a deep role in how the natives and the refugees look at each other. Franz Boas<sup>15</sup> first came up with the idea as to how cultural relativism is created when a person’s beliefs, values and practices are based on the culture that they were born and brought up in. Besides fighting with their own losses, the refugees have to also struggle with the cultural shock they experiences in the sheltering countries. The sudden changes puts strained on the psychological stability of the refugees’ conscious. The image of trauma and nightmares, chaos and disorder, death and loss, tiredness and tardiness seems to prevail and express of the untold stories of long journeys and cruel reality of lives within the eyes of these people.

The situation or scene can be relatable to the *God Grew Tired of Us* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. The two stories show the different sides of the same situation. John Dau, Nuri and Afra Ibrahim experience the conditions of the refugee camps. The concentration of the refugees, asylum seekers in such places can be seen as a “gathering of the powerless, the marginalised and politically contested, architecturally symbolised by the inhabitation of out of use places and buildings or tents” (131). We could see the difference in behaviour in *God Grew Tired of Us*, when John narrates of how they were treated in refugee camps of Kakuma, “We were penniless and powerless people from another country” (149)- the bitter truth of all the refugees in the world. Whereas the Kenyan government did not allow refugees to leave the country in John’s story, Nuri and Afra in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* were refugees who were not allowed to search for employment in the sheltering country due to the hostile behaviour of the natives and the economic instability occurring due to the presence of refugees.

---

<sup>15</sup> German-born American Anthropologist, who is a pioneer of modern anthropology and commonly known as the “Father of American Anthropology”. His work is correlated with the movements of Historical Particularism and Cultural Relativism.

The reality of border crossing and the measures that are taken for the displaced people to be allowed into the sheltering country show the presence of another reality for ignorant people around the world. Among the confusion of displacement, the questionnaires for the asylum seeking people are chosen by the authorities controlling the borders of the particular country. In both *God Grew Tired of Us* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* we see the protagonists had to go through a number of exams, interviews and had to present copies of identification for interviews. The refugees are selected by the answers provided by the interviewers in order to filter out those people who would use the guise of refugees in order to enter or escape to another country. But the question of the mental stability of a person also comes into question and their capability of answering the questions in the right way. We see John Bul Dau studying and getting educated in different subjects in order to pass the test that makes them eligible for the interview to have a chance to go to the United States. Not everyone has the same intellectual capacity and thus to only choose those who would be able to pass in subjects that they have been taught for a few years, completely different from the teachings that they had been given from their tribe elders, parents and relatives is a disadvantage for many. Question arises that whether or not the question that are asked or the interviews that are taken are shaped into the taste and perspectives of the natives of the asylum country. We see how John Bul Dau had explained in details regarding the steps and decisions he had to take in order earn the opportunity to live in America. In a way, it could be considered reasonable for certain criteria to be present within the interview because the refugees would have to live among the natives and would most likely experience a cultural shock of that particular country. Although, to what extent do these questions and criteria depend on the morality and condition of the refugees and does the compatibility with the natives outweigh the refugee's desperate desire to live safely and peacefully.

Like immigration policies and procedures, refugee related policies have also become more complicated due to the sudden rise of immigration flow to the European countries in the past few years. David Miller asks what proof would have to be given by the refugees in order for the authorities to decide whether to grant admission into the country permanently or temporarily. He also raises the issue of “national culture, economic advantage, social cohesion and so forth” (97) and how deeply does it influence the selection of refugees into a country. The 1951 Geneva Convention with the document that established the rights of the refugees to ask for asylum under the international law also recognised the problem of how the right of asylum may become a heavy burden to the particular countries that allowed the refugees to do so<sup>16</sup>. In order to solve such a crisis, UNCHR was created as a part of the United Nations to take the responsibility to oversee and manage the refugee flow within the countries so that no single country would have to bear the heavy burden of sheltering the continuous flow of incoming refugees. Basically, in order for the refugees to claim the right of asylum there has to be international co-operation among different countries to navigate and divide the flow of the refugees. David Miller believes that it is considered the right of a refugee to be admitted to a country due to the “long establishment principle of non-refoulement”<sup>17</sup>. The way the protagonists in *God Grew Tired of Us* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* express fear and nervousness of the exams and interviews within the texts show that there is always the possibility of the request of asylum into the country to be turned down.

Miller talks about the type of refugees that are based on the period of time they are allowed to live in the asylum country. The type of refugees that are accepted into the country

---

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR, Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. The Geneva Convention, 1951, page-15.

<sup>17</sup> The situation forbids the displaced people to go back to the place which had turned them into refugees in the first place. It includes all the places where they would have to face persecution or threat that would likely endanger their human rights.

on a temporary basis with the expectation that they would go back to their homelands after the chaos and disorder that led them to flee the country and turn into refugee calmed down and the volatile situation has settled down. For such type of refugees, the country that accepted them into their fold would be considered as a sanctuary. While on the other hand, there are people who live in the “receiving state on a long-term basis” because they have no realistic purpose of returning back home any longer. This type of situation occurs when the refugees are certain that they would face persecution on the basis of their race, religion and colour. Even after a few years, if there is a slight chance of the situation to have calmed down or the threat of being persecuted is removed; they are unable to return due to the fact that they would not be able to live their lives normally after the traumatising reality that they had to face. On the other hand, they may also not be able to go back due to the fact that they have settled down in the asylum country for a generation or two and have become accustomed to the lifestyle and culture of that particular country. These types of refugees ask for asylum with the intention of settlement within the particular country.

In all three texts in the research paper, none of the protagonists had the intention of returning to their own country. John Bul Dau in *God Grew Tired of Us* had settled down in America and was only allowed to bring his little sister and mother to live with him. Due to the extended and big family of his father and wives, it was impossible to bring all of them into the country as refugees. Whereas, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri and Afra Ibrahim is seen to keep on remembering the peaceful days before the political clash has taken away their peace and their child, driving them almost mad with loneliness and loss of their child, reality as well as identity. In addition to the former texts, in *Exit West*, both Saeed and Nadia settle down in different places because they are aware of the fact that they would never be able to go back to the place where they lost their family and would not be able to go back to their past realities and personalities any longer. Miller discusses how temporary refugees can turn

into permanent citizens depending on how deep their roots have been embedded into the society of the receiving state. However, the question still remains on how the receiving state perceives the way a refugee may be chosen to live within their bordered regions. Sometimes, they have to gamble with the luck of the refugee through lottery if too many applicants are received by one country, at other times they compare the gravity of the situation of the applicants and their family, both of which can be seen in the different characters that takes part in the story of Nura and Afra Ibrahim in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*.

However, we see that John Bul Dau follows the rules and regulations set by the authorities in the refugee camps in order to be granted permission to go and live in America, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* shows the readers the effect of time and expectations on a person who desperately wants to reach a place or community where there would be a presence of familiarity from their former lives. The interviews and the degrading living standards described within the texts give a taste of reality to the readers to a point they would internally feel blissful to have a roof over their heads. While on the other hand, we see Saeed and Nadia are given an opportunity to skip all the hassles regarding interviews and permission for border crossing. *Exit West* focuses more on the character development of the two protagonists as they experience fleeting yet profound discoveries of their lives. However, in defiance of the known boundaries of gravity, space and time, the door of transportation could be seen as a way of how refugees can be smuggled within a country and live within it as an invisible alien. While, in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, provides similar journey of Nuri and Afra had to travel far and wide, through disguise and lies, injustice and nightmares in order to reach to a place where they had to face another obstacle of being allowed to enter into the asylum country. Their entire journey gives the readers a glimpse of the illegal operations such as human trafficking, smuggling, identity theft and how people took advantage of their situation. Despite the various steps taken to ensure the safety and smooth transition of the refugee flow

to the receiving countries, the burden of the continuous flow of the displaced people makes it difficult for any country to properly navigate the people through legal channels of identification. As a result, we are able to look at the lack of resources and transportation to accommodate the ever growing number of refugees. This tends to bring rise to the underhand dealings of smuggling and illegal operations to be carried out by using refugees as the medium to transport products and people.

These desperate and hopeless beings are lured into such operations with the dream of getting a better life in a safe country which would be only achieved if they take risky steps to achieve them. The gravity of the situation that could have been easily seen by a rationally sane person is overshadowed by the desperate need of survival. The fear of being stuck in the deplorable condition of the refugee camps with no future in sight tends to make even the sanest man to become overwhelmed with sorrow and be easily influenced by smugglers and traffickers to get their jobs done. We see John Bul Dau's determination to reach America stemming from the reality he had seen while being stuck in a refugee camp for more than a year. The dream of a better life inspired him to work day and night, study and refine himself as a human being, fit for the American lifestyle. While the same case could be said for the Moroccan man who started to learn English and tried to speak in a British accent in order to impress the interviewers so that he would be granted asylum and Nuri's decision to become a delivery man of strange packages for the people who would give him and Afra fake identities to reach their destination. Their determination to leave the camps and relief centres are not without reason.

It had been observed that displaced people who live in urban or non-camp areas instead of the refugee camps and centres tend to fare better than those living in those camps. It is because as a refugee in a foreign land or region, the people are not allowed to find employment in the receiving land because it may endanger the employment rate of the

natives, making them more hostile towards the refugees. According to Shelly Culbertson et al., upto 2009, the main aim of the UNHCR was to provide relief goods and resources to the displaced victims in the refugee camps. However, the current situation of the refugee crisis shows that many of the displaced victims do not stay in the camps for a long period of time. Rather, they settle down into different villages, small towns and local areas, urban cities that surround the refugee camps or centres. Refugees recognize the opportunities that could be acquired living outside the relief camps. The intention of setting up refugee camps is to create a temporary solution of living space for the displaced people. However, most of the refugee crises that are happening around the world are long term. These people become a topic for discussion between political leaders and are reduced from human beings to just mere numbers. Their situation thus takes longer to get resolved and they have to stay in the camps far longer than intended. Shelly Culbertson et al. stated that, “In 2014, 45 percent of the world’s refugees were in a protracted situation (defined as lasting longer than five years), and the average duration of a protracted refugee situation is 25 years (UNHCR, 2015c)—meaning large numbers of refugees are displaced for one or more generations” (12). The Rohingya crisis could be taken as an example of how Bangladesh has been trying to accommodate the refugees that fled from Myanmar due to ethnic cleansing. The current population of Bangladesh being 165,023,883 people<sup>18</sup>, the densely populated country has been struggling to provide resources for both its natives and refugees. Thus, these displaced victims are kept inside the restricted camps with meager resources that quickly dwindle down into scarce resources. In cases like these, the resources are then hoarded and sold off at a very high price within the camps. Having barely or any money, many of the refugees starve and live in desperate conditions. There have been many attempts to send the Rohingya refugees were permitted to return to their homeland however, the people have denied returning back due to

---

<sup>18</sup> World Population Review. Retrieved from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/bangladesh-population>. Accessed on 13 Sep. 2020.



the fear of violence. According to Reuters, “Two attempts to get a repatriation process going, in 2018 and 2019, failed as the refugees refused to go back to Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where they are denied citizenship and considered outsiders, fearing violence” (Ruma Paul, Reuters). The resources donated by international organisations and countries are not enough to sustain the increasing number of refugees and such situation is prevalent in most of the refugee camps around the world. According to one refugee interviewed by Shelly Culbertson and other in the Jordan camps stated that it was not “fit for humans”.

In *God Grew Tired of Us*, the readers would be able to see similar conditions between what Shelly Culbertson and other respected researchers are referring to. John Bul Dau was only a mere roll number in the refugee centre that he occupied a space in. He experienced loss and life through his years in different refugee camps, some organized while others were informally attended. Despite the fact that John Bul Dau’s story was narrated more than a decade ago, some of the realities within the refugee camps still remain the same. As a result, people do not have intentions of staying in the camps and settle outside the premises. The protagonist mirrors the lives of thousands of refugees who move out of the camps because it can offer more freedom for movement, employment opportunities, better healthcare system, educational opportunities and so on. We also see that same kind of desperation in Nuri and Afra’s situation in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. They kept travelling from one camp to another, losing hope gradually as they start to fear that they would never be able to get out of the refugee camps. In *Exit West*, Saeed and Nadia do not stay in a place for more than a few months. Since they have the door to travel to, they easily slip through the crack in space and time and land on another place.

There are innumerable stories untold among the refugees as they flee from their homeland. While researching on her topic, “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization” Liisa H. Malkki conducted an anthropological field

research based on the Hutu refugees from Burundi in Tanzania camps, discussed how the displaced people are treated as “mute victims” rather than important witnesses of history. In reality, refugees are not considered a part of the history as they have been removed from their homelands despite experiencing the horrible reality of a life altering event, where the information has a high chance of being modified before making its way into the history books. The famous British Poet and Rastafarian, Benjamin Zephaniah, has clearly depicted the emotions of the refugees through his poem “We Refugees” through the lines,

“I am told I have no country now  
I am told I am a lie  
I am told that modern history books  
May forget my name.”

In honest truth, the refugees stop being a human being or a specific person. They become identified as victims with no other identity or information attached to their names. Malkki stated that, “become pure victims in general: universal man, universal woman, universal child, and, taken together, universal family (Barthes 1980)” (378)- in a way, the last line in the above poem by Benjamin Zephaniah could be related to Malkki’s statement as to how refugees become a universal identity for those who have been replaced. Their names, age, livelihood, education, wealth, knowledge and importance are reduced to just numbers in the application sheets. She states that the refugees are a group of people that are in desperate need of support in order to survive and get justice from the various ways they have been victimized. She, however, points out that while it is necessary to bring relief measure and resources to these people, the way they receive the resources and the long-term support by the host countries and international organizations are not recorded within the history of the events, “It can strip from them the authority to give credible narrative evidence or testimony

about their own condition in politically and institutionally consequential forums” (Malkki, 378). Even if the refugees have vital information of the cause of the chaos and disorder in their homeland, they are usually unable to tell anyone about them because of many reasons including language barriers, cultural beliefs, traumatic shock, post-traumatic stress disorder that leave them unable to describe the events and horror in details.

Vanessa Pupavac states that, “Collective horror is expressed culturally by a whole community being deemed at risk of trauma, and counseling is not just offered to immediate family victims but has become a cultural rite for the wider community” (277). She discusses that in terms of health issues related to their mental stability of function and dysfunction, the question of the refugee’s “capacity for self-determination” comes in question. While, seeking for counseling and health benefits of being traumatised may be beneficial for the people, their narration of the events are also brought into question as a consequence for it. The narration of different stories of a collective group experiencing a single event brings about different points of view. It leads to confusion of which facts are correct and which are not. With the sudden overwhelming pressure to settle refugees in a secure place with adequate of food and resources, the voices of the people gradually fades away. At times, when counselors, authorities or researchers approach these victims with the intention of writing their stories, the language barrier plays a vital role in lessening the impact of the situation to both the writers as well as the readers. Most of the refugee narratives are translated into majorly used languages around the world, thus through distorted words, misinterpreted meaning and translations the emotions and the narrative become a cluster of confusion and distorted truth. According to Simona Bonini Baldini, the innumerable pictures of the refugees and the migration flow into the receiving countries through the means of internet and social networks have amplified the situation of the refugees to be a “problem”. It highlighted “the phenomenon of forced migration within the militarization of borders and the securitization of

the humanitarian sector” (132) – basically it started to focus on the problems that countries have in terms of treating their citizens and the organizations who were trying to provide space for the refugees to settle and live in. In all the confusion and the blame game, the spotlight is removed from the people who are the actual victims of the entire situation. She talked about how the refugees have been reduced to a number with no gender, age group, history or identity. Readers or spectators look at them as the “Other”, a mindset that was known to be not in practice after the decolonisation and fall of empires. In many cases, the refugees are categorized in a “group of anonymous and illiterate individuals” (133) who are either portrayed as villains in the media and mass communication or are highlighted as unfortunate “Others” who need someone or a literary hero to write about their sufferings and events that led them to be in their present conditions. Either their stories are categorized to speak about the political and social situation of the exiling country and the receiving countries or to differentiate their identities from the people they are living with- basically categorizing themselves as “others” to focus on their misery, rather than letting them try to settle down to a foreign.

According to Baldini, refugees look at themselves in two different levels, “The first is symbolic, where the refugee has already been portrayed by the person chosen to speak for them. The second is juridical normative, related to the possibility of being considered a social and political subject” (133). There are limited numbers of people who believe that refugees have the ability to write their own stories. With the cut throat competition within the publishing world, only a few people have the courage to hand over the power of narration in the hands of the refugee themselves for the fear of bad profits. As a result, there is a barrier between the writers and the refugees as the writers may attempt to shape the stories of the refugee to their or the readers’ tastes. A lot of the incidents are either censored or diluted for the readers to stomach in. However, that creates another kind of injustice for the refugees

whose truth is diluted and distorted just for the sake of the readers. Anthropological research on the other hand, may have the tendency to give generalized opinions based on their observation in the lives, culture and beliefs of the refugees through the eyes and opinions of a few. It is not possible for fields like literature or anthropology to give out justice to all the refugees out there, but they have the power to provide the undiluted reality of the refugees to the people.

### **Conclusion:**

This research paper started off with the base assumption that the memoir *God Grew Tired of Us* would provide more information regarding the issues surrounding the lives of the refugees. However, in the case of John Bul Daus' story, the memoir provides an eminent happy ending which is not relatable to the realities of the current victims of the refugee crisis. While *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* lets the readers focus on the story of Nuri and Afra Ibrahim and their journey through the legal and illegal channels of the refugee settlements and what had it cost them to reach their destination. In *Exit West*, the partially refugee couple Saeed and Nadia part ways as their characters develop through every experience with every jump through the magical door. Since this paper is a multidisciplinary paper between literature and anthropology, the protagonists and the genre allows the crisis was highlighted, while the behaviour, emotional impact, social, economic impact of both the refugees and the natives of the receiving countries through anthropological research opened a new window of opportunity. It allowed the particular issues, briefly explained and set within the literary texts to have a more in-depth discussion regarding the people in question. Through the pages of written words, the many aspects of the refugee crisis were highlighted with the help of various anthropological researches of different authors. Many assume that anthropology and

literature are parallel fields of research looking at the people, society, life, culture and beliefs through different lenses. However, when issues like refugee crisis comes into play, both literature and anthropology meet at one point from their parallel journey in diverse manners. They shed light on the issues with their take on different theories and social phenomenon to give readers a more clear perspective of the refugee crisis and the people involved in them.

If the paper was only a literary analysis of the three mentioned texts than it would only discuss and compare the characters within the texts itself and how their sufferings had shown different sides of the refugee crisis. However, by adding information through anthropological research, the characters and their emotions were brought to life and given a depiction of reality closely to those refugees living is destitute. These characters of these texts were brought to life through anthropological research journals giving readers the opportunity to look at the situation from a different angle. Hopefully the paper has created harmony between literary novels and anthropological researches as both reflect on how the society fictions and how the people are the main parts of it. The aim of fusing both literature and anthropological facts throughout was to go in-depth into the issue. It aims to use the given research and stories to highlight the people within the refugee crisis rather than the issue itself.

## Citations and Reference

### INTRODUCTION:

“A visual guide to 75 years of major refugee crises around the world”, *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/historical-migrant-crisis/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

Amnesty International, “The World Refugees in Numbers”, Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

Benedictus. Leo, “A brief history of the passport: From a royal letter to a microchip”, *The Guardian*, 17th Nov. 2006. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2006/nov/17/travelnews>. Accessed on 7 Nov. 2020.

History.com Editors, “Ethnic Cleansing”, *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 10 Jun. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/topics/holocaust/ethnic-cleansing>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

“REFUGEE” NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, Resource Library, Encyclopaedic entry, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/refugee/>. Accessed on 31 Jan. 2020.

“Rohingya Crisis” HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH- <https://www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya-crisis>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

“Rohinygya Crisis”- UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

Salehyan, Idean. “Refugee Flows and the Spread of Civil War”, Department of Political Science, University of California. Retrieved from:

<https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/27705479-56a7-4545-acdc-fc412fe4de2e.pdf>.

Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Refugee*, Encyclopædia Britannica. 7 Jan. 2020,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/refugee>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2020.

UNHCR- Figure at a Glance. <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>. Accessed on

31 Jan. 2020.

United Nations, “Refugees”, *Global Issues*, Retrieved from:

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/>. Accessed on 7 Sep. 2020.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Harrell-Bond, B. E., and E. Voutira. “Anthropology and the Study of Refugees.”

*Anthropology Today*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1992, pp. 6–10. JSTOR,

[www.jstor.org/stable/2783530](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2783530). Accessed 9 Aug. 2020.

LEUDAR, IVAN, et al. “Hostility Themes in Media, Community and Refugee Narratives.”

*Discourse & Society*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2008, pp. 187–221. JSTOR,

[www.jstor.org/stable/42889189](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42889189). Accessed 9 Aug. 2020.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1979.

Sim, Ryan. “Into the Mind of the Refugee: Unpacking Modern Refugee Mental Health.”

*Harvard International Review*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2016, pp. 46–48. JSTOR,

[www.jstor.org/stable/26445618](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26445618). Accessed 9 Aug. 2020.

Stein, Barry N. “The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study.” *The*

*International Migration Review*, vol. 15, no. 1/2, 1981, pp. 320–330. JSTOR,

[www.jstor.org/stable/2545346](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2545346). Accessed 9 Aug. 2020.



## **CHAPTER -1:**

Anthony, Constance G. "Africa's Refugee Crisis: State Building in Historical Perspective." *The International Migration Review*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1991, pp. 574–591. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2546761](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2546761). Accessed 17 Feb. 2020.

Burt, Stephanie. LITERARY STYLE AND THE LESSONS OF MEMOIR, *The New Yorker*, 26 Jul. 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/literary-style-and-the-lessons-of-memoir>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2020.

Dau, John Bul, and Michael S. Sweeney. *God grew tired of us*. National Geographic Books, 2007.

"Literary Terms." *Literary Terms*. 1 June 2015. Web. 3 Nov. 2016. <https://literaryterms.net/>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2020.

Manger, Leif. "Reflections on War and State and the Sudan." *State, Sovereignty, War: Civil Violence in Emerging Global Realities*, edited by Bruce Kapferer, 1st ed., Berghahn Books, 2009, pp. 75–88. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qcn6z.9](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qcn6z.9). Accessed 17 Feb. 2020.

Stein, Barry N. "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study." *The International Migration Review*, vol. 15, no. 1/2, 1981, pp. 320–330. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2545346](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2545346). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

Turkon, David, and Ann Wheat. "SETTLING SUDANESE REFUGEES IN THE AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM." *Practicing Anthropology*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2006, pp. 31–34. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/24781659](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24781659). Accessed 19 Feb. 2020.

## **CHAPTER-2:**

Biehl, Kristen Sarah. "Governing through Uncertainty: Experiences of Being a Refugee in Turkey as a Country for Temporary Asylum." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2015, pp. 57–75., [www.jstor.org/stable/24718358](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24718358). Accessed 7 Sept. 2020

Burgess, Anthony. "Novel", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 Nov. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/novel>. Accessed on 13 Mar. 2020.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 2008.

"Greece condemned over ill-treatment of refugees held on ship", *ALJAZEERA*, 11 Mar. 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/greece-condemned-ill-treatment-refugees-held-ship-200311075441360.html?fbclid=IwAR1p9IJbLy4eKZfbun1GRfgg3V83tNHeGlxRnwb-fgeJmegW6u8JIyU9Fag>. Accessed on 14 Mar. 2020.

Haldrup, Michael, et al. "Practical Orientalism: Bodies, Everyday Life and the Construction of Otherness." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 88, no. 2, 2006, pp. 173–184. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3878386](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3878386). Accessed 12 Mar. 2020.

Hangartner, Dominik, et al. "Does exposure to the refugee crisis make natives more hostile?." *American Political Science Review*, vol.113, no.2, 2019, pp. 442-455.

Jensen, Sune Qvotrup. "Othering, identity formation and agency." *Qualitative studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 63-78.

Kidd, David Comer, and Emanuele Castano. "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind." *Science*, vol. 342, no. 6156, 2013, pp. 377–380., [www.jstor.org/stable/42619922](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42619922). Accessed 11 Mar. 2020.

Lefteri, Christy. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, London: Zaffre, 2019.

MEE Staff, "They showed us no mercy': Greek border forces accused of stripping, beating refugees, *MIDDLE EAST EYE*, 6 Mar. 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/they-showed-us-no-mercy-greek-security-forces-accused-stripping-beating-refugees?fbclid=IwAR2CCpj053qwfXSPEQovZMceJSGEJkcpP3QwFp4YuJmE5QNGsF8uzLa54wE>. Accessed on 14 Mar. 2020.

Pope, Paul James. "CONSTRUCTING THE REFUGEE AS VILLAIN: An Analysis of Syrian Refugee Policy Narratives Used to Justify a State of Exception." *World Affairs*, vol. 180, no. 3, 2017, pp. 53–71. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/26386898](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26386898). Accessed 12 Mar. 2020.

Stein, Barry N. "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study." *The International Migration Review*, vol. 15, no. 1/2, 1981, pp. 320–330. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2545346](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2545346). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

Taylor, J. Edward, et al. "Economic Impact of Refugees." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 113, no. 27, 2016, pp. 7449–7453. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/26470706](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26470706). Accessed 7 Sept. 2020.

Tegla, Emanuela. "WAR, LOSS, AND ALIENATION: THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO."

Wallace, Rebecca. "Contextualizing the crisis: The framing of Syrian refugees in Canadian print media." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, vol.51, no.2, 2018, pp. 207-231

### **CHAPTER-3:**

Alter, Alexandra. "Global Migration Meets Magic in Mohsin Hamid's Timely Novel", *The New York Times*, 7 Mar. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/07/arts/exit-west-mohsin-hamid-refugee-.html>. Accessed on 30 Mar. 2020.

Brotman, Shari, and Edward Ou Jin Lee. "EXPLORING GENDER AND SEXUALITY THROUGH THE LENS OF INTERSECTIONALITY: Sexual Minority Refugees in Canada." *Canadian Social Work Review / Revue Canadienne De Service Social*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2011, pp. 151–156. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41658841](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41658841). Accessed 31 Mar. 2020.

DE LA CAMPA, ROMÁN. "Magical Realism and World Literature: A Genre for the Times?" *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1999, pp. 205–219. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/27763542](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27763542). Accessed 29 Mar. 2020.

Jensen, Sune Qvotrup. "Othering, identity formation and agency." *Qualitative studies*, vol. 2, no.2, 2011, pp. 63-78.

Langdon, Nicola. "Empathy and othering: Framing Syria's refugee crisis in the british press." *Critical perspectives on migration in the twenty-first century*, 2018, pp. 91-111.

Stein, Barry N. "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study." *The International Migration Review*, vol. 15, no. 1/2, 1981, pp. 320–330. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2545346](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2545346). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Fantasy", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 Jan. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/fantasy-narrative-genre>. Accessed on 30 Mar. 2020.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Magic realism”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 16 Sep. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/magic-realism>. Accessed on 30 Mar. 2020.

Tolentino, Jia. “A Novel About Refugees That Feels Instantly Canonical”, *The New Yorker*, 10 Mar. 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/jia-tolentino/a-novel-about-refugees-that-feels-instantly-canonical>. Accessed 30 Mar. 2020.

#### **CHAPTER-4**

"Anthropology." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anthropology>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2020.

Bonini Baldini, Simona. “Narrative Capability: Self-Recognition and Mutual Recognition in Refugees' Storytelling.” *Journal of Information Policy*, vol. 9, 2019, pp. 132–147. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jinfopoli.9.2019.0132](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jinfopoli.9.2019.0132). Accessed 9 July 2020.

Boudreau, McDaniel, Sprout & Turgeon. *Border*, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/border/>. Accessed on 8 Jul. 2020.

Dau, John Bul, and Michael S. Sweeney. *God Grew Tired of Us*. National Geographic Books, 2007.

“Evolving Models of Urban Refugee Responses.” *Rethinking Coordination of Services to Refugees in Urban Areas: Managing the Crisis in Jordan and Lebanon*, by Shelly Culbertson et al., RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif., 2016, pp. 11–26. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1c2crxs.9](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1c2crxs.9). Accessed 9 July 2020.

- Malkki, Liisa H. "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1996, pp. 377–404. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/656300](http://www.jstor.org/stable/656300). Accessed 9 July 2020.
- Miller, David. "Selecting Refugees." *The Political Philosophy of Refuge*, edited by David Miller and Christine Straehle, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 97–113.
- Paul, Ruma. & Das, Krishna. "As other doors close, some Rohingya cling to hope of resettlement", *REUTERS*, 21 Aug. 2020, <https://in.reuters.com/article/myanmar-rohingya-bangladesh-idINKBN25H0DL>. Accessed on 13 Sep. 2020.
- Pupavac, Vanessa. "Refugee Advocacy, Traumatic Representations and Political Disenchantment." *Government and Opposition*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2008, pp. 270–292. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/44484135](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44484135). Accessed 9 July 2020.
- Ralph W. Nicholas, Suzanne L. Hanchett and Others. "Anthropology", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 Apr. 2020. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology>. Accessed on 18 Sep. 2020.
- Van Houtum, Henk, and Ton Van Naerssen. "Bordering, ordering and othering." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, vol. 93, no. 2, pp. 125-136, 2002.