



The Anonymous Identity of Forced Migrants: A Post-Colonial Study

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ABSTRACT

Colonialism invades the Third World countries, physically and psychologically. This article exposes but sample of the physical and psychological consequences of colonialism. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) by the British novelist, Christy Lefteri is a typical novel to diagnose the harsh circumstances of individuals within and after the disaster. Since it depicts characters from Asian countries, it would be a best representative for all Asian people who suffer colonialism. Migration toward anonymity is the mere option for the colonized people. Aftermath, they experience displacement, trauma, and the loss of identity.

Keywords: *anonymity, displacement, identity, migration, postcolonialism, trauma.*

The logo for the International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH) is a large, stylized graphic. It features a central figure that resembles a person or a flame, composed of several overlapping, curved shapes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange. This central figure is set against a background of a large, light green circle. Below the graphic, the acronym 'IJRSSH' is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

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INTRODUCTION

Under the chaos of the rapid changes, invasions, migrations, poverty, degradations, persecution, and many other aspects concerning the fixity of identity during 20th and 21st century; modern man becomes torn between national and international identity. Identity is a central notion and an abroad concept comprises many spiritual aspects that attributed to human beings; politically, socially, historically, culturally, and psychologically. Richard Jenkins (1996:3-5), in his book *Social Identity*, illuminates the concept of identity as the “thresholds of individual lives”. He resumes that identity is “the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities”. Then, he comments on the two previous explanations of identity by saying that “identification seems to *matter*, in everyday life and in sociology”.

In *Social Identifications*, Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams (1988:2) identify identity as “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others”. In ‘Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics’ by Alexander Wendt (1992:397), the author describes identity as “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and

expectations about self”. Francis Deng (1995:1) labels that people are defined depending on “race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture”. While William Bloom (1990:52) regards it as “a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols - have internalized the symbols of the nation”. The prior illustrations concerning identity prove that nearly most writers in the social, political, and psychological field reach agreement on the core of identity. The concept of identity is renewed and the post-modern sense of it does not differ from that of the eighteenth century when the world’s trend and ideology was the colonialism and fragmentation (Hobsbawm 1990:3).

Nations are what give particular members their identity. So, migrant individuals seek Nations to fulfill the sense of belonging and identification. Individuals’ “consciousness of belonging” and patriotism are regarded the main criteria to create a Nation which are mainly guided by the motive of identity fulfillment. What derives those individuals to establish their own Nation even if in an “Isle” is “the will to be one” who is defined as a member of a particular Nation (Hobsbawm 1990:8). Nationalism is highly associated with identity and belonging to “a place, a people, a heritage”. It what inspires people to resist

exile for it is “a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation”. The establishment of nationalism needs a collection of joint codes like, “founding fathers, basic, quasi-religious texts, rhetoric of belonging, historical and geographical landmarks, official enemies and heroes” which associate “habits”, inhabitants, and “inhabitation” (Said 2000:182-183). Nationalism needs a sense of affiliation to group, history and land. Nationalism gives the population their mobilized identity in a “sort of collective objective of recognition” (Hobsbawm 1990:10).

For each person, the process of unifying past, present, and future is certainly a problematic task which provides him/her with the sense of confidence and unity. It is a continuous journey which starts from the moment of one’s birth and lasts infinitely. This process is not a stable one. It varies from time to time, from place to place, and from person to another due to the one’s circumstances, nation, age, gender, etc. it is a “baseline sorting that is fundamental to the organization of the human world” (Jenkins 1996:13), while Rogers Brubaker and Fredrick Cooper (2000:2) conclude that “[Identity] . . . is too ambiguous, too torn between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist

qualifiers, to be of any further use to sociology”. Erik Erikson (1968:38) comments on the significance of identity by saying, “in the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity”.

Identity can be classified to many categories. The most significant ones are: psychological, cultural, social, ethnic, national, and international identities. Psychologically, identity is a collective of self- awareness, self- reflection, self- esteem, self- denial, memories, and experiences. It is the total of how one conceives and perceives. It is how person sees him/herself and how the other see them. According to Erikson (1968:22) “identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation... taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself... others judge him in comparison to themselves”. Cultural and social identity is interfered and nipped up. They squeeze the sense of being attached to a certain community by the virtue of collective norms, habits, traditions, folklore, language, religion, ethnicity, and even food. Normally, when people share all these cultural and social components, they will be culturally and socially identified and belonged. Social identity looks like a distinguished culture which refers to a distinguished society. Culture

knits the social fabric for any society. In turn, social identity leads man to inspect and enquire, “who I am/we are in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations” (Wendt 1994:395). National identity refers to the one’s sense of belonging and the subjective feeling toward a nation. Ethnic and national identity are confused. They look like two faces for the same coin. Ethnicity and nationalism are raised from distinctive “memories, culture, and a sense of solidarity”. From the mentioned elements, the “political movements” are raised. These movements form the fence and power to shield the nation and identity (Joireman 2003:9-10). National identity encompasses all the mentioned categories. It looks like an umbrella or a tent which protects its owner. It covers history, culture, norms, rights, language, and many other uncountable notions. Hence, every ethnic group has: nationality like Iraqi or British, “myth of common ancestry”, “common culture”, “a link with geographical homeland”, and “a sense of common... solidarity” within the population (Hutchinson and Smith 1994:9). While international identity transcends the national one. It is across boundaries identity. At the same time, it does not erect the national one entirely but creates a mixing individual, in-between

one. It is a matter of social, cultural, and psychological sentiment. If an individual like a migrant finds his needs and rights are highlighted and fulfilled, he will recognize the identifications and exclude the differences. Generating the sense of “in-group” will conduct to “a person's own sense of self-worth” (Arrow and Sundberg 2004:56-58). The person will be a citizen of the humanity more than a citizen of his native nation which is the highest sort of citizenship.

MIGRATION TOWARDS UNCERTAINTY

Deciding migration is a troubled and a challenging decision. People leave their home, nation, history, culture, relatives, and whatever things that attach them with their prior life to another setting which is normally odd for them. They are either forced or willingly migrate. Generally, individuals migrate seeking peace, dignity, and better living. Homi Bhabha comments in *Nation and Narration* (1990:1) that “nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye”.

The fundamental cause for forced individuals’ migration along periods is the military invasions. These invasions which smash citizens and their ultimate properties, derive them into scattering entities. Those citizens within and after

invasions become actual refugees whether in or outside their home. They are physically and psychologically refugees (Tyson 2006:421). The uncertainty of migration stems in the difficulties of coping with the new culture. Nearly all the philosophers and theorists like Edward Said, Albert Memmi, Bhabha, and other; agree that acquiring a new culture is a dynamic process but at the same time it derives migrant into a confused and distressed person. Memmi in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (2003:179) mentions that “there will be the ups and downs of all men..., but at least he will be a whole and free man”.

Unfortunately, Asian people suffer from invasions for a long time. They are “internal refugees”, just like Palestinians, Iraqis, Libyans, Syrian, and many other Asian people (Akash and Forche 2003:xvii). Subsequently, Vietnamese and Syrians are not exception. They are obliged to squander among countries looking for peace and certainty. Despite the uncertainty outside the original Nation, the post-modern man is a cosmopolitan citizen and he may manage the obstacles of place and time. The world of the 21st century is ecumenical world. It is the world of the globalization. The Globalization reduces the boundaries and distances among diverse nationalities. Various languages, cultures, histories,

religions, and whatever dissimilar aspects are no longer problems, “through globalization, the internet, multinational financial capital, migration, and increasing awareness about Humanity’s collective experience” (Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:7). Post-modern man erects himself from his original nationality and chooses migration because the uncertainty within his own nation is wider than the international one. No doubt, overcoming the uncertainty has many obstacles like; discrimination, oppression, prejudice, and persecution that the original communities experience over the foreign groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Beekeeper of Aleppo (2019) by Christy Lefteri is just sequel novel for the long trial of literary works which investigate the theme of Identity, dichotomy, nationality, migration, nativism, diaspora, and their consequences on human beings. The novel deals with people who are wavering between national and international identity due to colonialism during the age of post-modernity. Such category of literary work is known as “diasporic literature” or “migration literature” (Cuddon 2013:201). The British novelist, Lefteri, diagnoses the stories of migrants, refugees, and exiles. Early-modern English literature witnesses the publication of many poems, novels,

and dramas; which carry the same moral lesson of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. *Great Expectation* (1861) by Charles Dickens depicts an ambitious orphan boy who aspires immigration to London to fulfill his dreams on becoming a new Pip to suit his beloved and for self-development; socially, culturally, and educationally. As a social critic, Dickens presents a torn and a hybrid character between his real identity and the new one (Amigoni 2020).

Modern literature is characterized by “cultural and political turmoil” which consequently leads to chaos and loss of identity (Surette 1993:280). The distorted identity can be implicitly, within the nation, and even within ones’ own home. The psychological suffering usually prolongs to overcome the crisis of identity. It even can be derived to be a trauma. T. S. Eliot, the American born, English poet, and the representative of modern poetry, investigates identity from another perspective, the psychological one, which is one of the characteristics of the modern man. In T. S. Eliot’s poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1911), Prufrock is depicted as a hesitant character. He does not know ‘Who is he?’, he is a “psychological refugee”, just like the colonized and the diasporic people under colonialism and post-colonialism (Tyson 421). The hesitation and loss are very obvious in the next two lines: “No! I am

not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;/Am an attendant lord, one that will do”, (Eliot 1976:7). The protagonist is emotionally confused about his real identity. His illusion leads him to allude to prince ‘Hamlet’. He is torn between his real identity and delusive one. This dichotomy between the two identities of Prufrock is but a result of class distinction and the community of bourgeoisie which looks like a copy of colonial’s community. Both make a distance between themselves and other.

Post-modern literature mainly emerges after the World War II and around 1960s. It often thematizes both historical and political issues just like the modern one but with different intention. The authors of this era have vigorous “political tendencies”, like Kurt Vonnegut, Kathy Acker, and John Barth (Hutcheon 1988:202-03). The post-modern collection of *Children of Violence* (1952-1969) is a sequence of five novels by the British author, Doris Lessing, which is set in Zimbabwe, the British colony in south Africa. Lessing follows the characters of Martha Quest from Africa to England. The author highlights the issues of racism, migration, and cultural differences. She comments, that the “Children of Violence a Bildungsroman... the story of a young person’s development and education in society” (Whittaker 1988:35). *Small Island*

(2004) is a novel by the English author Andrea Levy which tackles the Caribbean migration, post-war via characters of a couple “who migrate from Jamaica to London in 1948”. Levy narrates the story by “four different perspectives”. This experimental style of narration depicts the fragmentation and unauthenticity of the characters due to imperialistic power on both, the English and the migrant characters (Lowe 2018).

Ultimately, the intentions behind the narrative of migration are to expose “the devastation wrought by current migrations...to exceed the capacities of narrative fiction and to demand a sober engagement with reality”. Writings of the twenty-first century “about asylum seekers and refugees” act as a substitution to “the arithmetic abstractions of mass politic”. They have the ability to be sensed and touched as a living “histories from the precarious movements” (O’Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:259).

OBJECTIVES

The current study aims to diagnose the following:

- a. The physical and psychological effects of colonialism and post-colonialism.
- b. Find whether the civilians manage to overcome these terrible consequences or not.

- c. Whether migration is the end or the beginning.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial is one of the most significant and modern approaches for literary studies (Bressler 2015:199-200). According to Ann B. Dobbie (2011:205), colonialism is “the subjection of one population to another. It is most clearly seen in physical conquest, but in its more subtle forms, it involves political, economic, and cultural domination”.

postcolonial theory adopts set of issues that have a direct contact with human’s identity, no matter whether they are literary or nonliterary disciplines. It goes beyond to follow “distinct groups of people” to examine how those people transcend their original nations, cultures, traditions, norms, and even boundaries to create a new identity, to acquire a new culture, and to locate a home in an alien home. These issues encompass psychology, economy, sociology, ideology, politic, and feminist issues. In the core of its interest is “cultural differences” (Tyson 2006:398).

Anne Clintock in *Imperial Leather* (1995:9) gives postcolonialism a very precise description. She mentions that “POSTCOLONIALISM, invites you through a slightly larger door ‘than

COLONIALISM' into the next stage of history, after which you emerge, fully erect, into the brightly lit and noisy HYBRID STATE". Taking into consideration Clintock's description, postcolonial theory widens the horizon of colonized people's insight and gives them a new perspective for their new life, where they are erected and confused by hybridity, but at any rate, they resist and 'emerge' in such brutal circumstances.

Conceptual Framework

Postcolonial theory covers a wide range of terminologies for textual analysis. For analysis and finding, this study follows the concepts of displacement and trauma. Displacement is a vital concept in the field of post-colonial and post-modern literature. It denotes to the conditions of exclusion from authentic region. It can be "voluntary or involuntary". Almost, it is a reflection of colonialism, subsequent, its forms come to be as following: "migration, desertion, exile, diaspora, exodus, eviction, banishment, travel..., imprisonment, and escape" (Blistein 2016).

The authors of postcolonial literature who are mainly displaced writers are widely interested in investigating the "crisis of identity" which comes to be an aftermath of "colonialism and modernism", as a tool to "reclaim their cultural identity". Their texts are best representative for the "painful stories of

their existentially and culturally alienated" individuals. Perpetually, man is destined to be a displaced creature since he has been displaced from his paradise, his mother's womb, the most protective place. Ironically, the same paradise is conspired on its inhabitants to be the source for their eternal discomfort. Colonialism derives the "modern man into... split subject" (Nayyar 2017).

Although displacement mostly connects with the last three centuries, "it has deep-rooted history with various layers of complex relation among power, position and human psyche". It can be classified into psychological, territorial, and social. The most effective one is the psychological for its rich reflection on the life of the displaced people. Displacement covers a long chain of consequences. Psychologically, individuals who were x-colonized mostly experience loss, trauma, alienation, distress, disorientation, and nostalgic remembrance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002:9). All these bitter sentiments are but silent symptoms for displacement. In the process of nostalgic remembrance, the migrant juxtaposes his home nation with the host one in whatever occasion, like market, food, traditions, life-style, rituals, and so on. Eventually, this ambivalent experience is deepened the crisis of identity.

Territorial or physical displacement obliges people to depart their home toward a foreign one, when the motherland turns to be a mere place for death, horror, and oppression, then, displacement is turned to be the turning point to save life, dignity, and honor. Social displacement is defined as social isolation, the less communication and interaction with social groups, “marginalized by the dominant... culture” and a “victim of placelessness in one guise or another” (Waugh 1989:3; Casey 1993:XIV). Social isolation will float on the surface of one’s identity and then on one’s psyche which leads to “a decrease in” his “well-being” (Hall 2021).

War brings severe wounds to the inhabitants of the zone where it takes place, physically and psychologically. Fanon impels the postcolonial critics to inspect the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. Hence, trauma is one of wars’ lacerations. The trauma as a consequence of wars is initially debated in the influential work of Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2013:267). Fanon (1986:14) offers the “massive psych existential complex” as a result of colonialism. Since that time, trauma enters the postcolonial discourse and becomes one of the major themes in postcolonial literature.

As a psychological term, trauma is a “psychic” illness, distress, or rupture. It comes to be as a result of “emotional shock” like the loss of son, wife, husband, brother, friend, ... etc (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2013:267). It is “a wound to the person’s self-concept and stability, a sudden loss of control over external and internal reality, with consequences that affect the whole organism. Trauma may be acute or cumulative” (Fromm 2012:55-56).

THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO’S PRELIMINARY NOTES AND SYNOPSIS

Christi Lefteri (1980), the daughter of Greek Cypriot refugees who left their nation in 1974, after the Turkish invasion to initiate a new reconstruction for their lives (Lefteri 4). They have been traumatized by the virtue of war, “I lived in the shadow of that war and the shadow of that trauma”, Lefteri says (Evangelista and Piccolo 2020). Moreover, these conditions were enthused her to be a writer of diasporic issues. She even dedicated her first novel to her mother and the second one to her father because she found them as the inspiration behind being a writer and assistant for refugees. Lefteri and her parents acted as a testimony of trauma for the history of displaced people (Nunziata 2020).

The Beekeeper of Aleppo (2019) is a fictional novel but at the same time, it is inspired from real stories of the refugees. It is centered on the stories of migrants, especially Nuri and Afra, the protagonists of the novel who have a stable and warm home with their son, Sami. They are a Syrian couple who leave their home in Syria, Aleppo, with unspeakable loss seeking asylum to the United Kingdom, across Turkey, Greece, and Europe. They flee Aleppo after hard disturbing and hazardous circumstances of the civil war and occupation of the murderous regime who holds its grasp on Aleppo in 2010. Before the disaster, they live a safe and devoted life with the companion of their son, bees, paintings, and friends. After the war, the light of their life fades and they find no solution but finding the way to the UK after an extremely perilous and long journey (Fitzgerald 2019).

Mustafa is Nuri's cousin, best friend, and the one who tutors him the beekeeping, "It was my cousin Mustafa who introduced me to beekeeping" (Lefteri 2019:13). Mustafa finds his way to UK before Nuri and still encourages the latter to manage his way to the same country. Mohammed is the lost boy nearly the same age of Sami who meets Nuri during their way to get asylum. Later, Nuri becomes the guardian of both Afra and Mohammed. Unexpectedly, Mohammed is but in the

mind of Nuri. As a traumatized character, Nuri lives with Mohammed in details. So, even the readers find Mohammed as a real character till the end of the narrative.

Lefteri concentrates her effort in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* on the effects of wars, psychologically and physically, and how they destroy homes and souls. She follows the inner life of her characters. Nuri and Afra suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. They experience horror and oppressive violence in Aleppo and through their harsh journey to UK across the stormy sea. They choose the uncertainty to save at least what remains from their souls after losing the son, the home, and the career.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Pitfall of Place

The modern man is psychologically and physically trapped due to the competition for gaining power, domination, commerce, and economy. Colonialism is just a tool to win the competition. The populations of the Third World are victimized and treated as a fuel for the military troops of colonialism. The consequences of being fuel is; famine, poverty, loss, death, trauma, and fragmentation. The interaction among these consequences increases the richness of the colonizeds' dilemma.

One of the most important legacies of modernism, colonialism, and postcolonialism is displacement. It refers

to the plight of place, home, culture, language, and even weather. When the colonized individuals are displaced and erected from their nations, they no longer belong to a culture or place. They find themselves “arrested in psychological limbo” due to the “cultural displacement” (Tyson 2006:421). Then, displacement comprises “a psychological mechanism and a physical experience”. The expanded migration of the people around the world and the inheritances of this migration lead to violence, hatred, and sometimes to expectation (O’Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:239). The great expectations are mostly connected with freedom. Sometimes, migration is the starting point for freedom and displacement is one of its faces.

Respecting the regional displacement or the “physical Experience”, Lefteri depicts a variety of settings to suit the psychological displacement. She converts the characters among Aleppo, Morocco, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Istanbul, Aegean Sea, Athens, Cyprus, different European countries, and finally UK, in a haphazard way. In one hand, the multi-settings reflect the uncertainty and chaos inside the characters, while in another, the multi-settings give the migrants varieties of entrance. Lefteri gives the readers a chance to feed their imagination and live the displacement with the characters of the

novel while they follow the map of the unexamined settings. She uses the physical location to achieve the psychological dislocation.

Mustafa writes a letter to Nuri and advises him, “leave this place, Nuri, it is no longer home. Aleppo is now like the dead body of a loved one, it has no life, no soul, it is full of rotting blood” and “the houses were empty or home to the dead” (Lefteri 30-33). So, when home becomes the place for danger, threat, and death, “displacement is what returns us to ourselves . . . to our true place or to our place in truth” (Tcherepashenets 2008:33). In this case, territorial displacement is not an end, in contrary, it is a mean for further ends. The stories of the migrants in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* accumulates the experience of the physical displacement. In an invisible way, it unites its “people from so many parts of the world” who represent the non-fictional individuals in such alien world (Lefteri 2019:110).

In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, the crisis of psychological displacement is overwhelmed Nuri, Afra, Mustafa, in addition to many migrants who meet Nuri through their journey to the UK. All are forced to leave their nations. It is not a matter of land, but of original roots which associate people with a certain home. After Sami’s death, “Afra wouldn’t leave” the place where Sami gets birth, brings up,

walks, chatters, runs, laughs, and cries (30). She is in a pitfall between the place which once was a paradise and the place which now is a hell. The sense of belonging and attachment with her home prohibits her from departure despite the sever danger of the war. Nevertheless, human beings are impulsively fragile and mortal like a shell. So, she does not resist after the situation when Nuri about to lose his life (Osborne 2020). Before Afra and Nuri, Mustafa departs Aleppo “When the bees died”, the only consolidation after Firas’ death, Mustafa’s son (Lefteri 2019:20). The devastation of the bees’ colonies reflects the internal and external destruction of all the characters who are typical to almost migrants. The recurrent examples about the unavoidable loss of home and identity and the decision of fulfilling home even if in abroad propose the humans’ intensive need for home because they are “vulnerable”. Establishing home does not mean to be secure forever, since the opportunity of displacement is present (O’Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:244).

Rooting off from Aleppo has severe consequences on the characters, especially Afra and Nuri. Afra in abroad is fragmented and Nuri is “a broken man” (Lefteri 2019:26). Afra being accustomed with meaningless dreams, “I had a night of scattered dreams. They were broken. My

dreams were everywhere” while Nuri being accustomed with “only dream of murder now, always the same dream” (7). Their dreams or it is better to say their nightmares thematize displacement in the novel and in reality. The opposition between the protection of the place and the contents of their nightmares interpret their horror, misery, and insecure from both, the present and the future. Even if they accept the rooting off from Aleppo but they still wear the gown of despair and anxiety. They cannot get interest in the protection of the place because affectionately, they are still attached with their home.

After the blindness of Afra, Nuri can gift her colored pencils and papers from a volunteer in the refugees’ camp. The first thing he asks her to draw is “the view from our house” and he comments on her drawing by saying “following each line as if it were a path” (139). The paint of Afra echoes Nuri’s sense of displacement. So, he interprets her lines as “a path” and hopes these lines lead him to their home. He hopes it to be real lines. Nuri’s psychological displacement derives him to submit to his daydream and fantasy. Whatever Afra paints, he connects with their home, not only their privet home, but almost things attributed to Aleppo like; “landscape”, “buildings”, “flowers”, and “streets” (139). The colors, papers, and painting unify Nuri’s and Afra’s dreams in

catching home again even if in their fantasy. They find harbor and shelter in these lines which may heal their psychological wounds. Nuri claims that “she had come back to life, in fragments” denoting to Afra (48). The word “fragments” has a fundamental meaning with regard to the experience of displacement. The narrative reflects “the unequal distribution of insecurity” in the age of post-modernism (O’Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:239).

Nuri goes back and forth in his memories to adjust the splitting from his home and Aleppo which act as a paradise for him in particular and for other migrants in general. He much depends on the past to nourish his present and future since he is cut off from his place to be physically and mentally unhomed. Then, Nuri drowns in his memories, “the memory came back to me”, “the house”, “old mahogany furniture”, and “there were photographs” (Lefteri 2019:113). In another occasion he resumes, “I ran through the memory three times in my mind, repeating... rewinding and replaying a videotape” (135). Whatever situation faces Nuri, it regresses him back to his earlier life. One night, while he comes back from his meditative tour around the camp, he watches cluster of migrants while they watch TV. So, the memories reemerge and transform him to his ghostly city, “it reminds me that back

home there is no one watching TV in their living room... everything that’s been destroyed” (89). Nuri suffers multi-problems since he is displaced from Aleppo where Sami, Mustafa, bees, nature, and culture exist. He suffers inevitably “nostalgic remembrance” and “juxtaposition” between the motherlands and the host one. This ambivalent meditation, regression, alienation, and allusion may give birth to the new identity (Nayyar 2017). As William Black (1794:28) writes in his album “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” that “Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence”. So, the scene of “watching TV” juxtaposes the past same scene in Aleppo and this may lead to agony (Lefteri 2019:89). Nevertheless, by the time, Nuri and the other migrants may find interest consciously or unconsciously in the guest country through the process of hybridity or mimicry to overcome the difficulties of displacement.

Nuri previously lives in an agricultural city, filled with fertility, energy, warm, purity, and security. After he flees it, he finds all the places as odd ones. He does not have a sense of belonging to neither. So, he interacts with the crowded places as if there is no one, only his past memories. This “contraries”

may heal Nuri's injuries. He describes the B&B camp in the UK as "empty. There is no movement, no sound... no people. In the shops, in the homes, on the streets ... only emptiness... no life in this place. Life is as useless as dust. Nothing can grow here" (95). Even the smoke, the polluted material, now, for him is a fertile memory "seeing the smoke rising into the morning sky, I remembered Mustafa" where he works with bees (96). The attachment with Aleppo and the reluctance with the current place increase the depth of the anonymous identity which may reconcile and identify in future.

Place, displacement, and language are highly interacted in an ambivalent way. According to Akram Al Deek (2016:34), linguistic displacement which is experienced by migrants is "concerned with acquired and required languages and tongues". He refers to the "tension" among needs, demands, and the mother tongues which the migrants can adjust only "through participation in different linguistic communities" (O'Gorman and Eaglestone 2019:246). Along the narrative of the novel, Nuri complains the problematic experience of the language. He witnesses two men "trying to communicate" (Lefteri 2019:57), in another place "variations of Arabic" (110), and a group of people "shouting in a language" he "didn't understand" (107).

The selection of Nuri's words stimulates the reader to stop and meditate the calamity of the linguistic displacement. The migrants want to speak, express, narrate, complain, and communicate, but unfortunately, they find themselves trapped and victimized due to the ideology and hegemony of colonialism. In many occasions, Lefteri concentrates on the "language barriers" due to its significance (243). It derives the displaced people into powerless and futile ones since they lose the faculty of communication. She suggests through her narrative that the displaced people may find consolidation in another things than language to compensate the lack of identity in an international environment like the "Arabic music" (77).

Furthermore, physical, psychological, and linguistic displacement; the migrants suffer the cultural displacement. The migrant who originally x-colonized, suddenly finds him/herself without belonging or identity. The battle between his own culture and the new one derives him to fit to neither and "being culturally displaced" (Dobie 2011:359). This kind of conflict is raised by Bhabha as "unhomeliness" (Tyson 2006:421). In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri comments on the English culture and directly expresses his cultural displacement. He declares, "I don't like their queues, their

order, their neat little gardens and... porches” (Lefteri 2019:89). The clash between his culture and the current one makes him bother even from the positive situation. Nuri seems nostalgic to Aleppo where he brings up, meets Mustafa and Afra, loves them, marries, gifted with Sami, and many other infinite ties which give him the sense of identity. Despite the fact that the current country bestows him with safety, shelter, and freedom; displacement derives Nuri into ungrateful man. He comments on the living of English people “that these people have never seen war” (89). He cannot find rest despite all the profits he gains. He still compares his previous life with the new one and still complains from the conditions which bring him here as a diasporic man. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1993:188) comments on such situation that Nuri in, “dislocation and displacement... are a consequence of imperialism”.

In an occasion, Nuri finds himself very embarrassed from over politeness of a British woman while he stands in a queue. She asks him not to take her place and thanks him in advance, “would you mind kindly moving out of my light, please? Thank you”, the British woman says (Lefteri 2019:89). According to the British culture, people “form a single line in a shop. It’s advisable to take your place in

the queue and not try to push your way to the front”. Nuri is astonished and at the same time choked from the gap between the two cultures, “It’s difficult getting used to British manners... I don’t like their queues, their order”, he says (89). Nuri as well as the other migrants seek “celebrating their uniqueness and refusing to deny their own backgrounds by blending in with the rest” (Dobie 2011:xix). They want to be themselves without any malformation or twisting out of their identity. But according to Lois Tyson (2006:422), the author of *Critical Theory Today*, living within two ambivalent cultures do not need to fight or struggle. In the contrary, it may create creative, exhilarating, and fruitful individuals who admire a hybrid culture in such a global world. If the migrant looks at the circumstances through these lenses, the lenses of globalization, he will welcome the contraries between the cultures and never revolts against either. Mustafa, Nuri’s cousin is typical to Tyson’s opinion regarding the migrant, the exiled, or the x-colonized. Within a short duration, Mustafa manages to transcend some barriers of cultural displacement, at least. In an email, he informs Nuri that he finds his way toward beekeeping in the UK. He even volunteers to “a beekeepers’ association” and he gets “some friends there” (Lefteri 2019:153).

The lacerations of the war

Forced migrants lack the sense of belonging and identity. Hence, the lack of belonging and identity can be the cause to inflict a trauma inside the colonized or x-colonized person which lead to fragmentation and distress. Such incidents are never healed and caused lasted bitter memories (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2013:267). Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* portrays extremely traumatic characters owing to the war in their country, Syria. Afra is a creative painter, a devoted mother, and a lovely wife "her laughter was gold once... I think she is disappearing." (Lefteri 2019:7). In unpredictable accident, Afra's eyes are transformed into "grey stones, sea stones" (7). Unfortunately, she misses her sight at the moment of her son's death while he plays in the garden of their home and his mother watches him from the window. A cursed explosion kills Sami and blinds Afra. She is being blind due to the over lighting of the explosion. Apparently, this is the logical interpretation for Afra's blindness, but there is an originality and a complement in the story.

Sigmund Freud reveals that within a human psyche, there is "unconscious dimensions" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1998, 220). These dimensions are what derived Afra to be blind. Unconsciously, her mind orders her

eyes not to see after Sami's death, because the last thing she sees is "Sami's eyes" (Lefteri 2019:162). After a long journey from Aleppo to the UK, the doctor of the B&B declares that "the blindness you are experiencing is the result of severe trauma" and it is not a physical one. She does not have any cause to be blind but her son's death. Afra being traumatized by this painful and unbearable experience, her excessive desire to see Sami alive conspires with her unconsciousness to conceal the function of her eyes as a trick "to cope" with the bitter experience (162). The disaster of child's departure is a recurrence in the mind of the parents which Freud calls "traumatic neurosis". Unconsciously, the "reenactment" of a bitter experience is repeated and renewed itself in the mind of the traumatized person (Caruth 1996:2). Now, Afra is prisoned in the darkness of her eyes, mind, and affections because she suffers a physical and psychological trauma like the other sufferers who react to the catastrophic events in some eccentric manners as an endeavor to bring the past "to light" (22). She is indulged in a silence and isolation even from Nuri for a long time as a device to purge her grief. Recently, she only complains from "nightmares", "I had a night of scattered dreams", she says (Lefteri 2019:7).

According to Fanon (1963:xix), the wildness of wars brings about the colonized to have a psychological illness, an alienation, fantasies, nightmares, and even “phantasmatic political identifications”. Afra responds to the death of her son, which is mainly a consequence of the war in Syria, firstly with fetishism and then with broken and fragmented dreams. She even has daydreams of “ghost... something not human” (Lefteri 2019:121). The blindness of Afra which is mainly a result of trauma and despair proves the profound effects of the wars on human beings “Afra was different before the war” (19). Thus, the narrative illustrates how the rupture of emotions rises such terrible psychological consequences inside her.

Apparently, Nuri is stronger than Afra and he is supposed to be her guidance in her physical and psychological darkness. He starts his narrative describing Afra “rolling Mohammed’s marble around in her fingers” (Lefteri 2019:7). From the first page of the novel, the readers being aware about the presence of Mohammed, the lost boy with seven years who meets Nuri in “Istanbul” (222). The readers may wonder how a boy with but seven years can migrate and pass many boundaries. After Sami’s death, Nuri becomes haunted with past memories of his son. Along the novel, he never stops talking about either

Sami or Mohammed. He does many transitions between the present and past to cure his inner vulnerability. To compensate the sense of fatherhood, Nuri intensively takes care of Mohammed, “I didn’t want to leave without Mohammed” (121). Nuri seeks a proximity for Sami since he finds the memories are insufficient to overcome the disaster. The disasters are accumulated on Nuri for the account that he cannot resist. Sami’s death, Afra’s blindness, Mustafa’s departure and the death of his son, the tragic end of the bees, and the destruction of Aleppo; are unbearable experiences which draw Nuri to the edge of insanity (Mikulencer and Shaver 2007:14).

Nuri is overwhelmed by all the painful experiences especially Sami. So, he responds to it “by absenting itself from direct experience of the event” (Balaev 2014:71). His mind refuses the confrontation of the reality. He finds the compensation of his son in Mohammed. Nuri misses Mohammed in Athens and he never neglects searching him “hoping to see Mohammed among them” (Lefteri 2019:199). When he misses the hope to find the boy, he writes him a letter with heartbreaking words. Then, he resumes, “I try not to think about Sami. But Mohammed?... I’m still waiting for him to find the letter” (9). Seemingly, whatever Nuri says about Mohammed along the

journey is but a trauma of Sami's departure. As Freud proposes that the traumatized characters revolt against the suffering of the event in "inexplicably persistent" (Caruth 1996:1). The fatal persistence of Nuri to the accident comes to be in the form of taking an imagined boy nearly about his son in age, appearance, and behavior. In the B&B, the doctor declares after some exchanging questions with Nuri and Afra, "I believe you are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder" (Lefteri 2019:220). This direct declaration proves the harshness of the wars which do not differentiate the child from the guilty. He does not only suffer the trauma of his son's death but also suffer all the violent experiences that he witnesses in Aleppo, "I only dream of murder now", he says (7). Nuri and his family are just victims in the hands of the politicians who lead the military invasions.

Ultimately, Nuri and Afra are severely traumatized by all the events they encounter especially the death of their son due to the unjustified battles inside their home which usurp their entire life. They find sleeping as an anchor to escape the reality "I didn't want to be awake in this world – my dreams were better than reality, and I think Afra felt the same" (212). Tortuously, the incident which causes people to be traumatized is repeated itself "to the unexpected reality". It is

inevitable and unavoidable to recurrence itself in the mind of the distressed persons. Nuri and Afra waver between the "*crisis of death*" and "*crisis of life*" (Caruth 1996:6-7). They cannot find rest because they swing between the past and the present, "fantasies and desires" which are "too bizarre" (Dobie 2011:55). They are physically alive but spiritually dead. Their minds are absent especially Nuri who follows his mental mysteries. Despite the fact that Afra is blind, she is more conscious than her husband who loses his mental insight and becomes absolutely blind concerning the imaginative story of Mohammed for a long period and the imaginative accident of the bomb in B&B camp (Osborne 2020).

Recovery from trauma needs fulfillment of "identity" and social communication especially when the traumatized people face an anonymous identity between national and international one (Ashmore, Jussim, and Wilder 2001:171). The undeniable fact is that the psychological and the mental "disorders" are extracted from wars (Fanon 1963:181). Nuri is completely lost but he never admits "I'm just having a bit of trouble sleeping" while Afra is aware to his and her reality "No... It's more than that", she replays (Lefteri 2019:163). The climax of Nuri's psychological ruin is in the scene when he sits with Mohammed and admits that "the

boy sitting next to me... is not Mohammed. 'Sami?'... I want to hold him, but I know that he will disappear, like paint in water, so I sit as still as I can" (224). Bridging the gap between one's own country and abroad, one needs the migrant to have an identity which acts as a source of confidence and independence. With such distress, the migrant will continue struggle the anonymous identity.

CONCLUSION

Colonialism has become a common trend of the West to submit and dominate the countries of the Third World, to scatter their communities, and to usurp their lands. Along ages, the colonizer manages to fulfill his objectives, either via force or via ideology. Agonizingly, what post-colonialism is merely destruction, exile, and migration. The legacies of colonialism force the x-colonized to find himself in a mess and annihilation.

To overcome the harsh legacies of colonialism, the migrant should be flexible, openminded, creative, and energetic. The colonized can be the

colonizer himself when he chains himself and refuses the new environment, the international one. To reduce the anonymity of the future concerning identity, migrants should be realistic and give themselves the opportunity to release what remain from the past. Ultimately, the anonymity after forced migration can never be healed but at least it can be reserved and minimized when the migrant encounters the reality and holds the painful memories in the back of his consciousness, rather than allowing these memories to seize his present and future. He should accept the new conditions and expel the sense of alienation by assimilating himself in new social relationships. To fix the void between the previous and the current identity, the migrant has to concentrate on the merits of the exile more than the demerits; like the right of work, education, and health care. Moreover, the eventual merit of migration is being safe to keep what remain from the past and even mend the distorted memories.

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