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Research article

The Complexities of Individualism and Belonging in the Context of Forced Displacement in *Hala Alyan's Salt houses (2017) and Christy Lefteri's The Beekeeper of Aleppo (2019):* An analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Forced displacement extends beyond the loss of physical space, profoundly affecting identity, belonging, and cultural attachment. As a growing global reality, displacement has become a significant literary concern associated with identity, loss, and belonging. This study examines individuality and belonging in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses* (2017) and Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) through the theoretical frameworks of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism. These frameworks provide a critical lens for examining how forced displacement transforms individuals' identities, cultural affiliations, and relationships with their homelands. The study focuses on how displaced individuals negotiate their sense of self and belonging across geographical and cultural boundaries. The findings reveal that the protagonists construct multiple and fluid identities while developing transnational forms of belonging and maintaining emotional and cultural connections to their homelands. The study concludes that both novels represent forced displacement as a complex psychological, cultural, and physical process that reshapes identity, belonging, and perceptions of home.

إشكاليات الفردانية والانتماء في سياق التهجير القسري :دراسة تحليلية لروايتي هالة عليان(بيوت الملح)٢٠١٧و كريستي لوفيتيري(نحال حلب ٢٠١٩)

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المُستخلص

يتجاوز التهجير القسري فقدان الحيز المكاني، إذ يُحدث تحولات عميقة في الهوية والشعور بالانتماء والارتباط الثقافي. وبوصفه واقعًا عالميًا متناميًا، غدا التهجير القسري من القضايا الأدبية الملحّة التي تتقاطع مع مفاهيم الهوية والفقدان والانتماء. تتناول هذه الدراسة تمثلات الفردية والانتماء في روايتي هالة عليان بيوت الملح (٢٠١٧) وكريستي ليفتيري نحّال حلب (٢٠١٩)، في ضوء منظوري العابرية للحدود الكوزموبوليتانية . وتوظف الدراسة هذين المنظورين بوصفهما إطارًا نقديًا للكشف عن الكيفية التي يعيد بها التهجير القسري تشكيل هويات الأفراد وانتماءاتهم الثقافية وصلاتهم بأوطانهم الأصلية. كما تركز على استراتيجيات تفاوض الشخصيات المهجّرة حول ذواتها وإحساسها بالانتماء في ظل عبورها الحدود الجغرافية والثقافية. وتُظهر النتائج أن الشخصيات الرئيسة تطوّر هويات متعددة ومرنة، وتعيد صياغة مفهوم الانتماء ضمن فضاءات عابرة للحدود، مع استمرار روابطها العاطفية والثقافية بأوطانها. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الروايتين تقدمان التهجير القسري بوصفه تجربة نفسية وثقافية ومكانية مركبة، تسهم في إعادة تشكيل الهوية والانتماء ومفهوم الوطن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الانتماء، اللاجئون، النزوح، العابرية القومية، الكوزموبوليتانية

1. Introduction

Forced displacement is one of the most extreme human experiences, with histories of trauma, culture and identity that leave deep psychological, cultural and social scars that affect people's identity and sense of belonging. As Edward Said observes, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience” (Said, 2000, p. 173), they draw attention to the fact that exile is much more than only a physical relocation from one's home country, but an entire state of alienation and emotional absence. Likewise, Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller define forced migration as “a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people, as well as people displaced by disasters, famine, or development projects” (Castles et al., 2020, p. 52). Emphasizing the involuntary and the catastrophic effect it has on communities and people. Forced displacement has become one of the most significant humanitarian and sociopolitical issues of the twenty-first century, and has significantly altered the lives of millions of people around the world. Forced displacement (also forced migration or forced relocation) means displacement of a person or people from their home or home area that is not voluntary or desired. According to UNHCR defines "forced displacement" as follows: displaced "as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations"(UNHCR 2014). According to UNESCO, forced displacement is "the forced movement of people from their locality or

environment and occupational activities," with its leading cause being armed conflict. Forced displacement continues in the world today as a result of conflict, violence, human rights violations and climate change, which fuel large scale population movements. Constantly unstable conditions and the lack of long-term solutions contribute to protracted displacement, creating significant socio-economic challenges for both refugees and host communities(UNHCR Global Trends 2020). While the belonging is one of the most fundamental needs of a child, influencing their identity, emotional state and attitude to society. It is more than a place attachment and has emotional, cultural, social and psychological connections for people to feel safe and have a place to live with a purpose. The need to belong is a fundamental human motivation, as interpersonal relationships and social bonds are natural human needs (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). The impacts of such displacement are compounded by the disruptions to belonging, which Nira Yuval-Davis describes as “about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197). Her definition clearly illustrates that "belonging" is not only a geographical issue, but also an emotional, cultural and social one, and gives individuals a sense of identity and security. Abraham Maslow states that this is reinforced by the understanding that “The belongingness and love needs involve giving and receiving affection and the sense of belonging” (Maslow, 1943, p. 381). This confirms that one of the basic human needs for psychological well-being is belonging. The impact of forced displacement is a major disruption to an individual's sense of belonging, as they lose their family, home, language and cultural traditions. These perceptions together highlight the fact that forced displacement involves more than just a crossing of borders; it is also an identity disruption and a loss of memory and attachment. Forced migration is different from voluntary migration because individuals are forced to leave their familiar place as a result of conflict, persecution or violence, which makes it very difficult for them to do so and gives them little choice but to leave their familiar place and rebuild themselves somewhere else. This rupture can lead to a sense of alienation, loss and cultural disintegration. Within the modern literature, the theme of belonging is often discussed in terms of refugees and/or displaced peoples' stories, which focus on the emotional impact of forced migration. The concept of belonging is not necessarily connected to a geographical space, but is also maintained by family connections, cultural memory, shared traditions and collective identity as shown in literary texts. Anderson (2006) emphasizes that communities are "imagined" through shared narratives and cultural symbols, suggesting that displaced individuals may preserve a sense of belonging even when physically separated from their homeland. Similarly, transnational perspectives argue that migrants often develop multiple forms of belonging that connect both their country of origin and their host society (Vertovec, 2009). Such dual attachments question the concepts of national identity and show how belonging can be flexible in this globalized world. Forced displacement and belonging are relevant to the contemporary Syrian and Palestinian story, as war, occupation and political instability have become a thematic concern of belonging. As Al-Hardan argues in her study of Palestinians in Syria, displacement produced “shattered communities” whose memories of Palestine continued to constitute an essential part of their collective identity (Al-Hardan, 2016, pp. 1–3). Hence it is not enough to speak of Palestine as a geographical

homeland, but as a remembered and imagined space that is traversed by displaced Palestinians as they navigate identity and belonging. The displacement crisis in Syria has resulted in one of the largest and most complex refugee movements in the modern Middle East, with millions of Syrians having to rebuild their lives in new and different social and cultural settings. Knudsen and Tobin emphasize that Syrian displacement must be understood not only in humanitarian and socioeconomic terms but also through questions of "social belonging" and the ways displacement transforms refugees' relationships with urban and social spaces (Knudsen & Tobin, 2024, pp. 1–3). The subdimension of displacement that is important here is the relationship between the homeland, host country and the displaced persons' changing self-perception. The experiences of Palestinian and Syrian refugees, it is thus clear, do not mean that displacement cannot be the agent of reaffirming the sense of belonging to the homeland; it can be the opposite. For instance, Culcasi exemplifies this intersection in the study of Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan, who, despite having been living for years or decades outside of their home country, are attached to a sense of belonging to Syria and Palestine (Culcasi, 2023, pp. 102–115). She further demonstrates that displaced people may develop hybrid territorial identities in which "Palestine and Jordan" or "Syria and Jordan" become intertwined rather than mutually exclusive spaces (pp. 86–101). These observations offer a useful conceptual framework for literary studies of displacement – displacement can involve loss, nostalgia, a sense of alienation, the process of adaptation, and a constant struggle for belonging. In these novels, characters often have identity crisis as they try to coexist between their past and present lives. Their travels are a case study in how belonging becomes a process of negotiation instead of a state of being. Forced displacement forces people to flee their homes due to war, political persecution, violence or environmental crises, and not just their physical location, but their sense of identity, belonging and cultural continuity as well. Since the start of the recent war a literary landscape has emerged that has become a major vehicle for depicting and interrogating the psychological, social and cultural impacts of displacement in the world. Contemporary literary narratives portray displacement not merely as physical movement across borders but as a transformative experience that continuously reconstructs individual identity and redefines notions of home and community (Said, 2000; Vertovec, 2009). Forced displacement also has a significant impact on belonging. In this context, the notions of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism are useful theoretical frameworks to explore how the displaced person is deliberating on his or her multiple identities while simultaneously retaining emotional, cultural and social connections across national borders. Transnationalism emphasizes the enduring connections migrants preserve with their countries of origin despite living elsewhere, suggesting that identity is no longer confined to a single nation-state but is formed through continuous interactions across borders (Vertovec, 2009). On the other hand Cosmopolitanism advocates an ethical and cultural openness that enables individuals to engage with diverse societies while recognizing their shared humanity. Rather than abandoning local identities, cosmopolitanism encourages the coexistence of multiple cultural affiliations within an increasingly interconnected world (Appiah, 2006). These perspectives provide a holistic context to assess the lived experience of displacement and its impact on identity and belonging. The political and

humanitarian crisis that has been going on in Syria and Palestine has greatly impacted the socio-political environment of the Middle East. The activities of criminal organizations—in both countries and in others—have created many problems for both countries. A great deal of displacement, violence and a highly divided society has been a result of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, with people and their families caught in the middle of territorial and political power struggles. The Palestinian people have faced military aggression, settler cruelty, and the everyday struggles of life under occupation, with numerous human rights violations by Israeli military and local extremist organizations (Abunimah, 2019). In the case of Syria, the country has been in a state of civil war since 2011, resulting in extensive destruction, a massive refugee crisis, and the formation of dangerous extremist organizations. The Bashar al-Assad regime, in association with different militia groups and criminal organizations, has carried out many atrocities against their people, including the use of chemical warfare, arrest, and execution of people (MacFarquhar, 2018). The Syrian conflict has evolved turned into a complex interaction among various armed group, international interventions and geopolitical rivalries remains difficult to resolve in the short term. In both Syria and Palestine, the devastating consequences of criminal activities by a number of actors, including state and non-state actors, persist. The repercussions of these crimes are far reaching, impacting the political and economic systems of these countries and on the lives of millions of people living in a precarious future. The issue of displacement has become a major global concern, as it is inherently linked with the themes of identity, loss, and belonging. The themes are discussed in the context of the motif of forced migration in the both novels. These pieces provide touching accounts of individuals or families who are displaced from their homes because of war. These pieces highlight the strength of individuals who have divided identities and are living in provisional spaces, as well as the cultural effects of migration. Displacement is an existential event rather than a physical one. It is a disorienting experience that affects individuals because it disconnects them from their cultural, historical, and social roots (Said, 1978). Alyan skillfully interweaves the events of the Nakba of 1948, marking the start of the Palestinian Diaspora, in *Salt houses*. The Syrian Civil War, which has led to the displacement of over 13 million people, forms the background for Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, a story about the perilous journeys of refugees in search of safety and stability. These works illustrate the issue of displacement as a force that transcends national borders, thereby affecting the identities of people and communities within the context of global interconnectedness from the perspectives of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism. These works illustrate the fact that displacement leads to a loss of a sense of belonging, yet also creates a new form of identity that combines traditional cultures with modern elements. This is a symptom of the complexity of the refugee experience that is in consonance with the continuing displacement in Syria and Palestine caused by war and instability. Despite the growing body of scholarship on migration and refugee literature, comparatively few studies have examined these two novels through the combined perspectives of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how forced displacement reshapes individualism and belonging by analyzing the protagonists' experiences of identity reconstruction, cultural negotiation, and transnational

attachment. Accordingly, the central research question of this study is: How do Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses* and Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* represent the psychological and cultural consequences of forced displacement and their implications for identity and belonging? To address this central question, the study examines the following subsidiary questions: How does forced displacement reshape the characters' perceptions of home, homeland, and belonging? How are psychological consequences such as trauma, loss, alienation, nostalgia, and insecurity represented through the displaced characters? How do the characters negotiate their cultural and national identities within unfamiliar geographical and social contexts? How do memory, family relationships, cultural heritage, and attachment to place contribute to the preservation or reconstruction of identity? And how do the novels represent belonging as a fluid and continuously negotiated condition under circumstances of displacement?. Finally, the study is meant to illustrate how both texts view displacement and its impact as a condition which transcends the act of moving materially to dramatically affect the development of identity, belonging and the prospect of creating a "home" in transnational spaces. The study employs an analytical perspective to show that forced displacement does not simply produce feelings of loss and alienation, but also leads to richer and more sophisticated identities and belonging, ones that are not always national in nature. In this regard, the outcome of this research adds to the ongoing research in literature by focusing on the changing dynamics of displacement, identity, and transnationalism in modern fiction. In both novels, the present analysis focuses on displacement, the psychic effect and its effect on the process of building identity literature-wise.

2. Significance of The Study

This study is important as it looks at the complexity of individual identity and belonging in the context of forced displacement in two novels, *Salt Houses* by Hala Alyan and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri. It reveals the change in the relationship of people to their homeland, their families, their culture, their past and their identity by being displaced. This study shows that the nature of belonging is not static but rather complicated and ever-negotiated by migrants and losses. It also looks at the psychological and cultural impacts on those who are forced into exile and trying to build new lives in unfamiliar surroundings. The study's focus on Palestinian and Syrian experiences brings these out into dialogue, revealing commonalities but also nuances of exile, recognizing the different historical and cultural settings of each experience. Finally, the study will be used in the current literary research on displacement, identity, belonging, trauma, and a transnational experience in modern fiction.

3. Literature Review

The concept of belonging, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism have emerged as crucial critical concepts in the field of literary studies, especially concerning refugee and diaspora writing. In the era of globalisation, forced migration and transnational mobility, the study of literature has become a space for scholars to investigate representations of the negotiation of belonging beyond the nation-state. Both novels Hala Alyan's *Salt houses* and Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* have attracted significant critical attention for their depiction of displacement, exile, and the enduring search for home. Existing

scholarship has predominantly focused on themes of trauma, memory, identity, and forced migration. However, relatively little attention has been paid to how belonging is reconstructed through transnational experiences and cosmopolitan encounters in a comparative context. Therefore, this literature review examines the most relevant studies on both novels while identifying the gap that the present study addresses through the theoretical perspectives of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism. Tegla (2019) states that *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) fictionalizes serious current issues like immigration, violence, relocation, and alienation. It is drawn from real-life refugees' experiences in Athens, where she volunteered during the years 2016-2017. Lefteri contests the presently dominant assumptions based above all on superficial knowledge and limited thinking - immigrants generally and war refugees specifically have a choice. The choice this part of humanity is left with: to stay and perish or gamble and move, in most cases under inhuman conditions, to a country that could offer them safety. Lefteri skillfully uses a plain narrative voice and introduces geographical and temporal shifts between the present (in England) and the past (in Aleppo, or during the journey to England), questioning complex realities and challenging the reader to revise his/her unexamined assumptions. The reader's empathetic imagination is developed by appealing to the moral dimension of the situation. Rubab et al (2019) examine identity problem through the explanation of Alyan's first book, *Salt houses* (2017), which focused on the themes of nostalgia, homelessness, displacement, and cultural tensions in the lives of scattered and exiled Palestinians. William Safran's diasporic theory is utilized as a theoretical framework in order to analyze the challenges that Palestinian diaspora communities have encountered both within and beyond borders for more than 70 years. They also presented arguments regarding the significance of a person's identity, which is one's country or homeland of origin. In addition, it states that diaspora Palestinians never feel as if they are and perhaps never will be fully accepted by their host nations, and that they are always perceived as aliens, enemies within their own nation, and foreigners. By describing the tragedies in Palestinian existence from the first exodus in 1948 to the current day, this research also poses the question of identity. Salam and Mahfouz (2020) state that displacement from one's homeland and inability to return challenge conceptions of diaspora, belonging, and identity." The novel *Salt houses* suggests how such traumatic events might be inherited by future generations of Palestinians so as to shape their transnational identity in diaspora. These further evidence that traumatic memories may act as some sort of resistance against the erasure of personal and communal memory of Palestinians. Awad (2020) investigates how Palestinian American author Hala Alyan employs sea imagery in her debut novel *Salt houses* (2017) to express her characters' emotions and thoughts. More particularly, this article illustrates that by examining a number of episodes in which characters sit by the seaside or walk along the sea waters, the reader is able to learn about such characters' inner lives and convictions and how they perceive themselves and contextualize their lives as they move from one city to another. As the novel tells the tales of four generations of a Palestinian family, occasionally through flashbacks, images of the sea come to occupy increasingly pivotal positions in these tales which unravel Alia's and her descendants' quest for voice through memories and experiences of displacement, exile and estrangement. Though the title of the novel suitably

proclaims the significance of houses, it is the sea that persistently emerges as a predominant motif in the tales that these characters narrate in their quests for a homeland that lies in the older generation's memories and the younger generation's imaginations. As Alia's granddaughter, Manar, goes to Palestine in the final chapter of the novel and maps the family history of the Yacoubs on the shore of Jaffa, including her unborn child, memory and imagination are used to stake a claim for the right of Palestinians to "belong" to the homeland. Yiğit and Kurtuluş state (2023) that many Syrians have endured physical and emotional damage due to the current Syrian civil war, which also dominates the current international agenda. The aim of this article is to examine how Christy Lefteri's novel *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) depicts refugee trauma on a personal level and how Syrian refugees attempt to survive it. This award-winning novel traces the experience of a bereaved Syrian couple who journey through Greece and Turkey to arrive in the United Kingdom, portraying the devastation of war. The study shows how research literature on trauma corresponds with Lefteri's fictionalized accounts of traumatized refugees .While, Balaji and Pavithra (2024) state that the word "refugee" embraces a host of ills such as homelessness, homesickness, and struggling for survival. The moral definition of refugees is: individuals who have fled because of war, violence, conflict, or persecution and cross international boundaries in search of protection in another country. This article narrates the story of Nuri and Afra, a Syrian couple who leave the war-torn country in search of safety and a superior life in Europe, as told in Christy Lefteri's novel *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. Nuri and Afra undertake a very dangerous journey, facing a number of hardships and tragedies on the way. The story follows the themes of loss, perseverance, and optimism in the face of hardship to bring into focus the refugee experience and the human cost of violence. The story covers themes of loss, courage, and optimism in the face of hardship, providing insight into the refugee experience and the human cost of conflict. Through the author’s engaging writing, the reader gets a glimpse into the lives of the refugees and is encouraged to develop empathy and compassion towards the lives of the people who are forced to flee their homes. The novel has achieved critical acclaim due to its strong representation of the lives of the refugees and its ability to encourage thought and discussion on the current global humanitarian crises. Gheytasi (2024) explores the significant impact of memory on the collective consciousness of a Palestinian family who have been through the trauma of forced displacement, chaos, and the ongoing cycle of occupation and migration. The article highlights the fact that the remnants of the past are not simply recollections but active influencers of the present and the future. This will demonstrate how tragic histories are passed down through the generations, creating a legacy that connects the past with the present. He demonstrates how the history of his characters connects the search for identity and the fight for displacement with the memory of ancestral tragedy. The elderly Palestinians, especially the grandmothers, carry an important meaning in preserving cultural history and transferring stories from generation to generation. Such stories are told not only to explain history but also as a form of resistance to occupation and claiming the right of return. She also explores the disjuncture between imagined homelands and contemporary realities for insight into the challenges the next generations will face in their journey to reclaim their heritage. Overall, previous studies have primarily

focused on trauma, identity, and diaspora in *Salt houses* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*. However, limited research has examined belonging, forced displacement , through the perspectives of Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by exploring how both novels reconstruct belonging and identity beyond national boundaries.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism

Contemporary literature increasingly reflects the complexities of forced displacement, exile, migration, and the continuous search for belonging in an interconnected world. The twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented levels of forced migration resulting from war, political violence, and humanitarian crises. As a result, literary critics have turned away from nationalistic readings of identity and towards the theoretical frameworks that embrace the malleability of cultural affiliation and the emergence of new forms of belonging in trans geographical context. Among the most influential perspectives are Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism, both of which provide valuable analytical frameworks for understanding how displaced individuals negotiate identity, memory, and belonging beyond the confines of the nation-state. These theories are particularly applicable to Hala Alyan's *Salt houses* (2017) and Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), as both novels portray characters whose identities are continually reshaped by forced displacement while preserving emotional and cultural ties to their homelands. Transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are two related frameworks investigating the ways in which literature represents identity, culture, and belonging in increasingly fluid and interconnected global perspectives. While transnationalism emphasizes transborder movements and exchanges, cosmopolitanism discusses ethics and sensibility of global citizens and shared human lives. Both theories discuss cultural hybridity, migration, and displacement problems. Thus, both theories have also become especially apt for modern writing.

4.2 Transnationalism:

The concept of transnationalism was first systematically developed by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. They define transnationalism as "Processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1). This definition moves the emphasis of migration studies from assimilation to continuity. Displaced people do not live out of touch with their home country; rather, they establish intricate configurations which enable them to be involved in more than one society at the same time. These relationships can be familial, cultural, linguistic, religious, collective memory, emotional, and work toward the process of identity reconstruction in people's lives even when they are physically distant. Steven Vertovec further expands this perspective by describing transnationalism as "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec 2). Migration for Vertovec is more than just a journey, it is an ongoing process of interaction that occurs across national borders. “Simultaneity” is an important aspect of transnationalism and it defies the notion that migrants have to make a choice between identifying with their homeland and settling into the host society. Levitt

and Glick Schiller (2004) argue that migrants can participate simultaneously in social fields located in different geographical spaces, making belonging a multidimensional rather than territorially fixed experience (pp. 1002–1039). Similarly, Faist (2000) conceptualizes transnationalism through "transnational social spaces," in which social relations, cultural practices, ideas, symbols, and resources circulate across national borders, particularly through migration and refugee movements (pp. 195–241). Ong (1999), meanwhile, emphasizes individual agency, demonstrating how transnational subjects negotiate cultural and national identities rather than simply being passive products of globalization (pp. 1–16). In this sense, displacement is not some kind of identity negation, but rather a new negotiation of identity, a cultural hybridity, and a new kind of belonging, which is placed between different locations. Nira Yuval-Davis' work on transnationalism and belonging has been also thoroughly studied. In The Politics of Belonging (2011), she argues that belonging extends beyond legal citizenship to encompass emotional attachment, identity, and social recognition. According to Yuval-Davis, belonging involves "emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home'" (10). Her condition is especially pertinent to refugee literature, as refugees are not only deprived of territorial security but also require emotional and psychological security. In both *Salt houses* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, home becomes less a geographical place than an emotional and cultural experience sustained through memory, family, and identity. Transnationalism deals with how people, ideas, cultural practices, and goods movement across national borders challenges traditional models of identity based on the nation-state. It is attuned to the creation of transnational social spaces and hybrid identities forged through continued exchanges between sending and receiving states. According to Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994) transnationalism is defined as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Vertovec (2009) defines transnationalism as a "mechanism of cultural reproduction and a site of political activity transcending the linear assimilation model." Literary narratives often feature characters who transgress nationalist norms, challenge conventional notions of cultural allegiances, and create new modes of cultural expression through the idea of hybridity. Transnationalism also challenges the idea of fixity of identity and culture. A relevant theory for the purpose of the present discussion is Bhabha's (1994) "theory of the third space." According to Bhabha, the formation of cultural identity takes place in a liminal space that allows for the negotiation and expression of new meanings. The cultural translation space leads to the formation of hybrid identities, a phenomenon that has been extensively explored in global literature, particularly in the context of the identities of the characters in such works. Such ideas are pertinent for the purpose of understanding the narratives of exile and return in literature. Furthermore, the ideas of Edward Said's "imaginative geographies" (1978), as expressed in Orientalism, are very productive for the purpose of the present discussion on transnationalism. Said's ideas emphasize the Western notion of the East as the 'Other' , the strange, thereby creating cultural hierarchies. Transnationally conscious writings tend to unmask and subvert such simplistic oppositions, presenting instead nuanced images of identity created by colonial history, migration, and global flows. Although the subject is predominantly about low-income immigrants from the Global South to the Global North, there

are warnings from scholars like Mahler (1998) against restricting the concept of transnationalism to a certain population because transnational experience itself is very diverse by class, occupation and place. A Focus on border permeability and multiple belongings extends an understanding of the reconfiguration of literature and life within a global context that is broader and more expansive.

4.3 Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism originates from the Greek concept of the citizen of the world, emphasizing that individuals belong to a broader human community rather than being exclusively defined by national borders. Contemporary cosmopolitan theory extends this philosophical tradition by examining how globalization, migration, and multiculturalism reshape human identity and ethical responsibility (Hooft, 2010). Cosmopolitanism, as contrasted with internationalism, nurtures a moral and intellectual brand of global citizenship and shared human responsibility. Cosmopolitanism, rooted in the Stoic concept of world citizenship, has matured into a model that tries to go beyond nationalistic, ethnic, or regional identity in preference for global consciousness. Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) defines cosmopolitanism as universal issue for others combined with respect for legitimate difference. Cosmopolitan theory-based literature tends to describe characters who struggle with issues of global ethics, cultural relativism, and politics of hospitality. Kwame Anthony Appiah, one of the leading contemporary theorists of cosmopolitanism, argues that cosmopolitanism rests upon two fundamental principles: universal moral concern for humanity and respect for cultural diversity. In Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers, Appiah explains, "Cosmopolitanism is about universality plus difference" (2006, p. xv). Beck (2006) believes that cosmopolitanism is a necessity in the current era of globality a means of reimagining political and cultural allegiances outside the nation-state. This is consistent with Paul Gilroy's (2004) "planetary humanism" theory, which advocates a post-national, post-racial mode of identification based on the general experience of being human, particularly as it is articulated among black Atlantic and diasporic populations. Edward Said's article "Reflections on Exile" (2001) illustrates cosmopolitan thinking in that it underlines estrangement and the intellectual responsibility to speak from the margin. Exile, for Said's calculation, is more than physical removal; it is instead a position of privilege where power, empire, and nationalism's foundational discourse can be challenged. In this sense, literature is built as a universal space of dissidence, criticism and cross-cultural discussion. These qualities can offer an alternative narrative to the exclusionary rationality of nationalism, leading to a sense of world solidarity and cross-cultural empathy. Transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are followed, studying contemporary literature from the perspectives of migration, exile and global cultural flows. These strategies are used to demonstrate negotiation of identity, power and ethics in the globalized world in literary texts. In cosmopolitan literature, the moral and ethical implications of encountering the world are central and call for the reader to take responsibility and empathy for the other across national, racial, or religious lines. The cosmopolitan texts highlight universal humanity and solidarity in the circumstances of displacement, violence or cultural alienation. According Clifford (1997) confirms this double view, which is that cultural identity is not about roots but about routes, moving, translating and encountering. These

routes are mapped, challenged and re-imagined in literature. Forced displacement, exile, migration and the ongoing quest for belonging in an interdependent world are becoming more complex features of contemporary literatures. One of the most significant views is Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism, which offers fruitful analysis of displaced people's processes of negotiating identity, memory, and belonging outside the confines of the nation-state. These theories are particularly applicable to Hala Alyan's *Salt houses* (2017) and Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), as both novels portray characters whose identities are continually reshaped by forced displacement while preserving emotional and cultural ties to their homelands. Cosmopolitanism is about universal ethics and global citizenship, whereas Transnationalism is about the social, cultural, political and emotional relationships that migrants and displaced people have across borders. Transnationalism is the concept that emerged from migration studies in the later part of the twentieth century that stands in opposition to the notion of a completely new beginning in a new land. Rather, it contends that migrants frequently build several multiple affiliations, identities and relationships that simultaneously bind them to countries of origin and countries of residence. This is especially true of narratives of forced displacement, where refugees are having to continue to negotiate belonging through memory, family, culture, and transcoder networks. In the present study cosmopolitanism offers a key theoretical perspective to explore the way in which forced displacement alters identity and reconfigures belonging through intercultural contact, moral concern, and the maintenance of collective memory. The theory takes a more nuanced approach, moving beyond the idea of the refugee as a person who has lost her home to recognize how refugees establish new ways of belonging and maintain links to the culture of origin.

5. Summary of The Novels

5.1 *Salt houses*

Hala Alyan is a Palestinian-American poet, novelist, and clinical psychologist born in 1986, noted for her work on themes of displacement, identity, and family. She spent her childhood moving with her family between Kuwait, Oklahoma, Texas, and Lebanon, and thus knew the diasporic existence firsthand that she often writes about. Alyan's journey through writing and particularly the work that has focused her on Palestinian families in exile has been influenced by her multicultural upbringing and her focus on intergenerational trauma. Her childhood experiences in both countries gave her a uniquely transcultural perspective that allowed her to capture the emotional and psychological impact on exile and migration. Reflecting on the inspiration behind her writing, Alyan states, “My writing also intersects a lot with diaspora, immigration and what it means to be in different places and carry the memories and the heritages and the inheritances of other places” (Masad, 2017)**.** This statement highlights her commitment to exploring the experiences of displaced communities and the complexities of belonging across borders. Her debut novel *Salt houses* (2017) won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for its powerful portrayal of the displacements of a Palestinian family over decades. Highly lauded upon publication, Alyan has also published several poetry collections, including *The Twenty-Ninth Year and Hijra*, which also explore loss and belonging along with her fiction. She holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and was able to weave

her understanding of the same into her literary expression. In 2013 Alyan's collection of poetry Atrium, received an honor from the Arab American National Museum. In 2018, she won the Dayton Literary harmony Prize given to a writer who it is believed work has promoted harmony. She also, during the autumn of 2018 was a visiting fellow at the American Library in Paris. Her second novel, The Arsonists' City, was published to critical acclaim on March 9, 2021, by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. It is the story of the Nasr family, who convene in Beirut to deliberate on the will of their progenitor. This family reunion exposes the secrets the family has held for years and the effects of conflict and violence the family has suffered (Keyers, 2019). Alyan writes with authority on migration, ethnic displacement, alienation, and loss of family. Thus, it would not be surprising that the subject of her first book is a Palestinian family that is always displaced from their country of origin. Through the story of the Yacoub family, she illustrates how war, exile, and repeated migration reshape both personal and collective identities. Rather than portraying displacement as a purely geographical condition, Alyan emphasizes its psychological, cultural, and emotional dimensions. Discussing the notion of inheritance, she remarks, “When I think of what I've inherited, I think of my understanding of what it means to feel connected to the world, or what it means to feel connected to other people” (Alyan, Wikiquote). The novel *Salt houses* is visual novel that construct images and feelings, with the narratives often breaking walls. The Palestinian-US relationship with *Salt houses* has not been addressed directly before. The novel is spanning multiple generations, starting in the 1960s before the first displacement-generation and ending in 2014. The three major characters in *Salt houses* are Khadija, Alia, and Manar, whose voices narrate the story mainly. In *Salt houses*, body and illness are richly problematized, as Alia suffers from cancer and Samuel develops Alzheimer because he was raped during imprisonment, “This betrayal of her body hobble her”(Alyan ,2017, p.90). While later presenting nostalgia itself as an affliction, “ Like a fever or a cancer , the longing for what had vanished(p.115) . The wombs of the women are barren or empty, and the family generational collapse and displacement connection is strong in Syrian novels. The female characters suffers from an inability to conceive, which is handled as a heredity from mother to daughter. Alyan's novel is based on the characters' departure from the sea, which has been a significant refuge since time immemorial. The characters, like Naima, are forced to flee to save their lives from destruction, knowing that the future ahead may end their lives. Naima's quest is about saving valuable things and earth, but the Naima structure ties the past and future together, and the existence collapses. The present is warped as the past and future are rigidly set, warping the past and present. The novel serves as a reminder of the dangers of venturing out of one's homeland and the necessity of adapting to new situations. The novels engage in a broader conversation on complex and yearning belongings. The lost home in both novels are a very textured tapestry composed of multilingual and multi-religious threads with a set of diglossic languages. The writing style of each novel showcases the subtleties of capturing such a complex idea of home (Awad, 2015). Both novel emphasize the importance of family ties and relationships. In novel, Afra and Nuri, having lost their loved ones, try to revive their relationships by secretly having children. The Family in novel *Salt houses* is a cause of burden to the characters, with them facing different issues in their

families. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri and Afra's families represented sanctuary, but when they lose their loved ones, they are dependent on at least one of their family members. The secret giving birth to a boy represents the children they could not have and who would have outlived them (Awad, 2015). Lefteri's novel, *The Beekeeper*, offers a clear demonstration of the dangers of such journeys and their aftermath. The characters encounter numerous perilous incidents during their journey, which begins in Syria and ends in England. They regularly confront traffickers, who are dangerous people, and they have to travel in terrible conditions, such as sharing the back of a lorry with "a cow in the back of the pickup, the floor scattered with its feces" (Lefteri 60). This represents responsibility for family survival, respect, and loyalty. In *Salt houses*, Nagid and Raja's family are the two extremes in the lives of other family members. The in-laws are dominating, cruel, and talkative, creating a distance between Riham and Raja. Aliya and Alia resist family members, unwilling to kill neighbors and overlapping Raja's mother. The spatial distance among kin in *Salt houses* weakens kinship relations and ties, since each member of the family has other issues that cause the breaking of relationships. Raja yearns for his father, blaming Nadim for failing to look after him and referring to it as ageism. Akram does not want to live with Atef due to school distance and traveling on foot. Trauma discourse has returned in what is commonly known as an "age of terror," an age that raises more questions than it answers (Parr, 2018). The challenge of expression is not that there are few words, but that there is the overwhelming weight of multiple injustices and violences that shroud individual pain, creating such a field of debris that it hides the violence itself, or quietly colors our perception with its unseen detritus. The main character is Alia among her sisters and also the narrator. In 1963, the novel begins with a lavish wedding party where she wedded Khaled Abu Nahil. It concludes a few months later when Khaled passed away. Then Alia wedded Bashar in 1970. They migrated to Kuwait and then to Jaffa six years later with four kids. The first of Alia's sisters to be wedded is Souad. In 1964, when Alia moves into her first shared house, she goes to Amman. Following the events of 1967, a sister, Khadija, departs for Lebanon with her husband, and their lives are forever altered. The following two decades, the sisters live life between Jordan, Lebanon, and the Gulf in the midst of a series of mishaps (Awad, 2015). Salma, the head of the Yacoub family, symbolizes the older generation's firm connection to Palestine. She eagerly awaits the family's migration and works hard to preserve her customs even as she has adjusted to the new conditions. Her personality reflects Said's (1978) belief that exile can be tragic but also a time for personal enhancement. Alia's spouse, Atef, is touched by his incarceration and forced exile. Emotional expense of statelessness is exemplified through his unvoiced anguish and hopelessness. His profile conforms to readings on trauma experienced through forced migration (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Which identifies the way that exile touches physical displacement as well as relationships with others and overall mental health. Manar is the greatest breakdown of diasporic identity as a third-generation member. She is raised with little attachment to Palestine and sees it as an abstraction rather than a real country. Her personality fits with the theory of "postmemory" (Hirsch, 2012), in which identity is built upon inherited trauma even in the absence of personal experience with exile. As Salam and Mahfouz argue, Alyan uses the Yacoub family to represent

"transgenerational traumas" and "fluid identities" shaped by displacement. Thus, the main characters collectively demonstrate that belonging in *Salt houses* is not fixed in one geographical homeland but is continuously reconstructed through memory, family, cultural heritage, and the experience of displacement (2020, 296–309).

5.2 *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

Christy Lefteri is a contemporary British novelist of Greek Cypriot heritage whose fiction explores the devastating consequences of war, forced displacement, trauma, and the enduring search for belonging. Christy Lefteri was born in London in 1980 to parents who were exiles from Cyprus. A British novelist of Cypriot origin, she was deeply influenced in her work and understanding of forced migration by the experiences of displacement that her family faced during the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus. She studied English and creative writing at Brunel University and taught creative writing. Her most famous novel, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), was inspired by her time volunteering in refugee camps in Athens, Greece. In it, a refugee couple's journey calls attention to the Syrian refugee crisis and offers a very human view of war and migration (Christy Lefteri - Meet the Author - Suffolk Libraries, 2019) . It was also an international bestseller and in 2020 won the Aspen Words Literary Prize for its powerful rendering of the refugee experience. The title , *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* symbolically reflects Nuri's loss, displacement, and search for belonging. As Nuri describes, "The bees were an ideal society, a small paradise among chaos" (Lefteri, p. 10). The bees represent peace, order, and community, while "Aleppo" represents Nuri's lost homeland and identity. Thus, the title connects his former peaceful life in Aleppo with the chaos of war and forced displacement. Christy continues to speak out on behalf of refugees, about displacement, and how it emotionally and psychologically impacts. Lefteri witnessed the suffering and resilience of displaced people firsthand. These experiences inspired *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019), a novel that presents the refugee crisis through deeply personal narratives rather than political discourse. Explaining the inspiration behind her work, Lefteri states, "I wanted to tell the stories behind the headlines because every refugee has a unique story that deserves to be heard" (Lefteri, Penguin Books, 2019). This statement reflects her commitment to restoring individuality and dignity to people often reduced to statistics. Lefteri believes that fiction plays a crucial role in fostering compassion and understanding. She remarks, "Stories have the power to transport us into another person's life, allowing us to experience their fears, hopes, and humanity" (Lefteri, Book Browse, 2019). Through this perspective, she demonstrates that literature can bridge cultural and political divides by encouraging readers to empathize with those who have experienced displacement. Lefteri had been able to glimpse a refugee camp, and she had spoken to a man who was simply inspiring to her. She was educated in the city of Aleppo. The meeting had such a profound effect on her and was the inspiration behind writing her novel. As Lefteri herself explains, "The crisis imagery and the unspecific language which is often used to portray the experience of refugees in the media left me feeling numb. However, being there for people during the most horrific circumstances of their lives moved me to tears and emotional exhaustion" (Lefteri, Aspen Institute, 2020). In between the lines of her book, she masterfully weaves the poignant

tale of Nuri and Afra, a newlywed couple who try to grapple with the tough choice of how to prepare themselves to leave their homeland of Syria and embark on a good and secure future in the United Kingdom. Their turbulent journey takes them across multiple continents and dangerous terrains, as they journey through Greece, Turkey, and Italy to finally arrive in Britain.

Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) is a contemporary refugee novel that explores the devastating psychological, cultural, and emotional consequences of forced displacement. The novel is set during the Syrian war and its aftermath, and follows the tale of a Syrian beekeeper named Nuri and his wife, artist Afra, as they flee Aleppo and make a perilous trip toward Europe and finally Britain. The story is about location, but the central issue for Lefteri is the fragmentation of identity, memory, family bonds, and the sense of home and belonging that comes as a result of war and displacement. The novel thus offers a perspective on displacement as an external geographical state and an internal psychological state. Nuri and Afra start the novel as they are in Aleppo, where their life has already been awry due to war. One of the novel's main metaphors is created by Nuri working as a beekeeper. The bees are an order, a cooperation, a continuity, a community, while the characters are surrounded by violence. Nuri observes that "The bees were an ideal society, a small paradise among chaos" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 10). This is an important opposition between the harmonious world of the bees and the broken world of man resulting from war. The apiary becomes in this way much more than a place of work, it becomes a lost homeland or a place of security, stability and belonging that is idealized. The destruction of this world forces Nuri and Afra to confront the necessity of departure. Their decision to leave Aleppo is not voluntary migration but an act of survival. When Nuri tells Afra, "We have to go," she initially refuses because she cannot abandon their dead son, Sami (Lefteri, 2019, p. 40). This is an illustration of how emotional attachment to homeland and physical survival can go against each other. Aleppo is for Afra the same place where Sami died, remembered and lived his life; it is where he was born and identified as. Her resistance, in this case, represents the way forced displacement can create a deep tension between the desire and the necessity to leave the danger behind and to stay in the home that is lost. Sami's death serves as a pivotal moment in both characters' lives. Afra becomes blind after witnessing the death of her son, and Nuri becomes more and more guilty, hallucinating, anxious, and having traumatic memories. The physical blindness of Afra is a symbol of the psychological blindness of Nuri, who cannot see what is happening to him in the present. Afra's blindness is the ravaging effects of trauma; Nuri's psychological disorientation is another type of war-induced blindness. Throughout the novel both characters have the struggle to come to terms with who they are after losing their old lives. They travel through various geographical and cultural settings, such as Turkey and Greece, and then come to Britain. The novel's movements become then a distinctly transnational narrative as the characters' identities are negotiated throughout national borders. They don't create a new 'home' in their body right away. Rather, displacement produces an unstable state of affairs, in which the homeland is mentally and emotionally still there, despite its physical absence. This tension becomes particularly clear when Nuri observes the apparently peaceful environment in England: "It reminds me that these people have never seen war. It reminds me that back home ...

everything that's been destroyed" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 113). This quotation is particularly significant for understanding belonging. Although Britain provides relative physical safety, Nuri does not immediately experience it as home. The peaceful houses, gardens, and ordinary domestic routines of the host society intensify his awareness of what has been destroyed in Syria. The contrast demonstrates that belonging cannot be achieved simply by crossing a national border. Instead, belonging involves emotional attachment, memory, cultural familiarity, and a sense of security. Lefteri also explores the transformation of identity through Nuri's relationship with his own body and memory. After the traumatic experiences of war and migration, Nuri observes himself in a mirror and realizes that he has changed: "I look so different now" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 124). The mirror image of the physical becomes a psychological change. Nuri is not the same beekeeper and husband as before the war. Through violence and loss, migration, guilt and survival his identity has been reconstructed. In this respect, displacement is seen as an event which challenges existing identities. One of the aspects that is particularly significant in the novel is the notion of the home. While trying to deal with life without Syria, Nuri's perception of home becomes more complex. He asks himself: "Where was home now? And what was it?" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 222). This question is among the main thematic issues of the novel. The idea of home has become more than just a space in the geographical landscape. While this is indeed an emotional hub of Nuri's memory, there's no way to get back to the city of Aleppo, or to the life he once lived. As a result, home is partly notional and remembrative. Thus, home is a part notional and remembrative. Nuri describes it as "a paradise never to be reached" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 222). Trauma can also disrupt close relationships, as seen in the novel. Nuri and Afra have to deal with the same disaster, but they react to it in different ways. But the sorrow that binds them together is not an emotional glue, but an emotional distance. One day Nuri confesses that he is unable to take the intimacy that he once had: "My hands belong to another time" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 115). The phrase "another time" indicates that the war has created a psychological boundary between the couple's past and present. As husband and wife, they have lost their identity, their role has been redefined by their status as survivors. Despite all that, Lefteri's portrayal of displacement isn't one that's solely based on despair. Hope, resilience and the potential for "rebuilding" "belonging" are also themes of the novel. As they face up to their trauma, the bond between Nuri and Afra slowly begins to heal. Afra eventually recognizes that Nuri has become psychologically trapped in his memories and tells him, "You are lost in the darkness, Nuri" (Lefteri, 2019, pp. 264–265). This is a turnaround of the earlier notion that Afra is the 'blind' character who is lost. Nuri's psychological wounding is another sort of blindness; it shows that displacement has an impact on physical and psychological perception. The symbolism of bees ultimately provides a possibility for recovery. Bees are a symbol of continuity, community, cooperation, and the potential for rebuilding after destruction. Afra encourages Nuri to remember them: "Can you see the bees, Nuri?" (Lefteri, 2019, pp. 285–286). This moment shows that you don't have to forget to heal. Instead, recovery means facing the traumatic memories and working to incorporate them into a new way of being. The novel has great significance in the context of Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism – Nuri and Afra's identities cannot be confined to the limits of any one nation. They live in Syria, Turkey, Greece

and Britain and their memories are tied to Aleppo. Ultimately, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* presents forced displacement as a multidimensional experience involving physical exile, psychological trauma, cultural dislocation, identity transformation, and the search for belonging. Nuri and Afra's journey illustrates that reaching a safe country does not automatically resolve the consequences of displacement. The physical trip may be over, but the psychological trip is still underway. In the recurring motifs of bees, blindness, darkness, light and home, Lefteri shows how a displaced person tries to rebuild meaning after the destruction of his or her previous worlds. The significance of this novel for present refugee and transnational literature, then, is that refugees are not just victims of political strife but are individuals in the process of constructing identity, memory, dignity and belonging in the face of cross-cultural and transnational experiences.

6. Method

The study applies the qualitative approach based on textual analysis. The novels *"Salt houses"* by Hala Alyan and *"The Beekeeper of Aleppo"* by Christy Lefteri are analyzed through the use of Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism as the two main theories of the study. These theories provide a basis for a comprehensive framework for analyzing depictions of forced relocation and migration. Based on the frameworks of Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism theories, the research reveals important analytic concepts such as identity, belonging, displacement, mobility, hybridity, cultural negotiation, and international experiences. The concepts are not seen as independent theoretical models but rather as analytic aspects which emerge from and are applied in the application of the two core theories in literary criticism. Cosmopolitanism is used to analyze questions relating to cultural openness, various affiliations, belonging beyond national boundaries, and the process of negotiating one's identity within varied cultural settings. Transnationalism is used to analyze cross-national connections, mobility, diasporic experience, transnational identities, and the methods used by migrants to maintain links across different national borders. The study takes into account concepts on migration and postcolonial studies that allow looking at the displacement experiences of the characters, their migration, identities, and belongings from different historical, social, cultural, and political angles. These theories can be viewed as complementary sources of knowledge rather than alternative core theoretical approaches. The study uses theoretically informed multidisciplinary approach in order to explore the effects of forced displacement on individuals and community identities as well as characters' belonging in different geographical, cultural, and national settings.

7. Textual Analysis and Discussion

7.1 "*Salt houses*"

Issues such as belonging, identity, migration, displacement, and generational trauma have been brought out in the novel *Salt houses* written by Hala Alyan 2017 as the Palestinian family is getting forcefully removed out of their homeplace. Transnationalism and cosmopolitanism theories provide some helpful frameworks in examining how this novel portrays the impacts of migration on cross-border human relationships and cultural identity. Telling the story of a Palestinian family displaced by war, occupation,

and exile, the novel investigates one important question: that of displacement. Tracing the cultural, emotional, and physical impact of relocation on its protagonists, the story spans four generations and a number of locales. The Nakba of 1948, a milestone event in which the Palestinian exodus caused them to lose their ancestral home in Jaffa, was when the Yacoub family faced displacement. It is this sudden and traumatic upheaval that plunged them into their long journey of consigned migration and loss, which affected the very identity of the family and its connective feeling with their homeland,

Still, her heart stirred when Alia, even at six, seven years old, spoke with the reverence of a mythologist about the enormous Jaffa pomegranates, the seeds that could be spooned out and sprinkled with either salt or sugar, depending on their ripeness. They were as big as the moon, little Alia would say, holding her starfish hands out, her voice confident. It would become the girl's most endearing and exasperating quality, how she could become enamored of things already gone. (Alyan, 2017, p. 12)

This indicates the complete destruction and suppression of the connection to the ancestral home. The term "ghost" represents the trauma of displacement because Jaffa remains as an omnipresent yet intangible loss for the Yacoubs. The smell of oranges symbolizes the Palestinian identity, particularly in Jaffa, as the area was famous for its orange fields before 1948, " I have forgotten the sound of Jaffa's waves, but sometimes I dream of a house that smells of oranges"(p.94). For Alia, the smell of oranges is initially associated with childhood, family, and the familiar landscape of Jaffa. However, the destruction of the orange groves transforms this comforting smell into a sensory reminder of violence and loss. The statement by Alyan that the oranges "no longer grow" indicates a loss of a place, culture, and means of subsistence. The smell image forms a significant connection to a history that the characters have acquired through their family's stories, and this is referred to as post-memory, which is the transfer of history to the later generation (Hirsch, 2008). After the Nakba, Yacoub family sought refuge in the city of Nablus, which is located in the northern West Bank, and they attempted to start their life in the midst of chaos, which characterized this period. However, this sense of stability would not last for the family,

In Salma's mind this remains the *new* house, the Nablus house. She has come to love it, in a resigned way. It is larger than their Jaffa home, the rooms cavernous, high-ceilinged. The previous owners who'd fled to Jordan had left their furniture; kitchen cabinets were still littered with biscuit packets and jars of sugar. (Alyan, 2017, p. 15)

The quoted statement revolves around the core concern of *Salt houses*: the issue of displacement and the ambiguity of the feeling of home. Salma and her family are based in Nablus, but their true home is Jaffa, a place that symbolizes the feeling of connection more than the physical site of origin. The dichotomy between Nablus as the "home in name" and Jaffa as the "home of the heart" is a feeling that is often double-edged in the exilic feeling of identity. The statement also revolves around the issue of the fragmentation of identity in exile. Salma's family is based in Nablus, but their identity is somewhere else. Home has moved beyond its spatial meaning and has become an idea defined by memory, myth, and longing rather than physicality. In the early 1990s, the Gulf War made it untenable for them to stay,

despite having recently started to think of it as home. The impact of the war meant that the family had to seek refuge elsewhere, “Only Alia mentioned Jaffa after they arrived at Nablus, with the tactlessness of the very young. She asked for the licorice sticks the grocer used to give her, for the dolls in her old bedroom. She cried at the thunderous sound of automobiles snaking through the Nablus marketplace” (Alyan, 2017: 12). The Yacoub family found refuge for a long period, moving from one city to another in the Middle East and beyond. The destinations included Beirut, a city known for its rich historical background and the effects of the Lebanese Civil War. After this, they would move to Amman, the capital of Jordan, in search of a sense of peace and tranquility. However, the family’s search for peace and tranquility made them move to the dynamic French capital, Paris. The family found refuge in the dynamic metropolis of Boston, which is located in the United States,

Souad left Paris easily, the city she’d never learned to love. In Boston, their life was quieter, constructed around their having small children. They lived in a series of cramped apartments near Suffolk, Souad taking the children on playdates with the kids of other young mothers in the neighborhood, spending her afternoons pouring apple juice and making small talk about teething. (Alyan, 2017, p.187)

Each of these migrations signifies not only the physical migration but also the significant fragmentation in the place of the Yacoub family. Each migration signifies the challenge that had to be endured in the face of uncertainty about their homeland and the desire to find their way back to a place where they felt at home. The story of the Yacoub family signifies the archetypal journey of a displaced family in their quest to belong in a society where 'home' is no longer than a mere desire. The locations identified Jaffa, Kuwait, Amman, Paris, and Boston are not only the locations where the migrations took place but also the emotional markers. Jaffa is origins, the disruption, and the home remembered. Kuwait and Amman are displacement and temporariness in the Arab world. Paris and Boston are Western displacement and hybridization of identity, with the characters endlessly negotiating integration and preservation. The family's story is representative of that of numerous Palestinian families that have witnessed successive waves of conflict, war, and forced displacement. According to Jumana Bayeh's work, particularly in her book "The Literature of the Lebanese Diaspora," explores the concept of home through the lens of Lebanese literature produced after the civil war. She examines how these writings reflect complex relationships between place, displacement, and belonging, challenging traditional notions of home as merely a physical structure. Bayeh's study highlights the diasporic imaginary that emerges from these narratives, questioning the identity of dispersed peoples and their connections to both their homeland and new countries of settlement (Bayeh, J. (2017).

Home is a private space where members of a single family come together and share food, stories, as well as culture. Safety, security and a sense of attachment or belonging to a homeland, cultural identity and ancestral heritage are a few concepts that Bayeh (2017) has identified as being associated with the concept of home. For the vast majority of Palestinians, home represents both an inalienable right and a transitory symbol of national identity and cultural connection. But the search for a new house is as much a

concern as the loss of homes itself. Everyone on earth has a permanent residence, with the exception of the Palestinians. The Palestinians often practice their stories of home and homeland as a way of maintaining the social and cultural fabric. “Home was a place you lived for decades, long enough to collect a history, to memorize the sounds and textures. What did it mean to rebuild such a thing?” (Alyan, 2017, p.50). The quote reflects the emotional struggle of reestablishing a sense of belonging and the fragility and loss of "home" that come with displacement. This phrase is used by Hala Alyan to highlight the magnitude of exile, including both physical and existential dislocation. The idea of home as a source of history, sounds, and textures sparks strong personal and sensory associations with the environment. However, home is more than just a physical concept for the Yacoub family. It is a living experience filled with memories and identity. The feeling of disconnection from one's roots is artificially created in the context of dislocation by the absence of sensory and historical continuity. Memories of their homeland, Palestine, are sacred and unmatched, making the process of rehabilitation emotionally challenging, “Houses that will be lost. And in the center, a smudged crown on its head, a zebra. Blurry but unmistakable, a zebra form, stripes across the flank. Salma wills her face expressionless, though fear rises in her, hot and barbed. A zebra is an exterior life, an unsettled life.” (Alyan, 2017, p. 14). Explores and emphasizes the constant and repetitive pattern of movement, which is seen throughout the experiences of the Yacoub family. This is the essence of *Salt houses*, which is a poignant reflection on impermanence, the unyielding power of memory, and the human cost of exile. Alyan vividly portrays the emotional state of exile, where love, self, and hope are created not through security, but through the strength to let go and begin again. The displacement of the family constantly re-creates and reconfigures, intricately crafting "home" into a rich fabric of meaning. Alia has an intense nostalgia and longing for her homeland, Palestine, “Still, her heart stirred when Alia, even at six, seven years old, spoke with the reverence of a mythologist about the enormous Jaffa pomegranates, the seeds that could be spooned out and sprinkled with either salt or sugar, depending on their ripeness.” (Alyan, 2017: 13). This is a characterization of Jaffa, which establishes it as both loved and connected. Classical Palestinian literary traditions tend to feminize, humanize, and mythologize the country. Jaffa is not simply a passive setting, but rather one that listens, mourns, and, above all, has a character that is capable of experiencing loss. This allows the speaker to outwardly convey her grief, yet at the same time, she maintains her symbolic connection to a country that she no longer physically has, but rather an emotional one. Her children and grandchildren, on the other hand, do not care about this fundamental character of place, which was shaped significantly by the distinctly different setting in which they were raised. This is the generational difference that is evident in the emerging diasporic identities, which are now formative years that are increasingly removed from the narratives and traditions that defined their family's origin. For her children and grandchildren, home was not a physical space, but rather an ideology of longing, which was quite different from Alia's longing for the past,

Nostalgia is an affliction. Someone said that once in front of Alia, and the words reach her now, years later. Like a fever or a cancer, the longing for what had vanished wasting a person away. Not just

the unbearable losses, but the small things as well. Alia thinks of her bedroom in Nablus. The seashells she filled with bobby pins. The tangerine dress she'd bought right before her trip to Kuwait and never worn. Photographs, necklaces, the glasses and silver *ibrik* her mother had given her. (Alyan, 2017, p. 70)

This is one of the most powerful metaphors in Hala Alyan's novel "*Salt houses*" and represents the impact of exile, both physical and emotional. The quotation, " Like a fever or a cancer," represents the symbol of memory, loss, and identity, and the idea that the concept of "home" is within us, away from the external world. Hala Alyan has employed the powerful metaphor of the concept of "home" to re-evaluate the idea of belonging. "*Salt houses*" suggests that the concept of "home" remains in the body, memory, and symbols, even if the physical place does not exist. The exiles carried hidden, sacred, and eternal memories, which symbolize the idea that even during the process of fragmentation, the idea of identity and history remains. Alia's grandkids saw Palestine as a far-off, perhaps fictional country, which symbolizes the diminishing connection with their ancestral homeland with each successive generation,

he brings them to Beirut, where the family gathers for long weeks. The four of them—Linah, Zain, Manar, and Abdullah—sit out on the balcony, lighting cigarettes and discussing the letters. Abdullah helped translate the passages from Arabic, as the rest of them confused tenses and verbs. They talk about the letters like a book, their grandfather writing about the war in Nablus, his years in Kuwait. The people he refers to—a dead great-uncle, old friends, their own parents—seem as exotic as characters in a movie, and as unlikely. She knows some of the passages by heart. (Alyan, 2017, p. 243)

This suggests a significant generational shift in the connection to Palestine, where the previous generation had a strong connection to the land, but the current generation is actively developing a sense of identity that is pragmatic and global. This shift has been the result of the complexities of migration and the experience of exile, where an individual is forced to consider their heritage in relation to the current realities of life in a variety of different, often unfamiliar, environments. The individual's perception of Palestinian identity is shifting, bringing together the ancient connections to the land with a more global sense of identity. The psychological effects of losing one's home is a major theme in the novel, highlighting the significant psychological effects of this experience. The individual is struggling to come to terms with a sense of loss, longing, and alienation from their previous life. Riham's strong religious convictions are a crucial coping mechanism for the individual, offering her hope for achieving a sense of stability in an increasingly chaotic and unpredictable world. The displacement of the family is having a negative effect on their physical surroundings "She prayed more fervently than ever, hoping her devotion might bring clarity to the chaos" (Alyan, 2017: 89). Riham's increased religious practice is a reflection of her desire to gain stability and power in a world that makes her powerless due to displacement and instability,

Riham wrapped faith around herself as effortlessly as a shawl, never once mumbling a complaint about rising early for prayer, never sneaking bites of bread—as Alia always did—during Ramadan. What could she and Atef do but encourage Riham even though over the years faith seemed to engulf her? To do anything else seemed inconceivable. (Alyan, 2017, p. 121)

This again shows the level of Riham's reliance on her religious convictions to create a sense of security in the midst of relocation. The physical separation of the family members often symbolizes a strong emotional detachment from each other as they try to cope with their new lives. The separation leads to misconceptions and alienation, thus showing the effect of the unfamiliar home on the previously connected people. The novel shows the complexities of the connections, highlighting the challenges of integrating the past with the painful present they are going through, "Their silences were louder than their words. Years of absence had turned them into strangers" (Alyan, 2017: 176). This is an example of the alienation that ensues due to displacement, which may lead to emotional detachment, even between family members, because of geographical separation. It is evident that the family relationships are severely damaged, an example of the many emotional scars that have accumulated over the years. Although they share a common history and wonderful memories, it is not enough to heal the many emotional scars that have resulted from years of separation and grief. Although they are connected by history, the relationships that once connected them have deteriorated because of misunderstandings, grievances, and the passage of time, and this is why they are unable to bridge the gap and address the issues, and so each tries, often with difficulty, to recover what has been lost This is particularly relevant for the Yacoub family, especially considering that their repeated relocation has an impact on their sense of belonging and identity. Wherever people are forced to relocate, they do not only change their physical locations but also their identity associations ,

All the houses they have lived in, the ibriks and rugs and curtains they have bought; how many windows should any person own? The houses float up to his mind's eye like jinn, past lovers. The sloping roof of his mother's hut, the marbled tiles in Salma's kitchen, the small house he shared with Alia in Nablus. The Kuwait home. The Beirut apartments. This house, here in Amman. For Alia, some old, vanished house in Jaffa. They glitter whitely in his mind, like structures made of salt, before a tidal wave comes and sweeps them away. (Alyan, 2017, p. 237)

As they continue their journey of migration, their idea of home changes from being static to one of fluidity, constantly changing and rejuvenating with each new place of abode. The harsh reality, however, has impacted their idea of identity, both as individuals and as a group, due to the disruption that results from losing familiar homes and their associated emotional ties,

Alia's one wicked secret, the one she thought she'd hidden from the family that on each of those summer trips, finding herself surrounded by friends and family, the same thought pinched her. I could stay. It was not in and of itself a betrayal, ... Stay here and what? Be with my mother, my cousins. And my children? So it would go, the silent argument, back and forth in her mind until she loathed the sight of herself in the mirror. What kind of mother, or wife, would consider such a fate—living apart from her children, moving to Amman. (Alyan, 2017, p. 130)

Alia's inner conflict between her loyalties to both Amman and Kuwait reveals the emotional landscape of her predicament, which was shaped by memory, shame, and practicality. Alia's conflict about her identity and her roles as mother and wife underscores the dissolution of location, identity, and function. Alia's

"wicked secret" reference underscores her emotional predicament as a displaced person, who was torn between fragmented, insufficient, or incorrect locations. The title of the book, *Salt houses*, perfectly captures the essential ephemeral nature of home. Salt, as a symbol, often represents preservation, but like any other element, salt can also dissolve. *Salt houses*, therefore, symbolize that a house can also dissolve or collapse due to the weight of adversity and change, as was the case with the Yacoub family. As salt dissolves in water, so does one's sense of belonging and security as represented by home, as was the case with the Yacoub family, who had to seek new refuge even as they mourned their losses "Houses made of salt, she thought. Beautiful and fleeting, they could not withstand the waves." (Alyan, 2017: 67). This metaphor closely relates to the title, reflecting the impermanence of their homes due to external influences and displacement. The Yacoub family faces the challenges of displacement, which requires them to constantly adapt to their new environments. With each new place, they recreate their identity and sense of belonging, coping with the psychological impact of leaving familiar places. Each new place comes with its new challenges and opportunities for growth, forcing them to recreate their identity as individuals and as a group, while trying to hold on to their culture and traditions amidst change: "It is the third time, she realizes, that she's buying furniture for a house, the third time she's piecing together scattered, unnecessary objects, trying to build a life around them."(Alyan, 2017, p. 191). This illustrates the family's inability to fully integrate or belong, highlighting the enduring psychological effects of displacement: "If Alia put her discontent away, it wouldn't stay. Her wanting disobeyed her, needling over the years, nudging her awake. If not Palestine, then Amman, it whispered. Anywhere but this hot, unwelcome country." (p. 130). Alia's emotional state due to years of displacement can be seen in her perpetual state of dissatisfaction. Her desire for security in an unwelcoming land shows the alienation that comes with a lack of belonging. Alia's failure to attain stability even after decades of being displaced shows the psychological resilience of exile, which dismantles identity and familial ties. Hybridity, as a concept, is a reinterpretation of colonial identity based on the persistence of discriminatory identity effects. It shows the distortion and reinterpretation of all instances of prejudice and dominance. The Yacoub family, as they assimilate into various new environments, creates a sense of hybridity that blends their deep Palestinian roots with their new cultural influences. Cultural amalgamation, as shown by the Yacoub family, extends beyond mere adaptation into new situations; it becomes an essential tool of resilience that allows one to face adversity and overcome obstacles, "For a while after she began menstruating, the girl asked Salma to teach her Qur'an verses, modeled Salma's veils, and spoke of someday visiting Mecca. But she slowly lost interest, drifting over to tight dresses and Egyptian love songs." (Alyan, 2017, p. 24). This hybridity creates inner struggles as each individual seeks to reconcile their background and the influence of the new cultures. The individuals end up questioning themselves as they have moments of introspection as they try to define the essence of the Palestinian identity and the new identity. The complex relationship between the traditional and the new illustrates the dynamic essence of the identity in a multicultural society,

Ya Mama, her mother used to say, everything in its place. There is a time for anger, a time for sorrow. You have to learn to distinguish. A lesson Alia never learned. Emotions swirl within her like the complex dish of maqlouba the aunts used to make in Nablus, the raisins impossible to pick from the rice. (Alyan, 2017, p. 136)

This illustrates how the family preserves their Palestinian heritage while adapting to life in different nations, integrating traditional practices with contemporary circumstances. The word trauma originated from a physical injury, but in psychiatric studies, it refers to a mental injury (Caruth 1996). Normally, traumatized persons or groups are required to have faced or experienced overwhelming ordeals that threatened their lives. Many traumatized subjects feel threatened by mortality or physical harm, become restless after the incident while some others become detached and emotionless. Intrusive flashbacks and nightmares are familiar experiences among traumatic subjects:

What they say never changes. There is a war, Alia knows. She understands this intuitively; in fact, it seems to her the only truth she holds immutable. There is a war. It is being fought and people are losing, though she is uncertain who exactly... A young girl wears nothing but dirt. An explosion has dismantled a city. People gather the entrails of their families. (Alyan, 2017, p. 260)

Traumatic experiences are irrecoverable unlike the ordinary ones which can be forgotten. The rereading of *Salt houses* will, in the future, validate the Palestinians' ability to make and use traumatic pasts as underlining for their collective memory's resiliency (Salam and Mahfouz,2020). In this regard, the novel elaborately negotiates the born-into-trauma understanding wherein that one horrible moment of displacement does not end with the generation living through the primary cataclysm but in fact ripples ahead to the next generation,

She is glad Widad isn’t here to witness her disloyalty, shamefully glad that Ghazi’s gout had flared up… It is Widad that Salma thinks of as she waits for the dregs, remembering how the girl begged for a cup reading before her wedding, weeping when Salma refused… Alia is a child of war. She was barely three when the Israeli army rolled through Jaffa’s streets… It would become the girl’s most endearing and exasperating quality, how she could become enamored of things already gone. (Alyan, 2017, pp. 13)

Alia, a "child of war" born into conflict and displacement, symbolizes the beginning of trauma even before memory. Her affinity for holding onto "things already gone" is a reflection of the emotional implications of exile, which have had a bearing on her adulthood. The heavy legacy of longing and loss from Salma to Alia is a reflection of the lasting effect of trauma on the following generations who were born after the disruption. There is a tremendous connection to the Palestinian land, even though the subject has not set foot on Palestinian territory, as a result of the stories, memories, and traditions shared within the family. This creates a sense of identity and belonging, particularly shaping the individual's view of history as a reflection of the individual's view of legacy, fairness, and association. The grandchild is thus in a precarious emotional state as a result of the feelings of longing and connection to the motherland that was not experienced. The term "post-memory" describes life routes that are determined by commitments, narratives, and emotional burdens that are passed down from previous generations.

These individuals often face issues of bewilderment, obligation, and the need to comprehend how their past life has impacted their individual identities and relationships as they seek to come to terms with their family's history. The story portrays how trauma between generations changes one's perspectives, choices, and relationships, "Only now, in the past year, has her memory shifted, her mind's eye fracturing and refocusing on the invisible character, the overlooked. Abdullah. There he is, in her revisited memories, in every single scene." (Alyan, 2017, p. 170). Riham's discovery that her son, Abdullah, is present in each memory that is suppressed or revised implies that she finally understands the interconnectedness of trauma and care. Words like "fracturing" and "refocusing" evoke psychological disturbances that are inadvertently transmitted as part of historical trauma. Abdullah represents the concept of an "invisible character," showing that children are burdened with their parents' unspoken struggles and concerns, she had grown up in houses with walls that knew better than to hold on to their inhabitants. This again emphasizes the transience of the essence of the Yacoub family's concept of home, thus showing the volatility of their lives, which has been greatly affected by the turmoil of history. Every move they make is a symbol of the general influences of history on their existence, thus challenging them to deal with the memory of places they used to find solace in but are now relegated to the past. The journey of the Yacoub family is marked by a series of transitory places of shelter, which are not permanent enough to offer the solace they seek, thus showing the effect of the disjointed feeling of belonging. Ultimately, the textual analysis of Hala Alyan's *Salt houses* (2017) demonstrates that displacement is not merely a physical separation from the homeland but a continuous psychological and cultural experience that reshapes identity and belonging. Through the Yacoub family's repeated experiences of exile and migration, Alyan presents home as a fluid concept constructed through memory, cultural heritage, and personal experience (p. 210). The novel further illustrates how displacement affects successive generations and produces fragmented identities across different geographical and cultural spaces. Thus, the textual analysis concludes that the novel portrays displacement as an ongoing process of identity negotiation in which memory and cultural continuity enable displaced characters to maintain connections with their homeland while reconstructing belonging in the diaspora.

7.2 *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

The themes of displacement within the novel *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* written by Christy Lefteri are very much integrated into the concepts of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is a very insightful study into the identities of refugees like the protagonists Nuri and Afra who move from their homeland of Syria to other countries, and this offers a very unique perspective on the role of migration and the impact it has on identity and community. The novel shows the strong battle and emotional fights of the people at that time when it was necessary to leave the homeland. This novel portrays an overwhelming and very dangerous journey undertaken by them amidst a series of unfamiliar countries fully filled with a lot of risks. A number of obstacles are faced by the characters while traveling in quest of safety: overcoming natural hurdles, avoiding hostile environments, confronting the heartrending choice of separating from loved ones. Told with a richness of vision and great powerful

storytelling, it pulls the human spirit to test resistance in times of adversity-an exemplar of hope and quest for a better life in chaotic and uncertain time, “We’ve started the journey – there’s no point giving up now, the journey was endless, every step taking us further from what we knew, and yet I couldn’t stop thinking that there was no going back.” (Lefteri, 2019: 64). Nuri argues that once a path of refuge is chosen, there is no real chance of reversal. The distance between England and the Aegean Islands is an emotional odyssey because Afra and Nuri cannot forget their experiences in Aleppo. The announcement underlines the permanence of exile and the impossibility of returning to their past lives. This emphasizes the irreversible nature of displacement, as refugees are compelled to confront the loss of their homes while also enduring the uncertainty of an unclear future,

One night, late in the summer, vandals destroyed the hives. They set fire to them, and by the time we got to the apiaries in the morning they were burned to char. The bees had died and the field was black. I will never forget the silence, that deep, never-ending silence. Without the clouds of bees above the field, we were faced with a stillness of light and sky… (Lefteri, 2019: 18)

Nuri's ongoing struggle helps to powerfully bring to life the countless difficulties of displaced individuals who are not so much attempting to survive their traumatic histories but who are struggling to accommodate to an unpredictable and many times terrifying future. His trauma finds close match in the postmemory theories of Hirsch in 2012 that propose that displacement does not just refer to the geographical uprooting from one's own land and environment but also to the difficult process of negotiating old and new selves. This struggle to construct self in the backdrop of shifting realities is a core part of the displaced experience. Nuri symbolizes the internal conflict that comes with adhering to his cultural identity and traditions in the face of the challenges that an alien and sometimes hostile environment present. In so doing, he portrays the emotional and psychological effects that accompany the quest to uphold one's cultural identity in the face of assimilation and transformation, "I now know that Mohammed will not be coming – I understand that I created him, but the wind picks up and the leaves rustle and there is a chill in the air that gets beneath my skin, and I imagine his tiny figure in the shadows of the garden.." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 235). This brings to life Nuri's experience of dissociation and the split identity that results from forced relocation. It also reinforces the emotional turmoil that Nuri goes through as he deals with the disconnection from his past life and the challenge of piecing together his fractured identity in the midst of the turmoil of migration,

When we arrived, Elias was never far behind me. The buildings in the city were tall and bright, old and new, gathered around the Bosporus, where the Sea of Marmara meets the Black Sea. I had forgotten that buildings could still stand, that there was a whole world out there that was not destroyed like Aleppo. (Lefteri, 2019, p. 63)

The astonishment of seeing intact structures in Nuri underlines the profound impact of the war on his psyche, as architecture symbolized destruction to him. His reaction is a perfect example of post memory as defined by Hirsch, as the displaced carry with them an emotional imprint that makes their encounter with a "normal" landscape seem unusual. Nuri's placement at the Bosporus is a suspension between the

future and the past, as he is both a beekeeper and a refugee in an unknown city, signifying the reunification of his past and current self. Lefteri uses a powerful metaphor to illustrate the psychological dislocation of the character. Nuri's recollections of Syria are also related to his attempts to preserve his identity while dealing with the complexities of crossing the borders. Nuri's recollections not only depict the fragmented images of his past but also represent the complex fabric of his culture, history, and life. Nuri's life represents the struggle to preserve his connection to his birthplace while dealing with the complexities of his relocation, the emotional challenge of dealing with the sentiment of nostalgia, and the need to feel a sense of belonging. Nuri's life also represents the considerable impact of migration on identity while dealing with the delicate balance between the need to start anew and the need to respect his roots,

I had four beehives in the garden, piled one on top of the other, but the rest were in a field on the outskirts of eastern Aleppo… The bees were an ideal society, a small paradise among chaos… I learned how to really listen to the bees and I spoke to them as though they were one breathing body with a heart… Once I did, the world around me never looked or sounded the same again. (Lefteri, 2019: 12)

Nuri's connection with his bees is an exact reflection of his connection with his nation, a connection he has attempted to preserve during his time as a refugee. This is not only true with regards to the bees but also with regards to the memories and traditions that accompany the bees, as they evoke his heritage as a person. This loss he feels so deeply, as he tries to create a semblance of "home" in a foreign land, is a testament to the complexity and depth of his disjointed transnational experience as a refugee. Each bee he tries to care for is a symbol of his heritage and his need for stability and security, “It was my job to protect the bees, to keep them healthy and strong, while they fulfilled their task of making honey and pollinating the land to keep us alive.” (Lefteri, 2019: 13). This shows how the refugees stay connected to their home country during their exile and how they hold on to their identity (symbolized by honey). It’s not just a physical move; it’s a move that involves a great deal of emotional turmoil as well. The characters are caught up in a web of emotions that stem from their lost relationships and their sense of non-belongingness. Trauma has an impact on the grief that the characters have already encountered, especially as they move to unfamiliar places that make their situation more complicated as they try to make new friends. The emotional landscape that has been set shows how the physical move is linked to the emotional trauma that the characters experience, “There was familiar acknowledgement, a quick nod, followed by a sudden change in Nadim’s movements, a nervousness, a twitching of the fingers and the skin around the eyes” (Lefteri, 2019: 156). In this time Nuri's feelings of isolation are indicative of the separation that refugees endure, as displacement induces a sense of being disconnected from reality, “I look at my face on the dark screen, thinking of what to write *–Mustafa,* I believe I am unwell. I have no dreams left.” (Lefteri, 2019: 76). This depicts the insecurity and instability of residing as an exiled individual, who is entangled between a lost past and an uncertain future. Edward Said (1978) states that identity was an unstable variable which derived from history, culture, and politics with regards to imperialism and colonialism. He believed this often led to identities being formed through the idea of

"othering," where the imperial power defines itself against that which it oppresses. For Said, identity was "never thought of as a stable, unchanging essence but always in relation to someone else." (p. 332). Displacement profoundly unsettles the characters' sense of identity and belonging. The ambiguity of the characters' new life, marked by uncertainty and the need for security, forces them to grapple with difficult questions of identity and their place in a world that is alien and uninviting. The journey of each character is a reflection of the psychological impact of leaving behind their old life as they attempt to forge new identities while clinging to the old “I do not want Mustafa to know what has become of me. We are finally in the same country, but if we meet he will see a broken man. I do not believe he will recognise me.” (Lefteri, 2019: 26). Nuri's personality is closely related to his experiences as a Syrian beekeeper, and the loss of his bees represents a huge loss of self and association with his life purpose and mission. The loss of these creatures represents not only the physical loss but also the emotional and existential loss, which affects his life and existence. Nuri's story about Aleppo represents a fractured personality because he does not recognize the person he once was. He is emotionally disconnected from Mustafa, who connects him to his past, and has become too changed to reveal himself with the statement, which emphasizes the idea that a sense of belonging is not about staying untouched but about the inner psychological work to reconcile the past and the present self. The couple tried to establish their sense of security and identity in a place that was totally unfamiliar to them as they were still trying to cope with their experiences in their former surroundings and relationships. It represents a clear picture of the psychological effect of being displaced. Afra’s journey in the novel represents a clear picture of the different processes people go through in their sorrow and recovery from it. Afra’s awakening represents not only a deep healing process but also a true recovery of her power in a world that tried its best to deny it to her. Afra’s blindness represents a clear metaphor of turmoil and psychological chaos associated with tragedy and sorrow. In this context, it is also relevant to refer to Said’s (1978) concept of exile being a "hybrid" formed by "loss" and "adaptation," especially in relation to Afra’s character. It is also a relevant concept because it represents a recurring theme in the novel, indicating the complexities of Afra’s experiences, as well as those of displaced people like Afra, who are forced to address their situations and, in effect, their identities. Adversity and change are also relevant in understanding the overall themes of loss in the novel,

I am scared of my wife’s eyes. She can’t see out and no one can see in. Look, they are like stones, grey stones, sea stones... Look at her, because I think she is disappearing." "‘I had a night of scattered dreams,’ she says. ‘They filled the room.’ Her eyes are fixed a little to the left of me. I feel sick... ‘And I have pain,’ she says. ‘Where?’ ‘Behind my eyes. Really sharp pain.’ I kneel down in front of her and look into her eyes. The blank emptiness in them terrifies me... She’s been worse since we got here. It’s like her soul is evaporating. (Lefteri, 2019, p. 7)

The metaphor of Afra's blindness is a powerful symbol of her psychological and emotional desolation caused by trauma. Afra's sightless eyes are symbolic of the emotional desensitization and obscurity caused by trauma, which makes her invisible. Fragmented identity is an important theme discussed by Said in his exile theory, which is a metaphor for loss and transformation. Afra's silence and blindness provide the backdrop for this, metaphorically "dissipating" as Nuri performs it. This powerful image leads to Afra's ultimate healing, as she re-enters society, finding her voice. This is a powerful metaphor for the misery of exile, the pain of adaptation, and the construction of identity in an unwelcoming and alien environment. Nuri's discourse is important for the discussion of secondary trauma suffered by the loved ones of trauma survivors, creating an important discussion of the reverberations of trauma, the isolation it causes, and the dislocation of the survivor and the loved one. This story is a powerful metaphor of the common experience of migration, as well as the difficulties migrants facing different backgrounds face on the migration journey. It is through all the hardships of these realities that these people start building strong bonds with each other, having finally found someone who understands their plights. In the story, through their interactions, resilience from the human spirit was well elaborated, which suggests that these relationships give comfort and support during times of adversity. The stories of the characters cross; the tapestry of experience shows a strong emphasis on commonalities in their pursuits of safety, belonging, and hope, "Apart from that day in Aleppo when we were hiding in the hole in the garden, she had not shed a tear. She did not cry when Sami died. Instead, her face had turned to stone." (Lefteri, 2019: 153). This underscores the universality of the refugee experience, in which people of many origins share the sorrow of relocation. Though the process of displacement is often told with its overwhelming sense of loss and perpetual suffering, this novel weaves in moments of hope and the remarkable resilience of the human spirit Where there are bees there are flowers, and where there are flowers there is new life and hope. It is a story that highlights the challenges that people go through after being displaced from their homes. It is a reflection of the pain that the displaced go through as they try to cope with the new environment. However, there are moments of hope, such as the small triumphs, acts of kindness, and the bonds formed among people. They are a reflection of the resilience that is present among people, showing the capacity that people have to overcome, cope, and even strive to bring joy into the midst of adversity, "Mustafa is the reason I came here. He is the reason that Afra and I kept going until we got to the United Kingdom. But now all I can do is stare at the reflection of my face on the screen… I do not want Mustafa to know what has become of me.". (Lefteri, 2019: 26). This shows the fleeting moments of hope that Nuri and Afra experience during their journey, highlighting their strength as individuals under adverse conditions, Displacement does not signify the cessation of your identity. It signifies the ability to retain your origins while establishing them in a different environment. This shows the potential that exists within individuals to reconstruct their sense of self and to find their sense of home despite the major challenges that they face as a result of their displacement. The resilient nature of humankind can be seen through their ability to overcome major emotional and physical hurdles during periods of change and connect with their environment and the people within it.

Conclusion

As indicated in both novels, the displacement is not the physical act of movement but a deep disruption that shatters identities, dislodges homes, and reshapes lives. Both novels engage deeply with the sense of belonging and the psychological toll exacted, along with the resilience required to rise above such adversities. Both novelist Alyan and Lefteri demonstrated how displacement and trauma are entangled in their relationship with identity to universalize the quest of self-definition and stability in the presence of loss. The generational transitions within the Yacoub family in novel *Salt houses* present a constant change in diasporic identities. Where the older generation holds a nostalgic memory of the homeland, the attachment for Palestine amongst a generation born and brought up in exile is fractured, having never visited their ancestral land. It is this intergenerational tension that underlines the continuity of impact within forced migration as portraying an exile which is a condition both physical and existential, as Said (1978) so elaborates *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* poignantly illustrates the refugee experience through the emotional and psychological scars that Nuri and Afra go through during their escape from the Syrian Civil War. However, there is the presentation of the broader frameworks of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Alyan poignantly illustrates the Yacoub family's ability to bring together different aspects of other cultures that they have been a part of, creating an identity that is a blend of Palestinian tradition, Amman, Boston, and Paris. Similarly, the two works poignantly illustrate the broader frameworks of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, where the experiences of Nuri and Afra going through different countries bring a different meaning to the idea of home and belonging, emphasizing the connectivity of all the refugee crises happening globally. These literary works represent the continued issue of displaced persons in Palestine and Syria, emphasizing the long-term effects of violence and the personal stories behind the news headlines. Both novels challenge the readers to sympathize with the experiences of displaced persons and to connect with their universal humanity through the interplay of personal and global themes. This analytical study has demonstrated that forced displacement is portrayed in *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri and *Salt houses* by Hala Alyan as a transformative experience that extends beyond physical relocation to reshape identity, memory, and the sense of belonging. In both novels, the major characters' experiences show the deep emotional, psychological, and cultural impact of displacement, as it upends and challenges existing identities while forcing them to work out new ways to belong in new places. Despite the hardships of trauma, loss, and the separation from their native land, the characters remain faithful to their culture in their memories, family bonds, and their feelings toward their home. In *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, Nuri and Afra gradually regain hope by rebuilding their lives despite the lasting effects of war and displacement. Likewise, in *Salt Houses*, the Yacoub family is profoundly affected by forced displacement, loss, and political upheaval. Loss of their homeland, familiar places, sense of identity and belonging, are all traumatic experiences for the family members. These experiences result in an intergenerational sense of feeling out of place, passing from one generation to the next, and from which younger generations inherit the sense of not being able to feel at home in new situations. However, the Yacoub family is resilient as they hold on to their memories, their

cultural links and their feelings for their native land, slowly building up a sense of belonging, even though the psychological effects of displacement remain. The analysis reveals that forced displacement is not a process that negates belonging, but rather one that creates a dynamic and evolving process of belonging that is negotiated through resilience, adaptation and cultural continuity. The study further reveals that both novels redefine the concept of home as more than a geographical location, presenting it instead as an emotional and cultural space sustained by memory and identity. The results are relevant to current literature research because they show the ways refugee literature can offer deeper insights into the impacts of war, migration and displacement on the human aspects. This study suggests that further analysis is needed in the context of forced displacement, drawing on more recent literary theories, such as Transnationalism, Diaspora Studies, Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Theory. It also invites scholars to read refugee stories in other cultural settings to explore concepts of identity reconstruction, belonging and cultural resilience in today's literature in greater depth. The latter can enhance literary analysis and raise awareness of the human aspects of forced displacement. The researcher finds that both societies in Syria and Palestine have suffered from a deep human impact from the long-term political instability, weak governance and regional conflicts which have led to significant displacement and social divisions. The analysis indicates that these communities have been the leading victims of a variety of competing political agendas, military interventions, economic pressures and a wider geopolitical struggle that has contributed to the breakdown of social cohesion and collective security. Moreover, the study shows that displacement has not only been caused by armed conflict, but also economic, ideological and cultural forces which have contributed to the fragility of Arab societies. Both novels thus emphasize the fact that common folk are often the ones who suffer the most from political and geopolitical conflicts and also show their ability to maintain their sense of identity, cultural memory and feeling of belonging in the face of exile and displacement. The researcher believes it is necessary to further strengthen literary and interdisciplinary humanitarian studies on the subject of narratives of forced displacement to understand the impact of forced displacement on the construction of the individual identity, collective memory and sense of belonging. Finally, the researcher calls for greater political engagement in addressing the structural drivers of forced displacement and to create conditions conducive to safety, dignity and social stability of displaced populations. Moreover, it seeks to involve intellectuals, writers and cultural institutions in the documentation of the communities' experiences and their memory in literary and scholarly pieces, which in turn helps to maintain their cultural identity. The researcher recommends further strengthening literary and interdisciplinary humanitarian studies that examine narratives of forced displacement in order to develop a deeper understanding of its impact on the construction of individual identity, collective memory, and the sense of belonging. The researcher invites political institutions to assume more responsibility in responding to the structural causes of forced displacement and in ensuring that the safety, dignity and social stability of displaced populations are supported. At the same time, intellectuals, writers and cultural institutions are invited to participate actively in recording such experiences of the displaced and the retention of their cultural identity and memory in literary and scholarly works.

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